

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: "SISTERS OF THE CAPITAL": WHITE WOMEN IN
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, 1860-1880
Edna Susan Barber, Doctor of Philosophy, 1997

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This dissertation examines the effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction on elite, middle-, and working-class white women in Richmond, Virginia. Anne Firor Scott has written that the Civil War was a historical watershed that enabled Southern women's movement into broader social, economic, and political roles in Southern society. Suzanne Lebsack and George Rable have observed that claims about white Southern women's gains must be measured against the conservatism of Southern society as the patriarchy reasserted itself in the postwar decades. This study addresses this historiographical debate by examining changes in white Richmond women's roles in the workforce, in organizational politics, and the churches. It also analyzes the war's impact on marriage and family relations.

Civil War Richmond represented a two-edged sword to its white female population. As the Confederate capital, it provided them with employment opportunities that were impossible before the war began. By 1863, however, Richmond's population more than doubled as Southerners emigrated to the city in search of work or to escape Union armies. This expanding population created extreme shortages in food and housing; it also triggered the largest bread riot in the Confederacy.

With Confederate defeat, many wartime occupations disappeared, although the need for work did not. Widespread postwar poverty led to the emergence of different occupations. Women had formed a number of charitable organizations before the war began. During the war, they developed new associations that stressed women's patriotism rather than their maternity. In the churches, women's wartime work led to the emergence of independent missionary associations that often were in conflict with male-dominated foreign mission boards.

Although change occurred, this study concludes that white women's experiences of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Richmond, Virginia, were far more complex than Scott's notion of a historical watershed indicates. The wartime transformation in women's lives was often fraught with irony. Many changes were neither sought nor anticipated by Richmond women. Several came precisely as a direct result of Confederate defeat. Others tended to reinforce patriarchal notions about white women's subordinate status in Southern society.

"SISTERS OF THE CAPITAL":

WHITE WOMEN IN RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, 1860-1880

by

Edna Susan Barber

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland at College Park in partial fulfillment
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Doris and Tom Pearson invited me into their Richmond home where Doris Pearson allowed me to interview her about her life in Richmond, Virginia, and her grandmother's work as a Brown's Island cartridge maker. While we talked, Tom Pearson prepared us a home-cooked Southern meal. I am thankful to the Pearsons for their generosity and their Richmond hospitality.

My research has also taken me to the Library of Congress, the National Archives and Records Administration, the Southern Historical Collection at the University of

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David, and Chris, have taken an interest in my work and have patiently given me "time out" from my roles as daughter, mother, and mother-in-law in order to bring this project to closure. My grandchildren, Kaylynn and Aaron, have provided me with many delightful, necessary diversions from my work as only they can. I look forward to many more of these in the future.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJA	American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio
BAMAT	Beth Ahabah Museum and Archives Trust, Richmond, Virginia
DU	William R. Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina
ESBL	Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia
LC	Manuscripts/Rare Books, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LV	Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.
SHC	Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
VBHS	Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia
VHS	Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia
VM	Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The American Civil War is hardly a neglected topic. No other single event in the history of the United States has commanded more attention from the reading and listening public than the four years from 1861-65, when Americans faced each other in bloody conflict. By the time the Ken Burns' serialization appeared on the Public Broadcasting System in 1990, Newsweek magazine placed the number of war-related publications--including 800 regimental histories, a number of single- and multi-volume comprehensive texts, and countless personal diaries and reminiscences--at more than 50,000.¹ Since that time, Hollywood representations of

¹H.F. Waters, "An American Mosaic," Newsweek, 17 September 1990, 68-70. Since the complete historiography of the Civil War and Reconstruction is too voluminous to be discussed in the scope of this review of the literature, I have chosen to limit the discussion to the two aspects which are most pertinent to this dissertation: scholarship examining the social consequences of the war to the Southern home front, and scholarship on Confederate women during the Civil War and Reconstruction. I use the term "Confederate women" to cover this entire period of time (1861-1880) because of some scholars' willingness to argue that a large majority of Southerners, and especially the women, remained "unreconstructed" until the end of the nineteenth century. For example, see James M. McPherson, Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 494-95.

Civil War events--"Glory," "Gettysburg," and "Andersonville"--have continued to popularize the century-old conflict for millions of American moviegoers.

Despite this outpouring of information (accurate or not), much remains to be learned about the profound effect of the Civil War on American society, and especially on American women. In raw numbers alone, more than 618,000 men lost their lives on both sides of the war, while countless more were permanently disabled. Approximately 6 percent of Northern white males between the ages of thirteen and forty-three died, while in the South, where the white population base was proportionally smaller, the casualty rate rose to 18 percent.² Yet, until recently, most Civil War histories have not added to the historical descriptions of the social results of the war on home front communities or on people behind the lines, despite pioneering works by Bell Irvin Wiley, Paul Escott, Clyde Olin Fisher, and Charles Ramsdell.³ Most social

²Maris Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? Some Preliminary Demographic Speculations," Journal of American History 76 (1989): 38-39, reprinted in Toward a Social History of the American Civil War: Exploratory Essays, Maris A. Vinovskis, ed. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1990). All subsequent citations are to the 1990 reprinted version of this essay.

³Bell Irvin Wiley, The Plain People of the Confederacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943); Paul D. Escott, "'The Cry of the Sufferers': The Problem of Welfare in the Confederacy," Civil War History 23 (1977): 288-40; Clyde Olin Fisher, "The Relief of Soldiers' Families in North Carolina during the Civil War," Atlantic Quarterly 16 (1917): 60-72; and Charles Ramsdell, Behind

historians writing community studies in the 1980s either ignored the war's impact completely or only mentioned, in passing, its effect on organized labor, prompting social historian Maris Vinovskis to ponder, in a speculative article, whether social historians had "lost the Civil War."⁴

Recent studies, however, by Matthew Gallman, Philip Paludan, and Steven Ash have deepened our understanding of the impact of the Civil War on both Southern and Northern communities, while at the same time calling for more work to fill in the missing gaps in the history of the Civil War at home.⁵ In April 1990, the Virginia Magazine of History

the Lines in the Southern Confederacy, Wendell H. Stephenson, ed. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969).

⁴Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? 2, and fn. 3 and 4. According to Vinovskis, studies that either ignore or pay little attention to the war's impact include Stephan Thernstrom's Poverty and Progress; Clyde Griffen and Sally Griffen's Natives and Newcomers; Alan Dawley's Class and Community; Daniel J. Walkowitz's Worker City, Company Town; Robert Wells's demographic study Revolutions in Americans' Lives; and Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg's Domestic Revolutions. Vinovskis's anthology focuses on the Civil War in the North. Unfortunately no similar book has yet been published that examines the social history of the Civil War South, although half of the essays in The Edge of the South are devoted to the history of Civil War Virginia. Edward C. Ayers and John C. Willis, eds., The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth-Century Virginia (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1991).

⁵Philip Shaw Paludan, "A People's Contest": The Union and Civil War, 1861-65 (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); Matthew Gallman, Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia during the Civil War (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Steven B. Ash, "White Virginians under Federal Occupation," Virginia Magazine of History and

and Biography devoted an entire issue to recent scholarship on the Civil War in Virginia which reflected these new scholarly trends.⁶

Despite the outpouring of women's history since the 1970s, published works on American women have tended to focus on antebellum New England or on plantations in the antebellum South. For example, studies undertaken by Thomas Dublin, Barbara Berg, Christine Stansell, Barbara Epstein, and Barbara Welter all examine the lives of Northern women up to 1860, while monographs by Catherine Clinton and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese deal exclusively with

Biography 98.2 (April 1990): 169-192; Steven Ash, Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1960-1870: War and Peace in the Upper South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); and Steven Ash, "War and Society: New Directions in Virginia History" (Paper presented at the Virginia Historical Society conference on New Directions in Virginia History, Richmond, Virginia, October 1990). I am grateful to Steven Ash for providing me with a copy of this paper.

⁶Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 98.2 (April 1990). Titled, "The Trumpet Unblown: The Old Dominion and the Civil War," this issue's opening essay by Gary W. Gallagher pointed to the paucity of recent scholarship on the Virginia home front during the Civil War. See Gary W. Gallagher, "Home Front and Battlefield: Some Recent Literature Relating to Virginia and the Confederacy," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 98.2 (April 1990): 135-36, and 153. William Blair's recent dissertation on the Civil War Virginia home front makes a contribution to this research, although it relies primarily on information from three Virginia counties--Albemarle, Augusta, and Campbell--and includes little on Richmond. William Alan Blair, "Virginia's Private War: The Contours of Dissent and Loyalty in the Confederacy, 1861-1865" (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1994).

women on Southern plantations before the Civil War began.⁷ Even Suzanne Lebsock's Free Women of Petersburg--one of the first books to examine the lives of white and black women in a Southern urban community--ends in 1860, and treats the Civil War only in a thirteen-page epilogue.⁸ In addition, a survey of 603 books and doctoral dissertations on American women, written between 1970 and 1987, shows that only 2 percent (thirteen) deal with either the Civil War or Reconstruction. Most of these concentrate on Northern women.⁹

⁷Thomas Dublin, Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); Barbara J. Berg, The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, The Woman and the City, 1800-1860 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Christine Stansell, City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986); Barbara Leslie Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1981); Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860," American Quarterly 18 (1966): 151-74; Catherine Clinton, The Plantation Mistress: Women's World in the Old South (New York: Pantheon, 1982); and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). Nancy Cott's study also focuses on New England women during a similar period of time. Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977).

⁸Suzanne Lebsock, The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985).

⁹Gerda Lerner, "Priorities and Challenges in Women's History Research," Perspectives 26 (April 1988), 1, cited by James McPherson, "Introduction," Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War, Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), xvi.

A few scholarly works written before 1970 attempted to restore Southern women to the Civil War canon. Francis Simpkins and James W. Patton's Women of the Southern Confederacy, originally published in 1936, offered a pro-South interpretation of white women's lives in the wartime South.¹⁰ Mary Elizabeth Massey's Bonnet Brigades--written for the Civil War centennial celebration in 1966--provided a well-researched and more balanced study of women's Civil War experience, while her earlier Ersatz in the Confederacy demonstrated the myriad ways in which Southern women coped with wartime shortages of food and other domestic commodities.¹¹ Although all of these works redeemed Southern women from historical invisibility, they were written well before the explosion of writings about women in the 1970s and 1980s deepened and problematized the uses of gender as a category of historical analysis.¹² Like Bell Irvin Wiley's Confederate Women, published in 1975,

¹⁰Francis Butler Simkins and James Welch Patton, The Women of the Confederacy (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1936; repr. St. Clair Shores, Mich.: Scholarly Press, 1971).

¹¹Mary Elizabeth Massey, Bonnet Brigades (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966); Mary Elizabeth Massey, Ersatz in the Confederacy (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1952). Massey's Bonnet Brigades is arguably the best of this earlier scholarship, and includes information recently rediscovered by some Civil War scholars, including data on the Civil War bread riots conducted by Southern women.

¹²Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," American Historical Review 91.5 (December 1986): 1053-75.

most also limited their discussions to elite white women, usually plantation mistresses, who were considerably more likely than poor women to have left behind journals, letters, and published reminiscences.¹³

One of the most important books on this topic to emerge from the early groundswell of interest in women's history is Anne Firor Scott's The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, a pathbreaking study written in 1970 which argued that the Civil War "passed over the South like a giant tidal wave," reshaping Southern society and paving the way for the "New Woman" of the post-Reconstruction South.¹⁴ For Scott, these "New Women" were Southern ladies of the antebellum period who had been transformed by the crucible of war into educated, resourceful, social crusaders who were "influenced by Frances Willard, Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and later Anna Howard Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt" to pursue their own agenda for

¹³Bell Irvin Wiley, Confederate Women (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975). Excluded from this discussion is Matthew Page Andrews's The Women of the South in War Times, which is really little more than an assembly of excerpts from women's diaries and reminiscences, compiled by a former Confederate Treasury clerk. Matthew Page Andrews, comp. The Women of the South in War Times (Baltimore: Norman Remington Co., 1920).

¹⁴Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 80-102. All subsequent citations are to this revised edition, which includes a new afterword in which Scott answers some of her critics, and evaluates her original thesis.

Southern women's rights.¹⁵ Scott's analysis was so sweeping and her command on the sources so masterful, that for more than a decade her argument remained relatively unchallenged as the definitive interpretation of Southern women.¹⁶ Instead, throughout much of the 1970s and 1980s, historians of American women in wartime concentrated their attention on fleshing out the experiences of women during the War for Independence.¹⁷

Recently, however, scholars have begun to build on Scott's work, or to chip away at some of her conclusions. New works by Victoria Bynum and Marjorie Spruill Wheeler have extended Scott's analysis, respectively, to the yeoman

¹⁵Anne Firor Scott, "The New Woman and the New South," South Atlantic Quarterly 65 (1962): 573-83.

¹⁶For Scott's role as a role model and mentor, see Nancy Weiss Malkiel, "Invincible Woman: Anne Firor Scott," in Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism, Nancy A. Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsock, eds. (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 381-92.

¹⁷A detailed discussion of women during the American Revolution is beyond the scope of this review of the literature. The most important works on this topic are Linda K. Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980); Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800 (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980); Joan Hoff Wilson, "The Illusion of Change: Women and the American Revolution," in The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism, Alfred F. Young, ed. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Press, 1976), 383-446; Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds. Women in the Age of the American Revolution (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1989); and Joy Day Buel and Richard Buel, Jr., The Way of Duty: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary America (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984).

women of upcountry North Carolina, and the genteel founders of the late-nineteenth-century Southern States Woman Suffrage Conference.¹⁸ Anne Scott's own Natural Allies, published in 1991, builds on her thesis about the Southern lady by expanding historical understanding of organizational politics for both white and black women in the South and North throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁹ Two recent anthologies edited by Carol Bleser, and by Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, have added to our knowledge of Southern marriage and family relations through much of the nineteenth century, and the ways in which the Civil War represented a crisis of gender for both white and black Southerners.²⁰ Although she has long been a compelling scholar of the wartime South, historian Drew Gilpin Faust has more recently fixed her gaze on the wartime experiences of Southern women as well, first, in her analysis of Confederate women's wartime disaffection

¹⁸Victoria E. Bynum, Unruly Women: The Political of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Despite Bynum's title, her examination of women in the North Carolina piedmont extends its coverage to include the Civil War years.

¹⁹Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

²⁰Carol Bleser, ed., In Joy and in Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South, 1830-1900 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); and Clinton and Silber, eds., Divided Houses.

and, then, in her book-length study of white female slaveholders.²¹ In addition, the many papers on this topic presented during the Ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, held in 1993, suggests that further scholarship is forthcoming.²²

²¹Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," Journal of American History 76.4 (1990): 1200-28; Drew Gilpin Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

²²Fourteen papers relating to women during the Civil War and Reconstruction were presented at this conference: LeeAnn Whites, "Women and the Lost Cause, or 'Stand by Your Man': The Ladies' Memorial Association and the Reconstruction of White Manhood in the New South"; Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, "Southern Suffragists and the Rejection of 'Indirect Influence,'" Tracey Weis, "'She Refused to Obey': African-American Domestic Workers and the Reconstruction of Richmond"; Jane E. Schultz, "'Seldom Thanked, Never Praised, and Scarcely Recognized': Black and White Women in Civil War Relief Work"; Elizabeth D. Leonard, "Extreme Pressure and Limited Tolerance: The Civil War Story of Mary Edwards Walker, M.D."; Laura Edwards, "Sexual Violence and Political Struggle: Finding Women in Reconstruction Politics"; Hannah Rosen, "Struggles over 'Freedom': Sexual Violence during the Memphis Riot of 1866"; Megan McClintock, "Breadwinners Go to War: The Case of Civil War Pensions"; Carolyn Stefanco, "'A Matter of Honor': Female Patriotism in the Confederate South"; Grace Elizabeth Hale, "'Some Women Have Never Been Reconstructed': Mildred L. Rutherford, Lucy M. Stanton, and the Racial Politics of White Female Identity in the New South"; Elizabeth R. Varon, "From Partisanship to Sectionalism: White Women's Political Consciousness in Virginia, 1840-1861"; Rachel Filene Seidman, "Blasphemous Harlots and Poor Widows: Women, Politics, and Culture in Pennsylvania during the American Civil War"; Elizabeth Hayes Turner, "From Private Entertainments to Public Rallies: The Transformation of the Texas Woman Suffrage Movement"; and Lana Ruegamer, "Female Moral Authority and Politics in Post-Civil War America: Toward 'the Matriarchal Moment.'" Program Committee of the Ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, "Transformations: Women, Gender, Power," program guide for the Ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, 11-

Recent studies have questioned Scott's work in three general areas: her suggestion that many slave mistresses disliked slavery intensely and often opposed its continuation; her contention that the social upheaval of the Civil War and Reconstruction significantly broadened women's social, political, and economic choices; and her focus--like that of other scholars of the time--on the (more accessible) records provided by elite white women.²³ Scott's presentation of Southern ladies as closet abolitionists has been most eloquently opposed by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese who argues that, although they

13 June, 1993, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York. Four papers on the same topic were also presented at the 55th Annual Conference of the Southern Historical Association, 8-11 November 1989, Lexington, Kentucky. These four papers were Victoria Bynum, "The Struggle to Survive: Poor Women in Civil War North Carolina"; Donna D. Krug, "The Enemy at the Door in the Confederacy: A Crisis of Honor"; Earl J. Hess, "The 'Face' of Battle and the Experience of Combat in the Civil War"; and Reid Mitchell, "The Union Soldier and the Local Community." As an indication of how recent most of this Civil War scholarship is, only two of the titles from the Ninth Berkshire Conference (Wheeler and Bynum) were mentioned as works-in-progress in the expansive historiographical essay on Southern women by Anne Firor Scott and Jacquelyn Dowd Hall which appeared in Interpreting Southern History in 1987. In fact, with the exception of works by Massey, Simpkins and Patton, and Scott's own Southern Lady, scholarship on the Civil War, per se, is hardly mentioned at all. See Jacquelyn Dowd Hall and Anne Firor Scott, "Women in the South," in Interpreting Southern History: Historiographical Essays in Honor of Sanford W. Higginbotham, John B. Boles and Evelyn Thomas Noland, eds. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 454-509.

²³Anne Firor Scott, "Afterword: The Southern Lady Revisited," in The Southern Lady, 270-79.

were known to grumble in private about certain aspects of their lives and even, on occasion, to blame slavery for the most disagreeable ones . . . the complaints of slaveholding women never amounted to a concerted attack on the system, the various parts of which, as they knew, stood or fell together. Slavery, with all its abuses, constituted the fabric of their beloved country--the warp and woof of their social position, their personal relations, their very identities.²⁴

Scott's contention that the Civil War and Reconstruction led to a permanent transformation in Southern white women's status--economically, politically, and socially--has been challenged by George Rable and Suzanne Lebsock who reject Scott's war-as-watershed

²⁴Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 290. In the afterword to the revised edition of The Southern Lady, Scott addresses this criticism, noting that she "would now be more cautious in attributing antislavery views to large numbers of white women," although she still maintains that "a considerable number of women objected to the institution because of the work and worry of managing slave labor or because they abhorred miscegenation." Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady, 273-4. Scott's analysis in the original relies heavily on two sources, Mary Chesnut's diary, and the abolitionism of Sarah and Angelina Grimké. Although clouded by other narrative threads, Fox-Genovese's chapter which offers a corrective to Scott's original analysis (Chapter 7: "And Women Who Did Not") is based on a broader sampling of the sources. Elizabeth Varon's recent dissertation, "We Mean to Be Counted," engages this criticism by Fox-Genovese and, in some ways mediates between Scott's original claim and those of her critics. Varon's evidence on Virginia women's work in antebellum anti-slavery societies contends that "hundreds of white women in antebellum Virginia publicly expressed their opposition to slavery" through their work in these antebellum associations. According to Varon, this opposition to slavery was muted and eventually transmogrified into a defense of the peculiar institution during the sectional crisis of the 1850s. Elizabeth Regina Varon, "'We Mean to Be Counted': White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1993), 84-167.

argument. Rable's analysis finds Southern women picking up the traces of their tattered domesticity at the war's end, while Lebsock's more nuanced examination suggests that Confederate defeat might not have killed white male authority in the South, but rather left it wounded, and thus more dangerous, to Southern women.²⁵ For Rable, this post-bellum reversal was due to the relentless pull of conservative forces in Southern society which turned back the tide of wartime gains.²⁶ For Lebsock, the reassertion of white men's protection and domination of white women and the negation of their wartime accomplishments was a necessary domestic balm to the political and economic losses white men sustained as a result of black emancipation. "Losers," Lebsock observes, "are not inclined to be generous."²⁷

Both Rable and Lebsock fault Scott on two points. The first is that some changes that Scott attributes to the

²⁵George C. Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Lebsock, The Free Women of Petersburg. Although Lebsock treats the effects of the Civil War on Southern women only in her epilogue, the entire body of her work demonstrates her contention that Petersburg's white women and free women of color were making slow steady progress in gaining autonomy from Petersburg men throughout the entire antebellum period. Rable's book, on the other hand, appears to be a richly-textured if somewhat subtle attack on the Scott thesis which can be largely read in the text's footnotes. Rable, Civil Wars, 367, fn. 24; 372, fn.2; 373, fn. 12; 376, fn. 38; and 377, fn. 50.

²⁶Rable, Civil Wars, 286-88.

²⁷Lebsock, Free Women of Petersburg, 247-48.

war--including the movement of Southern women into business enterprises, and their increasing participation in clubs and organizations--were actually taking place on a limited scale before the war began and, therefore, cannot be seen purely as a result of the social upheaval Scott claims the war engendered.²⁸ Second, both argue that Scott's findings are skewed by the fact that her study rests almost completely on qualitative sources like diaries and letters and, thus, documents the experience of the planter elite, a group which may have actually enjoyed enhanced social roles in the postbellum South, while their counterparts who lived further down the economic scale suffered, sometimes precisely because of the higher position enjoyed by their more affluent sisters.²⁹ In addition, Lebsack has noted that the war might actually be interpreted as a setback for some of the South's free women, if one considers the

²⁸Rable, Civil Wars, 367-68; Lebsack, Free Women of Petersburg, 239-40. Elizabeth Varon has recently made this same argument for Virginia women's political roles. Elizabeth Varon, "Tippecanoe and the Ladies, Too: White Women and Party Politics in Antebellum Virginia," Journal of American History 82.2 (September 1995): 494-521, and Varon, "'We Mean to Be Counted.'"

²⁹Rable, Civil Wars, 372; Lebsack, Free Women of Petersburg, 239-40. Scott raises this criticism, herself, in the afterword to the revised edition of The Southern Lady. Referring to a quote by Alice Walker about the importance of seeing a subject from different points of view, she observes: "If I had understood this necessity better, I would have paid more attention to the way various relationships, experiences, and structures were perceived by poor women and black women whose point of view would have provided some of the missing parts of the story." Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady, 276-77.

failure rate of female-dominated businesses in the postbellum years.³⁰

Rable and Lebsack raise important objections. My research concludes that white women's experiences of the Civil War and Reconstruction in Richmond, Virginia, were far more complex than Scott's notion of a historical watershed indicates. Instead, optimistic assessments about Richmond women's wartime advances must constantly be measured against the reality of life in a conservative, reactionary Southern society anxious to contain the social fallout from emancipation and defeat. One way to do this was to limit women's postwar gains.

One of the major flaws in Scott's original work, and one which also mars Rable's challenge, is that both Scott and Rable--and, to some extent, Drew Faust in Mothers of Invention--engage in a wide-ranging examination of the entire South in more-or-less monolithic terms, thus blurring distinctions between rural and urban communities; between older and newer Southern states; between Deep South communities and those along the border between South and North. Before the question of the effects of the Civil War on Southern women's status can be successfully answered, more research needs to be done on the experiences of Southern women in discrete and disparate communities throughout the South, to see if the war was, indeed, a

³⁰Lebsack, Free Women of Petersburg, 244.

liberating force in Southern society.³¹ This study seeks to contribute to this debate about the effects of the war on Southern white women's status through an examination of the public and private lives of white women in Richmond, Virginia.

Urban histories focusing mainly on the experiences of white men in Civil War and Reconstruction Richmond have been written by several amateur and professional historians, including W. Asbury Christian, Emory Thomas, Virginius Dabney, and Michael B. Chesson.³² In addition, several excellent studies have begun to sketch out the lives of African-American women and men in the antebellum

³¹George Rable, Anne Scott, and Suzanne Lebsock have all called for this to be done. See Rable, Civil Wars, xii; Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady, 276-87; and Lebsock, The Free Women of Petersburg, 247-48.

³²W. Asbury Christian, Richmond: Her Past and Present (Richmond: L.H. Jenkins, 1912); Mary Newton Stanard, Richmond: Its People and Its Story (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1923); Leslie Winston Smith, "Richmond during Presidential Reconstruction, 1865-1867" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1974); Michael B. Chesson, Richmond after the War, 1865-1890 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981); Emory M. Thomas, The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capital (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971); Virginius Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990) (All subsequent citations are to this edition.); Marie Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia, and Its People (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994). All of these sources include some information on women, but none breaks fresh ground in its attempt to incorporate white and black women into the history of Virginia's capital city. Excluded from this discussion is the often erroneous and unreliable Alfred Hoyt Bill, The Beleaguered City: Richmond, 1861-1865 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946).

and postbellum capital. Stephanie Cole's comparison of domestic work in five antebellum border cities places Richmond's black female domestics in the context of black women who labored in similar occupations in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Maryland, Louisville, Kentucky, and Cincinnati, Ohio.³³ Tracey Weis's examination of domestic work in Richmond from 1850 to 1880 has revealed the contours of labor negotiations and the redefinition of urban space as the city's domestic workers and their owners/employers moved from chattel slavery to wage labor.³⁴ Peter Rachleff's study of black labor traces the lineaments of African American society in the postwar capital and provides a detailed analysis of the relationship between white and black labor in the cauldron of post-Civil War politics.³⁵ Elsa Barkley Brown's dissertation provides a richly textured study of African American community development in the postemancipation city.³⁶ But although published and unpublished wartime

³³Stephanie Cole, "Servants and Slaves: Domestic Servants in the Border Cities, 1800-1850" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1994).

³⁴Tracey Weis, "Negotiating Labor: Domestic Service and Household Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1850-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1994).

³⁵Peter J. Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

³⁶Elsa Barkley Brown, "Uncle Ned's Children: Negotiating Community and Freedom in Postemancipation Richmond, Virginia" (Ph.D. diss., Kent State University, 1994).

diaries and letters by Richmond women abound, no study exists that analyzes the experiences of white Richmond women during this turbulent period in American history (with the exception of an earlier documentary text edited by Katharine M. Jones).³⁷

Richmond, Virginia, is an important place in which to study the short- and long-term effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Southern women--not because of the city's typicality, but because it was the capital of the Confederacy. Situated on the banks of the James River in the southeastern portion of the state, Richmond in 1860 was a major Southern metropolis. On the eve of the war, its population was surpassed in the urban areas that later joined the Confederacy only by New Orleans and Charleston; in 1880, by New Orleans alone.³⁸ An industrial and commercial center, Richmond led the world in the production of flour, which was shipped from the Gallego and Haxall

³⁷Katharine M. Jones, ed., Ladies of Richmond, Confederate Capitol (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962). For a discussion of the historiography of Virginia women during the war and Reconstruction, see Suzanne Lebsock, "A Share of Honour:" Virginia Women, 1600-1945, rev. ed. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1987), 79-103 (All subsequent citations are to this edition.); and Sandra Gioia Treadway, "New Directions in Virginia Women's History," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 100.1 (January 1992): 16-23.

³⁸Howard N. Rabinowitz, "Continuity and Change: Southern Urban Development, 1860-1900," in The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South, Blaine A. Brownell and David R. Goldfield, eds. (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1977), 83, Table 4.1.

mills throughout the world, especially to South America. Fifty-two tobacco processing warehouses and factories testified to its importance as a leader in the production of chewing tobacco. Tredegar Iron Works--one of the few iron manufactories in the South--produced locomotives and iron rails for railroads throughout the region.

Richmond had long been the capital of Virginia, and, in May 1861, it became the capital of the Confederate States of America, thus making it simultaneously the seat of a municipal, a state, and a national government. Confederate President Jefferson Davis occupied a house on the corner of Twelfth Street and Clay, and many cabinet members and Confederate congressmen called the wartime city their home. The Confederate legislature met in the Virginia Capitol, and hundreds of Confederate bureaucrats and government offices vied with the city and state government to occupy municipal buildings for the war's duration.

Such importance many Richmonders came to view as more of a curse than a blessing. Although Richmonders believed --or at least hoped--that the city's seven hills would render it impregnable, its short distance from Washington, D.C., made its capture a primary military objective for the Union Armies; Richmond was under serious assault at least seven times between 1861 and 1865. As a result, large numbers of Confederate troops were frequently stationed in

or near the capital city, usually for its defense, but also at times awaiting deployment to other locations in the war's eastern theater. The armies' presence attracted prostitutes who emigrated to the city to provide sexual services to the military population. As Union armies cut deep into the South's heartland, the city became home to thousands of refugees who streamed into Richmond to avoid Union troops, or to seek work in one of the government departments. By 1863, the city's population had swelled from less than 40,000 in 1860 to somewhere between 100,000 and 120,000. (In 1870, after the postwar exodus of white government workers and refugees and the influx of rural blacks, the Richmond population stood at 51,000; by 1880, it had reached 63,600.)

Richmond's role as the Confederate capital proved to be a two-edged sword for the city's white female population. As white men enlisted or were later conscripted into the Southern army, the Confederate bureaucracy provided white Richmond women with extensive opportunities for employment in traditional and nontraditional occupations on a scale unheard of before the war began and far exceeding those available to women in most Southern communities. But the city's rapid population growth in such a short period of time stretched its resources to the limit, creating acute shortages in food and housing, and driving the inflation rate to nearly 900

percent in 1863. Nearly everyone suffered and did without, but the deprivation was hardest on the poor and laboring classes who clustered in the city's working-class neighborhoods of Rocketts and Oregon Hill.

Wives and mothers of Confederate soldiers were especially hard-hit because their husbands' wages of \$11 per month could not keep pace with the city's escalating inflation. Many people applied to the Overseers of the Poor for help. In the spring of 1863, several hundred women staged a rampage through the city's market district, stealing bacon, flour, and other commodities. In the riot's wake, Richmond leaders established "free markets" to provide relief and maintain social order.³⁹

On April 3, 1865, the city fell to Federal troops. In the early morning hours, embers from burning tobacco and cotton warehouses touched off a conflagration in the city's business and financial district that levelled a twenty-block area. For the next five years, as a "New South" city rose from the ashes, white and black Richmonders negotiated the social terrain of Reconstruction under the eyes of the Union army. For a number of white Richmond women, this negotiation took the form of reconfiguring household relationships that had been severed, or at least

³⁹E. Susan Barber, "The Quiet Battles of the Home Front War': Civil War Bread Riots and the Development of a Confederate Welfare System" (M.A. thesis, University of Maryland, 1986).

transformed, by emancipation. Many also had to deal with the searing loss of husbands, fathers, or sons, or struggle with returning menfolk whose bodies were injured and whose sense of Southern manhood and honor had been damaged or destroyed. Some women formed associations to redeem the heroism of dead Confederate soldiers, or to care for the hundreds of women and children left destitute in the war's wake. Many labored--sometimes outside the home for the first time--to restore vigor and stability to family household economies depleted by the cost of the conflict.

The Civil War, thus, led to a wartime relaxation in gender roles for white Richmond women that permitted many of them to gain entry into social, political, and economic activities that had previously been closed to them. Briefly during the conflict, some Richmond women began to perceive of themselves as Confederate "sisters," self-appointed comrades in arms who shared with Confederate soldiers the responsibilities and burdens of creating and defending a new nation.⁴⁰ This new self-perception of Southern women as Confederate sisters was not open to all

⁴⁰By "sisters," I mean women "who share a common ancestry, allegiance, or purpose" with other women. American Heritage Dictionary, 3d ed. (New York: Dell Publishing, 1994). I do not use "sisters" or "sisterhood," here, to mean the bonding of women in a recognition of shared oppression by patriarchal society as it is sometimes used by contemporary feminism. Lisa Tuttle, Encyclopedia of Feminism (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1986), 302; Maggie Humm, The Dictionary of Feminist Theory, 2d. ed. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1995), 268.

Richmond women, although it found validation that cut across class lines to include working-class white women's labor in munitions factories and elite women's organization of gunboat societies. Nor did it represent a singular model for all wartime Southern women. Rather, it existed alongside more traditional representations of Confederate women as pedestaled "Southern ladies" or conceptualizations of them as Spartan mothers who sent their sons into battle with dry eyes and care-filled hearts.

While the war dramatically changed all women's lives for its duration, its effects were short lived for many. The city's fall in 1865 led to a postwar narrowing of expectations about the appropriate roles of Richmond women. Some women sought to return to the comforts of the past, while others struggled to preserve, or even expand on, gains the war made possible. The 1870s and 1880s were, thus, marked by tensions over women's appropriate roles, which occasionally erupted in conflicts that tore at the fabric of Richmond society. During this period of time, ideas of Richmond women as Confederate "sisters" disappeared, and were replaced by more traditional notions of Southern women as the subordinates of Southern men.

Historians have noted similar relaxations and contractions of gender roles for women during other American wars. While they differ in their assessments of women's wartime gains--liberalized divorce laws, increased

educational opportunities, or the emergence of a new postbellum role as "republican mothers"--most historians of women during the American Revolution concede that it stopped short of its revolutionary potential by failing to confer full citizenship on American women.⁴¹ Maurine Greenwald's examination of American women's wartime work during World War I concluded that it did not lead to a permanent alteration in the nature or scope of women's employment.⁴² Similarly, World War II placed thousands of American wives and mothers into nontraditional employment in shipyards and airplane factories, and then at its conclusion in 1945 closed these doors again, relegating women to postwar work as sewing factory operatives, waitresses, and domestic workers. As the birthrate skyrocketed in the post-World War II decades, American women also faced increasingly restrictive views of their

⁴¹Kerber, Women of the Republic; Linda K. Kerber, "'History Can Do It No Justice': Women and the Reinterpretation of the American Revolution," in Women in the Age of the American Revolution, Hoffman and Albert, eds., 3-44; Linda K. Kerber, "May All Our Citizens Be Soldiers and All Our Soldiers Be Citizens: The Ambiguities of Female Citizenship in the New Nation," in Women, Militarism, and War: Essays in History, Politics, and Social Theory, Jean Bethke Elshtain and Sheila Tobias, eds. (Savage, Md.: Roman & Littlefield, 1990), 103; Norton, Liberty's Daughters; Mary Beth Norton, "Reflections on Women in the Age of the American Revolution," in Women in the Age of the American Revolution, Hoffman and Albert, eds., 479-98; and Joan Hoff Wilson, "The Illusion of Change."

⁴²Maurine Weiner Greenwald, Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990).

roles in American society, which in some ways harkened back to the circumscribed gender expectations of the nineteenth-century cult of domesticity.⁴³

Although these expansions and contractions of opportunities for women occurred during the American Revolution and the two world wars of the twentieth century, the defining difference in this particular instance is that the South ended the Civil War in defeat.⁴⁴ For Southern men, the war's loss precipitated what some historians see as a "crisis of masculinity" that grafted Northern accusations of cowardice and battlefield inefficiency onto Southern men's own feelings of failure over their inability to protect their families and defend their new nation from Northern invasion. This postbellum crisis of Southern

⁴³William Henry Chafe, The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Connie Field (director and producer), The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter (Emeryville, Calif.: Clarity Productions, 1980). Sara Evans argues that the American Revolution and the Civil War both led to postwar gains, but that World War II ushered in a period of hostility during the 1950s which resulted in the Second Wave of feminism in the 1960s. Sara M. Evans, Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America (New York: The Free Press, 1989), especially 239-41.

⁴⁴C. Vann Woodward has commented that the postbellum South experienced a historical understanding of war that had more in common with nations in Europe than it did with the rest of America in the late nineteenth century. C. Vann Woodward, "The Search for Southern Identity," in The Burden of Southern History, by C. Vann Woodward. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960), 18-19. This essay was originally published in The Virginia Quarterly Review 32 (1956): 258-67. America as a nation would not suffer a wartime defeat until the end of the Vietnam war in 1974.

manhood was also complicated by emancipation, which stripped another layer of patriarchal control from white male slaveholders. All of this sharpened and intensified debates about appropriate roles for women in the postbellum South.⁴⁵

This study focuses on the public and private lives of white women from a variety of social classes living in Richmond, Virginia, from 1860 to 1880.⁴⁶ As this study will show, although white Richmonders had gone to war to preserve a culture and an economy built on slave labor, they failed. Regardless of their place in Richmond

⁴⁵The idea of the Civil War as a crisis in gender underpins all of the essays in Divided Houses, Silber and Clinton, eds., and many that appear in In Joy and in Sorrow, Bleser, ed. It also provides the foundation for Donna Krug's analysis of the war and Southern honor. Donna Rebecca Dondes Krug, "The Folks Back Home: The Confederate Homefront during the Civil War" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Irvine, 1990). Feminist scholars from a variety of disciplines have also taken up this question in Women, Militarism, and War, Elshtain and Tobias, eds. Jean Elshtain's Women and War examines images of women and men in wartime but does so from a relatively ahistorical perspective. Jean Bethke Elshtain, Women and War (New York: Bantam Books, 1987).

⁴⁶Although I have tried to remain sensitive to the ways in which issues of race permeated and informed the experiences of all Richmond women, I have chosen to confine my dissertation to white women in keeping with the practice established by other scholars of women in the Civil War South, including Anne Firor Scott's The Southern Lady, George Rable's Civil Wars, and Drew Faust's Mothers of Invention. While this may set up artificial distinctions that blur the lines of conflict and cooperation between white and black women, it permits a deeper study of a particular group of Southern women that could later be incorporated into a comprehensive analysis of the experiences of white and black women and men in the Civil War South. At present, no such synthesis exists.

society, the lives of all white women were marked by the war and its aftermath. My study of Richmond women confirms Anne Scott's conclusion that the Civil War created new economic roles for women as hospital workers, government clerks, and munitions manufacturers. Unfortunately, for Richmond women, none of these occupations was as liberating as Scott's original thesis would suggest. Some women in Richmond moved into new lines of wartime work, but this movement was not endorsed by everyone. As this study will demonstrate, many Richmond women confronted resistance rooted in antebellum expectations about women's appropriate place in the Southern workforce. Worse yet for women facing postwar poverty, all of these occupations came to an abrupt end with Confederate defeat. In the long-run, they were replaced by other jobs that were unexpected consequences of the war and Reconstruction.

In addition to their entry into new paid work, Richmond women, like women throughout the South, also made significant organizational gains during the war and Reconstruction. Where Scott finds a direct route between soldiers' aid societies, cemetery associations, temperance work, missionary groups, and suffrage, I find that the path in Richmond was not so direct. In Richmond, women's cemetery work reinforced notions of Southern women's subordination to Southern men. It also obliterated the wartime sacrifices of Southern women at the same time that

it extolled the heroism of Confederate soldiers. In addition, in Richmond, even women's volunteer work was opposed by men who feared it would lead to women's enfranchisement. This finding supports George Rable's and Suzanne Lebsock's contentions that the influence of Southern patriarchy and postwar conservatism were often too large for even the Civil War to overcome.

The eleven subsequent chapters are organized primarily by topic but also trace the narrative chronologically from its beginnings in 1860 to its conclusion in the early 1880s: The next five chapters (Part I) analyze events that occurred during the war; the six chapters that follow (Part II) examine the social consequences for women of Confederate defeat.

Chapter 2 offers a "snapshot" view of Richmond and the status of its white women on the eve of secession and war. Chapters 3 and 4 examine the experiences of women who worked for, or provided services to, the Confederacy. Chapter 5 focuses on Confederate women's organizational politics and the emergence of new perceptions of women in wartime. Chapter 6 traces the contours of women's wartime disaffection as evidenced by the bread riot of April 2, 1863, and an espionage network under the direction of Elizabeth Van Lew. Chapters 7 and 8 address the work experiences of white women in the postwar capital. Chapter 9 outlines the struggles of women in several religious

denominations to carve out a more autonomous role for themselves in the postwar churches. Chapter 10 discusses the creation of Confederate memorial associations in the postbellum period. Chapter 11 examines the war's impact on marriage and family relations. A brief conclusion (Chapter 12) summarizes my findings.

CHAPTER 2

RICHMOND: A SOUTHERN PARADOX

On April 12, 1860, exactly one year before the Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter in South Carolina signalled the start of the American Civil War, Richmonders were engaged in a lavish celebration marking the life of Kentucky statesman Henry Clay. Since December 1844, more than two thousand women throughout Virginia had contributed funds to an organization whose goal was to erect a marble statue in Clay's honor. Finally, after years of anxious waiting, the statue was complete and ready for installation in Richmond's Capitol Square, a public park surrounding the Virginia state capitol building designed by Thomas Jefferson in 1785. More than twenty thousand Richmond women and men witnessed the statue's unveiling, and listened as speaker after speaker extolled the virtues of the Whig politician revered for his role in the keeping the country together by "compromising" sectional tensions from the Nullification crisis of 1833 through the Mexican War and the Compromise of 1850. A brisk breeze blew through the crowd that day, ruffling the silken skirts of the white Richmond ladies who promenaded in and out of Capitol Square

to admire sculptor Joel Hart's handiwork. A few ladies, whom the Richmond Whig described as being "more circumspect than the others of their sex," were accompanied by a female slave who followed along behind, keeping her mistresses' skirts in place so the wind did not expose the ladies' feet to public scrutiny.¹ This event provides an ideal starting place from which to examine Richmond, Virginia, and the place occupied by white women in the city on the eve of the Civil War.

The Richmond Economy

White women living in Richmond, Virginia, in 1860 inhabited a city that straddled the line, economically, politically, and socially, between the slaveholding agricultural regions of the Deep South and the northern industrial metropolises.² By 1860, Richmond possessed a

¹Richmond Whig, 14 April 1860. The numerous descriptions of this ceremony have been distilled by Elizabeth R. Varon in "Tippecanoe and the Ladies, Too: White Women and Party Politics in Antebellum Virginia," Journal of American History 82.2 (September 1995): 509-17; and Elizabeth Regine Varon, "'We Mean to Be Counted': White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1993), 168-267.

²Several Richmond historians have described the city's contradictory nature. See Marie Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia, and Its People (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Michael B. Chesson, Richmond after the War, 1865-1890 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981); Emory M. Thomas, The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capital (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971); Tracey M. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom: Domestic Service and Household Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1850-1880" (Ph.D. diss.,

thriving commercial and manufacturing economy that rivaled the economies of some Northern cities, and included eight lumber yards, six brickmaking establishments, three flour mills, a nail factory, fifty-two tobacco processors, eight box factories, four textile mills, and the largest iron foundry in the South. Of the 332 businesses listed in the manufacturing schedule of the 1860 Richmond census, ninety employed between twenty and a hundred workers, each.

Fourteen more, including the Old Dominion Iron and Nail Works, the Eagle Machine Foundry, the Haxall and Crenshaw flour mills, Tredegar Iron Works, and seven large tobacco processors, hired crews that were sometimes well in excess of a hundred laborers.³

Although the industrial production of iron spikes, locomotive engines, and woolen cloth contributed more than \$1.7 million to the Richmond economy in 1860 and made it unique among Southern cities, the bulk of the city's revenue came from the processing of agricultural products raised by slaves working on farms and plantations in the

Rutgers University, 1994); and Virginus Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990). All subsequent references are to this edition.

³The Tredegar Iron Works employed more than 800 men; the Old Dominion Iron and Nail Works, 225. Manufacturing Schedule for the 1860 Census, Richmond, Virginia, NARA.

surrounding counties.⁴ In 1860, the city's three flour mills ground more than 1.3 million bushels of wheat into flour for a revenue of more than \$2.8 million, while Richmond's fifty-two tobacco warehouses processed almost twenty-three million pounds of leaf tobacco into chewing plugs for a net worth of \$4.8 million.⁵

In the city itself, a significant portion of the industrial labor was performed by hired slaves who worked side-by-side with the city's free blacks and white immigrant and native-born workers in a labor system unique to southern cities.⁶ Richmond slaves and free blacks

⁴Manufacturing Schedule for the 1860 Census, Richmond, Virginia, NARA. This is conservative estimate based on production figures for the Tredegar and Eagle foundries, the Crenshaw Woolen mill, and seven other smaller iron works. Marie Tyler-McGraw includes the total production of all of the city's iron and metal works (sixty shops), regardless of size, to arrive at an annual value of \$2.3 million in the same year. Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 120-23. For a discussion of antebellum Southern cities, see David R. Goldfield, "Pursuing the American Urban Dream: Cities in the Old South," in The City in Southern History: The Growth of Urban Civilization in the South, Blaine A. Brownell and David R. Goldfield, eds. (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1977), 53-91.

⁵Manufacturing Schedule for the 1860 Census, Richmond, Virginia, NARA. Agricultural processing also supported a number of ancillary industries, including barrel making, tobacco box manufacturing, and the production of agricultural machinery and tobacco cutters.

⁶Ira Berlin and Herbert G. Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves: Urban Workingmen in the Antebellum South," American Historical Review 88.5 (December 1983): 1175-1200; Gregg D. Kimball, "The Working People of Richmond: Life and Labor in an Industrial City, 1865-1920," Labor's Heritage 3.2 (April 1991): 45-48; and David R. Goldfield, "Pursuing the American Dream," 65-67. Goldfield has estimated that about 52 percent of the city's

comprised the bulk of the city's 3,400 tobacco hands, and a large proportion of the 800 foundry workers at Tredegar mill.⁷ In more affluent Richmond households, slave and free women of color toiled as domestic workers, freeing white Richmond ladies to work for various social reforms, or to engage in the endless round of visiting some found appealing. Others, like the slave woman who followed behind her white mistresses at the Clay statue unveiling, worked as personal retainers whose very presence both assured and reinforced some white women's privileged status in Richmond society. Nearly three dozen slave and free women of color labored as stemmers in the city's tobacco houses.⁸ Slave and free women and men were also employed as maids, cooks, porters, or butlers for the city's five hotels.⁹

In the 1830s and 1840s, waves of Irish and German settlers immigrated to the city, finding work in industry or the construction trades, or establishing private

slaves in 1860 worked under hiring contracts arranged by hiring agents.

⁷Leslie Winston Smith, "Richmond during Presidential Reconstruction" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1974), 7-11. Commercial agent John R. Anderson first bought slave laborers to work as puddlers at Tredegar in 1842. Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 120-23. Because of the heavy industry in Richmond, black men outnumbered black women in the antebellum Richmond population.

⁸Thirty-five women are listed as tobacco house employees in the 1860 Richmond census.

⁹Richmond Enquirer, 2 January 1860.

businesses as butchers, bakers, brewers, and confectioners. By the mid-1850s, Richmond's German community had a German-language newspaper, a yearly Oktoberfest, a German music society, and a scattering of beer gardens.¹⁰ Some of these immigrants were German Jews who mingled with earlier Jewish settlers to form a small but vigorous Jewish community that supported three congregations in 1860, including one of the oldest synagogues in the nation.¹¹

¹⁰Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, 153-54; Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 110-13.

¹¹Beth Shalome Congregation was one of six temples in the United States to send a letter congratulating George Washington on his election as the first president of the United States. Other Richmond congregations in 1860 included Beth Ahabah, formed in 1834, and Knesseth Israel. In the 1880s, Russian Jewish immigrants formed the Moses Monetfiore Congregation. Herbert Ezekiel and Gaston Lichtenstien, The History of the Jews of Richmond from 1769 to 1917 (Richmond: Herbert T. Ezekiel, printer, 1917), 236-56, and 279. Other information on Southern Jewry or Jews in Richmond can be found in Myron Berman, Richmond's Jewry, 1769-1976: Shabbat in Shockoe (Richmond: University Press of Virginia, 1979); Claire Milhiser Rosenbaum, Universal and Particular Obligations (Richmond: Beth Ahabah Museum & Archives Trust, 1988); Catherine Anne Wilkinson, "To Live and Die in Dixie: German Reform Jews in the Southern United States" (B.A. thesis, Princeton University, 1990); James D. Apple, "Jewish Christian Relations from 1861 to 1881" (Term paper, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1965); Allen I. Freehling, "The Acculturation of the American Jew" (Term paper, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 1965); and Martin Sklar, "'And the Walls Came Tumbling Down': Jews in the Old South, 1840-1861" (B.A. thesis, Princeton University, 1981). No wartime figures for Southern Jewish communities can be found; but by 1878 Richmond's Jewish population of 1,200 placed in the middle of population figures for Southern communities, succeeded only by Baltimore, Maryland; Memphis, Tennessee; St. Louis, Missouri; and New Orleans, Louisiana; but well ahead of those in Nashville, Tennessee; Galveston, Texas; and Charleston and Columbia, South Carolina.

Although immigrants tended to cluster in certain lines of work, many more labored in occupations--blacksmiths, ironworkers, drivers, and factory hands--that included men who were both slave and free, white and black, immigrant and native-born (Table 11.1).¹²

In 1860, most white upper- and middle-class women remained at home, or engaged in charitable work for one of the city's orphanages, or the churches, or Richmond's temperance or colonization societies.¹³ Only two white women headed businesses that were listed in the city's 1860 census. Bettie Bragg operated a corn grist mill that employed two male workers, who were possibly slaves, and did a yearly business of \$4,600. Rachel McDermott's regalia manufactory made insignia and flags with the help of three male workers for an annual income of \$1,500. Other white Richmond women worked in family-run confectionery or bakery shops, maintained private

¹²I have extrapolated this information from my sample of the Richmond marriage register, which is explained in Chapter Eleven, Table 11.1. See also Berlin and Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Free Men and Slaves."

¹³In 1860, the Richmond chapter of the American Colonization Society reported collecting more than \$3,700 during the month of December for the repatriation of slaves. Richmond Enquirer, 12 January 1860. For a discussion of anti-slavery work by Richmond women, see Elizabeth Varon, "'We Mean to Be Counted,'" especially Chapters 1 and 2. Varon's dissertation challenges the interpretation of Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Catherine Clinton, and Jean Friedman that Southern women lagged behind Northern women in the work of benevolence, and the critics who claim that Anne Scott over-estimated the number of white Southern women who were closet abolitionists.

dressmaking or millinery businesses, or sewed for some of the city's merchant tailors or shoemakers. At least ten middle-class women taught in Richmond's six female academies, usually music, art, English, or conversational French. Working-class women found employment in one of the textile factories, or at Keen, Baldwin & Williams, a clothing factory that moved to Richmond in January 1860.¹⁴

Richmond Society

By 1860, Richmond was a richly textured, cosmopolitan city with an economy that linked it to the industrialized North, but with a social organization that reflected its status as a Southern slaveholding society. White Richmond elites--a number of whom could date their ancestry to the city's founding in 1742--lived in the stately Greek revival homes in hillside communities in the eastern and western sections of the city, or in an affluent neighborhood just north of Broad Street that included the former home of Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall, who had died in 1836. In 1860, the city could claim two public libraries, a medical college, thirteen primary schools and private academies, five theaters, at least eight newspapers, and thirty-two churches and synagogues.

¹⁴Richmond Enquirer, 2 January 1860.

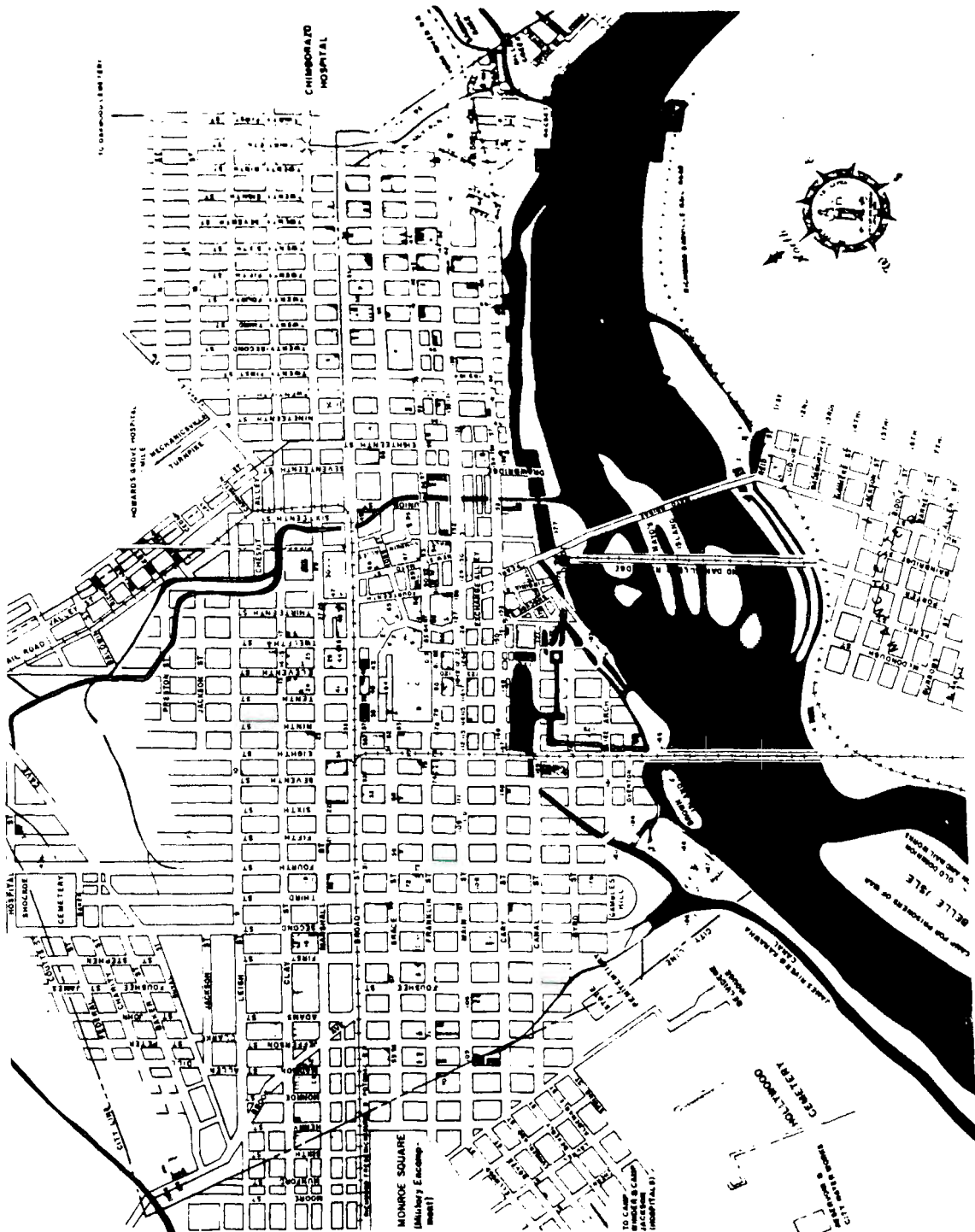


Figure 2.1. Map of Richmond, Virginia, 1861-1865
 (Source: Emory M. Thomas, The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capital (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971).

German and Irish laborers resided in the working-class neighborhoods of Oregon or Navy hills, or in Fulton. Others lived in Manchester, a working-class community on the southern banks of the James River, which was linked to the city by Mayo's Bridge. Poorer residents, both white and black, found homes in Rocketts, Screamersville, and Penitentiary Bottom.¹⁵ Some hired slaves who labored in industrial manufacturing returned to their owners' homes in the evening, while others lived independently in slave housing that dotted the city, making for a semi-autonomous slave population, but one in which slaves still lived largely cheek-by-jowl with their white owners.¹⁶

Beginning shortly after the discovery of Gabriel Prosser's conspiracy in 1800, the Richmond Common Council had passed a series of codes aimed at controlling slave mobility; but most of these regulations went relatively

¹⁵Richmond is comprised of a number of steep hills. Most community names, therefore, indicate something about the city's topography. Affluent and middle-class communities in antebellum Richmond included Union, Church, and Libby hills on the city's east end, and Shockoe Hill to the west. Michael B. Chesson, Richmond after the War, 117-43; Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 110-15; Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, 153-54.

¹⁶Boarding out slaves, according to Tracey Weis, was a widespread practice in antebellum Richmond. Tracey M. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 64-81. Also Peter J. Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 7-10; and Stephanie Cole, "Servants and Slaves: Domestic Servants in the Border Cities, 1800-1850" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1994). Both Weis and Cole argue that the lines between free blacks and slaves were blurred in antebellum border cities like Richmond.

unenforced until 1859 when John Brown's aborted raid on Harper's Ferry led to the passage of more restrictive measures.¹⁷ Under the 1859 law, free blacks and slaves were required to carry freedom papers or passes at all times. Slaves were also prohibited from engaging in a variety of behaviors, including public swearing, congregating on street corners, purchasing liquor or guns, joining secret societies, and renting city lodging.¹⁸

As a nineteenth-century center of industrial manufacturing, Richmond in some ways resembled Northern cities. White Richmonders frequently found themselves traversing an antebellum axis that linked Richmond to Baltimore, Maryland, and Washington, D.C.--two border cities with which Richmond shared a lot of similarities, but which remained in the Union during the Civil War.¹⁹

¹⁷Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 117. Gabriel Prosser was a Richmond slave who, in 1800, orchestrated a conspiracy of slaves and free blacks to seize weapons from the Richmond arsenal and hold the city hostage until all slaves were freed. The conspiracy was discovered before Prosser had time to put it into effect, and he and his followers were executed. Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 74-76; Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, 50-60.

¹⁸Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, 157; Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 131.

¹⁹Baltimore and Washington both had larger populations in 1860, but all three cities derived a portion of their economy from slave labor. Stephanie Cole's examination of antebellum domestic service contends that border cities had more in common with each other than they did with cities to either the North or South. Her study includes Richmond, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Maryland, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Louisville, Kentucky. Cole, "Servants and Slaves," 1-52. In his analysis of Southern

Episcopal minister Joshua Peterkin, for example, began his life in Baltimore in 1814, where he grew to adulthood and became part of a local shipping firm. In 1837, he entered the Virginia Theological Seminary, and upon his graduation in 1839, married Elizabeth Hansen of Georgetown. Following the ceremony, the couple moved to Baltimore, where Peterkin served as a priest to St. James's Episcopal parish. In December 1854, he answered a call from St. James's Episcopal Church congregation in Richmond, a position he held until his death in 1892.²⁰ Baptist clergyman William E. Hatcher followed a similar route. After graduating from Richmond College in 1858, Hatcher served as spiritual leader to Manchester Baptist Church during the Civil War, but moved to Baltimore in 1866 to preach for a larger Baptist congregation, probably the Eutaw Street Baptist Church. In May 1875, Hatcher returned to Richmond to

cities of the Old South, David Goldfield has concluded that "southern cities had stronger economic ties and were more similar to northern cities on the eve of civil war than at any other time." Goldfield, "Pursuing the American Urban Dream," 63.

²⁰Orphaned at the age of two, Peterkin was a partner in Wilson & Peterkin, a Baltimore shipping company, before entering the seminary in his late teens. In addition to the two St. James's churches, Peterkin pastored three other congregations in Maryland and one in Princeton, New Jersey, before settling in the Virginia capital. Minor T. Weisiger, Donald R. Traser, and E. Randolph Trice, Not Hearers Only: A History of St. James's Episcopal Church, Richmond, Virginia, 1835-1985, Margaret T. Peters, ed. (Richmond, Va.: St. James's Church, 1986), 21-23; Murray M. McGuire and John B. Mordecai, St. James's Church, 1835-1957 (Richmond: n.p., 1958), 10.

become the pastor of Grace Street Church for the remainder of his life.²¹

Clergymen weren't the only Richmonders travelling the 150 miles between Richmond and Baltimore. German Jews connected to the cities' retail trades also travelled the Richmond-Baltimore route, often on business, but sometimes in search of a suitable mate. Richmonder William Flegenheimer, for example, married Rosa Cohn in Baltimore's Lloyd Street Synagogue in early 1861, after pursuing her for more than six years between Baltimore and Richmond.²²

²¹Annie Florence Weeks, Grace Baptist Church, Richmond, 1833-1958 (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1958), 39-40; Charles Hartwell, "Struggle's Hoax," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 5 July 1936. The Richmond and Baltimore Roman Catholic dioceses also frequently shuttled clergy back and forth, although the relationship between these two dioceses was often contentious. Baltimore's James Cardinal Gibbons, for example, first served as bishop of the Richmond diocese. James Henry Bailey II, A History of the Diocese of Richmond: The Formative Years (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1956).

²²William Flegenheimer was born in Leutenshausen in the Grand Duchy of Baden in 1832. In 1851, Flegenheimer's family moved to Richmond, Virginia, where his uncle, William Thalheimer established a dry goods business. In 1853, Flegenheimer came to Baltimore to work for the Hecht Brothers of Baltimore, who later established a chain of department stores in Baltimore, Richmond, and Washington, D.C. While in Baltimore, Flegenheimer met Rosa Cohn who was visiting from Elizabeth City, North Carolina. In September 1859, Rosa Cohn's family moved to Richmond to open a dry goods store on Main Street. In 1860, the Cohns relocated in Baltimore, where Rose Cohn and William Flegenheimer resumed their courtship and were married a year later. The couple settled in Richmond, where William Flegenheimer became a well-known Richmond attorney. In 1861, he engrossed the secession ordinance for the state of Virginia and, in 1862, the credentials for the diplomatic mission of James Murray Mason and John Slidell. In 1865, he drafted the bail bond agreement for ex-Confederate

Baltimoreans Charles and James Talbott moved to Richmond in 1838, where they established a series of businesses for the manufacture of fire engines, tobacco processing machinery, and wrought iron railings.²³ And seven of ten women in Louly Wigfall Wright's graduating class at Mary Pegram's Richmond school for girls later married men with either Baltimore or Washington connections.²⁴

Some historians of Southern women have argued that a fully developed "cult of domesticity" did not exist in the antebellum South, and that the cult's influence, everywhere, tended to wane during the 1860s. The evidence for Richmond supports neither suggestion.²⁵ Indeed

President Jefferson Davis. Manuscript autobiography of William Flegenheimer, written in November 1905; and obituary from Jewish Record, 6 February 1910, both in William Flegenheimer Papers, BAMAT. An acrostic Flegenheimer penned for his fiancée can be found in the William Flegenheimer Papers, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia. In 1963, it was published in The Journal of the Southern Jewish Historical Society.

²³Baltimore-born William Greanor, a tobacco manufacturer, arrived a year after the Talbotts. Mary Wingfield Scott, Houses of Old Richmond (New York: Bonanza Press, 1941), 144 and 276.

²⁴Louisa W. [Mrs. D. Giraud] Wright, A Southern Girl in '61: The War-Time Memories of a Confederate Senator's Daughter (New York: Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1905). I have drawn this information from a list of illustrations in Wright's book.

²⁵The earliest articulation of the "cult of domesticity" (or "Cult of True Womanhood" or "separate spheres ideology" as it has also been called) can be found in Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," American Quarterly 18 (1966): 151-174. I am enclosing the words in quotes here to suggest that an actual cult did not really exist. Nonetheless, the image it created served as

Richmond newspapers in the early 1860s are filled with articles and literary contributions which suggest that white Richmond women inhabited a gendered and hierarchical society in which Northern expectations about women's particular "sphere of influence" were deepened and reinforced by a Southern society that relied on the subordination of women by men to provide an object lesson for the subordination of black slaves by their white owners. A four-part defense of slavery that appeared in the Religious Herald in January 1861, for example, began with a comparison between a "well-governed" hierarchical

a singular ideal or model which, although it did not represent the reality of most nineteenth-century women's lives, remained the standard by which all were judged. Other major works on Northern women which are informed by the idea of a separate spheres ideology include Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Barbara Berg, The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, The Woman and the City, 1800-1860 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973); Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865 (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985). For a discussion of the cult of domesticity as it applies to Southern women, see Suzanne Lebsock, The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Jean B. Friedman, The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); and Anne Firor Scott The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995). All subsequent citations to The Southern Lady are to this edition.

family and the proper governance of slaves. "In the family," author Thornton Stringfellow opined,

some have endowments to advance the general welfare--some are so dwarfed as to be incapable of a higher function than that of executing what another contrives--some have powers fitting them for control--others have qualities fitting them for humble submission and grateful dependence. In this most ancient organization, experience unfolds the principles for constructing a social body out of parts unequal--by which each member shall be rendered useful--made a contributor to the general welfare--and a partaker in the general result.²⁶

Although subordinate to Southern men, within the family circle a white Southern woman was expected to fill an important duty as the family's spiritual mediator, "a royal Priestess of our faith, helping, cleansing, purifying, and saving man by the enduring meekness and unselfish sacrifice of her love and friendship."²⁷ In addition, she was expected to serve as caretaker to the sick, and the educator of small children. "Woman, evidently by the law of Nature, is designed to stand as the

²⁶Thornton Stringfellow, "Slavery: Its Origins, Nature, and History," chapter 1, Religious Herald, 3 January 1861. Thornton Stringfellow was a Baptist minister from Culpeper County, Virginia. The other articles in the series appeared in issues dated 10, 24, 31 January 1861. See also Drew Gilpin Faust, "Evangelicalism and the Proslavery Argument: The Reverend Thornton Stringfellow of Virginia," in Drew Gilpin Faust, Southern Stories: Slaveholders in Peace and War (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 15-28.

²⁷G.H. Nedham, "Woman's Sphere," paper read before a meeting of the Menokin Female Missionary Society and reprinted in the Religious Herald, 30 May 1861.

chief personage in domestic life," wrote an anonymous author in the Southern Illustrated News in May 1861.

Woman was never formed to "ride upon the Whirlwind and direct the storm." She is more interesting when attending to her household and family; there is her kingdom and there only can she be happy. . . .When she aspires to ambitious situations, she steps out of the sphere allotted her by nature, and assumes a character which is an outrage upon her feminine delicacy and loveliness. There is one situation which claims the attention of women, and which points out still stronger the impropriety of their being ambitious of worldly distinctions; that is where they are mothers. In the hallowed occupation of rearing their children, the mild and benevolent feelings of their hearts beat in unison to the pulses of love and tenderness. A true mother . . . is more valuable in the sight of God and man than all the blood-thirsty Catherines or cruel and bigoted Marys that can be gathered from the four corners of the globe. In fine, the natural endowments of woman are essentially different than those of man. She is all passion and imagination--he has more of reason and judgement; she is delicate and timid--he is rough and courageous; she is calculated to move in quiet and peaceful situations--he, to bustle amid the uproar and contention of the world. Man is well enough in his place--but it takes a woman to make his happiness complete.²⁸

Like their sisters to the North, Richmond women were admonished not to greet their husbands at the end of the day with "troubled brows," but to "check angry words" and try "to look cheerful and bright."²⁹ Other writers made

²⁸Southern Illustrated News, 22 November 1863. For more examples, see the Religious Herald, 9 December 1858, 6 March 1862, 22 May 1862; the Richmond Whig, 14 January 1860; the Southern Illustrated News, 13 September 1862, 4 October 1862, 8 November 1862, 7 March 1863; the Southern Churchman, 7 March 1862, 12 June 1863.

²⁹"Be Gentle to Thy Husband," Richmond Enquirer, 26 March 1860; Janet H. Weaver, "A Perfect Woman," essay for her daughter, 11 April 1862, Randolph Family Papers, VHS;

careful distinctions between a "ballroom belle--a mere parlor ornament--whose highest ambition is to expend large sums annually in decorating her person and feeding her insatiate vanity," and a "pure-hearted woman" whose "little deeds of kindness" and "beacon light" of love made her the "brightener of man's existence."³⁰ While most messages such as these were aimed at upper- and middle-class white women, an anonymous writer to the Southern Illustrated News in 1862 also extolled the virtues of the mechanic's wife who eased her husband's labor through her "constant diligence," and acted as "an affectionate and ardent instructress" for her children. "Mechanics' daughters," the writer declared, "make the best wives in the world."³¹

"No Gloom at Home," Southern Illustrated News, 13 September 1862; "Female Delicacy," Southern Illustrated News, 4 October 1862; Mrs. A.J. Graves, Woman in America: Being an Examination into the Moral and Intellectual Condition of American Female Society (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1841), 143-49, 152-64; Samuel K. Jennings, The Married Lady's Companion, or Poor Man's Friend, rev. 2d. ed. (New York: Lorenzo Dow, 1808), 61-68. These excerpts from Graves and Jennings can be found in Nancy F. Cott, Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women, 1972 ed. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 113-16, and 141-47.

³⁰"What Can Woman Do?" Southern Illustrated News, 7 March 1863. Articles appearing in the Baptist newspaper, the Religious Herald criticized fashion-conscious women for wearing too much jewelry, or hoops skirts, which took up too much space in the pews and at the Communion tables. Another piece took them to task for wearing elaborate hats. Religious Herald, 30 September 1858, 6 December 1860.

³¹"Mechanics' Wives," Southern Illustrated News, 13 September 1862.

What the women cast in these roles actually thought and felt is, of course, another question.

The Politics of Secession

That Whig ladies attended the unveiling of the Clay statue in Capitol Square was not an anomaly in the Richmond of 1860. Politically, Richmond had long been at odds with the Democratic politics of the state. A Federalist enclave in the early nineteenth century, by the mid-nineteenth century Richmond was a Whig stronghold. Whig ideology, which favored protective tariffs and internal improvements such as railroads and canals, accorded with the vision of the city's political leaders, many of whom were lawyers, bank presidents, heads of corporations, or owners of stock in the Kanawha Canal Company, or one of the city's five railroads.³² The majority of the state remained loyally Democratic; but Richmond consistently voted for Whig candidates throughout the mid-nineteenth century. Although they could not vote, Richmond women participated in Whig party politics from the early 1840s, attending rallies, sewing banners, and opening their homes to overnight guests

³²David R. Goldfield, "Pursuing the American Dream," 58-60; Leslie Winston Smith, "Richmond during Presidential Reconstruction," 14-15. In the 1860 city elections, for example, the president of the city council, and seven councilmen all fit into this category. Richmond Enquirer, 5 April 1860; Manufacturing Schedule for the 1860 Census, Richmond, Virginia, NARA.

during the Whig convention in September 1840.³³ It was after Henry Clay's defeat in the presidential election of 1844 that Richmond women spearheaded a state-wide campaign to erect a statue in his honor.

As Virginia edged toward civil war in the spring of 1861, Richmond struggled to maintain its position as a bastion of Unionism in a state increasingly preoccupied with thoughts of secession. Richmonders had voted two to one for Constitutional Union candidate John Bell in the fall of 1860, helping him carry Virginia, one of only three states to vote for him in the presidential election that brought Abraham Lincoln to the White House and precipitated the departure from the Union of seven Lower South states.³⁴ When the Virginia secession convention convened in Richmond in February 1861, two of the city's three delegates--Marmaduke Johnson and William H. Macfarland--were determined Unionists.³⁵ Early indications were that Virginians, like the people of Richmond, were content to adopt a wait-and-see attitude regarding the new Republican President. A secession vote taken on April 4, revealed

³³Varon, "Tippecanoe and the Ladies, Too," 494-521.

³⁴Tennessee and Kentucky were the two other states that voted for Bell.

³⁵The third delegate, George Wythe Randolph, was an ardent secessionist.

that Virginians favored what James McPherson has called a "conditional Unionist" position by nearly two to one.³⁶

As Virginians considered the role their state would play in the secession controversy, Richmond women--whose position on secession ran the same political gamut as the male delegates and spectators--thronged the western gallery of Mechanics' Hall to listen to the debates. Some women who, like secessionist firebrand Parke Chamberlayne, had already cast their lot with the South, occasionally raised small Confederate flags to reveal their sympathies, while other women--like seventy-year-old Ellen Mordecai who listened to the debates with her sister Emma and her next-door neighbor Mrs. Robertson--were still waiting to be convinced.³⁷ "[The] speakers use such strong arguments,"

³⁶James McPherson has argued that secession sentiment in early 1861 fell into three major categories: immediate secessionism which was favored by regions with large slaveholding populations; cooperationism, which he further subdivides into cooperative secessionism, ultimatumism, and conditional Unionism; and unconditional Unionism. James M. McPherson, Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 127-29. McPherson's schema underpins Elizabeth Varon's discussion of secessionism in Virginia in her dissertation. Varon, "'We Mean to Be Counted,'" 385-446.

³⁷In February 1860, the seventeen-year-old Chamberlayne had engaged in a spirited debate with Robert Saunders, a noted Virginia Unionist, on a carriage ride between Richmond and Williamsburg. While there, Chamberlayne also argued repeatedly about secession with E.S. Joynes, a young professor at the College of William and Mary who, according to Chamberlayne, "rode the fence and never told what side he would take." Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby, "Chronicle of Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby," pp. 115-19, and 123, Bagby Family Papers, VHS; hereafter cited as "Bagby Chronicle." Born in 1842, Lucy

Ellen Mordecai later wrote in a letter to her niece, "which, if they have no other effect, keep lady politicians in a state of indecision."³⁸ Other Richmond women demonstrated their Unionist leanings by presenting Unionist delegate John Baldwin with a poem and a floral wreath.³⁹

Those who lived through or looked back on the secession crisis point to several different events as the one that catalyzed Richmond's support for the secession movement, set the nation and Virginia on the path to Civil War, and destined Richmond to become the capital of the Confederacy. Richmond lawyer John A. Cutchins believed that it was John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in October 1859 that ignited the "war fever" in the Virginia capital, leading to the development of six new militia companies, and the return of Southern medical students from Philadelphia to complete their studies at Richmond's

Parke Chamberlayne was the eleventh of fourteen children born to Richmond physician Lewis Webb Chamberlayne and his wife, Martha. Parke, as she was known, was the sixth daughter, and the first hearing girl. At least three of her brothers--Lewis Webb, Edward Pye, and Hartwell Bacon--were also born deaf. Her father established a school for deaf children in Staunton where several of the Chamberlayne siblings were educated. Shortly after Lucy's birth, the Chamberlaynes moved to Richmond where Parke's father died in 1854, while she was a student at the Virginia Female Institute in Staunton, Virginia.

³⁸Ellen Mordecai, Richmond, to her niece, Ellen, 23 March 1861, Mordecai Family Papers, Ms. M847, SHC. Emphasis in the original.

³⁹Richmond Whig, 25, 28 March 1861; Varon, "'We Mean to Be Counted,'" 343-35.

Medical College of Virginia.⁴⁰ Within six weeks of Brown's raid, the Richmond papers were filled with articles praising Southern businessmen for their decision to avoid commerce with Northern manufacturers and encourage the development of Southern industry.⁴¹

Thirty-eight-year-old Lucy Fletcher first recognized the ominous clouds of civil war in the election of Abraham Lincoln in the fall of 1860, and the subsequent secession of seven Deep South states.⁴² "[T]here is no telling what will be the result," she wrote. "I think a terrible responsibility rests upon those fanatics who have so long been stirring up strife. . . for party purposes. If, as seems probable, this once glorious Union would be dissolved, on them will rest the blame. May God in mercy save our country from the evils which threaten her!"⁴³

⁴⁰John A. Cutchins, A Famous Command: The Richmond Light Infantry Blues (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1934), 65; Agreement between Committee on Public Grounds and Buildings and the volunteer militia companies for use of Military Hall over the First Street Market as a drill room, Richmond City Papers, Agreements and Contracts, 1860-1862, in Minutes of the Common Council, LV; Richmond Whig, 25 March 1860.

⁴¹Richmond Enquirer, 2, 12 January 1860; Richmond Whig, 2, 4 January 1860.

⁴²By February 1, 1861, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas had all seceded.

⁴³Entry dated 25 December 1860, Keystone Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU. There are seven diaries and some loose diary sheets in this collection which I have identified as follows: the "Sabbath Notebook Diary," written from April to October 1865, in a small Sabbath

Sally Brock Putnam considered the secession frenzy following the Confederate victory at Fort Sumter and Lincoln's subsequent call for Virginia volunteers to suppress the rebellion as the point of no return. "Up until this time, we had scarcely begun to realize that war was inevitable," she wrote. "We had hoped against hope until the battle of Fort Sumter was fought, that some

Notebook; the "Red Book Diary"--a name given this volume by Fletcher herself--which contains a single entry from 9 April 1865; an unnamed Diary kept from September of 1865 to February of 1867; an unnamed diary kept from 27 April 1865 to 1894, but largely concerning 1865; the "Keystone Diary," kept largely during 1860 in a tablet with "The New Keystone Handy Pencil Tablet" on the cover; the "Nothing but Leaves" diary, covering 1865; the "Brown Diary" named for its cover, which encompasses the period from 1869 and 1879; and loose diary sheets for the period from September 4-8, 1864. Several of these diaries overlap chronologically; at times, too, Fletcher copied portions of previous entries into other diaries, sometimes only changing a word or two, but occasionally added deeper interpretation to an existing portion through further description/recollection. Like Fletcher, a number of Southern women kept wartime diaries in which they faithfully record their reactions to the events surrounding them. Perhaps the best known female Civil War diarist was Mary Boykin Chesnut, who lived in Richmond for a portion of the War and whose diary and reminiscences have received a great deal of attention from various authors and editors. The best of these is the one edited by C. Vann Woodward, Mary Chesnut's Civil War, (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981). Other Richmond women have left fascinating wartime accounts which have become a good source of evidence for this study. Among these women are Emma Mordecai (Emma Mordecai Diary, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond Virginia); Sarah Benetta Valentine (Sarah Benetta Valentine Papers, Valentine Museum, Richmond Virginia); Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby, "The Chronicle of Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby," in Bagby Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia; and an unknown diarist whose diary is in the manuscripts collection of the Valentine Museum in Richmond, Virginia.

compromise might be effected, some specific measures adopted to stay the dreaded evil."⁴⁴

Of all these events, it was clearly the battle at Fort Sumter and Lincoln's subsequent call for troops to suppress the rebellion that finally drew Virginia into the rebel camp. Although pockets of Unionist sentiment would continue to flourish in Richmond throughout the war, these two events worked a transformation on Richmond and the state which all of the fiery secessionist speeches had failed to accomplish.⁴⁵ Less than seventy-two hours after Union commander Robert Anderson surrendered Fort Sumter to South Carolina troops, a torchlight parade snaked its way through Marshall Street and a Confederate banner flew from

⁴⁴Sallie Brock Putnam, Richmond during the War: Four Years of Personal Observation (New York: G.W. McCarthy, 1867; New York: Time-Life Books, 1983), 23.

⁴⁵Richmond lawyer John Cutchins noted that Virginia's leaders did everything within their power to avoid civil war; but when that became impossible, Virginia became the "Mother of States," surrendering up "the blood and lives of her sons and. . .the heroism and devotion of her daughters." Cutchins, A Famous Command, 68. While others have endorsed Cutchins's observations, examples of persistent Unionism serve to undercut this image of a passionately loyal state. After the Battle of Roanoke Island in February 1862, for example, slogans saying "Union Men to the Rescue"; "Now is the time to rally around the old flag"; and "God bless the Stars and Stripes," appeared on the walls of Richmond buildings. Amidst rumors that Union men were holding nightly caucuses, John Minor Botts-- a committed Unionist--was taken into custody. Putnam, Richmond during the War, 101-02.

the top of the Virginia capitol.⁴⁶ "Oh! joy and ever to be remembered day," one young Richmond woman wrote.

Virginia has seceded from the abolition government. To day at half past 12 o'clock, while we were taking our drawing lesson, Archie came in with a piece of wood in his hand on which were some gilt letters. . .it was part of the United States Court, which has just been torn down, and he said. . .that the southern confederacy flag was then waving over the capitol. . .[W]e were very much excited and we all ran out to see it. . .waving in the breeze; we stayed there in the rain, jumping and clapping our hands untill [sic] we were obliged to go in.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Torchlight parades were held on April 13, 17, and 19, 1861. Entries dated 13, 15, 18, and 22 April 1861, diary of an unknown diarist, Richmond, Virginia, Ms. V.88.20, VM; Brock Putnam, Richmond during the War, 142-3; Julia Cuthbert Pollard, Richmond's Story (Richmond: Richmond Public Schools, 1954), 142-3; Fannie A. Beers, Memories (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1891), 25. A short time before the Virginia secession ordinance was passed, a group of students at the Richmond Female Institute (RFI) designed their own version of the Confederate flag, based on the "Southern Cross." This was supposedly the flag which flew from the capitol on April 18th. The students had never seen an actual Confederate flag, so their design, which was blue and white, differs markedly from the official Confederate banner. It featured a blue cross on a white field surrounded by eight stars. Bettie Leftwich Gray, "Virginia's First Confederate Flag," Ms. F352, ESBL.

⁴⁷Entry dated 18 April 1861, diary of an unknown female diarist, Richmond, Virginia, Ms. V.88.20, VM. Relatively little is known about this sixteen-year old, single woman. Born on October 16, 1845, this "unknown diarist" was apparently the middle daughter of three women born to a Baptist family with possible connections to Charleston, South Carolina. Evidence in her diary suggests that her father might have either been a mid-level Confederate bureaucrat or else worked at the telegraph office. He occasionally brought home rather specific information about the war that he might have learned in one of these two ways.

While some women rejoiced, others, such as Episcopal minister's wife Judith Brockenbrough McGuire, were filled with an almost palpable sense of foreboding.

Can it be that our country is to be carried on and on to the horrors of civil war? I pray, oh how fervently do I pray, that our Heavenly Father may yet avert it. I shut my eyes and hold my breath when the thought of what may come upon us obtrudes itself; yet I cannot believe itThe taking of Sumter without bloodshed has somewhat soothed my fears, though I am told by those who are wiser than I, that men must fall on both sides by the score, by the hundred, and even by the thousand.⁴⁸

The Confederate Citadel⁴⁹

Less than a month after Virginia's secession from the Union, Richmond became the capital of the Confederate States of America.⁵⁰ As the Confederate Congress began holding sessions in the Virginia Capitol, and government departments created offices in the U.S. Custom House, the

⁴⁸Judith Brockenbrough McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War (New York: E.J. Hale & Son, 1867; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1972), 9-10.

⁴⁹Virginius Dabney uses this as the title of his chapter on Civil War Richmond. Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, 159-86.

⁵⁰Earlier, the Confederate capital had been located in Montgomery, Alabama. While Richmond's proximity to the North/South border actually made it more vulnerable to Union attack than Montgomery would have been, the decision to relocate the Confederate seat to Richmond was based on several pragmatic considerations, including the fact that Richmond was larger and had more hotels and could, therefore, more easily accommodate the influx of thousands of government workers and military commanders. It was also less likely to be infested with disease-carrying mosquitoes in the summer months. Emory M. Thomas, The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865 (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 99-103.

Monumental Hotel, and the Mechanics' Institute, Richmond was transformed from an Upper South industrial metropolis with Northern aspirations into a military and political enclave that was the heart and soul of the Southern Confederacy. "Every railroad train that arrived in Richmond bore its freight of soldiers," Sally Putnam later wrote, "[and] from every direction around the city, the white tents of the soldiers were seen dotting the landscapes." The Central Fair Grounds were converted into a kind of "boot camp" to train new recruits, and the bugle sounds of reveille and taps echoed throughout the city.⁵¹

As her husband, Mississippi senator Jefferson Davis, took his leave from his Washington comrades following Mississippi's secession from the Union in January 1861, Varina Davis described the scene. "The Senator's cloak room was crowded to excess, and the bright faces of the ladies were assembled together like a mosaic of flowers in the doorway," she wrote. "The sofas and the passageways were full, and ladies sat on the floor against the wall where they could not find seats."⁵² As the Confederate government took shape during the spring and summer of 1861, several of those women--including Margaret Sumner McLean,

⁵¹Putnam, Richmond during the War, 29-41.

⁵²Varina Howell Davis, Jefferson Davis, Ex-President of the Confederate States of America: A Memoir (New York: Belford Company, 1890), reprinted in Katharine M. Jones, ed. Ladies of Richmond, Confederate Capital (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), 10.

Agnes Rice Pryor, Anita Dwyer Withers, and Virginia Clay-Clopton--followed their husbands and the Davises to Richmond, forming a portion of the "court society" comprised of cabinet members, Confederate congressmen, and military leaders who surrounded the Confederate president.⁵³ Although initially given a warm welcome by Richmonders, Davis and his entourage became increasingly isolated from elite Richmond society as criticism swirled around the Confederate president and his Cabinet over the prosecution of the war.⁵⁴

As the seat of government, Richmond's capture was one of the North's primary military objectives and, on numerous occasions, the city was threatened with attack by Union forces. During the Peninsula Campaign in the spring and

⁵³Many wives of politicians and military leaders who were not from Virginia--including Margaret Sumner McLean, Anita Dwyer Withers, Lydia McLane Johnston, Mary Boykin Chesnut, and Charlotte Cross Wigfall and her two daughters--roomed together in the Spotswood Hotel. Mary Boykin Chesnut, Mary Chesnut's Civil War, C. Vann Woodward, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 79-81; Sara Rice Pryor, Reminiscences of Peace and War (New York: Macmillan, 1904), reprinted in Katharine M. Jones, Ladies of Richmond, 150.

⁵⁴The Richmond press was especially vociferous. By 1862, Richmond newspaper columnist George W. Bagby was referring to Davis as "[c]old, haughty, peevish, narrow-minded, pig-headed, [and] malignant," while James Moncure Daniel, who was initially a supporter, came to view the Davis administration as being riddled with ineptness. Richmond Whig, 18 March 1862, quoted in James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). Also, Frederick S. Daniel, The Richmond Examiner during the War, or the Writings of John M. Daniel (New York: privately printed, 1868), 231.

summer of 1862, for example, Federal troops approached within six or eight miles of the city. By late May, cannon reverberations from the fighting at nearby Hanover Court House shook the window panes in Richmond houses.⁵⁵

In the early spring of 1864, a foiled raid on Richmond by Union cavalry under the command of Ulric Dahlgren sent shock waves of fear through the city.⁵⁶ In May and June,

⁵⁵Putnam, Richmond during the War, 133. The Peninsula Campaign lasted from March to August 1862. It began with Union commander George B. McClellan's movement of 105,000 Union soldiers southward from Alexandria to the southernmost point of a Virginia peninsula southeast of Richmond, that was bounded on either side by the James and York Rivers. Once there, McClellan's design was to move his forces northwest to attack the city. The Confederate armies, commanded by Joseph E. Johnston and Robert E. Lee, were seriously outmanned, but managed to fool a cautious McClellan into thinking he faced a larger foe. Eventually the two armies met in a number of smaller and bloody engagements--including Seven Pines/Fair Oaks, Mechanicsville, Gaines' Mill, Frayser's Farm, and Malvern Hill. With the exception of the Battle of Gaines' Mill, the Union emerged the victor in these clashes, with the Confederate armies suffering 20,000 casualties, compared to Union losses of 16,500. The Peninsula Campaign ended when McClellan ordered the Union army to withdraw after the Battle of Malvern Hill, over the objections of several of his subordinates. McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 236-48, Patricia L. Faust, ed., Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 571; Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 171-76. Rather than a detailed analysis of the campaign, Hattaway and Jones focus on McClellan's personality and the role it played in shaping his military decisions.

⁵⁶Twenty-two-year-old Ulric Dahlgren was acting in concert with Brigadier General H. Judson Kilpatrick of the Army of the Potomac. Their plan was to strike at Richmond simultaneously from the north and west, liberate and arm the Union soldiers in Belle Isle and Libby prisons, and use them in concert with their own forces to kill Jefferson Davis and members of his cabinet, murder former Virginia

Union armies threatened Richmond once more in three bloody encounters--the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, and Cold Harbor, all of which were successfully repulsed by Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.⁵⁷ Although the

governor Henry B. Wise, and burn and sack the capital. According to contemporary accounts, the plan was foiled when Dahlgren was delayed by Ellen Wise Mayo, Henry Wise's daughter, who detained Dahlgren at her home on Sabot Hill by plying him with blackberry wine and stories about Dahlgren's father who was Mayo's former suitor. This allowed Henry Wise to make his way to Richmond and sound the alarm. Once underway, Ulric Dahlgren was ambushed and killed by Confederate soldiers on March 4, 1864. William Cabell, "Woman Saved Richmond City: The Thrilling Story of Dahlgren's Raid and Mrs. Seddon's Old Blackberry Wine," Southern Historical Society Papers 34 (1906): 352-58; Wright, A Southern Girl in '61, 166; and Varina Howell Davis, Jefferson Davis: A Memoir by His Wife (New York: Belford Company, 1890), excerpted in Katharine M. Jones, Ladies of Richmond, 204-06. This event was especially chilling to Varina Davis who had dandled the young Ulric Dahlgren on her knee when he was a young boy. Also Patricia L. Faust, ed. Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War, 202-03; Emory Thomas, The Confederate State of Richmond, 158-60; and Foote, The Civil War: A Narrative, Vol. 2: Fredericksburg to Meridian (New York: Random House, 1963), 910-16.

⁵⁷Between May 4 and June 12, 1864, Union troops under the command of generals George C. Meade and Ulysses S. Grant met Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in three major engagements whose twin goals were to wear down Lee's army and to capture and occupy Richmond. Between May 5th and 7th, the Northern and Southern armies first met in "the Wilderness," a dense expanse of vines, brambles, and second growth pines and scrub oak immediately south of the Rapidan and Rappahannock rivers nearly fifty miles northwest of Richmond. The fighting here was complicated by the dense undergrowth which made it difficult to identify friend from foe and to execute battle plans effectively in the smoke-filled and sometimes burning forest. The Battle of the Wilderness eventually ended in a draw when the men of both armies became exhausted after two days of intense fighting. Although the Confederates were considerably outmanned (115,000 Union troops versus 60,000 Confederates), the casualty rates for each side hovered at around 17 percent. The battle at Spotsylvania Court House--a crossroads

Wilderness and Spotsylvania fighting took place some forty miles north of Richmond, there were skirmishes and pitched battles near Richmond throughout much of the month of May as Union troops advanced on the capital. The Battle of Cold Harbor on June 3, 1864, brought the fighting to the city's perimeter. For days, the roar of cannons and the crackle of muskets could be heard amidst the crash of heavy thunderstorms that soaked the battlefields and mired the soldiers in mud mixed with the blood of wounded men. "It is now about 8 o'clock," Emma Mordecai wrote on May 12,

village about forty miles north of Richmond--began shortly after the Wilderness fighting drew to a close and lasted for about two weeks, until May 19, 1864. In this campaign, Grant's strategy was to interpose his army between Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and the Confederate capital, thus forcing Lee into a fight to defend the city. Lee responded by ordering his men to erect an elaborate breastworks that stretched for nearly five miles around Spotsylvania Court House. For several days of frenzied and bloody fighting, Union soldiers threw themselves at the Confederate trenches during a heavy pelting rain. Although a few men occasionally broke through the Confederate lines, the Confederate trenches withstood the assault and the battle eventually ended when Grant withdrew his troops. During this campaign, Lee's chief cavalry scout, J.E.B. Stuart was killed on May 11 in an encounter near Yellow Tavern, an abandoned railroad station six miles north of Richmond. His body was brought to the capital where it lay in state pending interment in Hollywood Cemetery. The final battle in this series took place at Cold Harbor, a small town seven miles northeast of the Confederate capital, where some of the most deadly fighting of the war occurred. Within a half hour during that battle on June 2, 1864, Grant lost approximately 7,000 men. Weary and exhausted from more than a month of trench warfare, and fearing the worst, many Union soldiers had pinned slips of paper bearing their names on their uniforms before marching into the fray. McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 414-22; McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom; Patricia L. Faust, ed., Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War, 149-50, 325-37, and 709.

when the fighting at Hanover Junction brought Union troops within three miles of the city, "& another thunderstorm is answering the booming of the cannon, and the crack of the musketry, which continues. . . .Heaven's artillery has answered peal for peal with ours."⁵⁸ Elizabeth Van Lew spent part of the time watching the Union army's progress from the rooftop of her house in the city's east end. "Since Monday the atmosphere has been heavy with the smoke of battle," she wrote. "The stores are all closed, men are not to be seen on the streets. The alarm bell has sounded out now [but] there are no more to be called by it."⁵⁹ Other women paced the city's sidewalks, or stood on front porches until late at night hoping for news of a Confederate victory.⁶⁰

As the war raged in the countryside surrounding Richmond, thousands of women and children in the line of the Federal assault left their homes and fled to the capital where they became a part of what Richmonders eventually referred to as a "floating population" of wartime refugees and government workers, transients who

⁵⁸Entry dated May 12, 1864, Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS. The day before Mordecai made this entry, Lee's cavalry commander J.E.B. Stuart had been killed in the fighting near Yellow Tavern about five miles north of Richmond.

⁵⁹Elizabeth Van Lew, diary entry dated May 1864, reprinted in Katharine M. Jones, Ladies of Richmond, 216.

⁶⁰Judith McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War, 265.

roamed the city in search of food, lodging, and employment. "Richmond was so crowded by the women and children who had sought refuge when their homes were taken possession of by the advancing Federal forces," Virginia Dade later recalled,

that rents soon became incredibly high, and it was rarely the case that a single family, even of large means, could afford to occupy a whole house to themselves. . . . [A] house of average size would usually contain from two to six families, each occupying one, two, or three rooms, and a parlor when the guests to be entertained were not intimate enough to be brought in to the family room.⁶¹

Poorer refugees, or those who left their homes hurriedly, were frequently less fortunate than those described by Dade. Many were unable to find either lodging or work. At times, homeless women and men slept on city streets, or crowded into working-class tenements. Poor widows with young children were occasionally forced to feed their offspring on boiled turnip tops, or on table scraps supplied by one of the military hospitals.⁶² Poorly clad orphans competed for corn bread scraps and an occasional "macerated ham bone" thrown to them from the windows of Libby Prison.⁶³

⁶¹Virginia E. Dade, "Our Women in the War," newspaper clipping in Walter H. Lee Scrapbook, SHC.

⁶²Judith McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War, 252-53.

⁶³F.F. Cavada, Libby Life: Experiences of a Prisoner of War in Richmond, Va., 1863-65 (1864; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985), 132.

By March 1862, the city was placed under martial law in an effort to deal with the increased criminality that accompanied such a huge influx of transients. Writs of habeas corpus were suspended, and individuals leaving or entering the city were required to carry passports. The sale of liquor was restricted, and hotels and railroads were required to provide guest or passenger lists.⁶⁴ Despite these measures, throughout the war Richmonders continued to complain about the increased disorder brought about by the city's rapid population growth. "[W]hat was once the pride and boast of Virginia [is] now the receptacle and skulking place of vagabonds, loafers, renegades, nondescripts, thieves, swindlers, fools, spies, alien enemies, and a whole army of would be gentry," wrote a Confederate soldier in March 1863.⁶⁵ "Richmond, at this time, is one of the most undesirable places in the Confederacy," observed the editor of the Richmond Whig a few months later.

The offscourings of creation are assembled here for the vilest of purposes. It is really dangerous for one to walk the streets in some parts of the city after night. Burglaries, thefts, and robberies are of nightly occurrence, and most frequently the papers of the morning record murders committed the night previous."⁶⁶

⁶⁴Emory Thomas, The Confederate Nation, 151-52.

⁶⁵To Dr. Lee, Georgia, from "Charles," Richmond, 18 March 1863, Dr. Lee Letter, DU.

⁶⁶Richmond Whig, 14 May 1863.

Shortly after the Union army's withdrawal from Cold Harbor in June 1864, Ulysses S. Grant launched a final Federal initiative aimed at laying siege to the city of Petersburg, part of a vital rail network that linked Richmond to the South and provided it with supplies. For ten months, the Union army kept Petersburg contained while at the same time it engaged in a series of battles with Confederate soldiers under Lee's command, who were ensconced in trenches and breastworks that stretched the entire twenty-mile distance between the two cities.⁶⁷ When Union soldiers eventually broke through Lee's line near Hatcher's Run on the morning of April 3, 1865, Richmond surrendered. One week later Lee's Army of Northern Virginia lay down its arms and the Civil War was over.

⁶⁷Notable among these engagements were battles at Chaffin's Farm (September 29-30, 1864), Hatcher's Run (February 5-7, 1865), and Five Forks (April 1, 1865), all sites on the outskirts of Richmond. Some of the most deadly fighting during the siege took place in July 1864, when Pennsylvania coal miners under the command of Union general Ambrose P. Burnside blew up a portion of the Confederate breastworks by digging a tunnel under the trenches. Men from nine South Carolina companies were blown into the air from the force of the explosion, and the fighting in the 170-foot-long crater created by the blast yielded scores of casualties. Patricia L. Faust, ed., Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War, 123-24, 190, 350, and 577-59; McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 446-47, and 479-81; McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 756-60, and 845-46; Emory Thomas, The Confederate State of Richmond, 177-95.

The Postwar Capital

The city's fall precipitated the fiery destruction of the heart of the business and financial district. As government departments prepared to relocate in Danville, Virginia, Confederate soldiers acting under orders from General Benjamin S. Ewell set fire to the tobacco and cotton warehouses lining the James at Shockoe Slip.⁶⁸ Liquor manufacturers and retailers began dumping their stores of liquor in the street on orders from city officials who hoped to avoid a drunken riot when Union troops entered the capitol. Throughout the day, the odor of apple brandy, whiskey, and rum wafted through the air, while papers discarded from the fleeing Confederate offices lay ankle-deep in the streets where they were scattered by the April wind.⁶⁹ Embers from the warehouse fires later touched off a major conflagration that burned throughout the night.

⁶⁸Ewell, himself, acted on the orders of the Confederate Congress which had recently passed a law detailing the appropriate action to be taken in the event of the imminent invasion and occupation of Southern territory by Federal troops. Edward H. Ripley, The Capture and Occupation of Richmond, April 3, 1865 (n.p.: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 19-20. This pamphlet is in the Alfred Whital Stern Collection of Lincolniana, Rare Books Division, LC.

⁶⁹The Richmond Common Council eventually reimbursed the distillers and retailers for more than \$70,000-worth of liquor destroyed during the night of Richmond's fall. Richmond City Papers, Minutes of the Common Council, LV. Hereafter, these will records will be cited as MCC.

Five of the city's banks and the former Customs House, were completely destroyed. The blaze also gutted the telegraph office and the offices of at least four of the city's major newspapers and literary publications--the Dispatch, the Enquirer, the Examiner, and the Southern Literary Messenger. Eight of Richmond's public buildings and hotels, plus the Gallego Flour Mill and the Shockoe Warehouse, burned to the ground. In all, a twenty-block area of the city to the south of Capitol Square, including the Richmond & Danville and Richmond & Petersburg railroad bridges and the toll bridge connecting the city to the working-class community of Manchester, were reduced to rubble and ashes.

At about 5 a.m. on April 3, a series of loud explosions rocked the city as overheated ammunition from the burning Arsenal and the Brown's Island lab began to explode, shaking walls and shattering glass. In the distance, Richmonders could hear another series of loud percussions as the James River Squadron at Drewry's Bluff was destroyed. During the night, Penitentiary guards deserted their posts and hundreds of criminals made their way into freedom under cover of night. A dense crowd of whites and blacks milled around the Commissary Department as the warehouses were emptied of their stores. Then the crowd turned into the business district and began looting

some of the merchants.⁷⁰ As Union commander Godfrey Weitzel entered the city shortly after 7 a.m. on April 3, 1865, he was greeted with "a sight that would have melted a heart of stone." Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of women and children thronged the grounds of Capitol Square where they had fled to avoid the fire, many clutching "a few articles of bedding, such as a quilt, blanket, or pillow." Lying on the grass, "[t]heir poor faces were perfect pictures of utter despair."⁷¹

⁷⁰I have drawn this description of the Richmond's surrender from a variety of primary sources. Lucy Parke Bagby, "The Chronicle of Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby," Bagby Family Papers, Ms. 1:B1463b27750, VHS; Martha Buxton Porter Brent Reminiscence (in possession of the Farrell Roper family and used with their permission); Henry Chapin, Richmond, to his father in New York, 26 April 1865, Henry Chapin Letter, UVA; Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU; Amelia Gorgas, "As I Saw It: One Woman's Account of the Fall of Richmond," Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins, ed. Civil War Times Illustrated 25.3 (May 1986): 40-43; Emmie Crump Lightfoot, Papers Relating Personal Experiences in and around Richmond during the Days of the Confederacy, MC 3, L575, ESBL; Fanny Walker Miller, "To My Horror," in Katharine M. Jones, Ladies of Richmond, 276-77; Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS; Pember, A Southern Woman's Story; Brock Putnam, Richmond during the War; Richmond City Papers, MCC, LV; Ripley, The Capture and Occupation of Richmond, April 3, 1865; Mary Taylor Diary, Charles Elisha Taylor Papers, UVA; Sarah Benetta Valentine Papers, Ms. C57, VM; Mary Andrews West, Richmond, to Clara, her sister, 12 April 1865, Mary Andrews West Letter, VHS; William S. White, "A Diary of the War, or What I Saw of It," in Richmond Howitzer Battalion, pamphlet no. 2 (Richmond: Carlton McCarthy, 1883); and Anita Dwyer Withers Diary, SHC.

⁷¹Godfrey Weitzel, Richmond Occupied: Entry of the United States Forces into Richmond, Va. April 3, 1865, Calling Together of the Virginia Legislature and Revocation of the Same, Louis H. Manarin, ed. (Richmond: Civil War Centennial Committee, 1965), 52-3.

Although Richmonders had feared that the entry of Union troops into the Confederate capital would initiate a reign of terror and usher in a period of drunken plunder, Federal forces entered the city quietly and solemnly went about the business of restoring order. Once the fires were extinguished, gangs of able-bodied white and black men were organized and instructed to begin pulling down the charred skeletons of buildings in the "Burnt District," as it came to be called. The city was divided into four districts--each with a provost marshal--and a relief commission established to distribute rations to hungry whites and blacks from the meager supplies left in Confederate warehouses, supplemented by donations from the U.S. Sanitary Commission.⁷² Within the first three weeks, the Commission dispersed a total of 128,132 tickets that could be exchanged for food.⁷³ The city Soup Association, which had been formed in 1864 to feed destitute Richmonders,

⁷²Leslie Winston Smith, "Richmond during Presidential Reconstruction" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, August 1974), 44-5; Weitzel, Richmond Occupied, 55-7. Four-fifths of the city's food supply had been destroyed by the fire. Virginius Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, rev. ed. (1976: repr. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 196; all subsequent citations are to this edition.

⁷³Alfred Hoyt Bill, The Beleaguered City, 1861-1865 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 285. For the next several years, the Richmond Relief Association continued to provide one pound of meal and one pound of meat, weekly, to each member of the families qualifying for assistance. Richmond Dispatch, 12, 16, 21, 27 February; 13, 16 March 1866.

worked in cooperation with the federal authorities from the headquarters of the U.S. Christian Commission in Metropolitan Hall, providing soup made from beef shins and heads to starving white and black families.⁷⁴ Three dispensaries located throughout the city offered free medicine to the needy.⁷⁵

As the smoke and soot cleared from the city's skyline, with them went the permanent livelihoods of a number of Richmond's citizens. Of those whose businesses were destroyed by the fire, only 35 percent were restored and operating in the city in 1871.⁷⁶ For the next several years, persistent poverty dogged the city. Hundreds of those who were marginally connected to the Richmond economy

⁷⁴Soup Association Papers, ESBL; Bundle dated February 1871, MCC, LV.

⁷⁵Two hundred dollars was set aside for this in February 1866, probably in an effort to stem the tide of a cholera epidemic which swept through the city immediately after the war. Richmond Dispatch, 13 March 1866; Bundle dated 12 February 1866, MCC, LV. For a detailed discussion of postwar poverty and relief, see Leslie Winston Smith, "Richmond during Presidential Reconstruction," especially chapter nine. The three dispensaries, which remained in operation into the 1870s were the Richmond Medical College Dispensary, on Twelfth Street between Clay and Leigh; Nottings' Dispensary, located on Broad Street between Second and Third; and Thomas's Dispensary, on Main between Seventeenth and Eighteenth Streets. Report of the Committee Appointed by the Council to Supply the Poor with medicine, 1 April 1871, Bundle dated 3 April 1871, MCC, LV.

⁷⁶Michael B. Chesson, Richmond after the War, 1865-1890 (Richmond: Virginia State Library & Archives, 1981), 60. Based largely on evidence from the newspapers and the records of Richmond's Common Council, Chesson offers the best description of the white postbellum community.

took advantage of the outdoor relief offered by the city's Overseers of the Poor and other city agencies. By June 1866, the city council's Committee on Fuel had distributed 1,300 cords of wood and 1,000 bushels of coal to more than 1,300 white and black families living in Richmond and Henrico County.⁷⁷ By 1867, the number of families applying for fuel had risen to 1,800.⁷⁸ When the Freedmen's Bureau ceased its operation in the city in May 1870, the fuel committee was serving the needs of 876 white and 1,932 black indigent households.⁷⁹ Many of the most destitute were women and children of both races.

Poverty continued to be a problem and, for some, was exacerbated by the failures of the C & O Railroad Company and the Tredegar Iron Works during the Panic of 1873. Within a few years of the city's fall, however, a new modern metropolis began to rise, Phoenix-like, from Richmond's ruins, funded largely by affluent citizens who had weathered the economic storm the war created.⁸⁰ A

⁷⁷Report of the Committee on Fuel to Richmond Common Council, 11 June 1866, Bundle dated 11 June 1866, MCC, LV.

⁷⁸Bundle dated 14 May 1868, MCC, LV.

⁷⁹Report of Committee on Relief of the Poor, 10 May 1870, No bundle date, MCC, LV.

⁸⁰Chesson, Richmond after the War, 1865-1890, 161-62; James K. Sanford, ed. and comp., A Century of Commerce, 1867-1967 (Richmond: Richmond Chamber of Commerce, 1967),; Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 181-82. Historians disagree in their analyses of the impact of the Panic of 1873 on the Richmond economy. Michael B. Chesson maintains that the Panic halted plans to rebuild the city's economy and

committee of stockholders, petitioned the Common Council in April 1866, for permission to connect the Richmond, Petersburg & Potomac Railroad with the Richmond & Petersburg line. A month later, a committee for the

restore its place as an economic leader in the South. He concludes that, as a result, by the 1890s, Richmond's importance as an economic entrepôt was surpassed by both Norfolk and Newport News. Christopher Silver has challenged Chesson's declension thesis, arguing that the decline Chesson describes was temporary and that the creation of the first electric streetcar system in the nation in 1888 actually stimulated a real estate boom which, when coupled with resurgent urban boosterism in the early twentieth century, led to an urban revitalization. Christopher Silver, Twentieth-Century Richmond: Planning, Politics, and Race (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 20-23. James K. Sanford also disagrees with Chesson, arguing that, although the recession ran deep in the railroads and in iron manufacturing, the city's economy relied heavily on its tobacco-producing bases and, thereby, weathered the economic downturn more successfully than other Southern metropolises. Sanford, A Century of Commerce, 21-22. Oscar Pohlig disagrees with Sanford's assessment, observing that tobacco manufacturing in Richmond was damaged by the war and continued to decline in the postbellum period as the industry moved to the lesser ravaged areas of Kentucky, Missouri, and North Carolina. Oscar A. Pohlig, Jr., Lot 56 of Colonel William Byrd II's Richmond: Its Use for Tobacco Manufacturing under Miles Turpin and Rufus Yarbrough; and for a Confederate Military Hospital (Richmond: n.p., 1983), 30. Although the number of tobacco manufacturers did fall from fifty-two in 1860 to thirty-eight in 1870, by 1880, there were forty-four firms in the city. Marie Tyler-McGraw takes a different view, asserting that, although the depression was "a genuinely devastating setback" for Richmond's economy, it did little to "upend the structure of wealth in the city." Whatever the sources of economic decline, with the exception of Chesson who sees the postbellum period as one of declension for Richmond, most scholars agree that Richmond weathered the economic downturn more easily than some of its urban and Southern neighbors. By 1890, even the railroads which had gone into a period of default and receivership in the Panic of 1873, were recovering, with 3,368 miles of track as compared to the 1,800 miles it owned in 1860, part of which was destroyed by the war's end. Sanford, A Century of Commerce, 10.

improvement of the James River recommended the council approve a plan to dredge the James to a depth of fourteen feet to keep competing cities from diverting trade to more convenient ports. This proposed plan was to be underwritten with city bonds. A memorandum from the Richmond & Danville Railway Company, drafted during the same period of time, proposed the construction of a city railway connecting the Richmond & Danville to the other railway terminals. In addition, the Common Council minutes in the immediate postwar period are filled with requests from more financially secure citizens who wanted to improve existing buildings through the additions of awnings or railings, or to erect completely new, usually two-story, dwellings, presumably to replace houses destroyed or weakened by the war.⁸¹

During the late 1860s and 1870s, political control of the city vacillated back and forth between the Conservatives--a political party of white male elites, a number of whom had controlled the city before the war began--and the Republicans--a biracial coalition eager to

⁸¹J.E.B. Haxall, Gustavus A. Myers, P.V. Daniels, Charles Ellis, and Thomas H. Wynne, Richmond, to the Common Council, n.d., Bundle dated 16 April 1866; Report of Committee on the Improvement of the James River to the Richmond Common Council, Bundle dated 19 May 1866; Memorandum from the Richmond & Danville Railroad to the Richmond Common Council, n.d., No Bundle date, all the MCC, LV. Wartime destruction did not always mean burning; vibrations from the constant shelling of the area surrounding the Confederate capitol had so weakened some structures that they were deemed unsafe for habitation.

wrest power away.⁸² This struggle was complicated by the annexation of additional territory from the surrounding Henrico County which doubled Richmond's size from 2.4 to 4.9 square miles, and created two new political wards on the city's eastern and western ends, made up largely of rural whites.⁸³

In April 1870, this contest for political control led to a bloody confrontation when Republican Mayor George Chahoon refused to vacate his office following the election of Henry K. Ellyson, a white Conservative. When Chahoon appealed his ouster in the Richmond courts, Richmonders crowded into the balcony in such great numbers that the balcony collapsed, killing sixty-two men and wounding several hundred more.⁸⁴ In 1871, a sixth ward, Jackson, was gerrymandered for black Richmonders out of the city's existing territory as a means of reducing racial and

⁸²Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 159-83; Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, 199-219; Chesson, Richmond after the War, 87-143.

⁸³Chesson, Richmond after the War, 127-28. Before the war, Richmond's three wards were Madison, Jefferson, and Monroe. The new wards were Marshall and Clay.

⁸⁴Chahoon was at least a moderate integrationist who had appointed a police chief who had drilled black militia units after the war. Not only did Chahoon refuse to vacate his office, he took refuge in the police station where he was joined by a large contingent of black police and some white ones. Chahoon and his followers were eventually surrounded by a deputized citizen posse that tried to "smoke them out" by cutting off food, water, lights. Skirmishing between the two groups led to deaths on both sides. Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 177-78.

political tensions.⁸⁵ Despite this new voice, however, Richmond blacks in the postwar city were legally denied access to most forms of public accommodation--theaters, hospitals, cemeteries, restaurants, hotels--just as they had been in the antebellum years.⁸⁶

As it emerged from the Civil War and Reconstruction, Richmond was transformed into what one historian has called the "Holy City of the Lost Cause," a New South metropolis dedicated to enshrining Confederate heroism into the collective memory of Southern white culture.⁸⁷ As Richmonders paused in the late nineteenth century to remember the heroic deeds of Confederate soldiers, they sometimes, but not as often, recalled the wartime work of white Southern women who also labored to give birth to a new Confederate nation. It is to these women that we now turn in the next chapter.

⁸⁵Chesson, Richmond after the War, 157. For opposing interpretations for the creation of Jackson Ward, see Brown and Kimball, "Mapping the Terrain of Black Richmond."

⁸⁶Chesson, Richmond after the War, 101-102.

⁸⁷Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 6.

CHAPTER 3

AT WORK FOR THE CONFEDERACY:

HOSPITAL MATRONS AND GOVERNMENT CLERKS

As Southern men marched into battle, Southern women went to work at a variety of voluntary and paid occupations assisting the Confederate war effort. The enlistment or conscription of large numbers of white men into the Confederate armies, coupled with the Confederacy's reluctance to train and arm slaves, created a labor shortage of immense proportions in the relatively non-industrialized South at precisely the time that government bureaucracies in both regions experienced a rapid expansion brought on by the war. In the South, bureaucratic growth was complicated by the fact that no national government bureaucracy existed; after secession, the Southern states had to erect one from its base.¹ The Southern

¹For a discussion of the Confederacy's ability to create a government that could engage in a total war, see Frank Vandiver, Rebel Brass: The Confederate Command System (New York: Harper Row, 1970); and 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), especially chapters 2, 4, and 10. For a comparison of Southern and Northern preparedness, see James McPherson, Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 162-185.

government's demand for workers and the concomitant draining of white manpower for the Confederate armies permitted women to enter the workforce in far greater numbers than they had ever done before, constituting what Ida Tarbell later called a "great rear guard," a reserve labor force that freed men for military service at the same time that it performed vital wartime services.²

As the Confederate capital, Richmond provided unprecedented numbers of white middle-class women with paid work in the various government departments that were organized during and after the spring of 1861. Working-class women in antebellum Richmond had been accustomed to laboring outside their homes, but wage-earning work was

²Ida M. Tarbell, The Ways of Woman (New York: Macmillan, 1915), 49. This idea of women constituting a reserve army of labor appears in other discussions of wartime work. Alice Kessler-Harris, Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Maurine Weiner Greenwald, Women, War, and Work: The Impact of World War I on Women Workers in the United States (1980; repr. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990); William H. Chafe, The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970 (London: Oxford University Press, 1972). George Rable sees Southern women's economic gains during the Civil War as temporary, in part because he ends his study in the late 1860s. George Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989). Anne Firor Scott sees them as more permanent. Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995); all subsequent citations are to this edition. My research indicates that a larger number of white Richmond women worked outside the home in the postbellum period, although not in the same occupations that had propelled women into the workforce during the war itself.

often a new experience for many middle-class women who, according to contemporary beliefs about appropriate roles for women, were expected to confine their sphere of influence to the home. The Civil War legitimated work for these women, however, by providing a rationale based on patriotism. "I loved very dearly these heroes whom I served," matron Fannie Beers later recalled. "Every hour of toil brought its own rich reward. These were Confederate soldiers. God had permitted me to work for the holy cause. This was enough to flood my whole being with content and deepest gratitude."³

For some middle-class women, work outside the home was just for the war's duration; but for others, postbellum poverty meant that they would have to continue working once the war was over. White wage-earning women comprised only 1.6 percent of the free labor in the Richmond workforce in 1860; by 1870 this figure had risen to 9.9 percent.⁴ Although some women sought employment as a form of patriotic calling, for many more, it was a means of offsetting financial hardships created by the absence of male wage earners. Some women worked in areas that were

³Fannie A. Beers, Memories (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1866), 46. Beers was a Florida woman who, in 1862-63, worked, first, at Richmond's Alabama Hospital and, later, at Soldier's Rest Hospital, also in the city.

⁴Angela Catherine Bongiorno, "White Women and Work in Richmond, Virginia, 1870-1884" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1978), 11.

more-or-less natural extensions of women's domesticity. Others labored in new occupations created by the war.

This chapter examines clerking and hospital work: two occupations undertaken by middle-class Richmond women between 1861 and 1865 that provided services to the Confederacy. Women had traditionally cared for sick family members and friends but, under the exigencies of war, this homebound duty was transformed into full-time paid employment undertaken by thousands of white middle-class women in hospitals both "at home" and in the field. Clerking was also an occupation that had not been open to middle-class white women before the war began. As white middle-class Richmond women moved into both of these occupations in ever greater numbers, traditional beliefs about working women came into conflict with new expectations that were the product of wartime demands.

Hospital Work

Some of the most vital work a Richmond woman could perform involved caring for sick and wounded Confederate soldiers. Nursing as a profession for women was still in its infancy when the American Civil War began in 1861. Florence Nightingale's work caring for British soldiers during the Crimean War (1854-56) had revealed the importance of a well-trained corps of female nurses; but critics still questioned the wisdom of exposing women to

the types of situations they would likely confront in military hospitals: naked male bodies torn and broken by warfare; or lewd, profane, or drunken patients or doctors. Others wondered whether women would have the strength and stamina needed for hospital work.⁵ In the North, the opening of the Civil War led to the appointment of Dorothea Dix as nursing supervisor for Northern hospitals, but in the South, no comparable position or separate department was created to supervise the Southern women's hospital work.⁶

Like most communities on both sides of the fighting, Richmond was initially ill prepared to cope with the carnage of battle; most government officials expected that the war would be brief and the casualties few.⁷ But as wounded soldiers were brought from the field after the

⁵Mary Elizabeth Massey, Bonnet Brigades (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 43-44; Florence Nightingale, Cassandra, introduction by Myra Stark (New York: Feminist Press, 1979), 10-17. Nightingale began her work in the 1850s with the Crimean War; before this, with the exception of white and black women who worked as midwives, the only women involved in professional nursing were members of religious orders.

⁶The Medical Department was part of the War Department of the Confederate States of America (C.S.A.). The Medical Department was headed by Confederate Surgeon General Samuel P. Moore. The War Department was headed by the Secretary of War; there were six during the Confederacy's brief life: Leroy P. Walker, Judah P. Benjamin, George W. Randolph, Gustavus W. Smith; James A. Seddon, and John C. Breckinridge.

⁷McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 164; Vandiver, Rebel Brass, 16.

first battle at Manassas, Virginia, many public buildings, including schools, churches, and factories, were converted into makeshift hospital wards. Fourth Street Baptist Church and Sycamore Street Disciples of Christ both opened their doors to wounded soldiers in September 1861, and other churches, including First African Baptist, St. Paul's Episcopal, and Centenary Methodist, soon followed, despite objections from some of the clergy and from the religious press.⁸ The Richmond Female Institute served as a hospital from 1862 to 1865 while the girls attended classes in other locations.⁹ The Catholic Sisters of Charity

⁸Thomas H. Ellis to Mrs. George W. Munford, 13 July 1862, quoted in William S. White, "A Diary of the War, or What I Saw of It," in Richmond Howitzer Battalion (Richmond: Carlton McCarthy & Co., 1883), 183; Religious Herald, 5 September 1861; Southern Churchman, 20 December 1861; 9 May and 22 August 1862. Although initially supportive of the measure, by the spring of 1862, the Southern Churchman had grown critical of what it considered to be the "unnecessary" sacrifice of the "spirit of piety" on the altar of Southern patriotism. Southern Churchman, 9 May 1862. This sentiment was echoed in the Religious Herald, 2 April 1863. Manchester Baptist Church actually refused a government request to use the church's basement as a temporary hospital in July 1862. White, "A Diary of the War," 37-8.

⁹The Ninth Session attended classes in the home of John Caskie, on the corner of Clay and 11th Streets; the Tenth Session met at the home of former Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall. "History of the Alumnae Association of the Richmond Female Institute--Women's College of Richmond," paper presented at the 100th Anniversary Celebrations, 1954, in Lily Becker Epps Papers, UVA; Richmond Female Institute Records, VBHS; Ernest Taylor Walthall, Hidden Things Brought to Light, (Richmond: Dietz Printing Co., 1933), 41; Mary W. Dickinson, "The Diary of Mary W. Taylor," W. Harrison Daniel, ed. Virginia Baptist Register 19 (1980): 938; and Rees Watkins, Virginia Baptist Women: Their Story (Richmond: Virginia Baptist Historical

operated two hospitals: the St. Francis de Sales Infirmary on Brook Road, and St. Anne's Military Hospital.¹⁰ At least seventeen businesses and factory warehouses, as well as the Old Masonic Hall and the Variety Theatre, were also pressed into use.¹¹ By October 1862, Richmond's hospitals had treated more than 99,500 men.¹² By the war's end, more than sixty-five city buildings had served as temporary hospitals; at least twenty-eight of these were eventually absorbed by the Medical Department of the C.S.A. and continued in operation as military hospitals until the war's close.¹³

Society, 1984), 6.

¹⁰James Henry Bailey II, History of St. Peter's Church, Richmond, Virginia: 125 Years, 1834-1959 (Richmond: Lewis Printing Co., 1959); James Henry Bailey II, A History of the Diocese of Richmond: The Formative Years (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1956), 153-56. Although Ellen Jolly provides extensive lists of the nuns who served in various military hospitals for the North and South, unfortunately no list of the sisters working in Richmond survives. Ellen Ryan Jolly, Nuns of the Battlefield (Providence, R.I.: Providence Visitors' Press, 1927), 76-83.

¹¹A number of tobacco factory warehouse were put to this use, including Turpin & Yarbrough's, Atkinson's; Dibrell's; and Greanor's. In addition, this number includes R.H. Boshers carriage factory, and Breeden & Fox's variety store. Richmond Enquirer, 4, 6 June 1862; Robert W. Waitt, Jr., Confederate Military Hospitals in Richmond (Richmond: Richmond Civil War Centennial Committee, 1964), 5-10.

¹²Religious Herald, 2 October 1862.

¹³Military hospitals were usually called "general hospitals" and referred to by number. But many Richmonders referred to them by the name of the building they occupied. General Hospital No. 3, for example, was alternately known as Byrd Island Hospital, or Gilliam's Factory Hospital.

As more men were drafted into the Confederate armies, increasing numbers of women were drawn into hospital duty in order to free able-bodied male hospital workers for military service. As the war dragged on and casualty rates escalated, more women were also needed to care for wounded and diseased men. During 1861 and most of 1862, there was a two-tiered system of hospital care in the South in which Confederate military hospitals coexisted with private hospitals that women operated in their homes. In Richmond, Caroline Mayo managed Good Samaritan hospital in her home on Clay Street between Fifth and Sixth, while Sally Tompkins maintained a small private hospital in the home of a local judge. Maria Foster Clopton cared for soldiers in the home of a married daughter.¹⁴

In private hospitals such as these, women exercised a great deal of autonomy that extended to all facets of hospital management, including the types of patients accepted for treatment and the regimen of care. The female managers of the 4th Street Baptist Hospital, for example, reserved the right to hire and dismiss male employees,

There were at least thirty-four hospitals in the general hospital system. In addition to the twenty-eight numbered hospitals, this included Chimborazo, Jackson, Winder, Stuart, Louisiana, and Howard's Grove hospitals. None of these last six had numerical designations. Waitt, Confederate Military Hospitals in Richmond.

¹⁴Sally Louisa Tompkins Papers, ESBL; Lucy Lane Erwin, comp., The Ancestry of William Clopton of York County, Virginia, (Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle Publishing, 1939), 162-3.

including the attending surgeons.¹⁵ Other hospitals run by elite Richmond women limited their patients to Confederate officers in an effort to prevent genteel Southern ladies from coming into contact with rank-and-file soldiers whom they believed constituted the coarser element of the Confederate army.

The crown jewel of the military hospital system was Chimborazo, an assembly of 120 low white buildings on the eastern edge of the city. The largest military hospital in the world when it opened in October 1861, Chimborazo was organized into five divisions that grouped men for treatment according to the state from which they served.¹⁶ Each section was further sub-divided into thirty wards, with each ward capable of accommodating about thirty to forty patients. The hundred Sibley tents that dotted the hospital grounds offered additional space for convalescent

¹⁵Records of the 4th Street Baptist Hospital, ESBL.

¹⁶Sources vary as to what these divisions were, and they probably changed some as the war progressed, depending on the states of origins for military units engaged in fighting around the capital. Confederate Medical Department information lists the five divisions as follows in 1862: No. 1 Virginia; No. 2 Georgia; No. 3 North Carolina; No. 4 Alabama; No. 5 Miscellaneous. Consolidated Records for Chimborazo Hospital, 1862, Vol. 318, Ch. VI, R.G. 109, NARA. Waitt says Chimborazo's five divisions were Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, and Maryland. Waitt, Confederate Military Hospitals in Richmond, 19. The second largest Civil War hospital was Lincoln Hospital in Washington, D.C. Prior to 1861, the largest military hospital was Scutari Hospital in the Crimea. Edgar Erskine Hume, "Chimborazo Hospital, Confederate States Army: America's Largest Military Hospital," The Military Surgeon 75.3 (September 1934): 161.

soldiers waiting return to their units.¹⁷ The hospital also had its own ice house, soup house, soap factory, bakery, brewery, bathhouse, vegetable gardens, herds of cattle and goats, blacksmith shop, apothecary, carpenter's shop, laundry, and shoemaker's shop.¹⁸

Other military hospitals varied by size and function. General Hospital No. 9 operated as a triage unit, taking in large numbers of sick and injured men for speedy diagnosis and transfer to more appropriate locations. In four days during the fighting at Chancellorsville, Virginia, in 1863, this hospital, which was equipped to care for 900, took in a total of 3,752 men, the majority of whom were transferred out by week's end.¹⁹ Between July and September 1864,

¹⁷A Sibley tent was a conical canvas tent that could accommodate about twenty men.

¹⁸Waite, Confederate Military Hospitals in Richmond, 19; Phoebe Yates Pember, A Southern Woman's Story: Life in Confederate Richmond, Bell I. Wiley, ed. (St. Simons, Ga.: Mockingbird Press, 1959), 3 and 15. Although most editors choose to spell Pember's first name by the more conventional "Phoebe," I have chosen to spell it "Phebe," in the dissertation text as Pember did herself in her correspondence. Also Virginus Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976), 177 (All citations in this chapter are to this edition); Hume: "Chimborazo Hospital, Confederate States Army," 155-65; "Of Chimborazo Park: Dr. James B. McCaw Gave It Its Name," interview with James Brown McCaw, published in an unidentified newspaper in 1897, in Chimborazo Hospital Papers, ESBL.

¹⁹Record Book of General Hospital No. 9, Richmond, Virginia, 1862-1864, Vol. 81, Ch. VI, R.G. 109, NARA. The Battle of Chancellorsville took place on May 1-4, 1863, on the edge of the Wilderness in an area bounded by the Rapidan and Rappahannock rivers. Although Confederate troops were greatly outnumbered, the battle was considered

during the Petersburg campaign, it received 10,100 soldiers, of whom 9,663 were transferred, 96 died, and 341 remained in the hospital receiving treatment.²⁰ Other hospitals, such as the comparatively minuscule General Hospital No. 26 and General Hospital No. 27, which treated cases of gangrene, had capacities of fifty and forty, respectively.²¹

Although reminiscences and speeches delivered by doctors and other hospital personnel to veterans groups in the postbellum period romanticized military hospitals like Chimborazo as models of efficiency, the reality was often quite different. Despite efforts to keep the wards clean, hospital floors were littered with blood-stained bandages; and sudden arrivals of incoming wounded frequently left clean sheets and mattresses in short supply. In winter, snow sifted through the open slats in hospital walls. In summer, the stench of infection floated on the air, while swarms of flies flew in through open windows, contaminating food and annoying patients too ill to brush them away. In every season, rats scurried along the ward corridors at night, stealing bran-filled pads from under the arms and

a tactical masterpiece for the victorious Lee; but it cost him the life of General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, an eccentric but brilliant military tactician who was wounded by friendly fire. McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 319-23.

²⁰Waitt, Confederate Military Hospitals in Richmond, 13.

²¹Ibid., 17.

legs of wounded men. On one occasion, a group of hungry Chimborazo rats performed a minor medical miracle by debriding necrotic tissue from an injured soldier's foot, helping him avoid both a dangerous operation and further complications from gangrene.²²

An 1861 article in the Richmond Enquirer comparing care in private hospitals run by women with treatment in those operated by the C.S.A., concluded what others already surmised: that patients in hospitals run by women were "better lodged, better fed, better nursed, and in every way more comfortable" than soldiers in military hospitals operated by the Confederate Army.²³ The newspaper's conclusion about the superior care in hospitals organized by women provided a comfortable fit with popular beliefs about gender that defined women as natural nurturers whose closer relationship to God and their children made them better suited than men to care for the infirm. Ladies in the private hospitals, according to the writer, "count[ed]

²²Phebe Yates Pember, Chimborazo Hospital, Richmond, to Eugenia Levy Phillips, 30 January 1863, Phillips-Myers Papers, SHC, reprinted in Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 112; Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 61.

²³Richmond Enquirer, 3 September 1861. Descriptions of private hospitals run by women frequently stressed their cleanliness. Fannie Beers's description of Richmond's Soldiers' Rest hospital often refers to the whiteness of its surroundings: the sheets, the whitewashed walls, the curtains, the damask cloths covering the food baskets delivered by lady volunteers. Beers, Memories, 42-43. In addition to Beers, the women at Soldiers' Rest included Frances Gwathmey, Catherine Poitreaux, Susan Watkins, Mrs. Booker, Mrs. Grant, and Mrs. Edmund Ruffin.

the sick by souls,. . .consoling every affliction, [and] reviving the tender memories of home." Male military surgeons, by comparison, were thought to be "preoccupied with personal ambitions or blinded by pride and the etiquette of rank [that caused] too many of them to forget" that the "soldier's life and his attachment to public service" depended on their vigilance.²⁴ The lengthy poem excerpted below, which appeared frequently in the Richmond newspapers, probably as a means of encouraging more middle-class women into hospital work, stressed women's patience, sympathy, and "delicate fingers," as characteristics that fitted them for hospital duty.²⁵

Fold away all your bright tinted dresses,
 Turn the key on your jewels to-day,
 All the wealth of your tendril-like tresses
 Braid back in a serious way;
 No more delicate gloves, no more laces,
 No more trifling in boudoir or bower,
 But come with your souls on your faces,
 To meet the stern wants of the hour!

Look around. By the torch-light unsteady,
 The dead and the dying seem one--
 What? trembling and paling already,
 Before your dear mission's begun?
 These wounds are more precious than ghastly
 Time presses her lips to each scar,
 While she chants of that glory which vastly
 Transcends all the horrors of war.

²⁴Richmond Examiner, 3 October 1861.

²⁵"Ladies! To the Hospital," Southern Churchman, 26 September 1862. According to Katharine Jones, this poem first appeared in the Richmond newspapers after the Seven Days' battles during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862. Katharine M. Jones, ed. Ladies of Richmond, Confederate Capital (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), 94.

.
 Wipe the sweat from his brow with your kerchief;
 Let the old tattered collar go wide!
 See--he stretches out blindly in search if
 The surgeon still stands by his side.
 "My son's over yonder--he's wounded,
 Oh! this ball that has entered my thigh!"
 And again, he burst our all atremble,
 "In Thy mercy, O God! let me die!"

Pass on; it is useless to linger,
 While others are claiming your care--
 There is need for your delicate finger,
 For your womanly sympathy there.
 There are sick ones athirst for caressing,
 There are dying ones raving of home,
 There are wounds to be bound with a blessing,
 And shrouds to make ready for some.

They have gathered about you the harvest
 Of death in its ghastliest view;
 The nearest as well as the farthest,
 Is here with the traitor and true.
 And crowned with your beautiful patience,
 Made sunny with love at the heart
 You must balsam the wounds of the nation,
 Nor falter, nor shrink from your part.

Up and down through the wards where the fever
 Stalks noisesome, and gaunt, and impure,
 You must go with your steadfast endeavor
 To comfort, to counsel, to cure.
 I grant you the task's superhuman,
 But strength will be given to you
 To do for these dear ones what woman
 Alone in her pity can do.²⁶

Records from Maria Clopton's private hospital on
 Franklin Street suggest that it was the epitome of caring
 and precisely the sort of place that every wife or mother
 would have wanted for the treatment of her wounded

²⁶"Ladies! To the Hospital," Southern Churchman, 26
 September 1862.

Confederate, if she could not be with him herself. Letters from grateful soldiers and their families fill this slim collection with words of thanks that mirrored the type of personalized, motherly attention described by the Enquirer. "I shall never forget the kindness with which I have been treated whilst under your Care," wrote Frank B. Phister, of Mount Albion, Mississippi. "I know that only your close attention to me (with assistance of a few of your Friends) saved me from the Clutches of Death."²⁷ "I have an opportunity of sending letters through to Richmond," wrote Elizabeth Randle in September 1862,

and cannot let it pass without expressing my sincere thanks to you for your kind attentions to my son. . . .He wrote us that you took him to your house and cared for him so kindly that he owed his recovery probably to the circumstance. Let me assure you, dear Madam, that such tender treatment falls as gratefully on the mother's heart as it does upon the senses of the poor sick soldier.²⁸

References to the care in other private hospitals also conflated medical treatment with maternal devotion.

"Should [my son] Alick return to Richmond sick or wounded," B.W. Hunter wrote to Sally Tompkins,

I should be most grateful if you could have him carried to your hospital. The poor fellow would

²⁷Frank B. Phister, Mount Albion, Mississippi, to Maria G. Clopton, Richmond, Virginia, 6 January 1863, Maria G. Clopton Papers, ESBL.

²⁸Elizabeth Randle, Mt. Lebanon, [n.p.], to Maria G. Clopton, Richmond, Virginia, 26 September 1862, Maria G. Clopton Papers, ESBL.

not then feel so much the loss of a home and the absence of a mother's care.²⁹

At thirty-one years of age, Sally Tompkins was probably too young to have been the biological mother of most Civil War soldiers under her supervision; but her care and devotion nevertheless evoked maternal images in the minds of her patients and their families.

From the time Clopton Hospital opened in May 1862, until its closing some six months later, Maria Clopton and her staff of hired workers and slaves treated a total of 565 patients with only eleven deaths, a ratio of one death for every fifty-one cases. By comparison, the larger military hospitals experienced a death ratio which varied, for the same period of time, from between one in nine to one in twenty.³⁰ At Chimborazo Hospital, 41.2 percent of the 17,000 men who were treated there died, a statistic which later prompted Medical Director-in-Chief James Brown McCaw to remark that Chimborazo Hospital had "created

²⁹B.W. Hunter, to Sally Louisa Tompkins, 12 October 1864, Sally Louisa Tompkins Collection, ESBL. Alick Hunter was in the Black Horse Cavalry. A newspaper article praising the female operator of the Good Samaritan Hospital also emphasized her "motherly care and skillful attention." Religious Herald, 9 October 1862.

³⁰William A. Carrington, Report of Inspection for Clopton Hospital, Richmond, Virginia, 4 October 1862, Maria G. Clopton Papers, ESBL. Clopton's Hospital was apparently not an exception. An article in the Religious Herald in the fall of 1862 placed the death rate in all military hospitals in Richmond at an average of 10 percent, compared with a rate of 6 percent for women's hospitals during the same period of time. Religious Herald, 2 October 1862.

Oakwood [Cemetery], which up to that time had been comparatively but a small burial place."³¹

Explanations for this disparity in survival rates ranged from the higher degree of cleanliness, improved ventilation, restful atmosphere, and better nutrition provided in the hospitals run by women to the overcrowding, filth, mismanagement, and inept medical treatment in hospitals run by the Confederate Medical Department. "Some of the hospitals in this city are kept in a wretched condition, and consequently are nuisances to those confined in them and to the public outside," began the author of an article critical of the military hospital system in 1862.

In one, the dead body of a soldier was suffered to remain in the cellar for four days, and was only removed then after the odor had become so offensive as to drive nearly all the nurses from the building. . . . This duty [of keeping the hospitals clean and in good order] is really incumbent upon the military authorities, and should be made independent of the aid of the citizens. . . . To some extent, the real working men under the orders of the military authorities, have exerted themselves successfully, but there has as yet been nothing like a general, continued, and systematic course pursued in relation to this important subject.³²

Other articles, like the one praising Winder matron Sallie Swope, claimed that the women were simply better suited to be good health care managers.³³ As a result of reports

³¹"Of Chimborazo Park: Dr. James B. McCaw Gave It Its Name."

³²Richmond Enquirer, 11 June 1862.

³³Southern Churchman, 11 September 1862.

and testimonials like these and statistics showing their lower mortality rates, private hospitals occasionally became the refuge of higher-ranking Confederate officers, who could afford to dip into personal funds to pay for the extra attention and better diets these private facilities provided.

Despite its exemplary record, however, by October 1862, Clopton Hospital, as well as the other private Richmond hospitals operated by women, were under attack by the Medical Department of the C.S.A., which proposed closing the less successful private hospitals and absorbing the better ones into the military system. Suggested as a cost-cutting measure and endorsed by the Confederate Congress, this plan also enabled the Medical Department to assume a greater measure of control over treatment and personnel than it was able to exercise over private facilities headed by women.³⁴ A report on Clopton Hospital by hospital inspector William A. Carrington offered contradictory explanations for the hospital's closure which had less to do with Maria Clopton's management than it did with the fact that soldiers avoided military treatment in favor of care in hospitals run by women.

³⁴Robert S. Holtzman, "Sally Tompkins: Captain, Confederate Army," American Mercury (March 1959): 129.

Carrington opened his report by describing the hospital as being "situated in a thickly settled neighborhood" where "the wealth and patriotism of its inhabitants has caused the Hospital to receive a much larger amount of contributions in comforts for the sick than most others." Other portions of the report praised Clopton for her low death rate and her "excellent sanitary measures," but concluded that the hospital should be closed, because of concern by the neighbors that the hospital was too small and that the patients were forced to exercise in the street. These patients, Carrington concluded, should be used to fill the "several thousand vacancies" in the city's military hospital where "proper attention may be given to the patients at less expense."³⁵ It is possible that some of Clopton's neighbors might have been worried about the possibility of contagious diseases being spread by ambulating patients; but the more likely

³⁵William A. Carrington, Report of Inspection for Clopton Hospital, Richmond, Virginia, 4 October 1862, Maria G. Clopton Papers, ESBL. Emphasis mine. Although Carrington in his report claimed that the majority of Clopton's patients were severely wounded, this might not have been accurate. A register of the 249 patients treated at Clopton Hospital from June to October 1862 reveals that only seventy-three cases (29.3 percent) involved either gunshots or other battlefield injuries, while at least 153 (61.4 percent) were from diseases such as dysentery, bronchitis, pneumonia, typhoid fever, measles, influenza, erysipelas, and parasitic hemoptysis. The remaining twenty-three cases (9.2 percent) included chronic conditions such as hypertrophy of the heart or torpidity of the liver, and fourteen incidents of rheumatism which may have been brought on or made worse by exposure.

explanation for the hospital's forced closure must be the medical bureaucracy's determination to reduce competition between the military hospitals and the more efficient and successful institutions run by female volunteers.³⁶

Clopton protested, and was joined in her objection by her attending surgeon, H.A. Tatum, who sent an impassioned letter to Confederate Surgeon General Samuel P. Moore praising Clopton and her staff and criticizing the Medical Department's low rate of pay for hospital nurses. "I do not mean to use the language of mere panegyric," Tatum wrote

when I say that Mrs. Clopton and the other ladies performed the most laborious duties of dressing wounds, etc., not only without a murmur, but with joy that they possessed the power to serve the suffering soldiers. . . .The ladies were most particularly of benefit during the period the Hospital was filled with the wounded, as we found it difficult to procure intelligent nurses for the wages paid by the Confederacy, and our patients have reason to bless them for their labors of love. . . . [M]y best convictions are that the Hospitals where ladies have the general management of nursing, the patients are much more comfortable and happy.³⁷

Although Clopton's hospital was closed in October 1862, her hospital work did not end with its closure. She followed

³⁶Carrington's Report included no interviews with or correspondence from Clopton's neighbors to support his contention.

³⁷ H.A. Tatum, Richmond, to S.P. Moore, Surgeon General of the C.S.A., 15 September 1862, Maria G. Clopton Papers, ESBL. This letter was written after Carrington visited the hospital, but before he filed his report.

her patients into two Winder Hospital wards bearing her name in an arrangement struck with the Surgeon General. She worked there until the end of the war.³⁸

The law closing private hospitals stated that no Confederate soldier could be treated in a hospital administered by an individual with a rank lower than captain. This wording effectively excluded women from hospital administration. A number of Richmond women, however, continued to take one or two soldiers at a time into their homes for brief stays that were apparently tolerated by the Confederate government. These were most likely men who had been furloughed to their homes to recuperate, but who were too feeble to travel. Richmonder Lucy Fletcher, for example, cared for several soldiers like this who had befriended her son, Wattie.

The only Richmond woman able to avert the Medical Department's forced closing was Sally Louisa Tompkins. On September 9, 1862, Jefferson Davis commissioned her as a captain in the Confederate cavalry, which allowed Tompkins to continue operating Robertson's Hospital until the war's end. The precise circumstances surrounding the conferral of Tompkins's rank are unclear. Some sources maintain that Jefferson Davis was reacting to public outcry and made Tompkins a captain to prevent her hospital from being

³⁸Medical Director's Office, Richmond, to Maria G. Clopton, 11 October 1862, Maria G. Clopton Papers, ESSL.

closed under the Medical Department's consolidation plan. Others suggest that it was a favor granted at the request of Lee's brilliant cavalry officer J.E.B. Stuart. Whatever the case, a handwritten note at the bottom of her commission says that she never collected the pay to which her rank entitled her. Although a woman of some means before the war began, Tompkins expended a lot of her own resources in seeing that her patients were well fed.³⁹ Several Catholic nuns of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul also managed to keep St. Anne's Military Hospital and the Infirmary of St. Francis de Sales on Brook Road open despite the forced closures. These hospitals were not full military hospitals--although they were subsidized by the Confederate government.⁴⁰

³⁹After the war, Tompkins's continued charitable works depleted her resources even further. When she died at the age of eighty-two she was buried with full military honors. In 1961, St. James's Church, of which she had been a member, installed a stained-glass window in her honor. Church bulletin of program dedicating stained glass window in Sally Louisa Tompkins Papers, MC T840B, ESBL; Karen Schultz, "Descendant of Woman Captain Remembers Heroine of Civil War," Richmond News Leader, 21 July 1966; Richmond Times-Dispatch, 13 March 1960; Murray M. McGuire and John B. Mordecai, St. James's Church, 1835-1957. (n.p.: n.p., 1958), 26; Elizabeth Dabney Coleman, "The Captain Was a Lady," Virginia Cavalcade (summer 1956): 39-41; and Holtzman, "Sally Tompkins," 127-130.

⁴⁰For a discussion of religious women and hospital work, see Jolly, Nuns of the Battlefield; George Barton, Angels of the Battlefield: A History of the Labors of the Catholic Sisterhoods in the Late Civil War (Philadelphia: Catholic Art Publishing Co., 1898); Bailey, History of St. Peter's Church, Richmond, Virginia, 28; Bailey, A History of the Diocese of Richmond, 153-56; and Barbara Roberts, "Sisters of Mercy: From Vicksburg to Shelby Springs,"

A woman entering a Civil War military hospital entered a world that was both strange yet familiar. The care of the sick was part of woman's special province as the family nurturer; and many Southern women were, therefore, accustomed to nursing their children, parents, spouses, and other family members and friends through a variety of nineteenth-century illnesses that sometimes resulted in death.⁴¹ A Confederate recipe book published in Richmond in 1863 instructed women in how to prepare household remedies to treat dysentery, chills, sore throats, diphtheria, scarlet fever, asthma, croup, camp itch, burns, warts, "felons," corns, toothaches, sick headaches, and troublesome coughs.⁴²

But few if any Southern women were prepared for the blood and gore of bodies disfigured by combat. Although doctors and matrons possessed a wide variety of drugs for treating the suffering caused by disease, including quinine sulphur, ipecac, castor oil, magnesium sulphate, calomel,

Alabama Heritage 11 (winter 1989): 2-17.

⁴¹Southern Illustrated News, 22 November 1862.

⁴²[West & Johnston, publishers], eds., Confederate Receipt Book: A Compilation of Over One Hundred Receipts, Adapted to the Times, rev. ed., Introduction by E. Merton Coulter. (1863; Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960), 21-23. Richmond publishers West & Johnston compiled this recipe book from Southern newspapers. A felon is a purulent infection of the deep tissues of either the finger or toe, often near the nail. Dorland's Pocket Medical Dictionary, 20th ed., abridged from Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary, (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1959), F-3; all subsequent citations are to this edition.

and various forms of opium, severely wounded limbs were most commonly treated by amputation.⁴³ Frances Harriet Crane, a matron at General Hospital No. 9, told her daughter of often seeing "amputated legs and arms piled as high as her head."⁴⁴ At times, war-hardened surgeons simply tossed these limbs into the hospitals' back yards outraging passersby.⁴⁵ Sara Pryor fainted the first time she encountered a nurse kneeling beside a hospital cot, holding a pan containing the stump of an amputated arm. "The next thing I knew," she wrote, "I was. . .lying on a cot and a spray of cold water was falling over my face." Although Pryor recovered and eventually was able to work twelve-hour hospital shifts, she never became reconciled to

⁴³Magnesium sulphate was used for treating jaundice; quinine, for chronic hepatitis; and quinine sulphur, for recurring fever. Opium was used for typhoid fever; opium and ipecac were both prescribed for dysentery. Diet and Prescription Book, Clopton Hospital, Maria G. Clopton Papers, ESBL. A mercury compound, calomel was commonly used as a laxative; it blistered the mouths of some patients. Drew Gilpin Faust, James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 376-77; Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 57.

⁴⁴Stella Crane French Blanton Papers, MC C248A, ESBL.

⁴⁵Richmond Enquirer, 11 June 1862. Wyndham Blanton has calculated the mortality rate for amputations of the lower leg in Richmond military hospitals at 43 percent in 1862; for amputations of the thigh, the rate was 59 percent. Although amputations attract a lot of attention because of their sometimes macabre descriptions and their permanent disfigurement, disease actually claimed more men's lives. The three most prevalent diseases which resulted in death were malaria, typhoid, and pulmonary tuberculosis. Wyndham B. Blanton, Medicine in Virginia in the Nineteenth-Century (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1933), 286 and 292.

the sight of gravely wounded men, often wearing a dark veil as she walked to her home to avoid the sight of amputated limbs and wagons filled with dead soldiers.⁴⁶

The entry of a large number of women into the male world of the military hospital caused many to reexamine their beliefs about appropriate roles for women. Women had traditionally cared for male family members in the privacy of the home, and private hospital work by Richmond women had preserved an aura of that respectability by shielding that work from public view and by allowing some women to be selective in their choice of patients. But work in Richmond's military hospitals brought women into close contact with sometimes naked or nearly naked men who, in this case, were not beloved brothers, fathers, and sons, but rather strangers who were often drawn from the ranks of the poor and working class. In Chimborazo No. 2, a mentally-ill soldier under matron Phebe Pember's care adopted the practice of jumping out of bed and removing all of his clothes every time she entered the ward.⁴⁷ On another occasion a convalescent soldier, whom Pember described as a "rough looking Texan," boldly circled her,

⁴⁶Sara Rice [Mrs. Roger] Pryor, "The Hospital Was Filled to Overflowing," Reminiscences of Peace and War (New York: Macmillan Co., 1904), reprinted in Katharine Jones, Ladies of Richmond, 126-31.

⁴⁷Phebe Yates Pember, Chimborazo Hospital, Richmond, to Mrs. J.F. [Lou] Gilmer, 16 April 1864, Phebe Yates Levy Pember Papers, SHC, reprinted in Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 138.

"his eye never fixing upon any particular part. . .but travelling incessantly all over me." When Pember shifted her position to break his gaze, the soldier did likewise.⁴⁸

Actions such as these, as well as occasional reports of sexual misconduct, raised doubts about the wisdom of admitting female employees into the system, regardless of the need.⁴⁹ Some believed that hospital life might injure "the delicacy and refinement of a lady--that her nature would become deteriorated and her sensibilities blunted."⁵⁰ "There is a good deal of trouble about the ladies in some of the hospitals in this department," Kate Cumming wrote.

Our friends here have advised us to go home, as they say it is not considered respectable to go into one. I must confess, from all I had heard and seen, for awhile I wavered about the propriety of it; but when I remembered the suffering I had witnessed, and the releif I had

⁴⁸Pember, A Southern Woman's Story. 30.

⁴⁹I have not uncovered any blatant incidence of sexual harassment or sexual misconduct in Richmond hospitals. Jane Schultz cites a case in a federal hospital in Stoneman, Virginia, where an attending surgeon made unwelcome advances to a New York woman who had travelled south to nurse her dying husband. She also cites the case in the same hospital of a "suspicious nurse who had no duties to perform." Jane Schultz, "The Inhospitable Hospital: Gender and Professionalism in Civil War Medicine," Signs 17.2 (winter 1992): 363-92.

⁵⁰Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 16.

given, my mind was made up to go into one if allowed to do so.⁵¹

Shortly after her arrival at Chimborazo, Phebe Pember was wounded by remarks made by a female acquaintance who insinuated that Pember's decision to engage in military hospital work was not based on economic need, or patriotic altruism, but rather on her determination to live a life of licentious independence away from the gaze of friends and family. "How can that be?" Pember retorted.

There is no unpleasant exposure under the proper arrangements, and if even there be, the circumstance which surround a wounded man, far from friends and home, suffering in a holy cause and dependent upon a woman for help, care, and sympathy, hallow and clear the atmosphere in which she labors.⁵²

Northern nursing supervisor Dorothea Dix attempted to quell criticism that hospital "nurses" were little more than glorified prostitutes by adopting the practice of hiring only plain women over thirty years of age, who were required to dress simply in brown or black with no bows, curls, jewelry, or hoop skirts.⁵³ While no list similar to Dix's "requirements" can be found for women in Richmond

⁵¹Kate Cumming, A Journal of Hospital Life in the Confederate Army of Tennessee (Louisville, Ky.: John P. Morton & Co., 1866), 44. At the time of this entry (September 7, 1862), Cumming was visiting hospitals in Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia.

⁵²Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 105.

⁵³Schultz, "The Inhospitable Hospital," 366-67; Kate Cumming, Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse, Richard Barksdale, ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), xiii.

hospitals, the poem quoted on pages 88 and 89 of this chapter encouraged female hospital workers to remove their jewelry, put away their "bright tinted dresses" and lace, and braid back their hair "in a serious way," all practical measures for hospital workers to be sure, but perhaps ones also aimed at avoiding accusations of impropriety.⁵⁴

Sally Tompkins drew an additional mantle of respect around herself by carrying a bible and effecting quasi-military garb including a kepi and a black veil, which she wore for the remainder of her life.⁵⁵

Most middle- and upper-class white women in Richmond's military hospitals were employed as "matrons," a term which the Confederate Medical Department conferred on them as an indication of their higher status in the hospital hierarchy.⁵⁶ Working-class white women were hired as

⁵⁴"Ladies! To the Hospital," Southern Churchman, 26 September 1862.

⁵⁵Holtzman, "Sally Tompkins," 129. A kepi was a military cap with a short flat crown and a small leather visor patterned after French army headgear.

⁵⁶Northern hospitals called these women "nurses." Jane E. Schultz, "The Inhospitable Hospital," 369-70. My research on female hospital workers in Richmond takes exception to the conclusion made by Drew Faust in Mother's of Invention that more affluent Southern ladies "regarded matron's duties as too laborious, too indelicate for women of their social standing." Drew Gilpin Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 99. Evidence from Richmond military hospitals indicates that a larger number of upper-class women may have worked in the Richmond wards than Faust believes. Maria Clopton was the widow of a state supreme court judge, while Phebe Pember applied for a position at Chimborazo on

nurses, a broad category of laborers that also included convalescent soldiers and black women and men, either slave or free. Working-class white women and free black or slave women also worked as laundresses, although the number of white laundresses in Richmond hospitals was smaller than it may have been in other locations.⁵⁷

the advice of the wife of the Confederate Secretary of War who was a family friend. Sally Tompkins was a wealthy single woman descended from one of Virginia's "first families." Kate Ball, who worked with Phebe Pember in Chimborazo No. 2, was a refugee from a large farm near Manassas. Constance Cary's father had been a judge. Some of these women were recently widowed, and several--but not all--were either impoverished, or refugees, or both.

⁵⁷For example, the smallpox hospital located at Howard's Grove extensively contracted male and female slaves through labor brokers to work as cooks, nurses, and laundresses. This hospital employed a total of eighty-five, and treated smallpox cases among the civilian and military populations. General Hospital No. 24 employed both black and white laundresses, as did Chimborazo which employed a total of 115 women in this capacity in September 1862. Mary Westwood, Rebecca Elliott, Anne Wilkins, Johanna Costello, and Mrs. S.F. Charles were all white women who worked as nurses in either Chimborazo No. 4 or General Hospital No. 9. In addition to black women and men, this occupation was also shared with white men, usually convalescent soldiers who were not yet fit for duty. Convalescent soldiers also served as ward masters who performed such tasks as delivering food to the wards. Other soldiers who were considered "skillful and competent" in medical work were permanently detailed to hospital duty, unless "neglect or inattention" necessitated their removal. These latter were known as "detailed men." Ch. VI, Vol. 122, pp. 34 and 40; Vol. 318; Vol. 170, p. 161; Vol. 122, p. 256; Vol. 715, p. 153, all in R.G. 109, NARA. In 1862, the Confederate Congress passed a law permitting the employment of either free blacks, slaves, or whites--both female and male--to serve as cooks in any of the hospitals. 1st Cong., 1st. sess., Ch. 64, 21 April 1862. For the act providing for female nurses as well as a discussion of the use of convalescent soldiers and detailed men, see "An Act to provide for the sick and wounded of the army in hospitals," 1st. Cong., 2d. sess., Ch. 17, 27 September

In her essay on Civil War nursing, Jane E. Schultz has estimated the number of Northern and Southern military hospital workers at more than twenty thousand women, based on her extrapolation of information from the service records of Union nurses found in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.⁵⁸ The precise number of Southern nurses, laundresses, and matrons is impossible to obtain, in part because no such records exist for Confederate employees, since none of them ever received pensions from the U.S. government, and in part because none of the Confederate Surgeon General's papers survived the Richmond fire. For Richmond hospitals, a reasonable estimation of the number of hospital matrons is probably in the neighborhood of 300 to 350 women, based on the fact that most of the city's twenty-eight general hospitals average six matrons, each, while the six large ones averaged between thirty and forty-five. The number of white women who worked as nurses or laundresses is even more difficult to ascertain. Chimborazo was known to have employed about sixty

1862, in C.S.A., The Statues at Large of the Provisional Government of the Confederate States of America, James M. Matthews, ed. (Richmond: R.M. Smith, printer to Congress, 1864).

⁵⁸Schultz estimates that records for roughly 800 to 1,000 hospital workers are contained in each of the twenty-two boxes comprising R.G. 94, Carded Service Records of Hospital Attendants, Matrons, and Nurses, NARA. Her phrase "more than" is the closest she gets to estimating the number of Southern hospital workers there might have been. Schultz, "The Inhospitable Hospital," 363, fn. 2.

laundresses, but notations about these women rarely appeared in any of the hospital records. None of this takes into account the ministrations of hundreds of female volunteers who rolled bandages, wrote letters, and cooked food which they routinely delivered to the hospital of their choice. Nor does it account for the female relatives of wounded or sick soldiers who trekked to hospitals in order personally to assist in the care of loved ones.

Although precise numbers of hospital workers remain elusive, a survey of 115 white women whose names appear in the city's hospital records helps to flesh out the contours of female hospital employees. The women in this particular group ranged in age from nineteen to seventy. Of the eighty-two women whose marital status is known, fifty-four women (66 percent) were either married or widowed, and twenty-eight (34 percent) were single.⁵⁹ The preponderance of married women among this list of hospital employees suggests that marital status might have been used

⁵⁹The marital status of the remaining thirty-three women is unknown. I have developed this group of female hospital workers by reading all of the records of the Richmond military hospitals, including hospital morning reports, lists of furloughed female employees, and correspondence by the various hospital surgeons, contained in Chapter VI (Medical Department) of R.G. 109, NARA. Much of the information I obtained was from the "remarks" column on the morning reports which sometimes noted that a matron had been hired, fired, or transferred. Less frequently, this column might also yield more specific information, such as her age, name, or marital status. This group includes 104 women whose names appeared in these records, plus eleven additional unnamed women who worked at other hospitals than those where the women's names were known.

as a criterion for hospital employment as a means of offsetting accusations of impropriety that accompanied the thought of young single women caring for partially clad strangers.⁶⁰

Jane Schultz has argued that most Confederate women served voluntarily, or else received a modest \$30 a month, "which in inflated Confederate currency did not give them much purchasing power."⁶¹ Payroll records for Richmond hospitals, however, reveal that most female employees received regular wages which, like the salaries of hospital workers in the North, varied with rank. Chief matrons who were responsible for supervising the work of the other female employees were paid \$40 per month, while assistant matrons received \$35. Ward matrons earned \$30 per month; laundresses and nurses, \$25. All matrons of any rank were also entitled to purchase limited quantities of bread, flour, wood, meat, and meal each month at discount rates. Chief matrons were provided with lodging on the hospital grounds. Laundresses who worked in the smallpox hospitals--usually free blacks and slaves--drew additional pay for the hazardous duty involved in washing contaminated

⁶⁰The only extant set of regulations for female employees in a Richmond hospital are the "Rules for matrons of Jackson Hospital," written by Surgeon-in-Charge, F.W. Hancock. These deal with the specific duties matrons were to fulfill and do not discuss appropriate appearance or comportment at all. F.W. Hancock, Rules for matrons at Jackson Hospital, MC3 H471, ESBL.

⁶¹Schultz, "The Inhospitable Hospital," 367.

clothing and bed linens.⁶² By comparison, Union nurses earning forty cents per day plus rations collected less money but may have gained substantially more buying power, due to the inflated rate of Confederate currency.⁶³

Since these rates of pay were often insufficient in providing for the "necessaries of life," matrons frequently

⁶²Samuel P. Moore, Surgeon General, Medical Department, C.S.A., Richmond, to S.H. Stout, Surgeon-in-Charge, District of Chattanooga, 10 March 1863, Samuel P. Moore Letter, MC3 St.4, No. 9, ESBL. The salaries earned by slave women were paid directly to labor brokers who acted on behalf of the slaveowners or to the owners themselves. It was not uncommon in the Confederate capital for slaveholders to hire out several of their slaves for this sort of wartime work. Clopton & Lyne and Turpin & Eacho were two of many slave labor brokers that worked to place slaves in a number of Richmond hospitals. Ch. VI, Vol. 247, p. 34, R.G. 109, NARA. Refugees to Richmond often brought a few slaves with them which they rented out to provide income for their owners' room and board. For example, see the applications of Mrs. Mary Ann Galt, 14 February 1863, and Mrs. Mary C. Jeter, January 1863, both in Applications of Ladies for Clerkships on Virginia Treasury Notes, 1861-1864, Virginia, Records of Office of the Assistant to the Second Auditor, Auditor of Accounts, LV, hereafter cited as OASA Records.

⁶³Union cooks and laundresses--frequently black women who contracted their service to the U.S. government--earned between \$6 and \$10 per month. Schultz, "The Inhospitable Hospital," 367-9. All Confederate currency carried a message promising to pay the bearer "after the ratification of a treaty of peace between the Confederate States and the United States of America." Since no such treaty was ever negotiated, Confederate currency was worthless at the war's end. Shortly after the war, Virginia adopted a schedule determining the inflation rate for Confederate currency for each year of the war. This schedule was used for determining the value of claims paid to private citizens by the state. According to this schedule, currency worth \$1.10 in May 1861 was valued at \$1.50 in 1861. By 1863, the same currency was listed at \$5.50; by 1864, it was \$18 to \$21. A.C. Gordon, "Hard Times in the Confederacy," Century Magazine 36 (1888): 761-71.

supplemented their incomes by doing other kinds of work. Phebe Pember and Constance Cary both wrote for literary magazines; Pember also worked at as a copyist for one of the government departments. Monimia Cary signed Treasury notes in her spare time from her duties at Winder Hospital.⁶⁴ In February 1865, the Confederate Congress finally passed an act "regulating" the pay of all female hospital workers to be comparable with salaries paid to women in the rest of the government departments.⁶⁵ Unfortunately this measure came far too late for scores of female hospital workers who left exhausting work in the wards to sit for additional hours before a writing desk in order to make ends meet.

A reminiscence by Phebe Yates Levy Pember, chief matron of Chimborazo No. 2, provides a glimpse into hospital life in Confederate Richmond which reveals that, in their relations with patients, families, and male

⁶⁴Constance Cary [Mrs. Burton] Harrison, Recollections Grave and Gay (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 118, and 190; Phebe Yates Levy Pember, Chimborazo Hospital, Richmond, to Eugenia Phillips, 30 January 1863, in Phillips-Myers Collection, SHC, reprinted in Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 112-13.

⁶⁵See "An Act to regulate the pay and allowances of certain female employees of the Government," 2d. Congress, Sess. II, Ch. 56, 8 February 1865, in C.S.A., Laws and Joint Resolutions of the Last Session of the Confederate Congress (November 7, 1864 - March 18, 1865) together with the Secret Acts of Previous Congresses, Charles W. Ramsdell, ed. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1941). According to this new law, Pember's rate was raised to about \$3,000 per annum.

hospital workers, matrons frequently walked a fine line that often left them marginalized and powerless.⁶⁶ The scope of Pember's duties at Chimborazo clearly extended well beyond the "superintendence over the entire domestic economy of the hospital" described by the 1862 statute providing for her appointment.⁶⁷ In addition to seeing that the wards were swept daily, the linens properly laundered and changed, the food tastefully prepared, and

⁶⁶Born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1823, thirty-eight-year-old Pember was fleeing from an unpleasant family situation when she applied for work in Chimborazo Hospital in November 1862. Phebe Levy was the fourth of seven children born into a prosperous Jewish family. When the Civil War began in April 1861, she was living in Aiken, South Carolina, caring for her husband, Thomas Pember, a Bostonian who had moved south in hopes that the South Carolina climate would help him recover from a persistent case of tuberculosis. When Thomas Pember died on July 9, 1861, Phebe Pember did what many young widows of limited means did at the time--she returned to her father's home, then in Marietta, Georgia. Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 2-3. Life in the Levy household was not pleasant. In a letter to her sister, Eugenia Phillips, Pember complained not only of her father's indifference, but also of "false accusations" and "daily jealousies and rudeness," suffered at the hands of her siblings. It is not clear from her correspondence whether the "false accusations" to which Pember referred had anything to do with questioning her Southern loyalties, which her family might have believed were compromised by her marriage to a northerner, or whether the "daily jealousies and rudeness" were due to frictions surrounding her interfaith marriage. What is clear, however, is that, by November 1862, the acrimony within the Levy household had become so great that Pember determined to leave. Phebe Levy Pember to Eugenia Phillips, Marietta, Georgia, 29 November 1862, Phillips-Myers Collection, SHC, reprinted in Pember, A Southern Woman's Story: Life in Confederate Richmond, 109-11.

⁶⁷"An Act to provide for the sick and wounded of the army in hospitals," 1st. Cong., 2d. sess, Ch. 17, 27 Sept. 1862, in C.S.A. The Statutes at Large of the Provisional Government of the Confederate States of America.

the medicines accurately dispensed to the 600 or 700 patients under her care, Pember also cleaned and bandaged wounds and assisted during the ubiquitous amputations that were the solution of choice for limbs shattered by Union muskets. At times, she placed her finger in spurting arteries to stem the flow of blood until a doctor could determine if the patient would survive. On one occasion, she helped to manufacture a pasteboard cylinder out of sheets of brown paper and a thick paste, which was molded around her kitchen stovepipe and baked to provide an orthopedic device for a deformed hip.⁶⁸ When death proved the final resolution to a soldier's suffering, it was sometimes Pember herself who instructed a convalescent carpenter to build a coffin which she conveyed to Hollywood Cemetery in a Chimborazo ambulance.⁶⁹

But although Pember found most of the surgeons to be "sensible kind-hearted efficient men. . .who gave their time and talents generously to further the comfort and well-being of their patients," and who were not afraid to "listen kindly and respectfully to [her] suggestions," a few who feared that the presence of female workers would usher in an era of "petticoat rule," bristled at any hint of female interference.⁷⁰ On one occasion, a disgusted

⁶⁸Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 46.

⁶⁹Ibid., 71.

⁷⁰Ibid., 57.

surgeon tossed her herbal remedy contemptuously out the window, despite the fact that Surgeon General Moore had officially gone on record as encouraging their development and use.⁷¹ And shortly after her arrival in 1862, Pember's refusal to surrender the keys to the whiskey supply initiated a "paper war" with one of the assistant surgeons that lasted for more than two years.⁷² When she responded sternly to one surgeon's repeated requests for

⁷¹Moore urged newspapers to publish excerpts from Dr. Francis P. Porcher's Resources of Our Field's and Forests, which contained information on the cultivation and harvesting of various medicinal herbs, plants, and insects, including sassafras roots and leaves, dogwood bark, the tulip tree poplar, the opium poppy, and the Cantharis vittata, or blistering fly. The Richmond Whig published excerpts in its April 23d, 24th, and 28th issues in 1863. In its July 11, 1863 issue, the Magnolia also carried a plea to Virginia women from E. W. Johns, of the Medical Purveyor's Office of the C.S.A., asking them to cultivate garden poppies as a means of supplying the military hospitals with both opium and poppy seeds for a future crop. According to Porcher, cottonseed or willow bark teas were a good substitute for quinine, while wild cherry or bloodroot provided an acceptable replacement for digitalis. Hops and motherwort could be prescribed in lieu of laudanum; willow and dogwood barks could be used to treat malaria; and blackberry root or sweetgum bark could be used for diarrhea. Watermelon and pumpkin seeds provided natural diuretics. Blanton, Medicine in Virginia in the Nineteenth Century, 284.

⁷²Under the 1862 act, matrons were to be responsible for the distribution of liquor, usually whiskey, which was given daily to every patient and was considered a good treatment for such ailments as measles, mumps, pneumonia, colds, and camp fever. This provision in the law was an attempt to stop abuses in the system by other hospital personnel, and one which was apparently based on notions that women would be less likely to imbibe the liquor themselves. In frustration, Pember finally nailed the portion of the law giving her responsibility for the liquor supply to the door of her quarters. Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 25-26, 32-33, 51-55, 88, and 100.

more liquor, he replied by asking if Pember "consider[ed] herself a lady when she wrote such notes."⁷³

At times, female hospital workers overrode doctors' orders when patient well-being was at stake. In 1864, for example, when wounded began to pour into the city after a battle at Drewry's Bluff, Pember countermanded an order by the acting surgeon-in-charge to send the men elsewhere for treatment, ordering convalescent patients placed on the floor in blankets so incoming casualties could have their beds.⁷⁴ The female manager of the Good Samaritan Hospital once forcibly removed a patient from the care of a military surgeon who had neglected to provide the appropriate treatment.⁷⁵

Incompetence complicated relationships, not only between matrons and male medical professionals, but also among members of Pember's own staff.⁷⁶ Three female nurses that Pember hired shortly after the battle of Fredericksburg commandeered a portion of her living quarters for their own use. Their drunken ambulance ride through the streets of Richmond a few days later led to

⁷³Ibid., 52.

⁷⁴Ibid., 37.

⁷⁵J. William Jones, Christ in the Camp or Religion in Lee's Army (Richmond: B.F. Johnson, 1888), 198.

⁷⁶Pember, A Southern's Woman's Story, 57.

their dismissal.⁷⁷ At times, shoddy medical treatment resulted in injury or death. For instance, in early 1865, a Chimborazo soldier whose leg had been broken in a wagon mishap died of an untreated typhoid infection of the bone after a drunken surgeon "set" the wrong leg.⁷⁸

Visits by patients' relatives often provided matrons with an extremely important extra set of hands whose presence eased the burden of care for the overworked staff and also speeded recovery.⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the constant stream of visitors that poured unchecked into Richmond hospitals also tested the matrons' diplomacy and endurance by upsetting hospital routine. A group of cigar-smoking Virginia women invaded Pember's office at ten o'clock one evening in 1864 demanding a place to sleep; they remained for six days in the hospital laundry.⁸⁰ On another occasion, Pember was summoned to the bed of a convalescent Virginia soldier, only to find that his visiting wife had given birth a few minutes before. Pember immediately

⁷⁷Ibid., 31-36.

⁷⁸Ibid., 88-89.

⁷⁹For examples of the helpful care of friends and families, see Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 68; Margaret Baldwin Cabell Brown, Richmond, to Alexander "Sandy" Brown, 23 December 1862, Alexander Brown Papers, DU; Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS; and Mason-Smith Family Letters, Daniel E. Huger Smith, Alice R. Huger Smith, and Arney Robinson Childes, eds. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1950), reprinted in Katharine Jones, Ladies of Richmond, 224-28.

⁸⁰Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 66.

administered tea and toast and found the woman a bed in an empty ward. She then organized a few local women to sew a layette and provided the mother with a one-way ticket home. After a short recuperation, the mother departed, but left the hapless infant behind. Pember procured a pass and a quart of milk for the father so the baby could be returned home.⁸¹

Food was often another source of conflict, this time between matrons and their patients. Most of the food at Chimborazo was provided through an ingenious scheme devised by Chief Surgeon James B. McCaw of commuting the soldiers' rations and then using the reimbursements to purchase food which was brought to Chimborazo by means of a hospital boat that travelled the Kanawha Canal between Richmond, Lynchburg, and Petersburg.⁸² But not everyone was satisfied with the food this system provided. In November 1862, 360 Chimborazo patients petitioned the Confederate Congress for better food, and others complained unceasingly about food that was not prepared like the food "back

⁸¹Ibid., 67-68.

⁸²Hume, "Chimborazo Hospital, Confederate States Army," 161. Commute in this case means to change one kind of payment (in this case army rations of food for hospitalized soldiers) into another (money), as by substitution.

home."⁸³ At Winder Hospital, angry men threw peas on the floor and walls, and rioted for bread.⁸⁴

Unlike female clerks who worked in groups of ten or twenty or more, matrons often endured grisly and gruelling hospital work in relative isolation from other women. Many were tethered to their hospital lodging for long periods of time by the unpredictable nature of work dependent on battlefield losses. Matrons' rooms were located as far as possible from the wards as another way to address concerns about impropriety. "I never see a human being but the sick," Pember wrote in January 1863. "I am sitting all alone writing, for everybody but the sick soldiers and the nurses have gone away."⁸⁵

Of course, many matrons were exposed to communicable diseases and noxious medicines. Hospital matrons in Tennessee contracted typhoid fever from treating infected patients; laundresses became infected with erysipelas after

⁸³Pember provided food for holiday celebrations such as Easter, Christmas, and New Year's Day out of her own resources. In 1863, for example, she raised funds for a Christmas dinner by condemning and selling old comforters. Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 20-21; 48-49; and 89-90; Phebe Pember, Chimborazo Hospital, Richmond, to Eugenia Phillips, 30 January 1863, Phillips-Myers Papers, SHC, reprinted in Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 114.

⁸⁴Horace Herndon Cunningham, Doctors in Gray: The Confederate Medical Service (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), 85.

⁸⁵Phebe Levy Pember, Chimborazo Hospital, Richmond, Virginia, to Eugenia Phillips, 30 January 1863, Phillips-Myers Collection, SHC, reprinted in Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 112.

washing contaminated clothing.⁸⁶ Still others were wounded by stray bullets. Juliet Opie Hopkins, a matron at Richmond's Alabama Hospital, was wounded accidentally in the arm while trying to evacuate wounded soldiers after the Battle of Seven Pines.⁸⁷

Marginalized in a hospital command structure which overtaxed their physical endurance but which failed to confer on them any form of military rank commensurate with their duties, some women's mental and physical health broke down. Fannie Beers suffered a nervous breakdown while nursing Alabama soldiers in a Richmond hospital.⁸⁸ By April 1864, Pember was complaining of night sweats and constant pains in her side and chest.⁸⁹ Some matrons apparently coped with the strains of hospital work by

⁸⁶Cumming, A Journal of Hospital Life in the Confederate Army of Tennessee, 50, 61, and 72. Erysipelas is defined as a "febrile disease, characterized by inflammation and redness of the skin and mucous membranes," usually due to a Streptococcus bacterium. Dorland's Pocket Medical Dictionary, E-27.

⁸⁷The wife of an Alabama judge, Hopkins migrated to Richmond shortly after the war began to nurse Alabama soldiers. Beers, Memories, 43-44; Cumming, A Journal of Hospital Life in the Confederate Army of Tennessee, 184; Lucille Griffith, "Mrs. Juliet Opie Hopkins and Alabama Military Hospitals," Alabama Review 6 (1953): 99-120.

⁸⁸Beers, Memories, 50-51.

⁸⁹Phebe Pember, Richmond, to Lou [Mrs. J.F.] Gilmer, Savannah, Georgia, 16 April 1864, Phebe Yates Levy Pember Papers, SHC, reprinted in Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 139.

applying for recuperative leaves of absence.⁹⁰ In October 1864, after seventeen months of uninterrupted labor, Phebe Pember was granted a one-month leave to visit her sister, Caroline.⁹¹ Chimborazo No. 4 employees Mary Cassels and V.C. Read each took leaves-of-absence in August 1863; and Winder matrons Anne Pease, Nannie Taylor, E. Braddy, M. Smith, and T.H. Butts, were all granted furloughs between January and March 1864. Two matrons at Jackson hospital, where turnover rates for female employees were the highest for any Richmond hospital, took brief vacations, respectively, in December 1863 and March 1864.⁹²

Unlike other government workers whose labors came to an abrupt halt with the city's surrender, matrons continued

⁹⁰Included in the Medical Department records are occasional lists of women applying for furloughs. As with most other hospital information concerning women, most list only their names, the hospitals in which they worked, and their dates of absence. My conclusion that these were recuperative leaves is based on reasons the women apparently gave in the few instances when leaves were extended; most women asked for more time because their health had not recovered. Virginia Reed and Mary Cassels, for example, both requested furlough extensions in August 1863. The surgeon answering their request, closed his letters with the hope that the extension would "fully restore [their] health." W.A. Davis, Chimborazo No. 4, Richmond, to Mary Cassels, and to Virginia C. Reed, 19 August 1863, Ch. VI, Vol. 317, R.G. 109, NARA. Except for the case of one treasury clerk who was given a leave-of-absence for the delivery of her child, there is no record of women workers in other Confederate departments in Richmond ever applying for, or receiving, leaves of absence.

⁹¹Pember, A Southern Woman's Story, 78.

⁹²Records of various Richmond hospitals, R.G. 109, NARA.

to care for wounded patients of both armies for a time. Both Phebe Pember and Maria Clopton met with Federal officials in the days immediately following Richmond's fall to arrange for keeping their wards open until all their patients either were cured or died. In time, however, this work ended, too. Clopton remained in the city with her children and their families; Pember returned home to South Carolina where she wrote a memoir about her hospital work.

Clerking

Many middle-class Richmond women also served the Confederate government as departmental clerks. As was the case with female hospital workers, however, precise numbers of female clerks in Richmond, or the Confederacy-at-large, are impossible to ascertain.⁹³ A conservative estimate of female clerical workers in Richmond would place their number at somewhere between 375 and 500. All the evidence that remains for female clerks in Richmond are occasional references in letters and diaries and scattered records in Confederate government documents, including two registers of applications from women who sought work in the

⁹³No secondary sources attempt to answer this question for the Confederacy. Massey, Bonnet Brigades; Anne Scott, The Southern Lady; McPherson, Ordeal by Fire; Suzanne Lebsock, Virginia Women, 1600-1945: "A Share of Honour", rev. 1984 ed. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1987) (All subsequent citations are to this edition.); James McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Rable, Civil Wars; Drew Faust, Mothers of Invention.

Confederate Treasury between 1861 and 1865. Surviving payroll lists for Richmond Treasury clerks indicate that, by 1863, as many as sixty women may have worked in this department alone.⁹⁴ By 1864, when the department was relocated to Columbia, South Carolina, the number of Treasury clerks had climbed to more than 250.⁹⁵ Literally hundreds more women sought Treasury jobs. Lists of women applying for Treasury work in Richmond between 1861 and 1865 bear the names of more than six hundred applicants.⁹⁶ In addition to Treasury clerkships, evidence from the sources suggests that women clerked for other government departments, including the Quartermaster's Office, the War Department, the Post Office, the Treasury Department, the Ordnance Bureau, the Navy Department, the Conscription Bureau, the Medical Department, and the Commissary.⁹⁷

⁹⁴List of Signers and Numberers, Confederate Treasury Department, Richmond, Virginia, [1863], Ch. X, Vol. 267, R.G. 109, NARA.

⁹⁵Mary Magill, Richmond, Virginia, to Ann Evelina Tucker Magill, Winchester, Virginia, 26 April 1864, Mary Magill Letter, VHS.

⁹⁶List of Women Filing Applications for Clerkships in the Confederate Treasury in Richmond and the Surrounding Area, and List of Women Filing Applications for Clerkships in the Confederate Treasury from Areas Other than Richmond, Ch. X, Vol. 156½, R.G. 109, NARA.

⁹⁷Judith Brockenbrough McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War, 2d ed. (New York: S.J. Hale & Son, 1867; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1972), 244 (All subsequent references are to this edition.); Edward N. Smith, Richmond, to Mattie Pierce, 23 January 1864, Dorsey and Coupland Papers, Ms. 39.1 D73, WM; Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby, "The Chronicle of Lucy Parke

In most government offices, female clerks recorded letters received by the department, and copied letters that were ready for mailing. Female clerks in other departments gummed stamps, kept account books, and sorted mail.⁹⁸ In the Treasury Department, Parke Chamberlayne, Monimia Fairfax, and Sallie and Lucy Grattan signed, clipped, and numbered Confederate currency in a room called "Angel's Retreat" from nine o'clock in the morning until three in the afternoon.⁹⁹

Clerking provided well-educated but financially straitened middle- and upper-class women with a respectable form of employment at the same time that it freed able-bodied male clerks for field duty. "I have just written to Colonel Northrup, Commissary General, to ask for an appointment," Judith McGuire wrote in December 1863. "So many of the young men have been ordered to the field that

Chamberlayne Bagby," in Bagby Family Papers, VHS, 135, hereafter cited as Bagby Chronicle, VHS; Sallie Grattan, Church Hill, Richmond, to Alexander "Sandy" Brown, Alexander Brown Papers, 10 December 1862, DU; List of Signers and Numberers, Confederate Treasury Department, Richmond, Virginia, n.d., Ch. X, Vol. 267, R.G. 109, NARA; Bartholomew Fuller, Richmond, to Wilhelmina Fuller, Fayetteville, North Carolina, 9 March 1864, Bartholomew Fuller Papers, #3521-Z, SHC.

⁹⁸Sallie A. Brock Putnam, Richmond during the War: Four Years of Personal Observation (New York: G.W. Carleton, 1867; repr. Time-Life Books, 1983), 169-74.

⁹⁹Bagby Chronicle, 135, VHS; Harrison, Recollections Grave and Gay, 190-91.

this office has been open to ladies."¹⁰⁰ After female clerks were hired into the Post Office department in the spring of 1864, Bartholomew Fuller and the other male Post Office clerks saw several weeks of military action at Chaffin's Farm and Bottom's Bridge--both a short distance from the city--for the first time since the war began. Treasury clerk Frank Wise of Fauquier County, Virginia, served as part of a company of male clerical workers that was formed shortly after the first female clerks were hired into the department. Used for local defense, Wise's unit was sometimes detailed to Lee's army for maneuvers around Richmond.¹⁰¹

The hiring of female clerks became common in the decades after the war, but in the 1860s it was rare. As with hospital work, the war foreshadowed changes in this occupation, especially in the North. Despite the paucity of sources, it is still possible to draw some comparisons between Treasury clerks in Richmond, Virginia, and the

¹⁰⁰Judith McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee, 244.

¹⁰¹Bartholomew Fuller, Richmond, to Wilhelmina Fuller, Fayetteville, North Carolina, 18 June 1864, Bartholomew Fuller Papers, SHC; Frank Wise, Richmond, Virginia, to his father, 7 July 1863, Peter and Frank Wise Letters, DU. Other women clerked for the Confederate government at home to help with family expenses. Maggie Tucker wrote at home for the Naval Department to help pay her son's tuition at the Virginia Military Institute, while May and Lizzie Munford contributed to their family's finances by clerking at home for the Conscription Bureau. Margaret K. Munford, Richmond, to Powhatan Ellis, Lauderdale Springs Hospital, Mississippi, 8 October [1864?], in Young-Munford-Ellis Papers, UVA.

Federal treasury clerks in Cindy Aron's study of female clerks in wartime and postbellum Washington, D.C., especially for 1862 and 1863.¹⁰² Although Aron cites the passage of the 1862 Legal Tender Act as the starting point for female clerking in the U.S. Treasury, the greater manpower drain in the South and the larger amount of women in need of employment meant that three Richmond women were probably already at work in the Confederate Treasury Department by the fall of 1861.¹⁰³ In addition, Richmond

¹⁰²Cindy Sondik Aron, "'To Barter Their Souls for Gold': Female Federal Clerical Workers in Late Nineteenth-Century America" (Ph.D. diss. University of Maryland, 1981). These records for federal female clerical workers comprise more than a thousand boxes containing letters of application; letters of recommendation; other occasional correspondence concerning job performance; requests for promotion; and information surrounding disciplinary actions, demotions, and dismissals in two records groups--R.G. 56, General Records of the Department of the Treasury, and R.G. 48, Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior, both in the NARA. Aron's study is based on the records of 1,639 female clerks in four target groups: 1) all of the women who were listed as federal treasury clerks for 1862/3--the date when the first female clerks were hired in the department (128 women); 2) all of the female treasury clerks appearing in the list of federal treasury clerks for 1870 (101 women); 3) the 598 women who clerked for the Department of the Interior in 1880; 4) the 812 women who clerked for the Census Office of the Department of Interior in 1890.

¹⁰³Aron, "'To Barter Their Souls for Gold,'" 13. The three Richmond women applying in 1861 were Fannie Wray, Sarah E. Wise, and Mrs. M. Taylor. List of Women Filing Applications for Clerkships in the Confederate Treasury in Richmond and the Surrounding Area, List of Women Filing Applications for Clerkships in the Confederate Treasury from Areas Other than Richmond, Ch. X, Vol. 156½, R.G. 109, NARA. None of the actual applications survives, just these lists of applicants, including their names, their location, and the date the application was filed. I have been able to accumulate additional background information for twenty-

women appear to have sought Treasury work in slightly greater numbers. Between 1862 and 1863, 146 Richmond women applied for Treasury work, a number that exceeds by eighteen the number of Northern women Aron reported as applying for U.S. Treasury clerkships during the same period of time. In 1864, a groundswell of 473 women sought Confederate Treasury work in that year alone.¹⁰⁴

Nearly three-fourths of the 636 Confederate Treasury applicants (74.4 percent) came from Richmond or Henrico county, while the remaining 163 applicants, many of whom were refugees, came from nearby locations in the state, such as Lynchburg, Petersburg, Charlottesville, or Norfolk. A third of the out-of-state applicants were from Columbia, South Carolina, where the Confederate Treasury Department

five of these applicants by crossmatching their names to applications they filed for similar jobs in the Virginia State Treasury in 1863. Applications of Ladies for Clerkships on Virginia Treasury Notes, 1861-1864, Virginia, OASA Records. This last collection contains the applications of 159 women who sought work with the Virginia State Treasury after the passage of a bill on March 3, 1862, authorizing the state to issue one dollar notes.

¹⁰⁴Aron, "'To Barter Their Souls for Gold,'" 260; List of Women Filing Applications for Clerkships in the Confederate Treasury in Richmond and the Surrounding Area, List of Women Filing Applications for Clerkships in the Confederate Treasury from Areas Other than Richmond, Ch. X, Vol. 156½, R.G. 109, NARA. Although the number of female applicants slowed after the Confederate Treasury relocated in Columbia, South Carolina, in April 1864, 138 women still filed applications for clerkships with the Richmond office.

was relocated in April 1864.¹⁰⁵ Other applicants were from points further south, including New Orleans, Louisiana; Augusta, Georgia; Wilmington and Raleigh, North Carolina; and Meridian, Mississippi.¹⁰⁶ Eight women crossed enemy lines from Washington, D.C., to cast their lot with the Confederate government.¹⁰⁷

Of the 475 Richmond women seeking treasury work between 1861 and 1865 whose marital status is known, 318 (66.9 percent) were single, and 157 (33.1 percent) were married or widowed, figures which parallel those for the federal clerks profiled in Aron's study.¹⁰⁸ The marital status of the remaining 161 Richmond women (25.3 percent)

¹⁰⁵List of Women Filing Applications for Clerkships in the Confederate Treasury in Richmond and the Surrounding Area, List of Women Filing Applications for Clerkships in the Confederate Treasury from Areas Other than Richmond, Ch. X, Vol. 156½, R.G. 109, NARA.

¹⁰⁶After the Treasury Department's relocation to Columbia, South Carolina, in the spring of 1864, one-third of the out-of-state applications were from women of that city. Some of these women were no doubt hired to take the places of Richmond women who decided not to relocate. List of Women Filing Applications for Clerkships in the Confederate Treasury from Areas Other than Richmond, Ch. X, Vol. 156½, R.G. 109, NARA.

¹⁰⁷These women were Sarah E. Wise, Frances Ballard, Miss Upshaw, Catherine L. Davis, Mrs. L.W. Jackson, Mrs. M.E. Davis, Lucilla S. Mason, and Mrs. R.H. Riggs. List of Women Filing Applications for Clerkships in the Confederate Treasury from Areas other than Richmond and the Surrounding Area, Ch. X, Vol. 156½, R.G. 109, NARA.

¹⁰⁸Aron found that about two-thirds of the federal applicants between 1862 and 1880 were well-educated, middle-class, single women whose fathers were often doctors, lawyers, or other "white collar professionals." Aron, "To Barter Their Souls for Gold," 61-91.

is unknown.¹⁰⁹ These percentages of single and married workers are nearly the reverse of the married and single women who worked in the city's military hospitals, which may reflect the importance of marriage in lending an air of respectability to military hospital work.

Applications from women seeking similar wartime work in the Virginia state treasury suggest that female job seekers probably fell into one of two groups: financially needy women who fit the Confederacy's criteria of giving preference in employment to "females whose labor is necessary for their support," or, women who secured appointments through political patronage or social influence.¹¹⁰ Of the twenty-five Confederate Treasury applicants who also sought employment in the Virginia Treasury office, twenty-one claimed to be in "destitute" or "dependent" situations, usually brought about by unemployment or the absence or death of a husband or father, often in the service of the Confederate Army.

¹⁰⁹I am basing this on the presence or absence of titles of address denoting marital status. Aron does not include statistical information on marital status, arguing that "it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine their [married and single women's] numbers with much certainty," since some married women concealed their status to avoid criticism that they were usurping work from married men or from more deserving women who were the sole support of families. Aron, "'To Barter Their Souls for Gold,'" 76.

¹¹⁰1st Cong., 3rd. sess., Ch. 62, 1 May 1863, C.S.A., Statutes at Large of the Provisional Government of the Confederate State of America; Richmond Examiner, 18 February 1864.

India Trowers, for example, identified herself as the daughter of a War Department engineer who had recently died while on maneuvers with the army near Lynchburg. She begged for an appointment so that she could support her widowed mother and sisters.¹¹¹ Pattie Bates's application recounted the story of her father, Micajah Bates, a former superintendent of the city streets, who had died in 1863, leaving behind eight little sons and daughters dependent on Bates's support.¹¹² Mary Jeter applied for work after her son, a captain of a Petersburg cavalry unit, was killed in battle.¹¹³ Three married applicants--Mary Louis Lewis, Judith Brockenbrough McGuire, and L. Neimeyer--sought work because their husbands' salaries were inadequate.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹Application of India Trowers, 28 March 1863, OASA Records.

¹¹²Application of Pattie Bates, 21 March 1863, OASA Records.

¹¹³Application of Mary C. Jeter, 1 January 1863, OASA Records.

¹¹⁴Application of L. Neimeyer, 2 February 1863; Application of Mary Louisa Lewis, 26 March 1863; Application of Judith W. McGuire, 4 March 1863, all in OASA Records. Judith W. McGuire is the Judith White Brockenbrough McGuire whose diary about her wartime experience is cited in this dissertation. McGuire and her husband, refugeeed to Richmond from Alexandria, Virginia, in early 1861, after the area around their home was overrun by Union troops. Her husband, J.P. McGuire, was an Episcopal minister who had gotten a job in the Post Office Department for \$1,500 a month. A note on her application said the "she write a rapid fire & excellent hand." Lewis's husband, William, was a second lieutenant in the Wise Legion, a Richmond unit named for the O. Jennings Wise, the

At least a third of the women in this group were refugees. When Judith McGuire took up her duties in the Commissary Department, she discovered that many of her coworkers were refugees like herself. Like her, some were also recently bereaved.¹¹⁵ "It is melancholy to see how many wear mourning for brothers or other relatives," she wrote. "One young girl sits near me, whose brothers have fallen in the field, but she is too poor to buy mourning."¹¹⁶ Mary Ann Galt was a widow with an adopted daughter; she lost all of her property except for a few slaves when she fled to the capital from her home in Norfolk.¹¹⁷ Nannie J. Pendleton was a refugee from Richmond County; she requested work in order to provide for herself, her sister, and her aging parents.¹¹⁸ When A. Ruskell applied on March 16, 1863, she identified herself as a refugee from Maryland and completely dependent on a

son former Virginia governor, Henry A. Wise. Jennings Wise was killed early in the war.

¹¹⁵Two of McGuire's nephews had been killed in the few months before she began her Commissary work. William Newton died on a cavalry raid near Culpeper County, Virginia, in October 1863. Another nephew died of pneumonia in January 1864 following an amputation.

¹¹⁶Judith McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee, 251.

¹¹⁷Application of Mary Ann Galt, 14 February 1863, OASA Records.

¹¹⁸Application of Nannie J. Pendleton, 21 February 1863, OASA Records.

married brother with a large family to support on his pay as a clerk in the Quartermaster's Department.¹¹⁹

All applicants were expected to furnish references from influential citizens, usually ministers, politicians, or prominent businessmen, who could vouch for their good character and their deservedness, a measure which prompted critics to charge that political influence rather than "need" more frequently determined a woman's employment.¹²⁰ But although a few women like Bettie Waring tried to secure their posts by patronage alone, most applications combined the two criteria, suggesting that both economic need and the type of education that was frequently available only to more affluent women were equally important.¹²¹ In addition to describing herself as the half-orphan of a Confederate soldier, for example, India Trowers's application bore recommendations from Hustings Court Judge William H. Lyons, and the Rev. J.

¹¹⁹Application of A. Ruskell, 16 March 1863, OASA Records.

¹²⁰Richmond Examiner, 18 February 1864. The same was true in the North. Aron, "'To Barter Their Souls for Gold,'" 97-106.

¹²¹It is true that a number of Richmond clerks--like a number of the women in Aron's study--were women of upper- or middle-class backgrounds who had received good educations in one of the region's private female academies. Bettie Waring offered no explanation as to why she was entitled to the appointment. Instead, in her letter to Virginia Auditor Jonathan Bennett, she simply stated her endorsement would come "from Jefferson Davis himself." Application of Bettie Waring, 1 January 1863, OASA Records.

Lansing Burrows, minister of First Baptist Church in Richmond.¹²² Josie Sharpe's request contained references from the pastor of St. John's Church and the treasurer of the Richmond & Petersburg Railroad.¹²³ Mary Jeter's application left no potential reference ignored. Included in her long list of referees were the names of two Confederate senators and two members of the House of Representatives.¹²⁴ A number of women also included neat rows of letters and numbers at the bottom of their applications as silent witness to their expert penmanship.¹²⁵

The hiring of female clerks exposed a sexual double standard that affected the rates of pay that women and men received. Female and male clerks frequently did the same kinds of work, and when male clerks were called out to defend the city, female clerks performed all the tasks necessary to keep government departments open. Yet male clerks were paid more money, even in cases of widowed women

¹²²Application of India Trowers, 28 March 1863, OASA Records.

¹²³Application of Josie M. Sharpe, 5 March 1863, OASA Records.

¹²⁴Application of Mary C. Jeter, January 1863, OASA Records.

¹²⁵Applications of Mary Roy, 10 February 1863; L. Neimeyer, 2 February 1863; Fannie Halyburton, 9 March 1863; E. Harwood, 18 February 1863; Julia E. Lindsay, 25 February 1863; Bettie Price, 18 February 1863; and Mrs. Susan Taylor, 18 March 1863, all in OASA Records.

who were the sole providers for their families. In 1862, female clerks earned between \$500 and \$600 per year while male employees earned \$1000. By 1864, women were paid \$900 to \$1,000 per annum, while men received \$1,200 to \$1,500.¹²⁶

The sexual double standard also appears to have held female clerks to a different code of workplace behavior from their male counterparts. Endorsements by prominent Richmond men that accompanied the clerkship applications of younger women occasionally shaded over into testimonials emphasizing not only the women's economic worthiness and their genteel lineage, but also their purity and Christian devotion, qualities that were animated by concerns about the appropriate behavior of women and men working in close proximity to each other. Christian Advocate editor James A. Duncan, for example, referred to E.A. Duval, Susan Duval, and Rebecca Coulling as "ladies of . . . high character and Christian worth" while Baptist clergyman John Lansing Burrows called Mary Ballow "a very worthy and pious young lady."¹²⁷

¹²⁶Prov. Cong., sess. 5, Ch. 68, 13 February 1862, in C.S.A., The Statutes at Large of the Provisional Government of the Confederate States of America; S.G. Jamison, Columbia, South Carolina, to Miss J.R. Logan, Columbia, 7 May 1864, Miss J.R. Logan Papers, ESBL.

¹²⁷Application of E.A. Duval, Susan Duval, and Rebecca Coulling, 22 October 1862, OASA Records. Emphasis in the original. Application of Mary Ballow, 18 March 1863, OASA Records.

Fears about the possible sexual misadventures of female clerks in Richmond must have arisen in May 1864 when accusations surfaced about the U.S. Treasury Department in Washington, D.C. Some claimed that it was little more than a common whorehouse in which currency chief Spencer Clark and other male supervisors engaged in ménages à trois and clandestine trysts with cross-dressing female clerks in return for salary increases or promises not to dismiss them from service. Most of these accusations eventually proved to be false, but not before the reputations of several innocent women were ruined in the process.¹²⁸ In Richmond, no such lurid accusations were ever made. A few women attempted to finesse their appointments with offers of home-made eggnog or invitations to men in positions of power to visit them in their rooms, but no specific accounts alluding to the use of sexual influence to secure work in the Confederate Treasury in Richmond survive.¹²⁹

In April 1864, the Confederate Treasury Department was

¹²⁸Charles F. Cooney, "The State of the Treasury--1864: 'Nothing More than a Whorehouse,'" Civil War Times Illustrated 21.8 (December 1982); 40-43; Aron, "To Barter Their Souls for Gold," 136-37; Sarah Booth Conroy, "Hints of Historic Harassment," Washington Post, 1 December 1991.

¹²⁹Post Office clerk Bartholomew Fuller was beset by female applicants in the spring of 1864 who conducted "quite a levee" in his room in an attempt to persuade him to plead their case with his superior, Judge Rogers. According to Fuller, Judge Rodgers may have exercised what Fuller called his "bachelor taste" in making some of the appointments. Bartholomew Fuller, Richmond, to Wilhelmina Fuller, Fayetteville, North Carolina, 9 and 25 March 1864, Bartholomew Fuller Papers, SHC.

relocated to Columbia, South Carolina, to streamline the Department and ease concerns about the transportation of unsigned notes between Columbia and Richmond. A number of female clerks opted to transfer to the new facility.¹³⁰ The scene at the railroad depot on the morning of their departure was captured in a letter War Department clerk Mary Magill wrote to her mother in Winchester, Virginia.

Miss Waring reached here last night and went off this morning to Columbia with her sister, India, who had to go with the Treasury Department. We have been shaking in our shoes about going also, but are tolerably easy now as the Secretary of War has remonstrated against any of his Bureau being sent away. . . .Mr. Memminger has rented a college [the Ursuline convent school] about four miles from Columbia. They are all to live together. Imagine one hundred seventy women shut up in one house. Ask Mr. Graham how he would like to have a room there. Alice Waring went down to the cars to see them off and gave a very funny account of the scene. She says she never imagined such confusion--talking--laughing--crying--screaming--and everything else going on all at once. . . .I felt so sorry for the girls--theirs is really the greatest distress caused by the movement. So many young girls are necessarily thrown out of employment & poor women who have families dependent upon them and who have nothing else to live on. There have been eighty resignations.¹³¹

More surprising than the number of resignations is the number of Richmond women willing to move away from home and family to work for the Confederate government. Although rumors of the bureau's departure had been reported by the

¹³⁰Putnam, Richmond during the War, 288.

¹³¹Mary Magill, Richmond, Virginia, to Ann Evelina Tucker Magill, Winchester, Virginia, 26 April 1864, Mary Magill Letter, VHS, emphasis in the original.

Richmond press as early as February 1864, between March and April of that year the Treasury Department was besieged with applications by 228 Richmond women willing to pull up stakes and move to Columbia. Of this group, 130 women (57 percent) were single, and fifty-two women (22.8 percent) were married or widowed.¹³²

Clearly, relocation was easier for single women than it was for married women encumbered with children or other kinship obligations, and it is tempting to suggest that this willingness to relocate reflects a new-found sense of independence, gained as a result of workplace experience. For some women, this might indeed have been the case. But a number of these single women may have also chosen relocation as a means of keeping a job on which they and their families depended.¹³³ Women who chose to remain behind would have to compete for work with thousands of unemployed refugees who filled the newspapers with advertisements seeking work. The Richmond Examiner called it "a painful alternative either way" brought about by the "hard master" poverty, and an unfeeling treasury chief who

¹³²The marital status of the remaining forty-six women cannot be determined. List of Women Filing Applications for Clerkships in the Confederate Treasury in Richmond and the Surrounding Area, Ch. X, Vol. 156½, R.G. 109. NARA.

¹³³Thomas Dublin, Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

thought that women were like "swallows, who migrate quite easily without trouble at the change of season."¹³⁴

Conclusion

To the extent that warwork had been liberating (and that is a debatable proposition at best), it was a short-lived liberation. Although middle-class Richmond women had made significant inroads into new wartime professions as hospital workers and government clerks, all of these government occupations came largely to a close with the Confederacy's collapse in 1865. This was markedly different in the North. The work of Northern women such as Clara Barton, Dorothea Dix, Mary Livermore, and Mary Ann Bickerdyke had led to the creation of the U.S. Sanitary Commission in June 1861 and to the development of professional nursing careers for women that extended into the postwar decades. By 1873, nursing schools for Northern women were established in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. In 1881, Clara Barton would found the American Red Cross, an organization she would lead until 1904. But despite their exemplary wartime care, professional nursing opportunities remained relatively scarce for women in the immediate postwar South.¹³⁵ Only

¹³⁴Richmond Examiner, 25, 27 April 1864.

¹³⁵Philip A. Kalisch and Beatrice J. Kalisch, The Advance of American Nursing, 3d ed. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1995), 38-84. Here, I am agreeing with Drew

a handful of Richmond women, including Rebecca Peterkin, and Mrs. R.A. Payne established hospitals or found employment as hospital matrons in the postbellum years.¹³⁶ And the first training school for white Virginia nurses did not open at St. Luke's Hospital in Richmond until 1886.¹³⁷

Faust's assessment that Civil War nursing did not mark Southern women's entry into the health profession, as it did for Northern women during this time. But I disagree with her explanation for this: that Southern women's hospital work should be regarded as a "failure" because too few women volunteered for the job and because those who did struggled--sometimes unsuccessfully--to overcome conventional notions about female delicacy and propriety. Faust's contention that it was actually hired slaves who did the bulk of hospital work has some merit, although I think her discussion of their numbers is somewhat inflated, at least for Richmond, and it dismisses too readily the work of many dedicated women. In my estimation, the real reason why nursing in the South did not follow the Northern path had more to do with the need in the South to reassert patriarchal control over Southern women. Public nursing challenged too many Southerners' beliefs about appropriate work for middle-class women. Although it had been extremely important in wartime, with the war now over, the expansion of teaching as a postwar career for middle-class Southern women provided a more acceptable alternative to nursing. Drew Faust, Mothers of Invention, 92-113.

¹³⁶Rebecca Peterkin founded the Sheltering Arms Hospital for destitute whites in 1889. Annabell Gibson Jenkins co-founded the Retreat for the Sick with Dr. Hunter Holmes McGuire in 1877. Several Richmond women found postwar work as matrons in the Alms House or in the Protestant Episcopal Church Home for Ladies that was established in Richmond in 1875. See Chapter Nine. Few if any of these women, however, appear to have nursed in military hospitals during the war. Blanton, Medicine in Virginia in the Nineteenth Century, 208-17.

¹³⁷Sara M. Evans, Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America (New York: Free Press, 1989), 141-42; Blanton, Medicine in Virginia in the Nineteenth Century, 188-90. The St. Luke's school was one of only three in the South. The other two were located in Charleston, South Carolina,

The work of Confederate clerks came to an end, too. Northern women streamed into federal clerkships by the thousands in the postbellum decades as clerking became another career path for educated middle-class women; but few Southern women ever became part of this growing clerical workforce in the late nineteenth century, in part because they were deemed disloyal for having supported the Confederacy.¹³⁸ Nor did the state of Virginia reward its female clerks for their loyal service. In January 1866, the Virginia legislature vetoed a bill that would have permitted women to be hired as copyists in the state's Land Registrar's Office, on the basis that clerking was not the "appropriate sphere" of Southern women.¹³⁹ Of all the Richmond women who clerked for the Confederate government during the war, only Parke Bagby was able to convert her wartime experience into a government clerkship in the postwar capital, and this only after her husband's death in 1883.¹⁴⁰

and New Orleans, Louisiana. By 1891, Virginia opened the Hampton Training School for Nurses for educating black nurses.

¹³⁸Aron, "To Barter Their Souls for Gold," 65, fn. 6.

¹³⁹Richmond Dispatch, 24 January 1866.

¹⁴⁰After the war, Parke Babgy seems to have concentrated her efforts on her growing family. With her husband, George's, death in 1883, she resumed clerking in the Virginia State Treasury Office, a position she held for twenty-one years. Bagby Chronicle, VHS.

As they had taken up wartime occupations as hospital matrons and government clerks, middle-class women in Richmond had challenged conventional notions about the appropriateness of their working outside the home. Manpower shortages and battlefield losses had provided reasonable justifications for permitting middle-class Southern ladies to leave their homes to engage in work that contributed vital services to the Confederate war effort. Their entry into military hospitals had provoked discussions about female fortitude and propriety; their work as government clerks had held them to a sexual double standard as a means of assessing their worthiness for the job. Their work in these two fields had tested their mettle and had found them to be capable, efficient, and sometimes even exemplary workers. With Confederate defeat, however, patriotic rationales for their work evaporated and, in the social chaos in the South following emancipation and defeat, middle-class Richmond women saw these doors of opportunity close.

CHAPTER 4

MORE WORK FOR THE CONFEDERACY: SEAMSTRESSES, CARTRIDGE MAKERS, AND PROSTITUTES

Working-class women in Richmond had labored outside the home long before the Civil War began. Of the 171 white and free black women who appear in the manufacturing schedule of the 1860 Richmond census, the majority (69 percent, N=118) worked as shoemakers' assistants (15), or in the needle trades as milliners, hoop skirt makers, tailors' helpers, and mantua makers (103), all occupations based on their skill with a needle. Twelve women comprised one-third of the labor force that made paper at the Belvidere Paper Company; other women manufactured bricks (4) or distilled bitters (1).¹ Thirty-five women, most of whom were black, worked in the tobacco manufacturing, probably as tobacco stemmers.² Still more must have taken

¹Manufacturing Schedule for the 1860 Census, Richmond, Virginia, NARA. One woman also worked in a sawmill. Some women--white, free black, or slave--probably also worked at Tredegar preparing food for male laborers but, unfortunately, no payroll records for female workers at Tredegar have survived. The 1860 Manufacturing Schedule has no category for race.

²The lone exception might be one woman listed as one of four employees for John Fry, who manufactured cigars.

in laundry, sold home-made foods to the legislators in Capitol Square, rented out rooms, worked in family shops, or labored at one of the cotton textile factories in Manchester.³

Although white Richmond women had sewed women's and children's clothing, or worked as tailors' helpers before the war began, the demand for uniforms and tents drew thousands more into large-scale clothing production, both at home and in government shops. By 1863, the Richmond Examiner claimed that as many as three thousand Richmond seamstresses sewed for the Confederate government.⁴ In addition, the need for black powder cartridges and small arms ammunition opened up a new wartime occupation for working-class Richmond women as munitions workers in the Confederate laboratory on Brown's Island. As Richmond was transformed into a military town, prostitutes converged on the city to swell the ranks of the brothel women and femmes des pavés who had engaged in sexual commerce in Richmond before the war began.⁵ Although not regular "government

³Richmond Whig, 24 January 1860.

⁴Richmond Examiner, 27 July 1863.

⁵Newspaper accounts attest to the influx of prostitutes from other locations. The Richmond Examiner, for example, in 1862, claimed the "cyprians, resident and accumulated since the removal of the seat of government to this place, as well as loose males of abandoned character from other parts of the Confederacy" were now plying their vocation in the Confederate capital. Richmond Examiner, 13 May 1862. Emphasis mine. In 1864, the mayor and city council paid a blockade runner \$600 to "deport" a

work," prostitution nevertheless provided services to Confederate soldiers far from the conjugal comforts of home. Few of these working-class women have left written records of their own, but their wartime experiences can be re-created through the use of court and payroll records and information in the Richmond newspapers, to help round out the picture of wartime work in the Confederate capital.

Ordnance Work

A cluster of single-story white frame buildings on a small outgrowth of land in the James River, the Brown's Island ordnance plant employed nearly three hundred women and girls and a handful of men and boys from the city's working-class neighborhoods.⁶ Between July 1861 and January 1865, the Brown's Island operatives supplied Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia with 46,901,250 percussion caps, 1,456,190 friction primers, and 72,413,854

prostitutes to "the north banks of the Potomac." Richmond Examiner, 27 July 1864.

⁶The ordnance lab was a part of the Richmond Arsenal, one of the largest in the Confederacy. In all, about 900 men and boys worked in the arsenal but only a few males manufactured ammunition with the Brown's Island women. Additional arsenals were located in Fayetteville, North Carolina; Columbus, Macon, Atlanta, and Augusta, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; and Selma, Alabama. Josiah Gorgas, The Civil War Diary of Josiah Gorgas, Frank E. Vandiver, ed. (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1947), entry dated 8 April 1864, pp. 90-91. Gorgas was Chief of Ordnance for the Confederate States of America. For a history of the early years of the Richmond arsenal, see Giles Cromwell's The Virginia Manufactory of Arms (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975).

small arms cartridges for use in its clashes with Federal forces in the war's eastern theater.⁷

Wages for female workers varied with marital status and the type of work performed. Evidence from the arsenal's time record book for female employees indicates that, in January 1863, the unmarried women who comprised 84 percent of the workforce (N=242) earned a daily wage of \$1.62½, while the twelve married women (4.2 percent) were paid \$1.75, based on the Laboratory's rationale that married women were more likely to be contributing their wages to the support of families. Six women who trained and supervised the other female operatives received between \$2.00 and \$2.50 daily; and twenty-seven other women earned piece rates that varied from eighteen to thirty-five cents per hundred for performing such tasks as charging

⁷William LeRoy Brown, "The Richmond Arsenal," 457. Brown was commander-in-chief of the Richmond Arsenal. His report, published in 1869, can be found in the LV. Percussion caps are small, conically-shaped, detonating devices filled with fulminate of mercury and black powder. Friction primers are small metal cylinders filled with gunpowder which are used to set off black powder charges in cannons. Both were coated with varnish to make them waterproof. By the time of the Civil War, percussion caps were being manufactured by machine. Confederate Ordnance Bureau. The Field Manual for the Use of Officers on Ordnance Duty (Richmond: Ritchie & Dunnavant, 1862), 56 and 81. Dean S. Thomas, Ready...Aim...Fire! Small Arms Ammunition in the Battle of Gettysburg, Stephen V. Ash, ed. (Biglerville, Pa.: Osborn Printing Co., 1981).

cartridges and covering ammunition boxes with paper labels.⁸

During the course of the war, these rates of pay rose considerably for all female workers, due to the importance placed on providing ammunition for the Confederate armies, and the abilities of the Brown's Island operatives to engage in successful work protests. By November 1864, single women were paid \$5 per day, and married women, \$7. And by March 1865, cartridge makers were paid between \$12 and \$14 daily.⁹ In addition to their wages, female operatives by late 1864 were also entitled to purchase weekly rations of wood, flour, bacon, and cloth at reduced rates.¹⁰

A letter to the editor of the Richmond Examiner in October 1864 invites a comparison between the wages of the Brown's Island operatives and the salaries of middle- and upper-class women who clerked in government departments.

⁸Time Record Book of Female Employees, Richmond Arsenal, Richmond, Virginia, January 1863 - April, 1865, Ch. IV, Vol. 99, R.G. 109, NARA. No time book exists for male employees at the factory.

⁹Piece rates for women working in Colt Room No. 2 also increased during this period of time and, by May 1864, some women earned additional income by working overtime on Sundays.

¹⁰Richmond Examiner, 13 October 1864. The plan to provision ordnance workers was adopted in November 1863, with a proposal to erect a bakery, slaughterhouse, and store house on Laboratory grounds for the facility's 300 female and 900 male workers. Religious Herald, 26 November 1863.

Although the anonymous letter writer was clearly sympathetic to the working-class cartridge makers and referred to the female clerks as "pets" who earned salaries equal to or better than the best male clerks, "for doing very little work," in fact it was the Brown's Island operatives who were the Confederacy's best-paid female employees.¹¹ At \$5 per day in late 1864, even the lowest paid Brown's Island operative earned approximately \$1320 per year, not counting Saturdays and overtime.¹² Female clerks never earned more than \$900 to \$1,000 during this same time period; and hospital workers, whose work was definitely the most gruesome wartime occupation for women, were earning, at best, a depressing yearly salary of \$480. When compared with male ordnance workers, however, the wages of the Brown's Island operatives, like those of most female workers, were limited by a sexual division of labor that paid male workers more money and, in this case, for less hazardous work. In March 1865, for example, when female cartridge workers were earning an all-time high of \$12 to \$14 per day, men working in the Ordnance Department's harness shop earned \$19.50 daily.¹³

¹¹Richmond Examiner, 15 October 1864.

¹²I am basing this on a daily wage of \$5 per day for twenty-two days per month for an unmarried worker.

¹³James Dinwiddie to George W. Taylor, Raleigh, N.C., 25 March 1865, Ch. IV. Vol. 92, R.G. 109, NARA. In addition to being able to purchase wood, bacon, and flour at reduced rates, the men were entitled to purchased one

Like antebellum textile workers, the Brown's Island operatives appear to have experienced a good deal of workplace solidarity that derived, in part, from the fact that some workers labored in close proximity to female relatives.¹⁴ Fifteen-year-old Emma Ashmore made cartridge forms in Colt Revolver Room No. 2, while her mother, forty-six-year-old Elizabeth, sewed ammo bags in the Sewing Room. Five sets of sisters also worked on the island, including teenagers Annie, Maggie and Mary Ryan, and Mary and Delia Daily and their married sister, Ann Dodson.¹⁵

When coupled with the importance of munitions manufacture for the Confederate war effort, the operatives' workplace cohesion undoubtedly accounts for their ability to engage in successful work stoppages or strikes. In December 1863, and again in October 1864, striking workers succeeded in getting their daily wages increased; in the 1864 strike, they also managed to get the wage differential

pair of shoes yearly at government prices.

¹⁴Dublin, Women at Work.

¹⁵Other sisters included fourteen-year-old Eliza Priddy and twelve-year-old sister Lucy; Anny and Mary Cushin, who worked side by side in Cartridge Room No. 5; and Margaret Divine and her seventeen-year-old sister, Mary. Time Record Book of Female Employees, Richmond Arsenal, Richmond, Virginia, January 1863 - April 1865, Ch. IV, Vol. 99, R.G. 109, NARA; 1860 Manuscript Census, Henrico County Virginia, both in NARA; Doris Rose Pearson, interview with author, Richmond, Virginia, 16 March 1995. Delia Daily was Mrs. Pearson's grandmother.

between single and married workers narrowed from \$2 to \$1.¹⁶ In the second strike, which brought the plant to a standstill for five days, Laboratory commander William Brown initially took a tough stand--refusing the workers' demands and placing ads in the Richmond papers for 300 new operatives. Within a short time, however, Brown caved in amid concerns that a new group of unskilled laborers might seriously jeopardize the quality of ammunition being shipped to the armies.¹⁷

Although the Brown's Island operatives were better compensated than most female government employees, ordnance work was an extremely dangerous occupation that required the use of wooden mallets and cloth shoes with India rubber soles to guard against black powder explosions caused by sparks. On Friday, March 13, 1863, an explosion at Brown's Island leveled part of a fifty-foot building, sending plumes of flame into the gray morning sky.¹⁸ Laboratory

¹⁶Richmond Examiner, 7 December 1863, in Nancy Bowman, "Richmond's Free Working Women, 1850-1870," research paper, University of Maryland, 1991; Richmond Examiner 13, 14 October 1864. I am grateful to Nancy Bowman for sharing her research information with me.

¹⁷Richmond Examiner, 13, 14 October 1864.

¹⁸The explosion at the Brown's Island arsenal was not an isolated occurrence. The Sea Coast Ammunition Room at the Confederate Laboratory near Petersburg, Virginia, blew up on January 27, 1862, resulting in several injuries but no loss of life. Richmond Examiner, 28 January 1862. On May 2 of the same year, an explosion at Brown's Island mortally wounded two men; a blast on November 7, 1862, at the Natches, Mississippi, arsenal killed twenty-nine workers, mostly female cartridge makers. Richmond

superintendent Wesley W. Smith was seated in his office when the blast occurred. Racing to the scene, he saw more than forty dazed women and girls, some with hair and clothing still ablaze, shrieking and crying, or searching for sisters and friends among the burning ruins.¹⁹ A few girls whose burns were too intolerable to bear threw themselves into the rushing waters of the James River. Parents and eyewitnesses who heard the dull roar hurried to the plant but were blocked from entering it by armed guards stationed at the footbridge connecting the island to the shoreline.

On a grassy knoll by the river bank, wounded girls awaiting treatment lay side by side with the blackened corpses of dead coworkers. Frantic family members rushed among the rows of bodies, hoping to identify their loved ones among the survivors. Others administered first aid by slathering the victims with oil-soaked flour or cotton and

Examiner, 3 May 1863; Natches Weekly Courier, 12 November 1862. A third explosion took place at Brown's Island in December 1863. Religious Herald, 17 December 1863. The Augusta, Georgia, arsenal exploded on April 13, 1864. At least two women were seriously hurt in this explosion. Augusta Daily Chronicle, 14 April 1864. On April 21, 1864, a fourth explosion rocked Brown's Island when a pan containing fulminate of mercury was detonated, burning a small shed and injuring several female operatives. Richmond Examiner, 21 April 1864.

¹⁹Testimony of Wesley W. Smith, report of the committee investigating the Brown's Island explosion, 25 March 1863, Entry 453, Box 4, R.G. 109, NARA.

administering chloroform to relieve the pain.²⁰ All through the day ambulances carried injured workers to hospitals or homes.

Forty-three female workers ranging in age from ten-year-old Eliza Willis to sixty-seven-year-old Sarah Marshall eventually died of their injuries. Among the injured, only nineteen women and girls survived.²¹ Thirteen-year-old Annie Cushin lost her fourteen-year-old sister, Mary, and of the three Daily sisters, only Delia survived.²² Cartridge Room No. 4 sustained the brunt of

²⁰This description of the explosion was taken from numerous accounts. Richmond Examiner, 14 and 16 March 1863; Richmond Whig, 14 and 16 March 1863; Southern Illustrated News, 21 March 1863; to Dr. Lee from Charles, 18 March 1863, Dr. Lee Letters, DU; George Neville, Richmond, to Nellie Newman, 16 March 1863, George Neville-Nellie Newman Collection, UVA; Gorgas, The Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas, entry dated 21 March 1863, pp. 25-26. Many personal accounts repeat information from the Richmond newspapers.

²¹David L. Burton, "Friday 13th: Richmond's Greatest Homefront Disaster," Civil War Times Illustrated 21.6 (October 1982): 41. Burton used cemetery records to arrive at the names and ages of the disaster victims. By his account, most of the female workers were very young--fifteen between the ages of ten and fifteen. However, his list of names does not correspond in many cases with those of the Richmond press, which got its information directly from the Brown's Island timekeeper. Richmond Examiner, 14, 16 March 1863. Unfortunately, the time record book lists no ages for any of the female operatives.

²²Time Record Book of Female Employees, Richmond Arsenal, Richmond, Virginia, January 1863 - April 1865, Ch. IV, Vol. 99, R.G. 109, NARA. Three male workers were also injured or killed, among them sixty-three-year-old John H. Woodcock, a local clergyman in charge of supervising the room in which the blast originated, and Samuel Chappel, who died of a crushed skull from being wedged between a wall when the building roof collapsed.

the injuries: out of fifty women at work in that division, only twenty-one remained unhurt by the explosion.²³ By Sunday March 15th, funeral corteges crisscrossed the city, carrying the remains of the dead women and girls to their final resting places in coffins provided by the Richmond Arsenal.²⁴

A report filed by the committee investigating the disaster sheds light both on the work of the factory and the events surrounding the explosion. On the morning of March 13th, the twenty-by-fifty-foot room in which the blast occurred was alive with activity as at least sixty women and a few men and boys worked at a variety of tasks. Agnes Miller, Cornelia Mitchell, and Ann Drake were seated in front of a coal-burning stove at the lower end of the room, sewing cartridge bags while they chatted with Mary

²³Time Record Book for Female Employees, Richmond Arsenal, January 1863 - April 1865, Ch. IV, Vol. 99, R.G. 109, NARA. In the record book, timekeeper Philip Davis wrote the word "dead" or "wounded" across the time lines of women injured in the incident. I have used this source to develop a list of dead and wounded women, which can also be verified in the numerous press accounts of the incident.

²⁴Richmond Examiner, 16 May 1863; Richmond Whig, 16 March 1863. Arsenal employees also took up a collection to help defray the cost of funeral expenses for the neediest victims. They were aided by sympathetic members of the community, including the Y.M.C.A. and artist Lee Mallory who donated the proceeds of an evening's admission to his "War Illustrations," and an unidentified woman who donated \$700 to replace the injured girls' clothing. Richmond Examiner, 16 March 1863; Richmond Whig, 20 March 1863; Religious Herald, 7 May 1863. Josiah Gorgas's wife, Amelia, also made daily trips to the General Hospital No. 2 to care for the wounded. Gorgas, The Civil War Diary of Josiah Gorgas, entry dated 21 March 1863, p. 25.

Cunningham and Mary Cordle who stood nearby. A short distance away, Susan Butler, Paulina Smoot and a number of other women worked at a bench that ran nearly the entire length of the room, pounding black powder from defective cartridges with wooden mallets and depositing it in small sabots in front of them on the benchtop.²⁵ Along the opposite wall, Alonzo Owens and Samuel Chappel filled Williams Cartridges, while Mary Ryan worked a few feet away, removing friction primers from the wooden frames in which they had been placed for filling and varnishing.²⁶ At the far end of the room, several hands boxed caps and primers. From time to time, a male employee moved through the room, sweeping the floor of "all rubbish, greasy papers, and Inflammable materials" and returning the black

²⁵Testimony of Agnes Miller, Cornelia Mitchell, Ann Drake, Susan Butler, Paulina Smoot, Sarah A. Folkes, Lizzie Dawson, and Ella Barrett, all in report of committee investigating the Brown's Island explosion, 25 March 1863, Entry 453, Box 4, R.G. 109, NARA. Sabots were wooden cradles attached to cannonballs before firing. Their name may have come from the fact that they resembled wooden shoes worn by Dutch and French peasants. The workers at Brown's Island found them convenient receptacles for black powder. For a detailed discussion of munitions manufacturing, see Dean Thomas, Ready...Aim...Fire!

²⁶Testimony of Alonzo Owens, report of the committee investigating the Brown's Island explosion, 25 March 1863, Entry 453, Box 4, R.G. 109, NARA. Williams cartridges were manufactured for the Williams machine gun that could fire sixty-five rounds of black-powder cartridges per minute over a range of 2,000 yards. Jack Coggins, Arms and Equipment of the Civil War (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1962), 45.

powder from the sabots to the magazine for reprocessing.²⁷

As the women worked, their laughter and singing drifted from the room into the outside air.

Eighteen-year-old Mary Ryan was one of the highest paid women in the factory, an experienced worker who was known occasionally to rap the wooden frames on the side of the bench to free primers that had become stuck.²⁸ She did this again on March 13th, this time with disastrous results. The first blast, which Agnes Miller later described as sounding "not louder than a pistol shot," lifted Ryan from the floor.²⁹ This was followed by a second, larger explosion that blew Ryan to the ceiling as the walls of the building collapsed around her. She lived for three or four days, long enough to describe her role in

²⁷Testimony of Wesley W. Smith, report of committee investigating the Brown's Island explosion, 25 March 1863, Entry 453, Box 4, R.G. 109, NARA.

²⁸Primers were placed in holes in wooden frames where they were filled with fulminate of mercury and then sealed of moisture with shellac or varnish. It was the varnishing process that caused some primers to become stuck in the frames. Time Book of Female Employees, Richmond Arsenal, Richmond, Virginia, January 1863 - April 1865, Ch. IV, Vol. 99; testimony of Lizzie Dawson, Ann Drake, and Mary Cordle, report of committee investigating the Brown's Island explosion, 25 March 1863, Entry 453, Box 4, both in R.G. 109, NARA.

²⁹Testimony of Agnes Miller, report of committee investigating the Brown's Island explosion, 25 March 1863, Entry 453, Box 4, R.G. 109, NARA.

the event to members of the investigative committee who rushed to her bedside to interview her.³⁰

The investigation was ordered by ordnance chief Josiah Gorgas who was outraged at the loss of life. Before the investigating committee, Superintendent Smith testified that work involving friction primers and percussion caps had been transferred to Cartridge Room No. 4 just three weeks earlier, "to allow for the[ir] increased manufacturing" for the Confederate Army. This move was necessitated by the fact that an anticipated expansion of the percussion room had fallen behind schedule due to a shortage of lumber.

The relocation of percussion cap manufacturing into an area of the plant where girls also worked on defective cartridges created the conditions under which an explosion might be likely to occur. In addition, although reclaiming damaged cartridges was hazardous duty that required the use of non-metal tools and rubber-soled cloth shoes, at the time of the explosion, the shoes had not been supplied, despite repeated requests to the Quartermaster's Department. And although all the witnesses claimed that the arsenal workers assiduously removed the black powder as soon as possible, testimony from several of them suggests that somewhere between six and fifteen pounds of black

³⁰Oddly enough, the interview with Mary Ryan is missing from the report.

powder were likely to accumulate in the sabots and pans prior to removal. The air in the room, therefore, must have been thick with potentially explosive particles in need of a single spark.³¹ The unfortunate Mary Ryan provided that spark when she did what she had done hundreds of times before when she encountered a stuck primer--rap the wooden frame on the bench to release it.

Anxious to assign responsibility for the blast, the Richmond press blamed Mary Ryan, even though the investigative report concluded that none of the workers, including Ryan, had ever acted carelessly.³² The Richmond Examiner, for example, claimed that Ryan had acted "in haste" instead of carefully removing the primers from the frame one by one.³³ "The explosion was caused by the

³¹Testimony of Wesley W. Smith, report of committee investigating the Brown's Island explosion, 25 March 1863, Entry 453, Box 4, R.G. 109, NARA. An additional factor in the explosion, the coal-burning stove, was ruled out as a potential cause by most of the witnesses.

³²Testimony of Wesley W. Smith, Philip Davis, Ella Barnett, Cornelia Mitchell, Agnes Miller, Paulina Smoot, Mary Cordle, and Susan Butler, report of committee investigating the Brown's Island explosion, 25 March 1863, Entry 453, Box 4, R.G. 109, NARA; Southern Illustrated News, 21 March 1863; Richmond Whig, 16 March 1863; Richmond Examiner, 16 March 1863. Emory Thomas incorporates the Richmond press' implications in his description of the accident, claiming that Mary Ryan "grew impatient" with a jammed primer. None of Ryan's testimony survives, so it is impossible to say whether she was impatient or not. Emory M. Thomas, The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capital (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 117.

³³Richmond Examiner, 16 March 1863.

careless handling of a friction primer by. . .Mary Ryan," wrote a reporter to the Richmond Whig, "who is among the number of badly wounded."³⁴ When it announced her death a few days later, the Whig identified Ryan as "the girl whose hand exploded the friction primer and caused the awful disaster."³⁵ A more plausible explanation for the explosion, however, lies in the exigencies of war and the combination of activities taking place in the crowded room where Ryan and the other victims worked. In his closing statement before the committee, Smith noted that if the production of caps and primers "had been done in a separate building, damage from the explosion would have been limited to the fatality of the person handling it."³⁶

Although the press had blamed Ryan, workers in the plant recognized the more likely cause to be bureaucratic inefficiency and the hazards of arsenal work, now made all too clear by the devastating blast. In the aftermath of the explosion, more than eighty girls and women quit the arsenal to seek safer, if less remunerative, work elsewhere. Wartime working-class poverty assured that others were waiting to take their places, however. When

³⁴Richmond Whig, 16 March 1863.

³⁵Richmond Whig, 18 March 1863. These accusations also made their way into "eyewitness" descriptions of the event in letters and diaries.

³⁶Testimony of Wesley W. Smith, report of committee investigating the Brown's Island explosion, 25 March 1863, Entry 453, Box 4, R.G. 109, NARA.

the arsenal opened for work on March 16th--as the bodies of those who were killed in the explosion were being laid to rest--at least fifty-three women were waiting to be hired.³⁷ By May 22, 1863, the plant was fully repaired, and, except for brief closures during the 1863 and 1864 strikes, it continued to operate at peak capacity until April 1865, when it was destroyed in the fire accompanying the city's surrender to Federal forces.³⁸

Seamstressing

If ordnance work was one of the most lucrative kinds of wartime employment for white working-class women, sewing, which attracted women in far greater numbers, may have been the least remunerative and probably the most exploitative. Both white and black women in Richmond had worked at seamstresses before the war began; but wartime demand for Confederate uniforms swelled their ranks dramatically.³⁹ By 1862, between two and three thousand white Richmond women stitched overcoats, jackets, trousers, drawers, and shirts for the Confederate Quartermaster's Bureau, either at home, or in factories requisitioned for

³⁷Time Record Book for Female Employees; Richmond Arsenal, Richmond, Virginia, January 1863 - April 1865, Ch. IV, Vol. 99, R.G. 109, NARA.

³⁸Richmond Examiner, 22 May 1863; Brown, "The Richmond Arsenal," 458.

³⁹Manufacturing Schedule for the 1860 Census, Richmond, Virginia, NARA.

its use.⁴⁰ Factory sewers were more likely to be skilled in the use treadle sewing machines, while most home sewers usually made garments by hand.⁴¹

Other women worked in related trades. Twenty-five women and children, for example, formed a portion of the labor force at Crenshaw Woolen Works which, by October 1861, was producing 5,000 yards of regulation army cloth and 450 blankets weekly for the Confederate army.⁴² A few

⁴⁰Richmond Whig, 22 November 1862, cited in Emory Thomas, The Confederate State of Richmond: The Biography of the Capital (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 112. With the exception of Massey's Bonnet Brigades, most secondary sources on Civil War women's work contain little information--usually not more than one or two sentences--on government seamstresses. Massey, Bonnet Brigades, 143-48. The bulk of Massey's evidence concerns Union seamstresses.

⁴¹Invented in the 1850s, the treadle sewing machine was making its way into clothing manufacturing throughout the 1860s. The Civil War, no doubt, escalated this transition. Alice Kessler-Harris, Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Work in the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 77-78; Christine Stansell, City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860 (New York: Knopf, 1986), 113-15. By 1861, treadle sewing machines were in use in some sewing factories and middle-class homes. Unfortunately, according to Stansell, sewing machines in factory settings had the effect of increasing stress and driving piece rates down. Sewing machines were also in use in the South during this time. In a letter to her mother, Abby Gwathmey, the wife of a Confederate surgeon, referred to "making [her] sewing machine do its duty" manufacturing jackets for Confederate soldiers. Abby Manly Gwathmey to her parents, 29 April 1861, Abby Manly Gwathmey Letter, ESBL. A report on working women's employment in the Richmond Examiner in 1864 refers to machine-made drawers, coats, trousers, and dusters. "White Slavery in the North," Richmond Examiner, 19 April 1864.

⁴²Richmond Enquirer, 16 October, 5 November 1861. This woolen mill was destroyed by fire May 15, 1863. Richmond Examiner, 16 May 1863.

women also appear to have been employed as government cutters, a job that traditionally had been done by men and which men continued to dominate in sewing factories in the late twentieth-century.⁴³

Government seamstresses frequently found their labor exploited by a Confederate Quartermaster's Clothing Bureau that some believed was a symbol of bureaucratic inefficiency and possibly a source of government abuse. Angry field commanders complained about shortages of supplies, while a few also accused the Bureau of awarding lucrative contracts to affluent Virginians who fulfilled them through the use of slave seamstresses.⁴⁴ Others complained that government contractors frequently underpaid the female sewers and pocketed part of the money for themselves.⁴⁵

⁴³Conversations with Milton M. Vane, various dates. My father was a production manager in men's clothing factories for most of his life. In most of these locations men are employed as cutters; but when Judith McGuire went on a search for an impoverished Confederate seamstress she had encountered in 1863 on a Richmond street corner, she reported finding a number of women in the "squalid-looking" houses in Butcher's Flats, bending over tables, cutting out "Government work." Judith Brockenbrough McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee, 2d ed. (New York: E.J. Hale & Son 1867; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1972), 253-54; all subsequent citations are to this edition.

⁴⁴John B. Floyd, to Isaac Howell Carrington, 29 January 1863, Isaac Howell Carrington Papers, DU.

⁴⁵Richmond Examiner, 26 November 1864. The Congress appointed a three-person committee to investigate this complaint, but no report of its findings has been found.

Confederate seamstresses who worked at home typically received stacks of precut fabric from the Quartermaster's office, and then returned the finished garments a few days later. An exposé in the Richmond Examiner in June 1863, revealed that women arriving at the Bureau to pick up work were often compelled to wait for hours before any was provided.⁴⁶ The Bureau claimed to have "improved" the system after the Examiner's exposé by implementing a ticketing system that limited the number of women who could wait at the depot to no more than 300 to 400 at a time. Rather than ameliorating the Bureau's inefficiency, however, this procedure only made the bureau appear more efficient because fewer women were there waiting for work. The measure also reduced the potential for disorderly female conduct, something that was a high priority in Richmond after the women's bread riot in April 1863 (See Chapter Six), at the same time that it masked the actual number of destitute women in need of employment.⁴⁷

A payroll report for 191 seamstresses who either worked in Richmond or in nearby Lynchburg, Virginia, indicates that government seamstresses who worked at home were probably the poorest paid female government workers,

⁴⁶Richmond Examiner, 21 June 1863.

⁴⁷The flow of work was also interrupted at time by strikes by male cutters, which may also help to explain the female cutters, who were possibly strikebreakers, that Judith McGuire encountered on her Richmond foray in 1863.

many of whom were also the wives or widows of Confederate soldiers, some with young children to support.⁴⁸ During a two-week period ending November 22, 1862, these Confederate sewers produced a total of 3,956 garments, including 265 coats, 305 uniform jackets, 110 pairs of trousers, 1,664 shirts, and 1,612 pairs of drawers, for which they were paid \$1,902.10, an average of \$9.96 per worker, or \$259 per year.⁴⁹ These wages were slightly higher than the \$10 to \$20 per month paid to skilled seamstresses in peacetime Richmond, but they represented just 19.6 percent of the salary earned by an unmarried cartridge maker on Brown's Island during the same period of time, and \$41 less than that paid to military hospital laundresses.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Judith McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee, 252-54. Thus far, no evidence has emerged that will permit a comparison between homeworkers and seamstresses employed in one of the government sewing factories in Richmond.

⁴⁹C.S.A., Quartermaster's Department, Payroll Report for Seamstresses, Pay Period Ending 22 November 1862, LV. This payroll was authorized by Quartermaster General L.R. Smoot, who, until January 1863, divided his time between Richmond and Lynchburg. Together with Petersburg, these three cities formed a supply "triangle" for troops stationed in the field around Richmond or for men in Richmond's hospitals. Of the three, only Richmond was organized as a permanent depot, although quartermasters general were instructed to establish temporary depots wherever necessary. Unfortunately none of the payroll reports in this file specifies whether the women lived in Richmond or Lynchburg. I am grateful to Minor Weisiger of the Library of Virginia for locating this payroll report for me.

⁵⁰According to the Manufacturing Schedule of the 1860 Census for Richmond, seamstresses employed in tailoring shops made between \$10 and \$15 dollars per month. Women who sewed for the city's single hoop skirt maker earner

Rates of pay varied with the difficulty of the garment being produced. Factory seamstresses who made overcoats and uniform jackets by machine earned \$2.00 and \$1.50 per item, respectively, while women who hand-sewed coarse flannel army shirts with felled seams, gussets, and three buttonholes were paid thirty cents for three hours of labor. Trouser makers earned seventy-five cents per pair; and tentmakers received \$2.25 per tent.⁵¹

An article copied from the New York News and published in the Richmond Examiner under the title, "White Slavery in the North," although somewhat biased because of its intent to reveal the terrible working conditions faced by Northern seamstresses, nevertheless provides a useful comparison between the wages of Confederate and Union seamstresses. It also gives some sense of the amount of time required to complete each of these garments, although this would vary considerably depending on whether the garments were machine made or sewn by hand. Whereas Southern seamstresses were paid \$1.50 to \$2.00 a piece for machine-made infantry coats and jackets, Northern women earned \$1.20 to \$1.25, respectively. Each of these garments required approximately ten hours to complete. Union seamstresses

\$13.34. Those who made capes or cloaks for the city's mantua makers were paid \$15 to \$20. All of these are monthly wages as listed by the employers.

⁵¹C.S.A., Quartermaster's Department, Payroll Report for Seamstresses, Pay Period Ending 22 November 1862, LV; Richmond Enquirer, 10 December 1861.

were paid thirteen cents per pair for hand-sewn flannel drawers complete with buckles, buttonholes, and strings, while Confederate sewers received twenty cents for the same three and a half hours of work. All government seamstresses in both regions were expected to furnish their own buttons, needles, and thread. While this comparison was intended to suggest that Confederate seamstresses earned more money for the same amount of work, it must be kept in mind that Southern seamstresses were being paid in inflated Confederate currency which actually provided them with less purchasing power than their Northern coworkers.⁵²

Given the amount of time required to complete a single garment, the output of several seamstresses on the payroll report was nothing short of astounding. Ten single women and two married women each earned more than twenty dollars apiece, while Miss C. Farmer was paid \$37.40 for producing five overcoats, sixteen jackets, six shirts, and eight pairs of trousers. These high rates of production suggest that some women were either working sixteen- to twenty-hour days or else jobbing part of their work out to children or other female relatives in their households in order to make ends meet. The output of other women was really quite

⁵²Richmond Examiner, 19 April 1864. Additional prices for work done by Union seamstresses can be found in Fincher's Trade Review, 28 January 1865, quoted in Kessler-Harris, Out to Work, 337, fn. 3.

modest, by comparison, the result, perhaps, of illness, age, inexperience, or the press of other household duties. For example, six women produced only four pairs of drawers, each, for an income of eighty cents.⁵³

In light of these meager rates of pay, it is hardly surprising to learn that women who were skilled at other sorts of work jumped at the opportunity to change occupations. Lancaster County refugee Lucy Cardwell applied for work in the Virginia State Treasury on February 9, 1863, shortly after the passage of a state law permitting the issuance of one dollar notes.⁵⁴ A few days later, her application was joined by that of Mary A. Fose, a widow with two young children, who reported that she was unable to "make enough with a needle" to care for herself and her family.⁵⁵ Cardwell and Fose were fortunate in that they possessed the reading and writing skills necessary to seek a government clerkship, but for many of the government seamstresses, this was hardly an option. Of

⁵³C.S.A., Quartermaster's Department, Payroll Report for Seamstresses, Pay Period Ending 22 November 1862, LV.

⁵⁴Application of Lucy Cardwell, 9 February 1863, OASA Records.

⁵⁵Applications of Mary A. Fose, 24 March 1863, and Miss Vin, 13 February 1863, OASA Records.

the 191 women receiving pay on November 22, 1863, nearly half (48.7 percent) signed their names with an x.⁵⁶

During the course of the war, female workers in a number of sewing factories in the North struck for better working conditions and higher wages. In July 1862, for example, one hundred seamstresses employed at the United States Arsenal in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, signed a petition protesting the Arsenal's decision to transfer work done by government seamstresses to contractors promising cheaper rates.⁵⁷ By November 1863, New York government seamstresses had formed the Working Women's Protective Union which, for the remainder of the war, engaged in labor protests aimed at improving working conditions and wages for female workers.⁵⁸ In January 1865, a delegation from this group met with President Abraham Lincoln in Philadelphia, which resulted in an investigation into the

⁵⁶C.S.A., Quartermaster's Department, Payroll Report for Seamstresses, Pay Period Ending 22 November 1862, Quartermaster General L.R. Smoot, LV.

⁵⁷Petition addressed to Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, 29 July 1862, N.A.F. 6730A, NARA, reprinted in Victorian Women: A Documentary Account of Women's Lives in Nineteenth-Century England, France, and the United States, Erna Olafson Hellerstein, Leslie Parker Hume, and Karen M. Offen, eds. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1981), 330.

⁵⁸Massey, Bonnet Brigades, 145-46; Richmond Examiner 19 April 1864.

United States Quartermaster's Bureau that led to more equitable rates of pay.⁵⁹

No such working women's organization emerged to protect the labor of Confederate seamstresses in Virginia, however. In part, this may be due to the fact that the Confederacy's decentralized putting-out system prevented any type of worker solidarity from taking shape. For Richmond women, another part of the explanation rests in the fact that, by 1863, Richmond's population was triple its size in 1860. Since many of these new inhabitants were female refugees looking for work, laboring women in Richmond faced an increasingly competitive labor market in which striking seamstresses could be easily replaced by other women with similar skills.

While seamstressing as a profession for working-class women continued, women who made their living by the needle in the postwar decades found their labor circumscribed not just by a loss of government sewing, but also by the fact that they competed for work in the postwar capital with a much larger number of women who earned their living by sewing. The Richmond population increased by 34.6 percent between 1860 and 1870; but the number of white and black women who identified themselves as seamstresses more than

⁵⁹Massey, Bonnet Brigades, 146-47.

quadrupled from 103 to 470.⁶⁰ As a result, salaries plummeted. In 1866, for example, one of the largest clothing firms in the city paid seamstresses a mere twenty-five to thirty-seven cents per day for making pantaloons, a loss of forty-three cents per day over the daily rate possible for Confederate seamstresses just a few years before.⁶¹

Prostitution

Of all the occupations available to poor white and black Richmond women during the Civil War and Reconstruction, prostitution may have been the only one that flourished during the wartime period and continued relatively unaffected at its close. Accurate accounts of the number of prostitutes defy apprehension, but evidence from newspapers, eyewitnesses, and the Richmond courts suggests that wartime Richmond attracted large numbers of prostitutes, ranging in age from thirteen to sixty, who openly went about the business of providing sexual services

⁶⁰Manufacturing Schedule for the 1860 Census, Richmond, Virginia, NARA; Angela Catherine Bongiorno, "White Women and Work in Richmond, Virginia, 1870-1884" (M.A. theses, University of Virginia, 1987), 22. The race of the seamstresses is not listed on the 1860 schedule. Of the 470 seamstresses listed in the 1870 schedule, 378 were white.

⁶¹Leslie Winston Smith, "Richmond during Presidential Reconstruction" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1974), 208.

to Confederate soldiers quartered in the city.⁶² In May 1862, for example, the Richmond Dispatch complained that "shame-faced prostitutes of both sexes" were "disporting themselves extensively on the sidewalks and in hacks, open carriages, etc. . . to the amazement of sober-sided citizens."⁶³ Less than six months later, the Richmond Enquirer charged that prostitutes were using public

⁶²Richmond Examiner, 22 August 1864. Bell Wiley has called Richmond "a mecca for prostitutes" blaming them for the increased incidence of syphilis and gonorrhea in the Army of Northern Virginia and other troops garrisoned in and around the Confederate capitol. Bell I. Wiley, The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy (1943; repr. Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1991), 53-57. Emory Thomas relies heavily on the information Wiley provides; see Emory Thomas, The Confederate State of Richmond, 68-69. Judith Walkowitz's study of prostitution in nineteenth-century England indicates that prostitutes tended to concentrate around port towns of Southampton and Plymouth, in order to serve the British sailors. Judith R. Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State (1980; repr. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1983). A letter written by a Michigan soldier on duty in Alexandria, Virginia, in 1863, places the number of brothels there at seventy-five. Richmond must have had at least as many, if not more. Charles E. Grisson, 26th Reg't., Michigan Volunteers, to E.N. Wilcox, Suffolk, Virginia, 2 June 1863, Fort War Museum and Park, Alexandria, Virginia. I am grateful to Museum Director Wanda Dowell for telling me about this letter. Regarding the incidence of venereal disease among Northern soldiers, Rudolph Kampmeier estimates that there were 73,382 cases of syphilis and 109,397 cases of gonorrhea among white soldiers in the Union armies between June 1862 and June 1866. Rudolph H. Kampmeier, "Venereal Disease in the United States Army, 1775-1900," Sexually Transmitted Diseases 9.2 (April - June 1982): 100-08. Barring recurrences or cases in which soldiers contracted both syphilis and gonorrhea, this means that one in every eleven Union soldiers might have been suffering from venereal disease, although not all of it, of course, was the result of visiting prostitutes.

⁶³Richmond Dispatch, 13 May 1862.

conveyances to engage in sexual commerce to such an extent that "[r]espectable ladies are actually afraid to be seen in a public hack, from the dread of being mistaken for these painted wretches."⁶⁴ By 1863, prostitutes had invaded the dress circle of the Richmond Theatre, where they shared the private boxes with Confederate officers.⁶⁵ In August 1864, the Examiner reported that "gaudy unblushing strumpets" strolled "among the decent women and children" in Capitol Square, listening to martial music while leaning on the arms of Confederate soldiers.⁶⁶ In the brothels lining Main and Cary streets in the eastern end of the city, Confederate soldiers broke up furniture and occasionally engaged in murderous brawls. William Downes and Patrick Kelley, both soldiers in Read's

⁶⁴Richmond Enquirer, 21 October 1862.

⁶⁵Richmond Examiner, 27 April, 2 June 1863. Traditionally, tacit agreements with many theater owners permitted prostitutes to claim the "third tier" of most theaters as a place where they could meet prospective customers or entertain themselves on their "off hours." Marilyn Wood Hill, Their Sisters' Keepers: Prostitution in New York City, 1830-1870 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 199-206; Stansell, City of Women, 173-75. According to Marilyn Hill, attitudes about the Third Tier as the prostitutes domain were on the decline by the end of the 1850s, and theater managers by this time more frequently ejected the women or barred their entry. If this was the case in Richmond, the presence of prostitutes in the dress circle, which was usually reserved for respectable ladies, must have been a real affront to Richmond society. Richmond prostitutes who were arrested in the theater and made to appear before the Mayor's Court were frequently fined as much as \$200 to \$300. At other times, the theater manager simply ejected the women.

⁶⁶Richmond Examiner, 22 August 1864.

Artillery, were killed in a brothel fight on May 9, 1862; Louisiana soldier James Kelly was stabbed to death with a stiletto in February 1864 in a "low brothel" on East Main between 23rd and 24th.⁶⁷

Richmond Mayor Joseph Mayo was appalled at the growing number of prostitutes thronging to the city and, in 1862, attempted to curtail their spread through a strict application of the city's vagrancy laws. In 1863, Mayo stepped up his campaign by ordering the city police to arrest all prostitutes streetwalking in Capitol Square.⁶⁸ These measures led to the arrest of a number of the city's "public women," but they also flooded the city's overloaded court system. Many cases were dismissed for lack of evidence, while others resulted in fines that were hastily paid by women eager to return to their profitable trade.⁶⁹ By January 1864, prostitution in Richmond had become so great a problem that a separate department was set aside in Castle Thunder (a prison housing Confederate deserters,

⁶⁷Richmond Examiner, 13 June 1861; 17 February, 22 August 1864; Richmond Dispatch, 12 May 1862.

⁶⁸Richmond Examiner, 27 April 1863.

⁶⁹Many prostitutes used aliases or frequently changed their places of residence, situations which added a layer of confusion to the adjudication process. Richmond Examiner, 27 April 1863.

Unionist sympathizers, free negroes, and those convicted of espionage) for the city's "depraved and abandoned women."⁷⁰

Although the mayor's efforts succeeded in removing a number of streetwalkers from circulation, brothels continued to flourish. Hospitals filled with convalescent soldiers, miles from home and desperate for a little feminine comfort, often provided an important source of business. In May 1862, for example, the managers of the Y.M.C.A. hospital for sick and wounded soldiers complained to the city's provost marshal about a group of "lewd females" operating a brothel directly across the street. From the brothel's windows and doors, the women gestured and displayed themselves "in a half-nude state," divert[ing] the convalescent soldiers' attention "from their legitimate business of sickness." A few of the patients ventured across the street, returning a few hours later in a drunken stupor.⁷¹

Some madams who catered to Confederate officers and highly-placed government officials found prostitution to be an extremely profitable occupation in a military enclave like Richmond. Josephine DeMerritt, for example, was a woman of considerable means and influence who was able to

⁷⁰Richmond Examiner, 19 January 1864; Alan Lawrence Golden, "Castle Thunder: The Confederate Provost Marshal's Prison, 1865-65" (M.A. thesis, University of Richmond, 1980).

⁷¹Richmond Dispatch, 6 May 1862.

avoid a prison sentence through the use of high-priced lawyers and an entourage of well-placed "material witnesses."⁷² In 1863 she owned three slaves valued at \$3,600 and personal property amounting to an additional \$3,000.⁷³ Other women, especially streetwalking prostitutes, were probably forced into the occupation by sheer economic need. Fourteen-year-old refugee Eliza Dickinson, for example, roamed the streets of Richmond in April 1862, to earn a living for herself and her two

⁷²Commonwealth v. DeMerritt, et. al., Richmond City, Hustings Court Suit Papers, July 1863 term, LV. DeMerritt appeared in court several times during 1862 and 1863, but her connections to influential men in the city, including the former treasurer of the Virginia Medical Society and the City's fire chief, meant that the prosecution usually dropped the charges, or else DeMerritt was ordered to pay a fine.

⁷³Virginia, Personal Property Tax Records, Richmond City, 1863, LV. Several white brothel operators encountered treatment similar to DeMerritt's. Frances Matthews, Margaret Hamilton, Belle Jones, Margaret Taffy, Anna Thompson, and Alice Ashley--all white women--were either found "not guilty" or received nolle prosequi judgments, suggesting that either the court was too preoccupied with more pressing matters, or else had decided in favor of leniency in cases of sexual commerce by white women. Commonwealth v. Belle Jones, January 1863 term; Commonwealth v. Margaret P. Taffey, March 1863 term; Commonwealth v. Alice Ashley, March 1863 term; Commonwealth v. Margaret Hamilton, July 1863 term, Commonwealth v. Frances Matthews, July 1863 term; Commonwealth v. Anna Thompson, n.d. 1863 term, all in Hustings Court Suit Papers, Richmond City, LV. Black madams were not treated equally, however. Lucy Smith, "a fashionable free negress," was stripped and given twenty-five lashes in August 1862 for keeping "a house of evil fame, shame, and reputation." Richmond Enquirer, 15 August 1862.

Younger brothers, after her widowed mother died shortly after the family arrived in the city.⁷⁴

Military rule under Federal Reconstruction did little to stem the tide of Richmond's sexual commerce, in part because the city continued to be a military capital overrun with men. Eight weeks after the city's surrender, white and black prostitutes were perched in the rear windows of the Virginia Towing Company, joking and laughing with prisoners across the street in Libby Prison. To the outrage of at least one eyewitness, the Libby inmates responded by "frequently. . .exposing their persons in the most indecent manner."⁷⁵

Libby at this time contained Southern soldiers incarcerated by the Federal government, so it might be possible to conclude that the Richmond courtezans outside the prison were providing a little entertainment for the inmates as a demonstration of Southern solidarity. But many more prostitutes whose business sense and desire for economic survival were stronger than their patriotism simply exchanged their grey-coated wartime customers for

⁷⁴Dickinson's father had died some time earlier. Richmond Enquirer, 29 April 1862.

⁷⁵E.G. Westcott, Adams Express Company, Richmond, to the Provost Marshal, 10 June 1875, Isaac Howell Carrington Papers, DU.

Reconstruction clients wearing U.S. Army blue.⁷⁶ "The Yankee officers are in the constant habit of riding out on horseback, and in open barouches with women of the pavé," fumed Lucy Walton Fletcher in July 1865.⁷⁷ "There is a woman by the name of Phillips that keeps a house of I. fame and has balls most every night in the week," complained Mrs. Catherine Fall in a letter written a month later. "The neighbors and my self have informed the Provost Marsial [sic] of such doings and the balls they have been having and he said he was going to have them stoped [sic]. The gards [sic] and even the captains attend them and he has not put a stop to it yet."⁷⁸

Fall's observation that Union troops did little to curtail prostitution in Richmond was probably accurate. Accusations that Union soldiers were cavorting with the city's "fallen women" continued throughout the period of

⁷⁶Mary Massey has observed that prostitutes travelling with Confederate troops on battle maneuvers seldom evacuated the field with retreating Confederates. Instead, they simply waited for Union soldiers to arrive. According to one eyewitness, they were "as willing to extend their gentle favors to the National officers as to their late Rebel protectors." Quoted in Massey, Bonnet Brigades, 73, fn. 7.

⁷⁷Entry dated 3 July 1865, Diary for April 27, 1865 - 1894, Lucy Muse (Walton) Fletcher Papers, Mss. 441-01-1, DU.

⁷⁸Mrs. Catherine Fall Letter, Mss. 2 F1902a1, VHS.

Federal occupation.⁷⁹ On January 16, 1868, for example, nine white and mulatto prostitutes, including Emma Wilson, Adelaide Johnson, and Carrie Jones, were arrested in a bawdy house operated by a mulatto madam. With them were eleven white men, including eight soldiers in army blue.⁸⁰ In January 1870, a police raid on a "dance hall" owned by John C. Clarke resulted in the arrest of five United States soldiers, four civilian males, and ten black prostitutes.⁸¹ Although some prostitutes probably left the city with the Federal forces in the spring of 1870, the number of indigenous prostitutes that remained had become so great that, in 1874, a group of reform-minded men and women organized the Magdalen Society of the City of

⁷⁹Marilynn Hill's study of prostitution in New York City does not address prostitutes' relations with the military and neither Hill's study nor Anne Butler's examination of prostitutes in the American West deals with any potential changes to prostitution as a result of the Civil War. Anne M. Butler, Daughters of Joy, Sisters of Misery: Prostitutes in the American West, 1865-90 (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1985). James McPherson does not discuss the subject either in Ordeal by Fire or Battle Cry of Freedom, and George Rable's discussion of Richmond prostitutes in Civil Wars (pp. 194-95) adds nothing new. Drew Faust makes only two references to prostitution in Mothers of Invention: the mention of Benjamin Butler's General Order No. 28 (p. 212), and a reference to a discussion between and husband and wife about him visiting "fancy women" while in the army (pp. 124-25).

⁸⁰Richmond Enquirer and Examiner, 16 January 1868.

⁸¹Richmond Whig, 8 January 1870.

Richmond, the first association for the reform and redemption of prostitutes in the South.⁸²

Conclusion

The wartime demand for uniforms and bullets led to an expansion of seamstressing, and opened up a new line of work for laboring women as Confederate munitions workers, but, unfortunately, neither of these occupations fared well in the postwar capital. Cartridge making as a profession for working-class Richmond women ended with the surrender of Lee's Army and the burning of the Brown's Island lab, and the wages paid to seamstresses in the postbellum capital declined.

In contrast, Richmond's postbellum rebuilding boom spelled a period of economic security for some of the city's white working-class men, especially those at the Tredegar mill, or artisans skilled in the building trades. Although postbellum wages never equalled those commanded of Richmond's inflationary wartime economy, carpenters, plasterers, and masons were paid between \$3.00 and \$11.00 daily, while white and black molders, patternmakers, and machinists earned between \$2.50 and \$3.00. Rollers at

⁸²Magdalen Association of the City of Richmond, Va., Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Magdalen Association of Richmond, Va. (Richmond: Dispatch Printing House, 1898), 5; William W. Parker, President, Spring Street Home for Fallen Women, Richmond, to Richmond Common Council, 25 February 1878, Richmond City Papers, Minutes of the Common Council, Bundle dated 1875 to 1880, LV.

Tredegar made between \$150.00 and \$175.00 per month and puddlers in 1870 were earning \$6.00 daily.⁸³

More important than the salaries they commanded is the fact that these occupations flourished in immediate postbellum Richmond and, thus, offered a measure of financial protection for working-class women fortunate enough to be married to men employed in any facet of Richmond's postbellum rebuilding boom. But for many single working-class women and the many working-class widows who were now the sole means of support for their families, no comparable postbellum prosperity occurred.

⁸³Leslie Winston Smith "Richmond during Presidential Reconstruction," 206-07; Richmond Whig, 15 January 1870. For a fascinating discussion of ironmaking in the nineteenth century, see David Montgomery, The Fall of the House of Labor: The Workplace, the State, and American Labor Activism, 1865-1925 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), especially Chapter 1. During the war, the Tredegar plant produced six to eight small, and six large guns weekly, as well as locomotives and all the "iron work connected with the construction of railroads, sugar and saw mills, plating machines, ship spikes, iron and brass castings, portable and stationary steam engines, machinery for plantation purposes, circular saw plates, carriage axles, and tool and machinery of every shape and size." In 1860, it listed eight hundred employees. Although it closed briefly during the 1870s, it eventually reopened on a smaller scale. Richmond Enquirer, 24 September 1861; Schedule of Manufacturing, 1860 Census for Richmond, Virginia, NARA; Sanford, A Century of Commerce, 40.

CHAPTER 5
"SISTERS OF THE CAPITAL": WHITE WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS
IN CONFEDERATE RICHMOND

While several thousand Richmond women engaged in paid work for the Confederate government, many more joined voluntary associations aimed at assisting their new nation. Women's wartime associations delivered important services to the Confederacy at the same time that they provided Richmond women with a means of expressing their political support through their domestic industry. Over the past twenty years, historians have assiduously documented Northern women's organizational development, especially for the antebellum period. But they have written relatively little that describes and contextualizes the voluntary organizations formed by Southern women or that compares them to associations created by their Northern counterparts.¹ In addition, little scholarship for either

¹The scholarship on Northern women's organizations is voluminous. Among the more important works on this subject are Nancy F. Cott, The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977); Barbara Berg, The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, The Woman and the City, 1800-1860 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); Barbara Leslie Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America

(Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1981); Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973); Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865 (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Beauty, the Beast, and the Militant Woman: A Case Study in Sex Roles and Social Stress in Jacksonian America," American Quarterly 23 (1971), 562-84; reprinted in Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 90-108; Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States, (1959; repr. Cambridge, Mass. Belknap Press, 1979), all subsequent citations are to this edition; Lori D. Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990); Jacob Rader Marcus, The American Jewish Woman, 1654-1980 (New York: KTAV Publishing, 1981), 47-51; Mary P. Ryan, Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); and Estelle B. Freedman, Their Sisters' Keepers: Women's Prison Reform in America, 1830-1930 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984). For Northern black women's nineteenth-century groups, see Dorothy Sterling, ed., We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984); Gerda Lerner, "Community Work of Black Club Women," in The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History, by Gerda Lerner. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 83-93; Anne Firor Scott, "Most Invisible of All: Black Women's Voluntary Associations," Journal of Southern History 56.1 (1990): 3-22; and Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1991). In addition to Scott's Natural Allies, information on white Southern women's organizations can be found in Suzanne Lebsack, The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985); Sarah Hunter Graham, "Woman Suffrage in Virginia: The Equal Suffrage League and Pressure-Group Politics," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 101.2 (April 1993): 227-250; Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Angie Parrott, "'Love Makes Memory Eternal': The United Daughters of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia, 1897-1920," in The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth-Century Virginia, Edward L. Ayers and John C. Willis, eds. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 219-38; LeeAnn Whites, "Women and the Lost

group of women traces the development of wartime groups, or the ways in which the Civil War altered the design or strategies of groups formed earlier in the nineteenth century.²

Cause or 'Stand by Your Man: The Ladies Memorial Association and the Reconstruction of White Manhood in the New South" (Paper presented at the Ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, 11-13 June 1993, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York); Elizabeth R. Varon, "'We Mean to Be Counted': White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia" (Ph.D. diss, Yale University, 1993); Elizabeth Varon, "Tippecanoe and the Ladies, Too: White Women and Party Politics in Antebellum Virginia," Journal of American History 82.2 (September 1993): 494-521; Sandra Gioia Treadway, "A Most Brilliant Woman: Anna White Bodeker and the First Woman Suffrage Association in Virginia," Virginia Cavalcade 43.4 (spring 1994): 166-77; and Amy Feely, "Southern Lady Meets New Woman: Women of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society and the Lost Cause in Richmond, Virginia" (Paper presented at the Northern Virginia Community College Conference on Women of the Nineteenth-Century Chesapeake, 15 November 1996, Annandale, Virginia). For Southern black women's organizations, see Elsa Barkley Brown, "Womanist Consciousness: Maggie Lena Walker and the Independent Order of St. Luke," in Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History, Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1990), 208-23; Anne Firor Scott Natural Allies; Peter Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890 (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1989); Rosyln Terborg-Penn, "African-American Women's Networks in the Anti-Lynching Crusade," in Gender, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era, Noralee Frankel and Nancy S. Dye, eds. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 148-61; Nancy A. Hewitt, "Politicizing Domesticity: Anglo, Black, and Latin Women in Tampa's Progressive Movements," in Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era, Noralee Frankel and Nancy S. Dye, eds. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 24-41; and Elsa Barkley Brown and Gregg D. Kimball, "Mapping the Terrain of Black Richmond," Journal of Urban History 21.3 (March 1995): 296-346.

²Anne Scott has called for this work to be undertaken in Natural Allies, 183.

Like their sisters to the North, Richmond women's organizational work did not begin with the Civil War. From the beginning of the nineteenth century, white women in Richmond and elsewhere throughout Virginia formed a variety of reform-minded associations whose agendas mirrored those of organizations created by Northern women during the same period of time. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Jean Friedman have suggested that Southern women's organizational politics lagged behind those of Northern women and that their reform activism was frequently limited both by religious and communal expectations, as well as by an overwhelming desire to avoid involvement with any cause related to abolitionism.³ Neither of these seems to be the case in Richmond, although Richmond women, like women throughout the South, were often subjected to a high degree of subordination by a Southern patriarchy intent on keeping

³Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); and Jean E. Friedman, The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985). Anne Firor Scott and Suzanne Lebsock disagree with Fox-Genovese's and Friedman's conclusions, arguing that Southern women engaged in a variety of reform-minded organizations from the beginning of the nineteenth century. See Lebsock, The Free Women of Petersburg, especially Chapter Seven; and Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies. The evidence for Richmond supports Lebsock and Scott's contention. As Elizabeth Varon and others have shown, Richmond women's organizational activity was a integral part of the antebellum community.

not only white women but also slaves in their respective and respectful places.⁴

In 1805, Richmond women formed the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond for the care of white female orphans. During the 1810s and 1820s, they were active in female chapters of the American Anti-Slavery Society--an African colonization group--and, between 1820 and 1850, they created women's auxiliaries to several temperance associations, including the Martha Washingtonians and the Sisters of Temperance.⁵ In 1836, a group of female reformers formed the Union Benevolent Society, an organization that aided needy Richmond women by

⁴Anne Firor Scott, "Women's Perspective on the Patriarchy in the 1850s," in Half Sisters of History: Southern Women and the American Past, Catherine Clinton, ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 76-92.

⁵Marie Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia, and Its People (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 116-118; Elizabeth R. Varon, "'We Mean to Be Counted,'" especially Part One; Patricia C. Click, The Spirit of the Times: Amusements in Nineteenth-Century Baltimore, Norfolk, and Richmond (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), 78-81. Although many in the South worried about the drunkenness of Confederate soldiers, women's ecumenical temperance organizations disappear from the records during the war. In 1882, Richmond women organized a chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Shockoe Hill, under the leadership of Mrs. J.W. Pleasants. By 1883, they were joined by a Church Hill chapter, led by Mrs. J.W. Williams. In the later 1880s and 1890s, Richmond women--Pleasants, Williams, Margaret Crenshaw and Mrs. William Maybee--filled posts in the Virginia state organization. Mrs. Howard M. Hoge, "Virginia Women's Christian Temperance Union," Mss. 7:3 HV5297 V8:1, VHS.

selling their handiwork at a local depository.⁶ And in December 1844, Richmond women were among those who gathered in the city's First Presbyterian Church to form the Virginia Association of Ladies for Erecting a Statue to Henry Clay, the organization whose efforts bore fruit the year before the Civil War began.⁷

But although women in antebellum Richmond engaged in organizational activity, the American Civil War led to a proliferation of wartime associations whose goals, in some ways, transcended those of earlier groups, in that they were aimed at the more overtly political-military objectives of promoting Southern independence or defending the Confederate capital from enemy attack. These new objectives led to a temporary redefinition of gender expectations for Southern women from individuals in need of protection to coworkers with Southern men in this war for Southern nationalism. In this way, these wartime groups bear a striking resemblance to associations formed by female patriots during the American Revolution.⁸ Indeed, many Southern women and men considered themselves the

⁶Varon, "'We Mean to Be Counted,'" 31-33.

⁷Varon, "Tippecanoe and the Ladies, Too," 511.

⁸Linda K. Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in the American Revolution (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), 39-41; 99-113.

rightful ideological and political heirs of those American revolutionaries.⁹

At the same time that the Civil War led to the creation of new organizations and a new sense of women's wartime duty, it placed tremendous burdens on women to care for the poorer and more disadvantaged portions of the population, a segment of the community which grew exponentially as the city became the refuge for individuals fleeing Union armies. In the straitened economy of the wartime capital, both old and new groups ministered to the uprooted and newly impoverished, and competed for funding.

Many wartime groups were ad hoc organizations that vanished well before the war drew to a close in the spring of 1865. Although few records of these wartime associations have survived, references scattered in diaries, letters, and Richmond newspapers reveal a lively network of activity--organizational and informal--throughout the Richmond community.

Equipping the Army

Within the first two weeks of the war, women throughout the North and South organized themselves into

⁹Lucy Fletcher, for example, on several occasions drew parallels between Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee and Washington, Jefferson, and Madison. Entry dated 16 October 1864, Keystone Diary; entry dated 20 May 1864, Loose Diary Sheets, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU. Also entry dated 13 April 1861, Diary of an Unknown Diarist, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia;

more than twenty thousand voluntary associations.¹⁰ In both regions, many joined sewing circles to make troop uniforms, thereby undercutting the labor of working-class women who needed to be paid for such work. Less than two weeks after Virginia seceded from the union, twenty-two-year-old Abby Manly Gwathmey was hard at work with a group of Richmond women sewing uniform shirts and jackets. "Mrs. Wayt and myself with the assistance of two or three ladies made 6 large jackets from 12 o'clock Wednesday to Saturday evening," Gwathmey wrote to her parents in South Carolina. "Don't you think that was doing right well for persons that did not know anything about such work?"¹¹ In the early flush of wartime mobilization, thousands of Southern women like Gwathmey took up their needles and thread or sat down at sewing machines to equip the Southern armies.¹² Elite Southern women whose "[f]ingers. . . had never plied anything stouter than an embroidery needle, tugg[ed] away

¹⁰Sara M. Evans, Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America (New York: Free Press, 1989), 114.

¹¹Abby Manly Gwathmey, Richmond, to her parents, 29 April 1861, Abby Manly Gwathmey Letter, ESBL; emphasis in the original. Abby Gwathmey was a member of a prominent Baptist family. Her brother, clergyman Basil Manly Jr. was founder and president of the Richmond Female Institute. Abby's husband, Dr. William Henry Gwathmey, was a surgeon during the war at the 4th Street Baptist Hospital. Louise Manly, "The Manly Family," VBHS, 309-10.

¹²Richmond Examiner, 10 December 1861.

laboriously on heavy cloth, occasionally putting in a sleeve hindpart before or a pocket upside down."¹³

By early June, Ellen Mordecai and the women in her sewing circle had completed seventy-five tents, while Betty Herndon Maury had worked with others, including her cousin and her aunt, to sew eighty overcoats for a Georgia company.¹⁴ By the fall, Richmonder Catherine Hopley had bought up all the city's yarn to be knitted into socks and gloves.¹⁵ As Confederate troops first fell on Virginia soil during the fighting at Manassas, patriotic Richmond women formed the Soldiers' Aid Society of Virginia, which published appeals in the Richmond newspapers urging women to assist the hospitals by collecting medical supplies and by providing a cadre of volunteer workers.¹⁶ Fifty-one-year-old Emma Mordecai, a member of one of the city's most prominent Jewish families, was typical of the thousands of

¹³Catherine Mary Powell (Noland) Cochran Recollection, VHS.

¹⁴Ellen Mordecai, Richmond, to Alfred Mordecai, Philadelphia, 6 June 1861, Ellen Mordecai Papers, LV; entries dated 4 June and 29 August 1861, Betty Herndon Maury Diary, LC.

¹⁵Louly [Mrs. D. Giraud] Wright, A Southern Girl in '61: The Wartime Memories of a Confederate Senator's Daughter (New York: Doubleday, Page, & Company, 1905), 50. Most knitters attached tiny slips of paper bearing the women's names and a few encouraging words of cheer. Fannie A. Beers, Memories (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1890), 50.

¹⁶Richmond Enquirer, 2 August 1861. This organization was founded by Nancy Bierne Macfarland and Ellen Ruffin.

Richmond women who heeded the call. By the spring of 1864, Mordecai was making regular donations of buttermilk, chicken soup, ice cream, rice custard, and frozen lemonade to soldiers in three Richmond hospitals within walking distance of her home.¹⁷

Churches were frequently the hubs of women's voluntary work and often served as meeting places for their wartime associations. Evangelical women at Centenary Methodist Church in Shockoe Hill made cornshuck mattresses, cooked soup, and rolled bandages, while others at Third Street Presbyterian combined praying with knitting socks and scraping bandage lint.¹⁸ Jewish women at Beth Ahabah met in the synagogue basement to scrape lint and make clothes for Confederate soldiers.¹⁹ Mary Williams Taylor and her

¹⁷Entries dated 26, 29 May; 9, 17 June 1864, Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS. Mordecai volunteered her time at Winder, Seabrook, and St. Francis de Sales hospitals.

¹⁸Edith Denny White, The Elect Ladies of Centenary: The Story of the Organization and Development of the Woman's Work of Centenary Methodist Church, Richmond, Virginia, through One Hundred and Fifty Years, 1810-1960 (n.p.: Women's Society of Christian Service, 1964), 13. This is a brief history published privately by the church's women's society. "Third Street Presbyterian Church: 150th Anniversary History, 1835-1985" (Paper presented in honor of the church's 150th anniversary in 1985), 1, LV. No description of scraping bandage lint can be found; but presumably this activity involved scraping the nap or fibers from worn fabrics with a sharp implement, such as a knife edge or a piece of broken glass. This lint was used to form a soft matting for bandages, especially those covering amputations.

¹⁹Herbert T. Ezekiel and Gaston Lichtenstein, The History of the Jews of Richmond from 1769 to 1917 (Richmond: Herbert T. Ezekiel, Printer, 1917), 263.

daughter, Frances Taylor Dickinson, labored from May to August 1861 with a number of other women from Grace Baptist Church, sewing uniform shirts and trousers for soldiers from North and South Carolina. Over the course of about two months, the Grace Baptist women made more than one thousand shirts and five hundred pairs of trousers.²⁰ When the city was under threat of Federal attack in April 1862, a massive city-wide effort by women of various denominations netted a total of 100,000 sandbags to be used for erecting an earthwork defense on the city's western boundary.²¹ In the relatively non-industrialized South,

²⁰Mary Williams Taylor, Richmond, to Charles Elisha Taylor, 11, 14 May, 19 May, 5 June, 7 August, and 2 n.m., 1861, Charles Elisha Taylor Papers, UVA. The Taylors were a prominent family in Baptist Richmond. Mary Taylor's father, James Barnett Taylor was a clergyman member of the Southern Baptist Convention and served as secretary to the Foreign Mission Board; he was also a trustee of Richmond College and a founder of the Virginia Baptist Seminary. Her sister, Frances, was married to Alfred E. Dickinson, a co-editor of the Religious Herald and the superintendent of the Baptist Colporterage and Sunday School. Her sister, Jane, was the wife of the Rev. John L. Prichard, of Wilmington, North Carolina, who died November 13, 1862 of yellow fever. Her brothers James (Jemmie) and George were both Baptist clergy, with George serving as chaplain of Stonewall Jackson's Corps. After the war, Charles Taylor, who served in Company F of the 1st Virginia Volunteers, became president of Wake Forest College. Mary later married Luther Dickinson, a physician, and Alfred Dickinson's brother. Mary W. Dickinson, "The Diary of Mary W. Taylor," W. Harrison Daniel, ed. Virginia Baptist Register 19 (1980): 916-38.

²¹Judith Brockenbrough McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee (1867; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1972), 107-8 (All subsequent citations are to this edition.); interview with Mrs. Francis Giles (Mrs. A.D. Townes), quoted in Elizabeth Wright Weddell, 2 vols. St. Paul's Church, Richmond, Virginia: Its Historic Years and Memorials

women's contributions such as these were hardly symbolic, but rather represented important practical contributions to the Confederate cause.

St. Paul's Church, the home church of both Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis, was a veritable nerve center of energy. By May 1862, the women of St. Paul's Sewing Society employed ten to twenty seamstresses, who worked side-by-side with the St. Paul ladies, making sandbags, mattresses, overcoats, haversacks, uniforms, underclothing, and sheets in the church's lecture room.²² By July, the St. Paul seamstresses had produced nearly two thousand bed sacks, pillow cases, and sheets.²³

Through these groups, women's routine domestic acts became political acts, too, as they had nearly ninety years before during the American Revolution, when patriot women boycotted tea and coffee, wove homespun fabric, and sewed

(Richmond: William Byrd Press, 1931), vol. 1, 178-79; John H. Worsham, One of Jackson's Foot Cavalry, James I. Robertson, ed. (Jackson, Tenn.: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1961), 191-2; Dickinson, "The Diary of Mary W. Taylor:" 928; Sally Brock Putnam, Richmond during the War: Four Years of Personal Observations (New York: G.W. Carleton, 1867: repr. New York: Time-Life Books, 1983), 112.

²²Richmond Examiner, 29 May 1862, quoted in Weddell, St. Paul's Church, Richmond, Virginia, vol. 1, 182.

²³Mrs. George W. Munford, Richmond, to Thomas H. Ellis, 13 July 1862, quoted in Weddell, St. Paul's Church, Richmond, Virginia, vol. 1, 183.

uniform shirts as a show of patriotism.²⁴ By 1862, Confederate women's homespun clothing had become the basis for a patriotic song written by Kentuckian Carrie Bell Sinclair and sung to the tune of "The Bonnie Blue Flag," a song that enjoyed great popularity throughout the Confederacy, and which was frequently sung by Confederate soldiers preparing for battle.²⁵ The first verse of this song summed up the attitude of many Confederate women who took great pride in the domestic ingenuity as a symbol of their patriotism.

Oh, yes, I am a Southern girl,
And glory to the name;
I boast of it with greater pride
Than glittering wealth or fame;
I envy not the Northern girl
Her robes of beauty rare.
Though diamonds deck her snowy neck
And pearls bestud her hair.
Hurrah, hurrah!
For the Sunny South so dear;
Three cheers for the homespun dress
That Southern ladies wear.²⁶

While some Richmond groups no doubt continued to provide Confederate soldiers with much needed clothing and

²⁴Kerber, Women of the Republic. Southern newspapers drew on this ideological heritage in their claim to be the true heirs of the revolutionary patriotism of Jefferson and Madison.

²⁵Carrie Bell Sinclair, "The Homespun Dress," ESSL.

²⁶Authorship of the lyrics is unclear. One account credits Carrie Bell Sinclair with writing them, while an unidentified newspaper clipping says they were the work of a young Alabama soldier who died at Perryville. Carrie Bell Sinclair Papers, ESSL.

supplies, during the war other organizations shifted their attention toward the task of succoring the city's growing indigent population. By 1864, women of the city's Union Benevolent Society had joined forces with Richmond men to form the Richmond Soup Association which, during and after the war, distributed soup to needy white and black Richmonders for twenty-five cents per quart from the kitchen in the basement of the Metropolitan Hall.²⁷ By 1883, several hundred Richmond women met to organize the Richmond Exchange for Women's Work, which operated a store based on the Union Benevolent Society's original antebellum goal of selling the domestic products of destitute Richmond women, an activity that had taken on even greater importance in Richmond given the impoverished condition of many elderly widows and spinsters in the 1870s and 1880s.²⁸

Building Gunboats

As women met and sewed for the Confederate armies, they shared information about the war that helped shape

²⁷Richmond Dispatch, 26 November 1864; Richmond Examiner, 8 December 1864; Richmond Soup Association Papers, ESBL.

²⁸First annual Report of the Exchange for Woman's Work of Richmond, Va., for the Year Ending March 1st, 1884. (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1884). This pamphlet can be found in the Richmond Exchange for Women's Work Papers, 1883-1957, Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia.

their critique of its progress as well as the vulnerability of their community. "We are intensely anxious," Judith McGuire wrote in April 1862 when Union and Confederate soldiers faced each other near Yorktown, Virginia. "[O]ur conversation while busily sewing [sandbags] at St. Paul's Lecture-Room, is only of war. We hear of so many horrors committed by the enemy in the Valley--houses searched and robbed, horses taken, sheep, cattle, etc. killed and carried off, servants deserting their homes, churches desecrated!"²⁹ A few weeks earlier, a "large assembly" of white Richmond women alarmed by persistent rumors about Federal warships on the James River had met in the basement of the Broad Street Methodist Church to organize the Ladies' Defense Association, a group whose primary purpose was to raise money for building ironclad gunboats to patrol the river.³⁰

²⁹Judith McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War, 107-08. From early April 1862, Union General George B. McClellan had been marching his army northward through Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, in the direction of Richmond. In these assemblies, according to Sally Putnam, "certain of the chicken-hearted officials of the government received a merited share of ridicule." Putnam, Richmond during the War, 132.

³⁰Minutes, 27 March 1862, Ladies' Defense Association Papers, ESBL, hereafter cited as LDA Papers; Richmond Enquirer, 28 March 1862; entry dated 6 April 1862, Betty Herndon Maury Diary, LC. The records of this organization are very sparse. I have fleshed out my account by using the association's annual meeting reports which were usually published in one or more of the Richmond newspapers. Part of the North's strategy for winning the war involved creating a blockade around the Southern coastline to prevent Confederates from engaging in trade with European

Situated at the city's southern border, the James, with its swiftly flowing waters and dangerous undercurrents, had long served as a major artery that provided access through the docks at Shockoe and Rocketts to the numerous tobacco warehouses and flour mills that formed the backbone of Richmond's antebellum economy. But with the declaration of war and the naming of Richmond as the Confederate capital, the James took on more ominous significance as a likely conduit for Federal warships bent on an amphibious assault. On several occasions during the war, Union vessels made their way up the James well within view of Richmond's citizenry and, in more numerous instances, rumors of sightings threw local residents into a panic about an imminent attack. Many of these concerns probably stemmed from what Richmonders came to refer to as "Pawnee Sunday," the first Sunday after Virginia had seceded from the Union when Richmonders were frightened by rumors that the Federal sloop-of-war Pawnee was advancing up the James. After that, according to Sally Putnam, Richmonders were frequently awakened by alarm bells on

trading partners. This meant the constant presence of Federal ships near Southern ports. Southern women formed gunboat societies--organizations which, like Richmond's Ladies' Defense Association, built iron-clad gunboats--in other communities, among them Charleston, South Carolina, and Macon, Georgia. Southern Churchman, 31 October 1862; Constance Cary (Mrs. Burton) Harrison, Recollections Grave and Gay (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1911), 95; Matthew Page Andrews, Women of the South in War Times (Baltimore: Norman Remington, 1920), 296-97.

Sunday morning calling out troops for local defense.³¹

The location of a Confederate munitions laboratory and a camp for Federal prisoners on two islands in the James served to heighten the river's strategic importance and exacerbated concerns about its protection.³²

Although defending one's community was a responsibility traditionally associated with men, an address delivered at the Ladies' Defense Association's organizational meeting by corresponding secretary Wilhelmina McCord Vernon redefined home front protection as a responsibility that women and men shared. Drawing on images of Manon Roland and Thérésia Tallien, two heroines of the French Revolution, Vernon maintained that it was the "duty of the women of the South, who are true to the sacred trusts assigned them by nature, . . .to render every assistance in their power for the protection of their homes

³¹Putnam, Richmond during the War, 24-25. Other references to "Pawnee Sundays" can be found in Mary Boykin Chesnut, Mary Chesnut's Civil War, C. Vann Woodward, ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1981), 181, all other citations are to this edition of Chesnut's diary; entry for 12 May 1864, Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS; reminiscence of William C. Bentley, Appendix I, in Weddell, St. Paul's Church, Richmond, Virginia, vol. 2, 589-90; Rosena Hutzler Levy, Richmond, to her children, 31 May 1907, quoted in Saul Viener, "Rosena Hutzler Levy Recalls the Civil War," American Jewish Historical Quarterly 62 (1973): 308-09; Richmond Dispatch, 22 May 1862; Religious Herald, 11 February 1864.

³²The prisoner-of-war camp was located at Belle Isle, a large island in the middle of the river just below Mayo's Bridge. The ordnance plant was located on the smaller and more narrow Brown's Island a few yards from the Richmond shoreline.

and children."³³ Drafted a week later, the Association's constitution reinforced this idea of Confederate women as partners in home front defense. Claiming for themselves the title of "sisters of the capital," the women promised to "encourage the hearts and strengthen the hands of our husbands, brothers, fathers, and friends by all means within our power."³⁴ To particularize their contributions as women, the members pledged to

give of such ornaments of gold, and articles of silver, as are our private property. For should it be our sad fate to become slaves, ornaments would ill become our estate of bondage; while if God, in His infinite mercy shall crown our efforts with success, we will be content to wear the laurel leaves of victory, and point our children to our civil and religious liberty--so gloriously achieved and say, "These be thy jewels."³⁵

By linking the sacrifice of these outward symbols of feminine adornment with the "laurel leaves of victory" worn by conquering heroes, the women of the Ladies' Defense Association attempted to recast their actions in the

³³An account of this first meeting and of Vernon's speech can be found in the Richmond Enquirer, 28 March 1862; the emphasis in the quotation is mine. Wilhelmina McCord Vernon was a Georgian who Mary Chesnut describes as "more Confederate than the Confederation." Given to bold patriotic rhetoric, Vernon, according to Chesnut, was also occasionally under suspicion as a spy; she died of a fever in May 1862. Chesnut, Mary Chesnut's Civil War, 361-4.

³⁴Constitution and slate of officers, LDA Papers, ESBL.

³⁵Constitution and slate of officers, LDA Papers, ESBL.

wartime context and place them on equal footing with those of men.³⁶

This belligerization of women's roles can also be seen in the changing masthead of the Magnolia, a Southern literary newspaper published in Richmond, that focused on women and the home. When it began publication in 1862, the Magnolia's masthead featured a woman seated at a writing desk with a quill pen in her hand. She was surrounded by library books, while a woman in the background appeared to be operating a printing press. In the foreground, a group of cherubs prepared copies of the paper for delivery (fig. 5.1).³⁷ By 1863, however, this masthead was replaced by one that featured a helmeted bust of Minerva, the goddess of war and the benefactor of cities, in the foreground, with a fenced country home and a train on a trestle in the rear. The gate to the fence was open, perhaps to suggest the absence of a loved one whose return was imminent (fig. 5.2).³⁸ The Magnolia's new masthead contributed to the idea of an expanded role for women, as defined by the warlike Minerva, in protecting not only the family hearth but also the city and the region's transportation network.

³⁶This is comparable to the politicization of housewifery undertaken by colonial women during the American Revolution. Kerber, Women of the Republic, especially chapters 2 and 3.

³⁷Magnolia, 11 October 1862.

³⁸Magnolia, 21 March 1863.

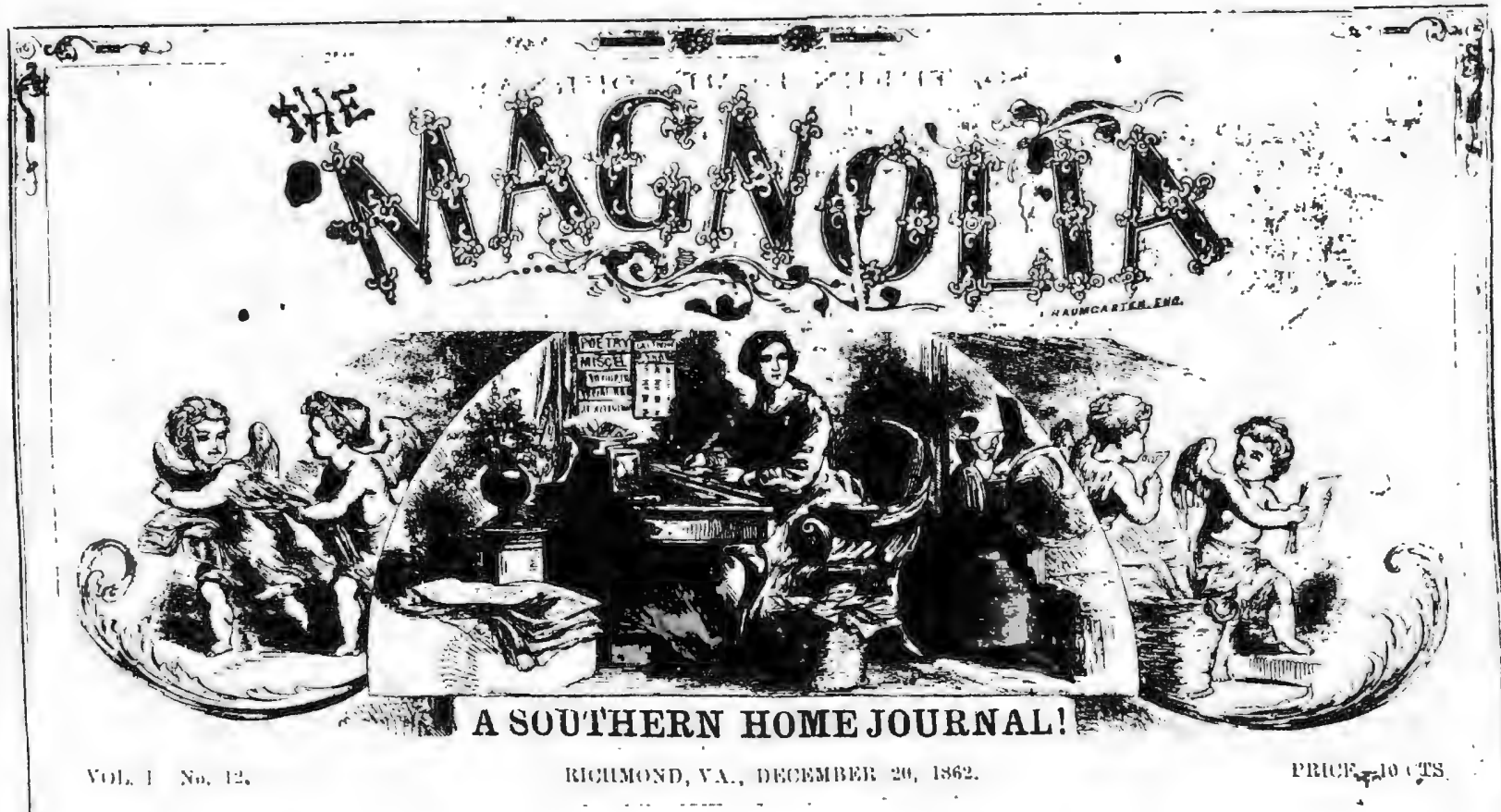


Figure 5.1. Masthead of the Magnolia, December 20, 1862
(Source: Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia)

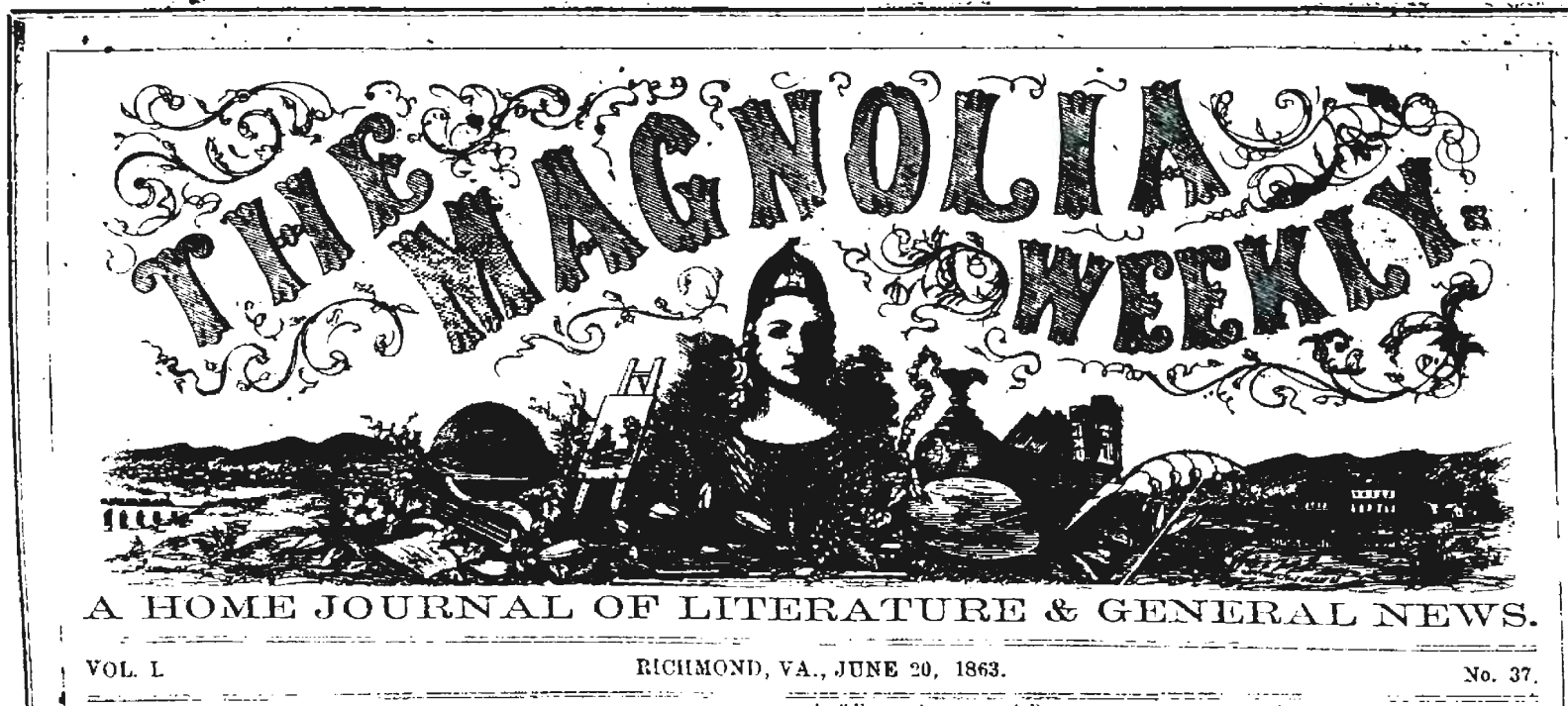


Figure 5.2. Masthead of the Magnolia, June 20, 1863
(Source: Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia)

A few Northern and Southern women transformed this militaristic image into a reality by surreptitiously enlisting in the Union or Confederate armies. Mary Massey has estimated that more than four hundred women took up arms as Union and Confederate soldiers, a number of them serving two or more years before their gender was revealed.³⁹ Lauren Cook Burgess has identified at least 135 women in uniform, four of whom were either wounded or killed at the Battle of Antietam and one of whom died while participating in Pickett's charge during the Battle of

³⁹Massey, Bonnet Brigades (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 78-79. Drew Faust accepts Massey's estimate as a realistic one. Drew Gilpin Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 202-04. Although George Rable discusses the deadly seriousness of female militia women, he completely neglects female soldiers. George W. Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 151-53. The most infamous cross-dressing Civil War soldier was probably Loreta Janeta Velazquez who, according to her published memoir, spent more than three years in the Confederate Army as Colonel John Buford. Loreta Janeta Velazquez, The Woman in Battle, C.J. Worthington, ed. (Richmond: Dustin Gilman & Co., 1876; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1972). For a critique of Velazquez's memoir and an account of the experiences of Lauren Cook Burgess, a contemporary Civil War re-enactor who interprets the experiences of the female soldier, see Elizabeth Young, "Confederate Counterfeit: The Case of the Cross-Dressing Civil War Soldier," in Passing and the Fictions of Identity, Elaine K. Ginsberg, ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 181-217. Although Velazquez's exploits have been dismissed by some, it is harder to discount the military service of other women, a number of whom accompanied their husbands into battle, and a few of whom were wounded in combat. For an account of a Northern female soldier, see Lauren Cook Burgess, An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, 153rd Regiment, New York State Volunteers (Pasadena, Md.: Minerva Press, 1996).

Gettysburg.⁴⁰ In Richmond, hospital nurse Catherine Hodges, who was listed as a member of Company K, 5th Regiment, Louisiana Volunteers, strode the city streets clad in a Zouave uniform with a red cap.⁴¹ Although a few cross-dressing women in Richmond were summarily arrested and thrown in prison for "unsexing" themselves, or under the suspicion that they were either prostitutes or spies, Hodges seems to have avoided this consequence, and was later buried in the Soldiers' Section of Hollywood Cemetery with full military honors.⁴²

⁴⁰Lauren Cook Burgess maintains that women enlisted for a variety of reasons, including patriotism, a sense of adventure, and a desire to be with husbands and lovers. Rosetta Wakeman, a private in the 153rd New York State Volunteers, had been cross-dressing as a man for at least six months and working as a manual laborer on a coal barge when she decided to enlist in the Union Army because the enlistment bounty of \$152 was better than any wages she could earn as a woman. Other female soldiers whom Burgess has been able to document through their military records include Jennie Hodgers (alias Albert D. Cashier, Co. G., 95th Illinois Regiment); Mary and Mollie Bell (alias Tom Parker and Bob Morgan); and Sarah Emma Edmonds (alias Franklin Thompson, 2d Michigan Volunteers). Burgess, An Uncommon Soldier, xii, 4-10.

⁴¹Zouave uniforms were colorful costume composed of either white leggings, red Turkish pantaloons, flowing white shirts, and navy blue, bolero-type vests. Headgear was a tasseled fez or occasionally a turban. Zouaves originally were French Algerian soldiers who became known for their bravery in the Crimean War. During the Civil War, the North and South both had zouave units; one of them was from Richmond.

⁴²Mary H. Mitchell, Hollywood Cemetery: The History of a Southern Shrine (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1985), 51. Lillie Smith of Mercer County, Tennessee, was arrested wearing "white pantaloons, a black dress frock coat, black patent leathers, and a slouch hat" on a train travelling between Lynchburg and Richmond. She claimed she was on a

In Southern communities bereft of male defenders, women organized militia units to protect their homes from attack. In LaGrange, Georgia, women formed the Nancy Harts, a militia unit named for a Georgia heroine of the American Revolution.⁴³ Although no female militias appear to have existed in Richmond, Virginia Governor John Letcher received several letters from women requesting "a brace of pistols" or Colt revolvers for use in case of a Union invasion.⁴⁴ By forming their organization, the members of the Ladies' Defense Association indicated a similar intent to defend their city from invasion.

The Association's founders were women of both influence and accomplishment. The president was Maria Gaitskell Foster Clopton, the sixty-two-year old widow of John Bacon Clopton, a Richmond judge from 1852 until his death in 1860.⁴⁵ A diminutive mother of twelve with dark

trip to visit her lover. Richmond Examiner, 23 May, 2 June 1863. Sixteen-year-old Fernella Green was taken into custody wearing a "gypsy hat and black and white checker duster." In court, she testified that she only wanted to go to the Metropolitan Hall (a Richmond theater) alone on a Saturday night. Richmond Examiner, 19 May 1863. Cross-dresser Anne Jackson was imprisoned for prostitution in April 1864. Richmond Examiner, 12 April 1864.

⁴³"Personal Recollections of the War: Girl Confederate Soldiers" (Paper read before a meeting of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Atlanta, Georgia, 13 February 1902), Lelia C. (Pullen) Morris Recollection, ESBL.

⁴⁴Rable, Civil Wars, 152.

⁴⁵W. Asbury Christian, Richmond: Her Past and Present (Richmond: L.H. Jenkins, 1912), 174; Henrietta Runyon Winfrey Reminiscences, #M837:1 C6235, VHS. A veteran of

brown hair and blue eyes, Maria Clopton briefly operated a private hospital for Confederate soldiers on Franklin Street.⁴⁶ Other officers and members included Mrs. Robert Craig Stanard, the wife of a judge whose home often served as a meeting place for Richmond elites; Anne Augusta Myers, the wife of a prominent Jewish attorney and the daughter of the former governor; Amelia Gorgas, the wife of the Confederate Ordnance Bureau chief; and Mrs. Joseph R. Anderson, whose husband owned the Tredegar Iron Works where the scrap iron collected by the association was later melted into iron plate for the vessel's outer skin.⁴⁷ The

the War of 1812, John B. Clopton also served, for a time, in the Virginia Senate, and participated in the organization of such Richmond enterprises as the James River and Kanawha Company (March 16, 1832), Richmond College (March 4, 1840), and the Virginia Historical and Philosophical Society (December 29, 1831). In 1835, he was a pall bearer at the funeral of U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall. Christian, Richmond: Her Past And Present, 119-20, 131, and 141.

⁴⁶This description of Clopton is from a C.S.A. War Department pass issued July 7, 1864. Maria G. Clopton Papers, ESBL.

⁴⁷Chesnut, Mary Chesnut's Civil War, 431-2; Emory M. Thomas, The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capital (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 116. Gustavus Myers was a prominent Richmond lawyer who served for more than thirty years as a member of the Richmond Common Council, and its president from 1843 to 1855. He also served on the executive committee of the Virginia Historical Society. Myers's wife, Anne Augusta Giles Myers, was an Episcopalian and the daughter of former governor William B. Giles. Virginus Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 116 (All subsequent citations are to this edition); Malcolm H. Stern, comp. First American Jewish Families: 600 Genealogies, 1654-1977 (Cincinnati, Oh.: American Jewish Archives, 1978). Myers was part of a

presence of so many prominent Richmond women might suggest that the Association catered to the city's elites but, at a modest \$1 per year, the dues of the Association were well within the reach of numerous women in white, middle-class Richmond society.

Within weeks after the Association was organized, a delegation of women met, first, with Jefferson Davis and, later, with Secretary of the Navy Stephen R. Mallory to arrange for commissioning the ironclad's construction along the lines of the C.S.S. Virginia.⁴⁸ Funding for the project came from a variety of sources: donations of gold and silver jewelry; the proceeds of one night's performance of Lee Mullany's War Illustrations; and a large bazaar featuring the sale of "sculpture, statuary, paintings, engravings, books, jewelry, cutlery, . . . needlework,

delegation of Richmond citizens who greeted Abraham Lincoln on his visit to the former Confederate capital shortly after the war. He later was one of a committee of twenty men who each posted \$50,000 for the release of ex-Confederate President Jefferson Davis from Fortress Monroe. Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, 196; Christian, Richmond: Her Past and Present, 228; list of nominees, n.d., LDA Papers, ESBL.

⁴⁸Minutes, 3 April 1862, LDA Papers, ESBL. The Virginia was the former U.S.S. Merrimac, which was seized by Confederate troops in their capture of the Norfolk naval yard in April 1861. During the winter of 1861, it was rebuilt as an ironclad ram which, on March 8, 1862, dealt a surprise blow to the Federal blockade at Hampton Roads, destroying two ships completely and running three others aground. James McPherson, Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: Knopf, 1982), 178-9.

embroidery, fancy clothing, [and] furniture of all descriptions."⁴⁹

While this list of donated items might make it seem as if wealthy women were the mainstay of the organization's fundraising efforts, some of the most important contributions were domestic articles made of iron--bells, tea kettles, andirons, tongs, stoves, and cooking pots--which were collected at local depots and shipped by rail to Tredegar.⁵⁰ Despite the massive industrialization effort brought about by Southern secession, iron in the Confederacy was often in short supply, a fact Maria Clopton emphasized in a letter she wrote to the editor of the Richmond Dispatch in April 1862. Calling on women and men throughout the South "to exert themselves to collect and

⁴⁹The benefit performance of Mullany's War Illustrations, also called a panopticon, was held on June 27, 1862, at Metropolitan Hall. The Ladies' Defense Association received a donation of one thousand tickets worth \$500. Richmond Enquirer, 28 March 1862. One member, Susan Montague, sold 188 tickets on her own. Susan Montague to Maria G. Clopton, Richmond, 3 April 1862; Minutes, 2 April 1862, LDA Papers, ESBL.

⁵⁰Letter to the Editor of the Richmond Enquirer, from Philip Catesby Jones, Louisa Co., Virginia, on behalf of Mrs. Col. J.B. Strange, Gordonsville, Orange Co., Virginia, 23 April 1862; to Mrs. Vernon [secretary of LDA], Richmond, from Mary A. Fitch, Charlottesville [Virginia], 3 May 1862; to "Madam" [Maria G. Clopton], Richmond, from Catherine P. Speed, Lynchburg [Virginia], 27 December n.y.; to "My Dear Cousin" from J.W. Woolfolk, Mulberry Place, Milford, 19 March 1865; to R.H. Maury, Richmond, from E.M. Gillespie, Russelville, Tennessee, 24 April n.y.; to Mrs. Clopton, Richmond, from Cornelia A. Berkeley, President, Aid Society, Prince Edward Court House [Virginia], n.d.; LDA Papers, ESBL.

send to the Tredegar Works all the metals they can," Clopton also sought to extend her appeal across class lines by offering as an example of patriotic self-denial a "poor widow [who]. . . offered to the Association a bell and metal kettle which she had owned for forty years."⁵¹ Here was something all women, rich or poor, could do to aid their beloved nation. Rather than following the scriptural admonition to beat their swords into plowshares, they could transform their cookpots into battering rams. To buttress its appeal for scrap iron, the Association also appointed a delegation of women who met with the city's tobacconists to secure donations of discarded iron screws and frames used in tobacco processing.⁵²

It is unclear from the Association's records exactly how much iron was raised from these two sources. Although the tobacconists pledged their support, no account of their donations remains, while the surviving record of amounts raised through contributions by individual women totals a little more than half a ton.⁵³ What is more apparent, however, is the fact that by late June 1863, the Ladies' Defense Association had succeeded in raising enough money to launch their first gunboat, the Richmond, in a public

⁵¹Richmond Enquirer, [n.d. April 1862].

⁵²Minutes, 7 April 1862, LDA Papers, ESBL.

⁵³Receipt from J.R. Anderson & Co. to Mrs. J.A. Robertson, 30 April 1862; J.W. Woolfolk, Mulberry Place, to "Dear Cousin" 19 March 1863, LDA Papers, ESBL.

ceremony at the Navy Yard at Rocketts.⁵⁴ A second gunboat, the Fredericksburg was launched later that year. Although the James River Squadron, as it was known, eventually was comprised of three ironclads--the Virginia, the Richmond, and the Fredericksburg--and five wooden-hulled steamers--the Hampton, the Nansemond, the Roanoke, the Branfort, and the Torpedo, it is likely that only the Richmond and the Fredericksburg were built with the help of the Ladies' Defense Association. The entire fleet was blown up at Drewry's Bluff just north of Richmond when the city fell to Federal troops on April 3, 1865.⁵⁵

Anne Firor Scott has commented that one of the ironies of the Civil War is that work done by Southern women's wartime associations may have actually prolonged the war by

⁵⁴Richmond Examiner, 30 June 1863. Ernest Taylor Walthall later recalled standing at the Confederate Naval Yard as a young boy, watching as first the Richmond, and later the Fredericksburg were built "at the sacrifice of our ladies' jewelry." Ernest Taylor Walthall, Hidden Things Brought to Light (Richmond: Dietz Printing Co., 1933), 29. By the spring of 1863, the women had raised \$17,705. Minutes, n.d. April 1863, LDA Papers, ESBL. The Macon, Georgia, society launched a gunboat in 1862. Matthew Page Andrews, Women of the South in War-Times. (Baltimore: Norman Remington, 1920).

⁵⁵Raphael Semmes Papers, DU. Nicknamed the "workhorse of the James, the Fredericksburg was 188 feet long and forty feet wide. It weighed more than 700 tons, but drew only nine feet of water. Historians believe that the Fredericksburg and possibly the remains of the rest of the James River Squadron lie "under ten to fifteen feet of silt near the north shore of Drewry's Bluff, southeast of Richmond near Hopewell," where they are currently endangered by a project to dredge the James River to a depth of twenty-five feet. Potomac News, 16 August 1993.

supplying Confederate armies with goods and services beyond those provided by the government departments.⁵⁶ And indeed, this may have been the case. Confederate women in thousands of wartime associations channeled their domestic industry into making uniforms, tents, and haversacks; preparing and preserving foodstuffs; rolling bandages; and growing medicinal herbs, items which the fledgling nation desperately needed but was ill equipped to provide.⁵⁷ Confederate women in Richmond participated in this process not only by equipping Confederate troops but also by playing a role in Richmond's defense by raising money for ironclad gunboats and by manufacturing thousands of sandbags for the city's fortifications.

With the war's end, the work of many ad hoc associations like the soldiers' aid societies and the Ladies' Defense Association came to a close. In its aftermath, many Richmond women channeled the organizational energies they had developed during the war into caring for the remains of those who had perished in the conflict. (See Chapter Ten.) The war's ghastly toll of lives also had transformative consequences for the women of the Female Humane Association who, since the beginning of the

⁵⁶Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies, 72.

⁵⁷For a discussion of the problems of supply in the Southern armies, see McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 180-207, and Frank E. Vandiver, Rebel Brass: The Confederate Command System (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 79-107.

nineteenth century, had cared for a portion of the city's orphaned children.⁵⁸

Caring for the Children

The Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond was one of the city's oldest charitable groups and the first ecumenical association to be organized by white Richmond women.⁵⁹ Formed in 1805, the Association operated a nonsectarian Christian asylum for "the relief and comfort of distressed females," as well as a day school for poor white girls, both of which were located on the corner of Charity and St. John streets near the northwest

⁵⁸Of the 258,000 Southern white men who lost their lives in the Civil War, approximately 77,400 were married. Many were probably also fathers of dependent children. Maris A. Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the American Civil War? Some Preliminary Demographic Speculations," Journal of American History 76.1 (June 1989): 34-58; and Amy E. Holmes, "'Such Is the Price We Pay': American Widows and the Civil War Pension System," in Toward a Social History of the American Civil War: Exploratory Essays, Maris A. Vinovskis, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 171-96.

⁵⁹The records of the Female Humane Association--later the Memorial Foundation for Children--are extremely sketchy for the period from 1860-80. No minutes of the meetings for the war years survive, although I do have minutes for the period from 1875 to 1880. My history of this organization is therefore based on two brief antebellum published histories (12 and 16 pages, respectively); the annual reports to the board of directors for 1877, 1883, and 1886; and the Association's account books which cover the entire period. I have supplemented these with a few additional annual reports which appeared in the Richmond press or in the minutes of Richmond's city council when the association petitioned for financial support.

city boundary.⁶⁰ During much of the nineteenth century, the Asylum took in full- and half-orphans; provided them with a rudimentary education in "reading, arithmetic, needle work, knitting, spinning, and every kind of domestic business"; and then bound a number of them out for service in the homes of affluent white families throughout the surrounding counties.⁶¹ Although the Asylum staff and the number of residents it served was originally quite small, it grew to include a matron, and one or more assistant matrons, several teachers, a visiting doctor, and a variety of domestic workers who cooked and cleaned for the Asylum's residents, which numbered from thirty to seventy-three girls between the ages of two and seventeen.⁶²

⁶⁰Female Humane Association, (n.p.: John Warrock, 1827), 6, Memorial Foundation for Children Records, 1827-1935, LV. Hereafter, these will be cited as MFC Records. Throughout this portion of the chapter, I am using "Association" to refer to the benevolent organization known as the Female Humane Asylum of the City of Richmond. I use "Asylum" to refer to the orphanage this group established.

⁶¹Constitution and By-Laws of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond, Adopted April 1, 1833, (Richmond: John Warrock, 1833), 14. Throughout much of this period, African American women made up ninety percent of Richmond's domestic labor force. White female orphans provided a portion of the remaining ten percent. Angela Catherine Bongiorno, "White Women and Work in Richmond Virginia, 1870-1884" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1978); and Tracey M. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom: Domestic Service and Household Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1850-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1994).

⁶²The Female Humane Association was only one of several Richmond associations devoted to caring for the city's orphans. In 1860, eleven nuns from the Sisters of Charity operated the St. Joseph's Orphan's Asylum for seventy-five Catholic girls. 1860 Manuscript Census for

The benevolent association that operated the Asylum was composed of white women from the more affluent sections of Richmond. Among the Female Humane Association's founders were Jean Moncure Daniel, a sister-in-law of Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall, and Eliza J. Carrington, the wife of a Revolutionary War hero.⁶³ A list of members for 1860 included the names of the wives and daughters of a number of prominent Richmonders.⁶⁴ Women of good standing in the community were nominated to join the Association, pending approval by a majority of the

Richmond, Virginia, NARA. Due to the large number of children orphaned by the war, these two Richmond associations competed for municipal funds in the 1870s with the Male Orphan Asylum of St. Peter's Catholic Church, and an orphan asylum and school operated by a board of lady managers under the auspices St. Paul's Episcopal Church, whose congregation was comprised largely of wealthy Richmonders. Richmond Dispatch, 1 January 1872. Suzanne Lebsock has described a similar asylum for female orphans founded by Petersburg women in 1811-12. Lebsock, Free Women of Petersburg, 199-212.

⁶³Other founders included Mary Nicholas, the wife of a Virginia Attorney general, and Elizabeth Wirt, the wife of a prominent Virginia attorney. Varon, "We Mean to Be Counted," 12.

⁶⁴Members included Mrs. Joseph R. Anderson, the wife of the Tredegar chief; Mrs. Bolling Haxall, the wife of a Haxall Flour Mill scion, and Nancy Bierne Macfarland, whose husband was on the Richmond Common Council. [Mrs. Edwin Cox], "The Memorial Foundation for Children," 1-2; Constitution and By-Laws of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond, Adopted April 1, 1833; Account Book, December 1858 - December 1867, all in MFC Records, LV.

members. On the eve of the Civil War, the Association's membership totaled fifty-four.⁶⁵

With the exception of the three male Trustees who executed adoptions and apprenticeship indentures and annually reviewed the Association's finances, the day-to-day operation of the Asylum was supervised by the female members and officers, which included a president, a secretary, two stewards whose duty was to pay out the Association's funds, six solicitors to engage in the door-to-door fundraising, and six visitors. In 1811, the Asylum was incorporated by an act of the Virginia legislature, a move that permitted the mostly married female members to operate the Asylum independent of the laws of coverture that restricted married women's roles throughout much of the nineteenth century. Incorporation enabled the women, without male support, to buy and sell property, receive and administer bequests, and serve as the girls' legal guardians.⁶⁶ In 1829, when the Association replaced door-to-door solicitation with benefit fairs, the solicitors were eliminated and a seven-member board of directors assumed the task of seeing that the property was properly

⁶⁵List of Subscribers for 1860, MFC Records, LV.

⁶⁶Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence, 48-53; Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies, 26; and Lebsack, Free Women of Petersburg, 199-201.

maintained and of making periodic visits to the Asylum to monitor the girls' treatment.⁶⁷

During the antebellum period, the work of the Association was financed largely through the collection of membership dues of \$4.00 per year, an annual fair or door-to-door fundraising campaign, and a few modest bequests, which the women occasionally invested in bank stocks and other securities. In 1843, an endowment from the estate of Edmund Walls allowed the Association to erect a larger facility near the city's northern boundary.⁶⁸ From time to time, older girls contributed to their room and board by sewing aprons, drawers, chemises, petticoats, dresses, flannel shirts, and cloaks worn by themselves and the younger inmates.⁶⁹

As its symbol the Association chose a standing female figure surrounded by children. The figure held a naked infant in her left arm, while her right hand clutched the

⁶⁷Female Humane Association, 2; Constitution and By-Laws of the Female Humane Association, Adopted April 1, 1833, 8, both in MFC Records, LV.

⁶⁸Walls was a poor Irish immigrant who became a flour inspector for the port. Cox, "The Memorial Foundation for Children," 6-7, MFC Records, LV; Christian, Richmond: Her Past and Present, 146-47; Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, 137.

⁶⁹Annual Reports of Board of Directors, 1 December 1877; 6 December 1880, MFC Records, LV. In 1877, for example, when the residents of the home numbered 55, the girls made 225 aprons, 45 pairs of drawers, 201 chemises, 247 dresses, 4 flannel shirts, 28 flannel skirts, and 4 cloaks. They also knitted 180 pairs of hose.

hand of a little girl; another child to the left clung to her skirt.⁷⁰ This image underscored the ties between women's personal and social mothering, and also emphasized the maternal role the Association expected to play to the young girls who became their wards.⁷¹ An 1827 history of the Association reflected this apotheosis of the "Association as mother" in its account of an early resident of the Asylum who eventually became its matron, a position she held until her death at the age of seventy-three.⁷²

⁷⁰Constitution and By-Laws of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond, Adopted April 1, 1833, 11, MFC Records, LV.

⁷¹For a discussion of the importance of the mother-child bond in nineteenth-century families, see Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860" American Quarterly 18 (1966): 151-74; Daniel Scott Smith, "Family Limitation, Sexual Control, and Domestic Feminism in Victorian America," Feminist Studies 1.3-4 (1973): 40-57. On motherhood in the South, see Julia Cherry Spruill, Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies. (1938; repr. New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), 43-63; and Sally G. McMillen, Motherhood in the Old South: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infant Rearing (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990). Suzanne Lebsock has argued that, although Virginia women took propaganda about the "powerful influence" of motherhood "with several grains of salt," they were, nevertheless, "very serious. . . about being good mothers," and were "passionately attached to their children." Suzanne Lebsock, Virginia Women, 1600-1945: "A Share of Honour", rev. ed. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1987), 65-8; all subsequent citations are to this edition.

⁷²Female Humane Association, 8; Cox, "The Memorial Foundation for Children," 8, both in MFC Records, LV. Although neither of these accounts names this particular matron, she may have been Mary A. Lipscomb, who died on February 26, 1882, and was eulogized in the Association minutes. Minutes, March 6, 1882, Minute Book, December 1875 - October 1894, MFC Records, LV.

No male figure is present in the image, suggesting not only the dependent and orphaned or semi-orphaned status of the children clinging to the female form, but also the Association's intention to assume the primary role in decisions concerning the children's welfare. In accepting children into the Asylum, the Association preferred full orphans, including female children living in the Almshouse who had been abandoned at birth, to children with a surviving parent who sought temporary placement because of illness or desertion but who might interfere with the Association's plans by reclaiming the child at some future date.

The women of the Association were no doubt motivated by a genuine altruistic concern for relieving the conditions of misery and want they saw reflected in the lives of their female wards. But their actions were also informed by contemporary middle-class attitudes surrounding the working poor, as well as white Southern attitudes regarding race. The Constitution and By-Laws of the Association, as well as the annual reports, are replete with statements of the women's determination to rescue these girls from "the haunts of vice and . . . viciousness," where they would become "a tax upon the citizens," and to send them forth into the world, "strong in virtuous

principles, and rich in useful knowledge."⁷³ This "useful knowledge" consisted primarily of the skills necessary to render them efficient seamstresses or domestic servants in the homes of upper- and middle-class women like those of the Association members. And despite the fact that Southern white women's benevolent activity was frequently made possible by a bevy of African-American domestic workers and household slaves, no female orphans of color were ever admitted to the Asylum.⁷⁴ By establishing an orphanage for female orphans that was administered by a board of female "directresses," the members of the Association were also staking their claim to a portion of the public sphere and a voice in Richmond society that was often denied to women by the gender prescriptions of the nineteenth century.⁷⁵

The Association had experienced temporary financial reverses in the depression following the War of 1812, and had once considered closing the Asylum in the late 1820s; but nothing in its history prepared it for the challenge to

⁷³Annual Report of the Board of Directresses of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond for the Year Ending December 1, 1865, bundle dated 29 January 1866, MCC, LV; Constitution and By-Laws of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond, Adopted April 1, 1833, MFC Records, LV.

⁷⁴Varon, "We Mean to Be Counted," 27-29.

⁷⁵Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood"; and Berg, The Remembered Gate.

its resources posed by the Civil War.⁷⁶ A \$5,000 legacy the Association received in 1861 no doubt eased its financial burdens for a time; but during the war other sources of income evaporated, while the number of orphans in the Asylum grew. Many of these new girls were the daughters of Confederate soldiers killed in battle, or girls whose mothers, according to the Association, had died after being "worn out by the care and toil of providing for the wants of a family left upon her hands by this relentless war."⁷⁷ The Richmond schools were forced to withdraw their annual stipend in 1862, and other organizations such as the Richmond Literary Fund and the Richmond Musical and Dramatic Association simply disappeared from the Association's financial records. By the spring of 1862, the matrons were instructed to restrict the girls' food to "the plain necessaries of life" which required the exclusion of tea, coffee, and molasses.⁷⁸ In January 1863, the Asylum sold some of the older girl's

⁷⁶Female Humane Association, 8; Constitution and By-Laws of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond, Adopted April 1, 1833, 4, both in MFC Records, LV.

⁷⁷Entry dated 4 April 1861, Account Book, December 1858 - December 1867, MFC Records, LV; Report of the Board of Directresses of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond, Southern Churchman, 4 January 1865.

⁷⁸Report of the Board of Directresses of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond for the Year Ending December 1, 1862, in the Southern Churchman, 22 May 1863.

needlework for \$190.⁷⁹ By the end of 1864, the city's precarious financial situation made further donations by the Richmond Common Council impossible.⁸⁰

The Female Humane Association attempted to recoup its financial losses and meet the needs of its expanding population through appeals to the local churches and by reinvigorating their door-to-door campaigning. This fundraising strategy may have been necessitated in part by a shortage of available space for holding benefit fairs, because many municipal buildings had been requisitioned by the Confederate government for use as office buildings or military hospitals. In 1863, six of the local churches contributed more than \$4,500 to the Asylum's operating budget, and door-to-door campaigns in the city's three wards in 1864 and 1865 netted \$7,308, an astounding figure given the straitened economy of the Confederate capital in the closing years of the war.⁸¹ As impressive as these amounts may seem, they did little to offset the rising

⁷⁹Entry dated 27 January 1863, Account Book, December 1858 - December 1867, MFC Records, LV.

⁸⁰Up to this point, the Richmond Common Council had allocated \$3,000 for the Asylum each year, which was usually paid in two or three installments. But the increased demand on the city's resources, which included supplying fuel, food, and medicine to needy residents, including refugees, depleted municipal funds.

⁸¹Entries dated 1 June through 11 December 1863; 1 January through 18 June 1864; and 20 March through 29 March 1865, all in Account Book, December 1858 - December 1867, MFC Records, LV.

inflation rates for market commodities which, by mid-1863, had soared to 900 percent.⁸² For a short time in 1865, a year the Association's secretary later characterized as one of "anxious care and constant struggle," the girls were forced to subsist on a diet of bread and water, until a Confederate battalion stationed in the city sent a day's rations of bacon, flour, rice, and meal.⁸³ When Richmond fell even this source of aid vanished.

Richmond's surrender on April 3, 1865, virtually bankrupted the organization, while the resulting fire that levelled the city's financial district reduced its securities to piles of ash. Confederate defeat also rendered \$3,900 in Confederate bonds and the remainder of the \$4,200 in Confederate currency collected during the Association's March 1865 door-to-door campaign worthless.⁸⁴ With no place else to go for help, the Asylum registered with the Federal authorities occupying

⁸²Thomas Senior Berry, Richmond Commodity Prices (Richmond: Bostwick Press of the University of Richmond, 1985), 1.

⁸³Southern Churchman, 4 January 1865; Annual Report of the Board of Directresses of the Female Humane Asylum of the City of Richmond for the Year Ending December 1, 1865, bundle dated 29 January 1866, MCC, LV.

⁸⁴Entries for March 20-29, 1865, Account Book, December 1858 - December 1867, MFC Records, LV.

the city, permitting the girls to draw rations of meat and meal on a regular basis.⁸⁵

At the same time, the Association reduced the number of residents from sixty to thirty-one, in part by binding out more girls into domestic service, usually to fill vacancies created in white households by the departure of former slaves.⁸⁶ Not all of these arrangements were mutually satisfactory, in part because the girls sent out were often younger, and were either poorly trained, or homesick, or both. "A white girl from the Orphan Asylum has come out on trial," Emma Mordecai wrote of the young girl named Annie who arrived on the morning of May 7, 1865, shortly after the Mordecais' servants announced their intention to leave. "[She] is unhappy & lonesome, and doesn't intend to stay. She does not seem to be very

⁸⁵Annual Report of the Board of Directresses of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond for the Year Ending December 1, 1865, bundle dated 29 January 1866, MCC, LV.

⁸⁶Annual Report of the Board of Directresses of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond for the Year Ending December 1, 1865, bundle dated 29 January 1866, MCC, LV. A few girls were also returned to relatives. By 1868, the number of inmates has risen to forty. Annual Report of the Female Humane Association for the Year Ending December 1, 1868, Southern Churchman, 24 December 1868. By 1872, the number of female orphans stood at forty-nine, and by 1873, it was fifty-five. Richmond Dispatch, 5 December 1872; Report of the Board of Directors, 1 December 1877, MFC Records, LV. Conversely, Anne Scott has described an orphan association in Salem, Massachusetts, which reacted to an economic decline in the 1830s by taking the exact opposite action: it reduced the number of girls bound out to work. Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies, 18-19.

competent." Within a week, Annie was back to the Asylum.⁸⁷ Other such arrangements must have proved more mutually beneficial, however, for throughout the late 1860s and the 1870s, the Female Humane Association continued to cope with the added drain on its resources by placing ever younger girls in Virginia households. Although most girls in the antebellum period had remained at the Asylum until they were fourteen or fifteen years of age, by the mid-1880s, girls of nine and ten were routinely sent out to work.⁸⁸

The decision to put younger girls into domestic service met with disapproval, not only from some Association

⁸⁷Entries dated 6, 7, 11, and 13 May 1865, Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS. Fifty-two-year-old Emma Mordecai was living with her widowed sister-in-law, Rosina Young Mordecai, on a farm on Brook Road in the city's north end. Unfortunately, neither Mordecai's diary nor the Female Humane Association records specifies the last name or age of this particular orphan.

⁸⁸Constitution and By-Laws of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond, Adopted April 1, 1833, 10; minutes 4 December 1876 and 4 June 1877; Report of Board of Directresses of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond for the Year Ending December 1, 1877; Report of the Board of Directresses for the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond for the Year Ending November 20, 1886. The Female Humane Association also permitted a few of the girls to be adopted by other relatives or returned to a surviving parent. Minutes, 5 June 1876; 1 October 1877; 4 March 1878; 3 March 1879; 2 October 1880; 20 November 1886. All of these sources are contained in the MFC Records, LV. An orphan asylum in antebellum Salem, Massachusetts, made the exact opposite decision regarding the binding out of female orphans in the 1830s. They abandoned the practice during a financial crisis in Salem in the 1830s. Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies, 18-19.

members who, in 1877, attempted unsuccessfully to fix the minimum age for placement at fifteen, but also from surviving relatives who complained that the girls were being released "before their moral and mental training is completed." In 1874, the Association moved to curtail family interference by adopting a resolution requiring absolute in loco parentis control over any child it accepted.⁸⁹ Despite this new policy regarding placement, the Association still attempted to exercise a measure of compassion and good judgment by reclaiming girls from homes where abuse was suspected, and denying adoptions of girls in ill health, or by relatives the Association deemed "unsuitable."⁹⁰

A second way in which the Association coped with its wartime reverses was by altering its financial strategy. Although evidence for the period from 1866 to 1871 is extremely sketchy, the impression it provides is that the Asylum led a rather hand-to-mouth existence, depending to a large extent on door-to-door contributions and handouts from several charitable groups and private donors--some from the North--to piece out its daily needs. During this

⁸⁹ Amendments of the Constitution of the Female Humane Association, 11 March 1874, loose paper inside Minute Book, December 1876 - October 1894, MFC Records, LV.

⁹⁰Southern Opinion, 14 December 1867; Minutes, 3 December 1877; 4 March [1878]; 12 December 1878; 3 March [1879]; 7 June 1880; and 21 October 1895, MFC Records, LV.

period, between 83 and 93 percent of the institution's yearly budget was derived from these sources, while interest and dividends on stocks and bonds supplied less than a tenth. Beginning in 1872, the Association abandoned door-to-door campaigning almost entirely, and began systematically investing in the major railroad lines serving the metropolis.⁹¹ In 1872, the women purchased stock in the Richmond & Petersburg line and, in 1874, acquired shares in both the Orange & Alexandria and the Danville. By 1876, they also owned stock in the Clover Hill and the Virginia & Tennessee lines.⁹²

The Association had maintained a small portfolio of state and municipal bonds from the early 1810s but, for much of the antebellum period, it had relied on community largesse to fund most of its yearly expenditures.⁹³ The investment decisions of the 1870s indicate a shift away from door-to-door solicitations and a more concerted effort to rely on financial investments in stocks and bonds as a

⁹¹Between 1872 and 1880, the Association conducted only one door-to-door campaign. Account Books for December 1859 - December 1867, and December 1866 - December 1899, MFC Records, LV.

⁹²Account Book, December 1866 - December 1899, MFC Records, LV. Money for these purchases came from bequests by two FHA members. The Association also leased property on Pearl Street to several Richmond merchants.

⁹³Constitution and By-Laws of the Female Humane Association of the City of Richmond, Adopted April 1, 1833, 3, MFC Records, LV. During this earlier period, the Association simply incorporated interest from these investments into the Asylum's operating budget.

more reliable source of income, a strategy the Association had only flirted with briefly during its antebellum years. Between 1872 and 1880, the amount of yearly income from dividends on stocks and bonds rose from 21.4 to 82.7 percent while income from charitable contributions fell from 76.1 percent to as low as 8 percent. (Table 5.1)

This shift from charitable contributions to investments as the primary source of revenue reflects the women's newer and more sophisticated financial strategy that had been forged by the "anxious care and constant struggle" of their wartime experience. No longer content to beg door-to-door for whatever the hand of charity would provide, throughout the 1880s and early 1890s, the Association continued to reinvest its dividends and expand its investment portfolio through the purchase of municipal bonds and stocks.⁹⁴

⁹⁴Throughout this entire period, the Association--with few exceptions--continued to reinvest its earnings, and added to its portfolio through the purchase of municipal bonds for both Richmond and Petersburg, and shares of stock in the Georgia Pacific Rail Road Company. By 1895, they possessed a portfolio of investments valued at more than \$150,000, and the financial stability to extend their mission to orphaned children until well into the twentieth century. In 1923, the Asylum's name was changed to the "Memorial Home for Girls," and, by the 1930s, the institution redirected its focus from destitute female orphans to girls with emotional and behavioral problems. When the institution began accepting boys in 1944, it became known as the "Memorial Foundation for Children." Minutes for 5 March 1883, 5 December 1887, and 29 October 1888; Cox, "Memorial Foundation for Children," 12-16, all in MFC Records, LV.

Table 5.1. Female Humane Association Yearly Income,
1860-1880, by Percent

Year	Dues	Donations	Stocks & Bonds	Bequests
1860	4.8	45.7	49.5	----
1861	2.3	78.2	19.5	----
1862	1.7	63.6	34.2	----
1863	1.7	64.6	12.0	21.6
1864	1.2	83.0	15.3	0.4
1865	2.4	72.3	25.2	----
1866	1.6	88.6	3.5	0.5
1867	3.5	86.6	3.5	0.5
1868	6.0	83.0	10.4	0.6
1869	3.0	86.5	10.4	----
1870	2.6	93.4	4.0	----
1871	3.6	85.4	10.9	----
1872	2.6	76.1	21.4	----
1873	1.4	32.3	25.7	40.6
1874	1.8	17.9	80.3	----
1875	1.5	23.2	75.2	----
1876	0.6	1.1	58.2	40.0
1877	3.7	19.0	73.9	3.4
1878	1.3	8.0	73.9	16.7
1879	1.7	9.0	74.8	14.5
1880	1.1	15.6	82.7	0.7

Source: Account Books, December 1858 - December 1867, December 1866 - December 1899; Minute Book, December 1875 - October 1894, Memorial Foundation for Children Records, 1827-1935, Library of Virginia.

Anne Scott has observed that, for some groups formed in the antebellum period, the war's special demands diverted the women's attention away from their work for the poor. For instance, leaders of the Boston Fragment Society, which had been formed in 1812 to minister to needs of widows and orphans, worried that the war's overwhelming carnage would harden both members and supporters to the daily destitution of women in their community, and would also drain the group's energies and resources. And for a time it did, causing the Society to examine its custom of holding an annual social event for its subscribers, on the

basis that the funds could be more suitably spent on the poor.⁹⁵ But although the Female Humane Association was initially devastated by wartime changes, the Civil War ultimately served to focus and concentrate its energies. It emerged from Reconstruction on sound financial footing which enabled it to become a permanent force in caring for the city's destitute children.

Conclusion

Whereas middle-class white women's employment had disappeared at the end of the war, the demand for their organizational work continued. The Female Humane Association's mission remained little changed after the war. The Ladies' Defense Association and the soldiers' aid societies--like ad hoc organizations formed in Richmond in the antebellum period--disappeared at the war's end, but were soon replaced by other organizations devoted to rebuilding churches damaged by the war and expanding their missions both at home and abroad; and to rescuing fallen Confederate heroes from the grave of forgetfulness through the creation of Confederate cemetery associations. These topics will be taken up, respectively, in chapters Nine and Ten.

⁹⁵Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies, 26-36.

CHAPTER 6

ESPIONAGE AND PROTEST

Although a number of elite Richmond women had participated in Whig politics in the early to mid-nineteenth century, the Civil War caused greater numbers of women from all classes to reflect on their political convictions. For middle- and upper-class women, these reflections frequently took place in their diaries or in letters to friends and family and varied from undying loyalty to the Confederacy, to a wavering commitment dictated by military reverses and worries about absent male kin, to an outright condemnation of the war based on fundamental objections to slaveholding and/or secession. These reflections often gave shape and meaning to women's wartime activities that have been discussed in Chapter Five.

Poor and working-class women no doubt shared all of these convictions, but unfortunately few have left any written record of the role such thoughts might have played in deepening or weakening their Confederate resolve. Instead, evidence of their loyalty or rejection can be seen in their actions, such as Judith McGuire's account of one

poor Richmond woman, a seamstress for the Quartermaster's Bureau, who kept her husband's worn and bullet-riddled hat on the wall opposite her bed, as she told McGuire, to remind herself of his patriotism, or their unquestioning surrender of their sons as cannon fodder for the Confederate war machine.¹ Other proofs can be found in the protests working-class women conducted in a number of urban and rural communities over the high cost of food and other commodities.

For a tiny group of middle- and working-class Richmond women who intellectually opposed the war, Virginia's decision to secede from the Union posed insurmountable political and ideological problems.² Throughout the war,

¹Judith Brockenbrough McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee, 2d ed. (New York: E.J. Hale & Son, 1867; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1972), 254-55; all subsequent citations are to this edition. According to McGuire, the woman's husband had survived, but his hat bore two bullet holes from his close encounters at the Battle of Chancellorsville.

²I am defining "disaffection" here somewhat differently than the definition cited by Ronald Hoffman in his essay on the Revolutionary South. Ronald Hoffman, "The 'Disaffected' in the Revolutionary South," in The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism, Alfred F. Young, ed. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976), 285. Whereas Hoffman defines the disaffected population in the American Revolution as that portion of the populace which refused to side with either the patriots or the British, I am using it to mean those individuals in the South whose support for the war waned, at least temporarily, for several different reasons, and who then sometimes opposed the war through their words or actions. As the war entered its third year in the spring of 1863, many of the disaffected were women who had grown weary of the added responsibilities they had assumed in the men's absence, or who were increasingly fearful about the

these women gathered information on the Confederate government which they passed on to Union sources. In the spring of 1864, they helped engineer the escape of more than a hundred Union soldiers from Libby Prison. This chapter examines Richmond's women's attitudes toward the war, with an emphasis on the more overt forms of political disaffection or disloyalty directed against the Confederate government.

Female Patriotism

"From one end of the Confederacy to another, you will scarcely meet a man who desponds, and never a woman," Benetta Valentine wrote in an 1863 letter to her brother,

safety of their menfolk in the Confederate armies. Others of the disaffected were individuals who were incensed at the war's economic toll on families and communities. Some others were discouraged by Confederate military defeats, often coupled with rumors of bureaucratic bungling at the highest levels of government. Scholars who have written on Civil War disaffection in the South and/or the role played by women include Charles W. Ramsdell, Behind the Lines in the Southern Confederacy, Wendell H. Stephenson, ed. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969); Frank L. Owsley, "Defeatism in the Confederacy," North Carolina Historical Review 3 (1026): 446-56; Paul D. Escott, "'The Cry of the Sufferers': The Problem of Welfare in the Confederacy," Civil War History 23 (1977): 228-40; Victoria E. Bynum, Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); George Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," Journal of American History 76.4 (March 1990): 1200-28; and Drew Gilpin Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

Edward, who was safely sitting out the war in Paris. "The relationship which the women of this Confederacy have borne towards the men in its great struggles for independence resemble more closely those of the early German tribes under similar circumstances than anything else in history to which I can liken them."³ And indeed many Richmond women who waved Confederate flags from the balcony during Virginia's secession convention, or who crowded the streets during the torchlight parades once secession was declared,

³Members of an affluent Richmond family, Edward Virginius Valentine and his brother, William, spent the wartime years in Europe, visiting museums and taking lessons in painting and sculpture from European masters, while their sister, Benetta, who was twenty-eight years old in 1861, cared for her ailing father and mother in Richmond. A third brother, Mann S. Valentine, Jr., was declared unfit for military duty because of chronic diarrhea that required him to "observe a strict regimen. Exposure to soldiers' fare would doubtless quickly occasion a relapse." Note dated September 2, 1864, in Valentine Family Papers, VM. Willie and Edward's letters to their sister are filled with lighthearted descriptions of their European adventures, while Benetta wrote in more measured prose about the family's wartime privations. At one point, the family's financial circumstance were so perilous that Benetta urged her siblings to sell pieces of their work to pay for some of their travel expenses, a move the two men had earlier protested on grounds that it would demean their art. Willie's talent as a painter never bore fruit as a profession, but brother Edward later became a premier sculptor of the Lost Cause, designing the famous statue of a recumbent Robert E. Lee for Washington and Lee University, in Lexington, Virginia, and the massive Jefferson Davis statue for Richmond's Monument Avenue, an ironic consequence for a young man who spent most of the war out of the country and, thus, safe from enemy bullets. Sarah Benetta Valentine Richmond, to Edward Virginius Valentine, Paris, 27 January 1863, Sarah Benetta Valentine Papers, VM.

or who bent over their sewing machines making Confederate uniforms seem to fit Benetta Valentine's description.

As military companies were hastily assembled and equipped in the war's early days, Richmond women played central roles in encouraging men to enlist by showering their attention on those who answered the call, and heaping scorn and derision on those who did not. A Confederate uniform was "a passport to every heart and home," wrote Fannie Beers. "Every man who wore it became ennobled in the eyes of every woman."⁴ "The young women denied the pleasure of their companionship to the youth who hesitated," a former member of one of Richmond's elite military units later recalled, "and. . .were ready to pin the white feather upon any man of military age who opposed immediately taking up arms."⁵

Many Southern women tracked the war's progress in their diaries, faithfully recording battlefield locations and troop deployments. One young diarist filled page after page with meticulous descriptions of wartime engagements, gleaned from newspaper articles, telegraphic reports, and conversations with her father and other male relatives.⁶

⁴Fannie A. Beers, Memories (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1891), 26.

⁵John A. Cutchins, A Famous Command: The Richmond Light Infantry Blues (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1934), 70.

⁶Unknown female diarist, Richmond, Virginia, Ms. V.88.20, VM.

Fifty-one-year-old Emma Mordecai maintained an exceptionally detailed account of the engagements taking place near her deceased brother's farm on the western outskirts of the city, especially those involving her three nephews, John, George, and Willie, all of whom saw duty in Company 2 of the Richmond Howitzers.⁷ In part, these precise renderings helped women like Mordecai to fix their place in relation to the fighting which many Richmond women would experience only vicariously. It also helped confirm their convictions about the war's "rightness." "The welcome & long expected sound of cannon, quick & heavy, has at length fallen upon our ears, and we feel that our cause is about to be decided," Lucy Fletcher wrote in her diary during the 1862 Peninsula campaign.

We feel assured that we shall come off victorious. God will help us as He has so wonderfully done in the past. He will hear our prayers for deliverance from this barbarous foe and our people will soon be free from their vile intrusion.⁸

When noble heroes like Stonewall Jackson fell in battle, Richmond women like Kate Mason Rowland and her sister, Emily Mason, formed a portion of twenty thousand mourners who filed by the funeral bier through the day and night that Jackson's body lay in state in the Confederate

⁷Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS.

⁸Entry dated 27 June 1862, Keystone Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

Capitol.⁹ "The city is one house of mourning," Rowland later wrote

the stores closed and crepe hanging from each door and window. Bells tolled, mournfully, as the body was brought into town. . . . White flowers covered the coffin. I could not refrain from carrying away a small blossom as a fleeting memento of the great immortal chieftain.¹⁰

Many Southern women tended to define their patriotism mostly in relation to the political convictions or military exploits of male kin; but others appear to have developed deeply-seated political beliefs of their own based on personal opinions about slaveholding and states' rights. Lucy Fletcher, for example, engaged in a spirited and frequently acrimonious political debate about the war with a Northern sister, Eliza Walton Clark, the reverberations of which could be felt for at least thirty years after the war was over.

"It is so distressing to me to find that my beloved sister is completely convinced. . . .to believe all the horrors of Southern life as circulated in the Northern

⁹Sallie Brock Putnam, Richmond during the War: Four Years of Personal Observation (New York: G.W. Carlton, 1867; repr. New York: Time-Life Books, 1983), 218-25; Louise (Mrs. Giraud) Wright, A Southern Girl in '61: The War-time Memories of a Confederate Senator's Daughter (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1905), 126-27.

¹⁰Kate Mason Rowland diary, ESBL, quoted in Katharine M. Jones, ed. The Ladies of Richmond:, (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), 167.

papers, " Fletcher confided in her diary after a particularly bitter exchange in late 1865.

There were some features in slavery that must be repugnant to every generous heart--but I am more than ever convinced that. . .the condition of our slaves on the whole was far better than that of any laboring people in the world. Power will always be abused, is now, all over the world, in every relation in life. Husbands & parents--Rulers and Employers have abused & will continue to abuse where they have the power & I contend that there was less abuse of that power among our native slave holders than in any other part of the country. . . .It is a notorious fact that the most severe & cruel overseers were found to be Northern men generally of N. England.¹¹

Stung by her sister's accusations of a lingering vindictiveness some four years later, Fletcher penned the following letter

I have been reading over some of your letters, and while I have fully appreciated and responded to every expression of affection, I have been deeply wounded by the reproaches in which you have indulged towds. me personally, characterizing my political conviction as "wicked and unchristian. . . .All I have ever done has been not to make you think as we do, but to place ourselves in a true position, and correct misrepresentations."¹²

Fletcher remained an "un-Reconstructed" rebel well into the late-nineteenth century. Sometime between 1870 and 1899, she reread and edited her diaries, excising

¹¹Entry dated 25 October 1865, "Nothing but Leaves" Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

¹²Excerpt from an 1868 letter to Fletcher's sister, , quoted in the "Nothing but Leaves" Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU. Emphasis in the original.

offending portions and adding personal commentary to counter accusations of continued bitterness hurled at her from her Northern kin. "1899 still finds me lingering 'at the Gate,'" she wrote in a long entry shortly after the Spanish American War

[I] have outlived another war which has been mercifully brought to a speedy termination. The details of suffering to our brave soldiers have been terrible, but God is wonderfully over-ruling all for good, and the Northern people have been forced to recognize the loyalty. . . & heroism of the South--as I have always said history will do us justice. I have often wondered, when reading of the. . . generous treatment of our Spanish prisoners. . . if they ever recalled, by contrast, their own treatment of our own noble President & their own dreadful ravages by fire & sword, laying waste to our whole country & boasting that a crow in travelling over it would have to carry his own provisions. We can never have any love in our hearts for Miles, Sheridan, & Sherman.¹³

Not all Richmond women were able to sustain the patriotic zeal of Benetta Valentine, or Lucy Fletcher, or Kate Rowland, however. Confederate Treasury clerk Sallie Grattan poured out her misgivings about the war in a letter to her friend, Alexander Brown, after a particularly devastating Confederate defeat at Roanoke Island in February 1862. "It has almost taken my breath away," she wrote,

& certainly has disposed all my hope & patriotism. They tell me the Federalists [sic] will certainly occupy Norfolk, Richmond, Savannah, Mobile--all the seaport towns. . . I

¹³Entry dated 1 January 1899, "Nothing but Leaves" Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

could almost wish. . .for the wings of a dove that I might fly away & be at rest; but they tell me that is very unpatriotic, that I should be willing to see the whole country devastated, all the men, women, & children killed &c, rather than submission. What good would it do me, when all those I love are dead. Patriotism is a curious thing & is beyond my comprehension.¹⁴

With the city's fall in April 1865, many patriotic Richmond women faced the moment they had feared most from the time the war began: invasion by Union troops. Shortly before dawn, a sleepless Phebe Pember watched from atop Chimborazo Hill as the mayor and the city council surrendered the keys to the city.

[H]alf an hour afterwards, over to the east, a single Federal blue jacket rose above the hill, standing transfixed with astonishment at what he saw. Another and another sprang up as if out of the earth, still all remained quiet. About seven o'clock, there fell upon the ear the steady clatter of horses' hoofs, and winding around Rocketts, close under Chimborazo Hill, came a small and compact body of Federal cavalrymen, on horses in splendid condition, riding closely and steadily along. They were well mounted, well accoutered, well fed--a rare sight in Southern streets--the advance of the vaunted army that for four years had so hopelessly knocked at the gate of the Southern Confederacy.¹⁵

Even in the face of invasion, it was difficult for Pember to stifle her sense of pride at what the smaller and less-well-equipped Confederate forces had been able to accomplish.

¹⁴Sallie Grattan, Richmond, to Alexander Brown, 11 February 1862, Alexander Brown Papers, DU.

¹⁵Phoebe Yates Pember, A Southern Woman's Story: Life in Confederate Richmond, Bell I. Wiley, ed. (St. Simon's Island, Ga.: Mockingbird Press, 1974), 95.

As white Richmonders watched from behind shuttered windows, an "endless stream" of blue uniforms filed into Richmond to the tune of "The Star Spangled Banner," and hoisted the U.S. flag over the Capitol. Prepared for the worst, some Richmond women recorded initial surprise and relief at the degree of calm and respect with which the city was occupied. "We had been taught to believe, that when the Federals came, that a set of desperadoes, thieves, and. . . devils, were to be let loose in the city, to . . . commit every conceivable act of cruelty and wrong," Mary West wrote in a letter to her sister, Clara. "How agreeably have all been disappointed."¹⁶

Others greeted the sight with rage or despair. "It is a galling sight to see the streets filled with Yankees," Lucy Fletcher fumed, "remembering that these are the people who for 4 years have been slaying our brethren and desolating our land."¹⁷ To Emmie Sublett, the flag's red stripes looked like "so many bloody gashes," reminding her of all the Confederate blood shed in four years of warfare.¹⁸

¹⁶Mary Andrews West, Richmond, to her sister, Clara, 12 April 1865, Mary Andrews West Letter, VHS.

¹⁷Entry dated 12 April 1865, Little Red Book, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

¹⁸Emmie Sublett, Richmond, to Emilie, 29 April 1865, Emmie Sublett Letter, ESBL.

Many were especially enraged to see the occupation forces were led by black soldiers, which many Richmonders viewed as a blatant attempt by Northern commanders to further humiliate the conquered city.¹⁹ "The whole place was black and blue with negro troops," Emma Mordecai complained.²⁰ "They were the blackest crowd I ever saw, and not a mulatto among them," added Lucy Fletcher. "It was a horrible sight to see these negro troops paraded thro' the streets. . .looking like demons with their bayonets & sabres gleaming in the sunlight & showing their white teeth as they grinned with satisfaction, or derision."²¹

Even more disturbing to some was the reaction of ex-slaves who packed the streets, many falling on their knees

¹⁹Isabel Maury Reminiscence of the Evacuation of Richmond, ESBL. Maury later became a member of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society and served, for a time, as regent of the Confederate Museum. One of the visitors she happened to meet there was a man who had been a soldier in the U.S. troops that entered the city on April 3, 1865, and who told her that the decision to have the 5th Massachusetts (a black unit) lead the advance was based on "negroes had been accustomed to submission, and could more easily be controlled than white men. I told him I was glad he told me that," she later recalled, "for I saw them that 3d day of April 1865 as they marched up Clay St.--the blackest men I ever saw. . .I felt how mean--how ignominious to try thus to humiliate us. . .and now you tell me it was meant in kindness, to prevent disorder and misconduct. I am glad to know that I am learning history every day."

²⁰Emma Mordecai, Richmond, to "My dear Edward," 5 April 1865, Myers Family Papers, VHS.

²¹Entry dated 5 April 1865, Sabbath Notebook Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

to thank Union soldiers for their deliverance.²² Lucy Fletcher was offended by the sight of their former servants occupying the public places previously inaccessible to them. "The streets are thronged with negroes of all shades," Lucy Fletcher complained,

from the pretty mulatto in her jaunty hat and furbelow, to the dusky ragged cornfield drudge, who with soiled garments and streaming headgear is on her way to the square to enjoy the music of "Yankee Doodle" & "Old John Brown." Hundreds of ragged & dirty negro boys are rolling over the beautiful grass plots on the square, while the girls are enjoying themselves around the Monument, jumping rope & rolling hoops. [A]t intervals throughout the grounds, dirty tents are placed for the sale of cakes & pies, & this is Yankee civilization! I hope they enjoy each other's society.²³

More than any other sight, this vision of black children and adults enjoying themselves in areas previously known only to whites foreshadowed the altered social relations in the South many white women dreaded. It signalled to white Richmonders that life in Richmond would never be the same-- that white women would now have to negotiate with their former slaves for their labor in white households, and that

²²Edward H. Ripley, The Capture and Occupation of Richmond, April 3, 1865 (n.p.: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 8.

²³Entry dated 25 April 1865, Little Red Book, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

whites would now have to compete with blacks for the city's public spaces.²⁴

While most patriotic Richmond women would have probably chosen to remain behind closed doors, the absence of many of the city's men drew large numbers of women into forced encounters with Union soldiers for the purpose of securing the safety of their dwellings, or inquiring about their menfolk being held in Union prisons, or registering for government relief. These confrontations left some women feeling even more committed to the Confederacy than they had ever been before. "[T]hough my heart beat loudly and my blood boiled," Judith McGuire later recalled after a trip to Union headquarters to request a guard, "I never felt more high-spirited and lofty than at that moment."²⁵ Parke Bagby also accepted Union protection, and allowed the guard to heat his coffee in her kitchen; but she drew the line at any form of social interaction by refusing to accept a visit from a commanding officer who appeared on her porch three days after the occupation with a bag of oranges for her children.²⁶ "Our ladies, young and old,

²⁴Elsa Barkley Brown and Gregg D. Kimball, "Mapping the Terrain of Black Richmond," Journal of Urban History 21.3 (March 1995): 296-346.

²⁵Judith McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War, 347-49. McGuire had met with Union officers to request a guard for her property after finding an uninvited Union soldier standing in her kitchen.

²⁶Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby, "The Chronicle of Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby," Bagby Family Papers, VHS.

have the most utter aversion to any intercourse with these hated blue coats," she wrote,

and. . .have pursued a very dignified & reserved demeanor towards them. Some of the officers and clergy have. . .been coolly repulsed in such a manner as to mortify them, as much as their want of sensibility would suffer them to be mortified at any thing.²⁷

Spying for the Enemy

For a handful of Richmond women, the arrival of Union soldiers must have represented a sort of deliverance that signaled the war was now drawing to an end. It is difficult to know precisely how many Richmond women were actually involved in the espionage network that radiated from the Confederate capital, carrying vital information to Washington, D.C., or to Union troops stationed in the field. Information on both female and male agents is difficult to come by, in part because of the covert nature of their work, and in part because of the Confederacy's determination at the end of the war to destroy evidence documenting their activity.²⁸ A contemporary source lists the names of nineteen female spies, but this list is problematical in that some of these names were probably

²⁷Entry dated 13 May 1865, Diary dated April 27, 1865 - 1894, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

²⁸This was probably done out of fear of reprisals, or that, as traitors, the women might be executed.

aliases for known operatives.²⁹ Of the thirteen women for whom more than a name is known, three--Pauline Cushman, Jeannette Mabry, and Mary Walker--were more active in the war's western theatre, while at least four of the remaining ten spent most of their time engaged in intelligence gathering and other covert activity in Richmond.³⁰

²⁹Donald E. Markle, Spies and Spymasters of the Civil War, (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1994). This source completely overlooks former slave and Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman, who spied for the Union. It does, however, include the names of other black female agents. I have added Tubman's name into the list of female spies being discussed here. Mary Massey's Bonnet Brigades also includes the names of thirty-one Confederate and Union female spies, some of which correspond with names provided by Markle. Mary Elizabeth Massey, Bonnet Brigades (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 87-99. There is very little reliable information on covert activity by either women or men. Some of the sources that do exist are really highly sensationalized or fictional accounts that may contain a few kernels of truth but which are relatively untrustworthy. Among these are Ishbel Ross's Rebel Rose: Life of Rose O'Neal Greenhow, Confederate Spy (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954) and Harnett T. Kane's Spies for the Blue and Gray (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1954.) Others are highly condescending about the role played by female agents. See, for example, Alfred A. Hoehling, Women Who Spied (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1967), 19. George Rable's Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism is surprisingly silent on the issue of female espionage. An interesting account of the spy narratives of Union agents Pauline Cushman, Emma Edmonds, and Harriet Tubman is Lyde Cullen Sizer's "Acting Her Part: Narratives of Union Women Spies," in Divided Houses: Gender and The Civil War, Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 114-33.

³⁰The thirteen female spies included here are Frances Abel, Mrs. E.H. Baker, Mary Bowser, Pauline Cushman, Emma Edmonds, Abby Green, Hattie Lawton, Jeanette Laurimer Mabry, Lucy Rice, Harriet Tubman, Elizabeth Van Lew, Rebecca West, and Mary Walker, a Union surgeon who spent a portion of the war imprisoned in Richmond's Castle Thunder.

Although some scholars have argued that women made ideal spies because they were seldom suspected of holding strong political beliefs, others have claimed that it was precisely this lack of political acumen that compromised women's effectiveness--that in "their enthusiasm and magnificent unfamiliarity with things martial," female spies "deluged the Union and Confederate headquarters alike with a magpie's outpourings of gossip [and] trivia" which was far overshadowed by more accurate information provided by male operatives.³¹ Evidence from the Richmond network operated by Elizabeth Van Lew, however, suggests that effective espionage activity was seldom a function of either gender or race.

From her vantage point on Church Hill in Richmond, fifty-three-year-old Elizabeth Van Lew operated a Union espionage ring that included four additional white and black women and as many as five men and boys.³² A

³¹Hoebling, Women Who Spied, 19.

³²In addition to Van Lew's widowed mother, the other female spies in Van Lew's network were Mary Bowser--a former Van Lew slave who cared for Jefferson Davis's children and served food at the Confederate White House, and Abby Green and Lucy Rice, two white agents who collaborated with Van Lew in the Libby Prison escape in February 1864. The male spies included Judson Knight; former New Yorker William S. Rowley and his teen-aged son, Merritt; Samuel Ruth, superintendent of the Richmond, Fredericksburg, & Potomac Railroad; and his assistant, F. William Lohmann. Meriwether Stuart, "Of Spies and Borrowed Names: The Identity of Union Operatives in Richmond Known as 'The Phillipses' Discovered," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 89 (1981): 308-27. Other suspected Union spies in Richmond include Mary Caroline Allan, Anna

lifetime Richmond resident and the daughter of a successful merchant, Van Lew's wartime role grew, no doubt, out of her family's longtime opposition to slavery. Throughout the war, Van Lew maintained close contact with Union General Benjamin F. Butler, whom she supplied with elaborate information about troop sizes and location that was relayed to her through her male scouts.³³ The only surviving message that had been preserved in the official records of the war is the one she penned to Butler at Fortress Monroe in 1864, as Union generals plotted their strategy for the spring 1864 campaign.

No attempt should be made [to take Richmond] with less than 30,000 cavalry, [with] from 10,000 to 15,000 infantry to support them, amounting in all to 40,000 to 45,000 troops. Do not underrate their strength and desperation. Forces could probably be called into action in from 5 to 10 days; 25,000 mostly artillery--Hoke and Kemper's

Scott, Mary Lee, Sally Thaw, Nicholas Steiger, John Minor Botts, and a Confederate War Department clerk and his wife. Many were incarcerated in Richmond's Castle Thunder, a prison for wartime dissidents. Alan Golden has concluded that as many as a hundred women were imprisoned there during the war, for one reason or another. In July 1863, prisoner Mary Lee gave birth to a daughter whom she named Castellina Thunder Lee in commemoration of her incarceration. Richmond Examiner, 29 April 1862; 10, 20, 25 July 1863; Putnam, Richmond during the War, 211, 248-40, 263-64; Alan Lawrence Golden, "Castle Thunder: The Confederate Provost Marshal's Prison, 1862-1865" (M.A. thesis, University of Richmond, 1980), 121.

³³Nancy B. Samuelson, "Employment of Female Spies in the American Civil War," Minerva 7.3/4 (fall/winter 1989): 61.

brigades gone to North Carolina; & Pickett's, in or about Petersburg.³⁴

To deflect attention from her activities, Van Lew often assumed the pose of a mentally-unstable woman who carried on conversations with imaginary people, a thinly-veiled disguise that was easily penetrated by her Richmond neighbors, who showered her with curses and, at times, threatened bodily harm. "I have had brave men shake their fingers in my face and say terrible things," she wrote.

We all had threats of being driven away, threats of fire, threats of death. . . . I have turned to speak to a friend and found a detective at my elbow. Strange faces could sometimes be seen peeking around the columns and pillars of the back portico.³⁵

In February 1864, Van Lew invited additional enmity from the community by helping to engineer the escape of 109 Union officers from Libby Prison.³⁶ Working with Abby

³⁴Elizabeth Van Lew, Richmond, to Benjamin F. Butler, Fortress Monroe, [Maryland,] 20 January 1864, War of the Rebellion: Official Record of the Union and Confederate Armies, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, various dates), Series I, vol. 33, 520-21. Hereafter, this source will be cited as O.R.

³⁵Undated entry, Elizabeth Van Lew diary, quoted in Katharine Jones, Ladies of Richmond, 184.

³⁶When coupled with Eric Dahlgren's raid in March and the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, and Cold Harbor in May and June, the Libby Prison escape should be seen as part of the campaign to capture Richmond in the first half of 1864. Van Lew and her operatives played a role in each of these events, by keeping Union commanders apprised of Confederate locations and strength, and by enabling a number of Union officers to return to wartime commands by facilitating the Libby escape. It was also Elizabeth Van Lew who retrieved and buried Ulric Dahlgren's body after his botched raid. Robert P.

Green and Lucy Rice, two of her Richmond agents, Van Lew established a series of safe houses for the escapees, who crawled to freedom through a rat-infested tunnel dug beneath an unused hospital room on the prison's ground floor.³⁷ As she carried food and clothing to sick prisoners in the months before the escape, Abby Green also relayed information to the future escapees about the number and placement of the prison's guards, the location of the city's armory and arsenal, and the size of the Confederate troops deployed nearby.³⁸ For nearly two weeks after the breakout, Lucy Rice sheltered Union soldiers, including

Broadwater, Daughters of the Cause: Women in the Civil War, Joseph T. Campbell, ed. (Martinsburg, Pa.: Daisy Publishing, 1993), 30.

³⁷F.F. Cavada, Libby Life: Experiences of a Prisoner of War in Richmond, Va., 1863-65 (1864; repr. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985); Frank E. Moran, Bastiles of the Confederacy: A Reply to Jefferson Davis (Baltimore, Md.: n.p., 1890); Elizabeth Van Lew Journal, LV, quoted in Jones, Ladies of Richmond, 202-03; Samuel A. Urquart Letter, VHS; Southern Opinion, 15 June, 27 July 1867; Thomas E. Rose, Col. Rose's Story of the Famous Tunnel Escape from Libby Prison (n.p.: n.p., n.d.); A.G. Hamilton, Story of the Famous Tunnel Escape from Libby Prison (n.p.: n.p., n.d.). Rose's and Hamilton's accounts are contained in a pamphlet in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

³⁸According to Nancy Samuelson, much of this information was passed through books with encoded messages made through a pattern of pin pricks on the pages. One woman also enclosed information in a packet of dress patterns. Samuelson, "Employment of Female Spies in the American Civil War," 57-66. This description of Green's activities is drawn largely from the report accompanying her claim for compensation before the Congressional Committee hearing wartime claims. U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Claims, Report on the case of Mrs. Abby Green, S.R. 112, 38th Congress, 1st sess., 28 July 1866.

Colonel Abel D. Streight, often recognized in postwar accounts as the escape's planner. Rice's home was subject to repeated searches by military detectives, but none of the men hidden there were ever discovered.³⁹ Forty-eight of the 109 escapees were eventually recaptured, but fifty-nine men successfully made their way to the Union line, carrying vital information about Richmond fortifications and returning Union officers to key positions of command.⁴⁰

In the wake of the escape, Rice and Green fled to the North, leaving their homes and property behind.⁴¹ By May 1864, Rice had settled in Baltimore, where she was supported by the charity of Union sympathizers.⁴² In 1866, a grateful U.S. Congress awarded Abby Green and Lucy Rice \$1,500, each, in compensation for the losses they had incurred.⁴³ Elizabeth Van Lew remained in Richmond, where she was on hand to greet the arrival of Union troops on April 3, 1865. A Union guard was immediately placed around

³⁹Richmond Examiner, 2 May 1864; Report on the case of Mrs. Abby Green, 28 July 1866, Committee on Claims, 38th Congress, 1st sess., S.R. 112.

⁴⁰The other two escapees drowned in Grape Vine Creek during the escape.

⁴¹Richmond Examiner, 2 May 1864.

⁴²Richmond Examiner, 2 May 1864.

⁴³U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Claims, Report on the case of Mrs. Abby Green, S.R. 112, 38th Congress, 1st sess., 28 July 1866.

the Van Lew house to protect her from anticipated reprisals by angry Richmonders; but although Van Lew was frequently shunned when she appeared in public, no overt attacks on her appear to have been made. In 1869, newly elected President Ulysses S. Grant rewarded her loyalty by appointing her to head the Richmond Post Office at an annual salary of \$4,000, a position she held for eight years. As a feminist, postmistress Van Lew instituted several reforms, including hiring additional female clerks, who were assigned to the "ladies window."⁴⁴ When she died in 1900, a Massachusetts veterans' group erected a stone over her grave bearing the following inscription: "She risked everything that is dear to man--friends, fortune, comfort, health, life itself. . .that slavery might be abolished and the Union preserved."⁴⁵

As Benetta Valentine's quote at the beginning of this chapter suggests, some Southerners believed that the Confederacy's women were, if anything, more loyal than its men, an idea that was echoed in many postwar writings. "Too much praise cannot be awarded the noble women of the

⁴⁴Elizabeth Van Lew Album, Ms. 5:5, V3257, VHS. Under her guidance, the city also established letter boxes throughout the metropolis. Two undated newspaper clippings, Emily Howland Scrapbook, Section XVI, no. 2, National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) Collection, Rare Books Division, LC.

⁴⁵Quoted in Katharine Jones, Ladies of Richmond, 278.

South who bore such a prominent part in the late war:"
 began a writer to the Southern Opinion in 1868

mothers wives, daughters, and sisters buckled on their belts and sent husbands, sons, and brothers forth to meet the invaders of their soil, while they toiled for bread and spun the raiment of little ones in shanty homes in the country, or shops in town. . . .Had the spirit of the women animated the entire Confederacy, a cause now prostrate might have been still erect and in arms, and perhaps triumphant.⁴⁶

"The women of the South in the days of our peril made the Confederate soldier the ideal soldier of the world," another Southern chronicler remarked. "No one can deny that the women of the South were a potent factor in our holding out in the unequal struggle as long as we did."⁴⁷

Given the prevalence of these notions, postwar Richmonders must have struggled to reconcile this image of

⁴⁶Paul W. Hayne, "The Women of the South--Their Heroism and Devotion during the War," Southern Opinion, 20 June 1868.

⁴⁷J. Ogden Murray, "The South's Peerless Women of the World," in Three Stories in One, by J. Ogden Murray. (n.p.: n.p., 1906), 59-65. Murray was a major in the Confederate Army. This pamphlet was intended for use in the Southern schools to educate children to the "true" history of the South during the Civil War. (See Chapter Ten.) Ironically, this notion of Confederate women as super-patriots has sometimes been accepted unquestioningly by contemporary historians. James McPherson, for example, repeats Northerners' observations about the white hot anger of Southern female noncombatants, but makes little mention of Southern's women's disaffection for the Confederacy, as seen in the commodities riots they staged during the war in a number of Southern cities. James McPherson, Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 494-95.

a super-patriotic Confederate sisterhood with Elizabeth Van Lew, a lifelong Richmonder who opposed slavery, turned her back on the Confederacy, and spied for the enemy. In November 1867, a writer to the Southern Opinion recast Van Lew's role in the Libby Prison escape in a fictionalized account that some Richmonders might have found more appealing. Titled "Love in the Libby," it told the story of Lula Vanhorn, a Church Hill woman who had fallen in love with an Illinois soldier, Major Edward Glover, one of the Libby escapees.⁴⁸ Instead of the real Elizabeth Van Lew, a plain-looking, fiftyish radical who abhorred slavery, eschewed marriage, and feigned insanity to avoid detection, the fictional Vanhorn was an attractive young woman with a "full bust," "delicate hands," and "beautiful tresses" who fainted when she heard of her lover's re-capture, but later donned a male disguise to help free him.⁴⁹ The story

⁴⁸Based on the published narratives of the escape, this is probably a fictional name. There is absolutely no evidence that suggests Van Lew was in love with any of the Libby detainees. She never married.

⁴⁹According to the story, Vanhorn disguised herself as a Confederate soldier named Michael and volunteered for duty as a prison guard. "You must put off the woman and put on the man," claimed fictional character Jim Cate, a duplicitous blockade runner who operated as a double agent. J. Marshall Hasna, "Love in the Libby, or the Disguised Sentinel: A Sketch of the Late War," Southern Opinion, 9 November 1867. In some ways, this is an inversion of the actual circumstances surrounding the escape of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who avoided detection by wearing women's clothing. Nina Silber, "Intemperate Men, Spiteful Women, and Jefferson Davis," in Divided Houses, Silber and Clinton, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992). Elizabeth Van Lew was one of a handful of Richmond women

concluded with Vanhorn marrying Glover at the headquarters of General Ulysses S. Grant.

By re-defining Van Lew's actions as being based primarily on love, the author of this fictionalized account provided a more justifiable explanation for her behavior that took away some of the shame Richmonders must have felt at having the most notorious female turncoat of the Confederacy living within their midst. By ending the story with Lula Vanhorn's marriage, the author also reasserted the importance of Southern women's subordinate role as wives and mothers, a role that the real Van Lew had rejected. By marrying the fictional Vanhorn to a Northern officer, the author of "Love in the Libby," may also have anticipated the reconciliation literature that emerged in the postwar North to give literary and cultural definition to national reunification.⁵⁰

The Civil War and the Family Household Economy

who, in the 1870s, endorsed women's enfranchisement by joining the first Virginia suffrage association. Sandra Gioia Treadway, "A Most Brilliant Woman: Anna White Bodeker and the First Woman Suffrage Association in Virginia," Virginia Cavalcade 43.4 (spring 1994): 166-77.

⁵⁰Nina Silber, The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), especially Chapter Two. Silber argues that a common metaphor in this reconciliation literature involved the subordination of a Southern woman to a Northern man, usually through marriage. "Love in the Libby" does not follow this precise formula, however, because Van Lew was well-known as a Northern sympathizer.

Although Elizabeth Van Lew's betrayal harmed the Confederacy by revealing the vulnerability of its fighting strength, a potentially more destructive blow to Confederate resolve may have been the one dealt by the growing disaffection of thousands of Confederate wives and mothers who, especially beginning in 1863, besieged government officials with appeals for their menfolk's return or conducted wartime riots in a number of Southern cities.⁵¹ This disaffection was brought about less by

⁵¹North Carolina Governor Zebulon Vance, Georgia Governor Joseph Brown, and Confederate Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin collectively received thousands of letters from Confederate women demanding the release of soldiers whose labor was needed at home. Beginning in 1863, soldiers in the field were also frequently inundated with letters from home detailing the hardships suffered by their wives and children. When coupled with the Confederate Army's failed 1863 initiatives, these letters help to account for the spiraling desertion rate suffered by the Confederate army in the closing years of the war. Historians have debated the question of the commitment of working-class Southerners and yeoman farmers to the Confederate cause. Paul Escott's examination of North Carolina during the Civil War has led him to conclude that many North Carolina laborers did not support the war from the start and believed that it was really "a rich man's war but a poor man's fight," a conclusion supported by the research of both Frank Owsley and Steven Hahn. Escott, "The Cry of the Sufferers"; and Paul D. Escott, Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1985); Owsley, "Defeatism in the Confederacy"; and Steven Hahn, The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). Drew Faust has contributed to this discussion by asserting that disaffection among Confederate women may have been an important factor in Confederate defeat. Drew Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice." Analyses which argue that Southern elites and the rank and file equally supported the war include James McPherson's Ordeal by Fire and Richard E. Beringer, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N.

opposition to the Confederacy's political objectives than it was by searing economic hardships faced by many families, that were the result of complex set of relations between the Union blockade, the activities of Confederate impressment agents, and wartime speculation by Southern merchants.

As the Union blockade tightened around the Southern coastline to restrict the flow of raw materials and manufactured goods, Southerners began to feel the impact of wartime shortages on the family household economy.⁵²

Evidence documenting these shortages abounds and can be found not just in the personal writings of Confederate women and men, but also in articles in Southern newspapers that instructed women on how to deal with the absence of

Still, Jr., Why the South Lost the Civil War (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986). Stephanie McCurrie has contributed to this side of the discussion with her claim that yeoman farmers in the South Carolina Low Country made common cause with the large planter on the basis of patriarchy which made them the "masters of small worlds." Stephanie McCurrie, "The Politics of Yeoman Households in South Carolina," in Divided Houses, Clinton and Silber, eds., 22-41, and Stephanie McCurrie, Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁵²Placing a coastal blockade around Southern ports was part of the Anaconda Plan, the Union strategy for winning the war, in part, by cutting the Confederacy off from European markets for its agricultural products and limiting its access to manufactured goods from abroad. Although historians have debated the effectiveness of the Union blockade by citing the successes of Confederate blockade runners, James McPherson maintains that the blockade "cut the South's seaborne trade to less than a third of normal." McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 179.

practical household articles. The Richmond Whig, for example, published information on making ink from maple, bay, or magnolia bark or by distilling pine branches in a mixture of water, sugar, vinegar, and copperas. Sally Putnam's diary included instructions on how to make envelopes from leftover pieces of wallpaper.⁵³ Richmond women learned to substitute cornmeal in place of flour, and corncob ash for baking soda. Many also resumed the manufacture of candles and soap.⁵⁴ Some women at first viewed wartime sacrifices patriotic. "[W]e felt extremely patriotic & self-sacrificing when we resolved to dispense with ice creams and cakes," Catherine Cochran recalled about the early denials of 1861 and 1862. "[W]e called [this] putting our tables on a war footing."⁵⁵

Providing adequate clothing for themselves and their families also became a source of great concern that preoccupied the waking hours of many Southern women. Cut off from information about European fashions, affluent and

⁵³Richmond Whig, 1, 2, May 1863; Putnam, Richmond during the War, 190. Letters written in the South during this period of time are often distinguishable not only by their paper and ink, but also by the frequent use of cross-writing, a device used to conserve paper by writing first across the page from top to bottom, and then turning the page sideways and writing across the previous lines.

⁵⁴Southern Churchman, 5 June 1863; Richmond Whig, 9 May 1863; Richmond Enquirer, 6 September 1861; Kate Mason Rowland diary, ESBL, quoted in Jones, Ladies of Richmond, 151-52; Richmond Dispatch, 3 September 1862.

⁵⁵Catherine Mary Powell Noland Cochran Recollection, VHS.

middle-class women connived to have European goods shipped to them by blockade runners, or scoured outdated editions of ladies' magazines for ways to "re-invent" threadbare dresses by redesigning bodices or adding new ruffles, inserts, or trims.⁵⁶ Poorer women and children with fewer economic reserves dressed in rags, or made do with clothing improvised from cast-off curtains and bed-ticking.⁵⁷

Improvised clothing such as this often became an outward symbol of women's patriotism. "The most ingenious dress I remember during the war," one Southern woman later wrote

was a black silk, made from the covers of worn parasols, the umbrella form being preserved. It was regarded as very stylish, and was lined with a mosquito netting, which had been presented the young lady by an officer who had been stationed on James Island. The buttons on the dress had been in battle, and were much valued by the owner.⁵⁸

Women in hundreds of Southern homes became adept at plaiting straw not just for their own bonnets, but also for

⁵⁶Georgiana Ghoulson Walker, for example, frequently was able to obtain kid gloves, perfumes, silks, and other luxuries through the blockade-running operation headed by her husband, Norman. Georgiana Ghoulson Walker, Private Journal, Dwight F. Henderson, ed. (Alabama: Confederate Publishing Company, 1963); Mrs. I. V. Franklin, Augusta, Georgia, "Our Women in the War--No. 11," newspaper clipping in vol. 3 of the Walter H. Lee Scrapbook, SHC.

⁵⁷Putnam, Richmond during the War, 194, 315-16; Lauren Taylor, "A Common Thread: A Review of Civil War Fashions," Civil War Times Illustrated 24.3 (May 1985): 32-41; Clara Minor Lynn, "What the Confederates Wore," Clara Minor Lynn Papers, ESBL.

⁵⁸Mrs. I.V. Franklin, Augusta, Georgia, "Our Women in the War--No. 11," newspaper clipping in vol. 3 of Walter H. Lee Scrapbook, SHC.

the headgear worn by men and boys.⁵⁹ And after New Orleans fell to Union forces in 1862, Confederate women made up for shortages in Texas leather by manufacturing shoes from a variety of materials, including canvas sails, carpet scraps, and squirrel and rabbit skins.⁶⁰

As market prices climbed and the war stripped away other sources of revenue, the barter and sale of clothing often become an integral part of an individual woman's strategy for her family's survival. Richmonder Mary Andrews West, for instance, kept her family fed by systematically selling her clothing and jewelry. "The week before the Federals arrived," she later wrote, "I was reduced to two dresses, which were barely passable to wear; I was trying in my mind to decide which of those two I would give up."⁶¹ In Richmond, a brisk trade in second-

⁵⁹Some women also fashioned hats from ornamental gourds. Mrs. I.V. Franklin, Augusta, Georgia, "Our Women in the War--No. 11," newspaper clipping in vol. 3 of Walter H. Lee Scrapbook, SHC.

⁶⁰Clara Minor Lynn, "What The Confederates Wore," 5-6, in Clara Minor Lynn Papers, ESBL; Kate Mason Rowland Papers, ESBL, quoted in Jones, Ladies of Richmond, 192; Judith McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War, 251-52; Atlanta Southern Confederacy, 11 November 1863; Emma Holmes, The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 1861-1866, John F. Marszalek, ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 181; Mrs. I.V. Franklin of Augusta, Georgia, "Our Women in the War--No. 11," newspaper clipping in vol. 3 of Walter H. Lee Scrapbook, SHC. After New Orleans' occupation, sugar was also in short supply. Putnam, Richmond during the War, 125.

⁶¹Mary Andrews West, Richmond, to her sister, Clara, 12 April 1865, Mary Andrews West Letter, VHS.

hand clothing kept society belles rigged in threadbare and outdated European fashions as they struggled to maintain the pretenses of high society in the midst of want and suffering.

By 1863, impressment officers who fanned out into the Southern countryside in search of provisions for the Confederate Army added to these economic hardships by stripping local communities of food and other commodities.⁶² As a result, staples of the Confederate soldier's diet, including coffee, bacon, flour, cornmeal, and molasses, were often unavailable. In addition, shoes, blankets, and shirts often disappeared, at least temporarily, from store shelves. Richmonders variously made up for the absence of coffee and tea by substituting beverages made of rye, sweet potatoes, chicory, ground acorns, parched okra seeds, or leaves from blackberry

⁶²At first impressment activity was largely unregulated. In March 1862, the Confederate Congress passed the first impressment act, which was designed to standardize impressment activity and put an end to "emergency commandeering" which had been widely criticized by state and local politicians and private citizens. One year later, a second act attempted to address continued irregularities by establishing a schedule of fixed prices and more precise conditions and terms under which impressment officers could operate. Neither of these measures was successful, in part because of the difficulty enforcing them. Frank E. Vandiver, Their Tattered Flags (New York: Harper & Row, 1970); 178; "An Act to Regulate Impressments," O.R., Series IV, vol. 2, 469-72; E. Susan Barber, "The Quiet Battles of the Home Front War': Civil War Bread Riots and the Development of a Confederate Welfare System" (M.A. thesis, University of Maryland, 1986), 30.

willow, or sage, and by substituting breads made with cornmeal or rice flour for those made with wheat.⁶³

Excited by the possibility for wartime profits, some farmers contributed further to the problem by deliberately withholding foodstuffs from local markets to drive market prices even higher by reducing the supply.⁶⁴ Southern

⁶³Putnam, Richmond during the War, 79-113; Mrs. I.V. Franklin of Augusta, Georgia, "Our Women in the War--No. 11," newspaper clipping in vol 3 of the Walter H. Lee Scrapbook, SHC; Mary Williams Taylor, Richmond, to Charles Elisha Taylor, 1 October 1861, Charles Elisha Taylor Papers, UVA; Richmond Whig, 4 April, 9 May 1863; Richmond Enquirer, 4 October 1861; Holmes, Emma Holmes Diary, 180-81. A Confederate receipt book published in Richmond in 1863 contained eleven different recipes for making bread from rice flour, as well as instructions for keeping firearms polished and curing blisters incurred on long marches. Confederate Receipt Book: A Compilation of Over One Hundred Receipts, Adapted to the Times, E. Merton Coulter, ed. (1863; repr. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960), 24-35, 30, and 33-35.

⁶⁴Typically, the prices paid by impressment officers were less than what farmers could get by selling their goods in the local markets. In March 1863, for example, a group of Petersburg millers and merchant complained to the Confederate Congress that impressment officers paid them \$19.50 per barrel for superfine flour that would have commanded \$26 to \$28 in the market. Petition of Petersburg Millers and Merchants to the Confederate Congress, 3 March 1863, ESBL. Discussions about flour speculation continued throughout 1863. Richmond Dispatch, 8 August, 16 October 1863; Richmond Enquirer, 16 October 1863. Under the impressment act, farmers and merchants were required to comply with reasonable requests for goods and produce, although they were permitted to retain necessary supplies for themselves, their families, employees, slaves, or "to carry on. . .ordinary mechanical, manufacturing, or agricultural employments." Impressment officers were supposed to compensate private citizens according to a schedule of prices that was regularly revised as costs rose. O.R., Series IV, vol. 2, 469-72, and 559-62. Several governors complained that the system was riddled with problems, including over-zealous impressment officers who stripped entire communities of supplies, and scoundrels

manufacturers also conspired to increase profits. By 1863, two prominent Richmond firms--the Crenshaw Woolen Works and the Belvidere Paper Company--were both under investigation for wartime extortion.⁶⁵ Virginia Governor John Letcher was well aware of the impact of wartime profiteers on the state's economy. Only six months after the war began, he wrote the following in a letter to the Confederate Congress

It is important that some action should be taken at the earliest moment to put down the growing evil of extortion almost universally prevalent throughout the state. . . .All things necessary for the comfort and support of the volunteers, who are exposing their lives and health in the defense of our honor and independence have been run up to an almost incredible price. . . .Unless something shall be done by you speedily to strangle this evil of extortion, a vast deal of suffering will be entailed upon the country [T]he volunteer who receives only \$11 per month for his services cannot afford to supply his family with salt at from \$20 to \$25 per sack, and shoes, clothing, etc., in like proportions. Men who are neither contributing physical nor pecuniary aid to the prosecution of the war should not be allowed to reap exorbitant profits.⁶⁶

who posed as bogus impressment officers in order to steal commodities from the unsuspecting producers. O.R., Series IV, vol. 2, 943-44.

⁶⁵Savannah Republican, 27 March 1863; Richmond Examiner, 3 March 1863. By "extortion," Richmonders really meant unregulated speculation. The Belvidere Paper Company, for example, had turned a \$41,000 investment in 1860 into profits of \$235,000 in 1863. Seventy-five percent of this money had been earned in 1862 alone. The Crenshaw mill had doubled its investments during the same period.

⁶⁶John Letcher, Richmond, to the Confederate Congress, 18 November 1861, O.R., series IV, vol. 1, 738-39, hereafter cited as O.R. Emory Thomas has commented that

The governor's appeal was joined by those of other Southern politicians and clergy who pleaded with the Confederacy to do something about wartime profiteering.⁶⁷ But although the government passed legislation aimed at regulating impressment, widespread speculation continued relatively unabated; and many believed that the government was culpable. "Speculation is running wild in this city," wrote a War Department clerk in April 1863, "and the highest civil and military officials are said to be engaged. . . .Mr. Memminger cannot be ignorant of this, and yet these men are allowed to retain their places."⁶⁸

As Governor Letcher's observations suggest, the working-class wives and dependent mothers of Confederate soldiers were hit especially hard, by the absence of their loved ones from the family circle, and by the loss of the labor and income these men provided to the family household economy. Rank-and-file Confederate soldiers earned about

Richmond was a "bellwether" of future economic problems that the rest of the Confederacy would suffer. Emory M. Thomas, The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865 (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 137.

⁶⁷Pastoral Letter on Extortion," Southern Churchman, 5 September 1862; Joseph E. Brown, Governor of Georgia, to Jefferson Davis, 18 February 1863, in O.R., series I, vol. 2, 404-05; Richard Hudson, Benton, Mississippi, to Jefferson Davis, 5 October 1863, O.R., series I, vol. 2, 356-58; Richmond Whig, 16 February 1863, quoted in Emory Thomas, Confederate State of Richmond, 118.

⁶⁸John Beauchamp Jones, A Rebel War Clerk's Diary, Howard Swiggett, ed. (New York: Old Hickory Book Shop, 1935), 288.

eleven dollars a month; but many soldiers' wives complained to Confederate officials that the money their husbands earned failed to reach home. In addition, in communities like Richmond, escalating inflation meant that a soldier's pay did little to ease the financial burdens of providing for a family when market prices for such dietary staples as butter and bacon had increased to well beyond the reach of ordinary citizens. (See Table 6.1.) Even more affluent Richmonders felt the economic pinch. By March 1863, War Department clerk Garlick Kean estimated that his yearly salary of \$3,000 would buy as much as \$700 would have in 1860.⁶⁹ By May, market prices had risen to such extremes that Kean's family, along with those of many other Richmonders, were reduced to only two meals per day.⁷⁰

⁶⁹Entry dated 7 March 1863, Robert Garlick Hill Kean, Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean, Edward Younger, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), 43.

⁷⁰Entry dated 8 October 1863, Kean, Inside the Confederate Government, 108.

Table 6.1. Comparison of Food Prices for an Average Family
Richmond, Virginia, 1860 and 1863

Item	1860	1863	Percent Increase
Bacon, 10 lbs.	1.25	10.00	700
Flour, 30 lbs.	1.50	3.75	150
Sugar, 5 lbs.	.40	.75	88
Coffee, 4 lbs.	.50	20.00	3900
Green tea, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.	.50	8.00	1500
Lard, 4 lbs.	.50	4.00	700
Butter, 3 lbs.	.75	5.25	600
Meal, 1 peck	.25	1.00	300
Candles, 2 lbs.	.30	2.50	733
Coal, bushel	.20	1.00	400
Wood, cord	3.50	15.00	329

Sources: Richmond Dispatch, 29 January 1863; Robert Garlick Hill Kean, Inside the Confederate Government: The Diary of Robert Garlick Hill Kean, Edward Younger, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957).⁷¹

By the spring of 1863, then, deep fissures had opened in the loyalty felt especially by the working-class wives and mothers of Confederate soldiers who were weary of contending with widespread shortages in food and clothing created by the Confederate impressment agents. Some Richmond women--and indeed women in urban and rural locations scattered throughout the Confederacy--had begun to experience a crisis of confidence about the Confederacy's ability to tend for their families' economic needs in their husbands' absence. At times, this crisis of confidence erupted into public protests in the form of raids on local merchants or bread riots in a number of Southern cities.⁷¹ During March and April 1863, urban

⁷¹I use the term "bread riot," here to include riots resulting from the unlawful seizure of a variety of different commodities which, during the war, were in short supply in the South. Many of these items were foodstuffs,

such as beef, bacon, coffee, flour, molasses, and sugar. Some, such as salt, bacon, molasses, beef, flour, and coffee--although often quite scarce--were still sometimes available for Southern tables, providing one had the ability to purchase them at the inflated prices. In addition to food items, I am also extending this term to include other scarce items, for example, leather shoes, and clothing. During the Richmond riot trials, attorney A.J. Crane defined a riot as "a tumultuous disturbance of the public peace by three or more persons assembling together of their own authority, with an intent mutually to assist one another against any who shall oppose them in the execution of some private object, and afterwards executing the same in a violent and turbulent manner to the terror of the people, whether the act intended is lawful or not." Quoted in the Richmond Examiner, 15 May 1863. There is an extensive literature on the bread riot as a form of political and social protest which informs my analysis. Louise Tilly divides French riots into three different categories: the market riot, the entrave, and the taxation populaire. She defines a market riot as an urban disturbance aimed at bakers charging too much, or making too few loaves, or at people suspected of hoarding, or at officials acting too slowly in times of food shortages. An entrave is defined as a localized rural disturbance in which wagons of grain are detained in the locality to keep produce for local consumption. A taxation populaire is a seizure and ordered sale of goods at a "just price" with the proceeds being returned to the proprietor. The Richmond riot conforms to Tilly's definition of a market riot. Louise Tilly, "Food Riots as a Form of Political Conflict in France," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 2 (1971): 23-4. Douglas Hay defines the eighteenth-century English food riot as "an organized and often highly disciplined popular protest against the growing national and international market in foodstuffs. . .which alarmed the poor by moving grain from their parishes when it could compel a higher price elsewhere." Douglas Hay, "Property, Authority, and Criminal Law," in Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England, by Douglas Hay, Peter Linebaugh, John G. Rule, E.P. Thompson, and Cal Winslow. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975), 21. David Grimsted defines a riot as "those incidents where a number of people group together to enforce their will immediately, by threatening or perpetrating injury to people or property outside of legal procedures but without intending to challenge the general structure of society." David A. Grimsted, "Rioting in Its Jacksonian Setting," American Historical Review 77 (1972): 261-97. Other works on unruly women or the history of food riots in Europe and the United

Confederate women rioted in Atlanta, Georgia; Salisbury, Greensboro, Raleigh, and Durham, North Carolina; Mobile, Alabama; and Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia.⁷² In the spring of 1864, similar disturbances broke the calm in Savannah and Valdosta, Georgia.⁷³ Taken together, these demonstrations contributed to an ongoing critique of the Confederacy's, and the Davis administration's concern about the needs of the nation's civilian population. In

States which have contributed to this discussion include Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women on Top," in Society and Culture in Early Modern France, by Natalie Zemon Davis (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1975), 124-51; Herbert Gutman, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America," in Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History, by Herbert Gutman (New York: Vintage, 1977), 3-78, and especially 59-64; George Rudé, The Crowd in the French Revolution (London: Oxford University Press, 1968); George Rudé, The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848 (New York: Wiley, 1964); E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," Past and Present 50 (1971): 76-136. For a more generalized discussion of rioting as a form of political protest, see E.J. Hobsbawm, Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries (New York: W.W. Norton, 1959).

⁷²Religious Herald, 2 April 1863; Richmond Examiner, 18 April 1863. Of the seventeen merchant raids and commodities riots in the South that I have been able to document, at least ten took place in March and April 1863. This cluster of disturbances during such a short period might have several explanations, most notable the beginning of a third planting season that found many Southern men again absent from their farms and which also meant that supplies from the previous year would be in short supply; and the "riot contagion," caused when news of a riot spread to another community nearby where similar conditions prevailed. Barber, "Quiet Battles of the Home Front War." 2-19.

⁷³Richmond Whig, 25 March 1864; Richmond Dispatch, 26 April 1864.

addition, the women's discontent exacerbated perceptions of a growing schism for Confederate men between the twin goals of defending their new nation and protecting their families, a conflict that led to extremely high rates of military desertions in the closing years of the war.⁷⁴

⁷⁴As with other pieces of statistical evidence for the Confederacy, accurate desertion rates are difficult to ascertain. Part of the reason for this is that desertion as a category often included not only men who had quit their posts without permission, but also convalescent soldiers on recuperative furloughs; soldiers who were on leave for other reasons; and soldiers whose transfers to other units had not been properly recorded. Despite these inconsistencies, however, the desertion rate for Confederate soldiers was still extremely high, and has variously been reported at more than 100,000 men, or at two-thirds of the Confederate Army's fighting force. Some men took what were referred to as "French furloughs," brief unauthorized leaves of absence to return to their nearby homes for a few days or weeks to attend to chores. These men often later returned to their units. According to Bell Wiley, statistical information from the Confederate War Department in April 1865 showed 198,400 soldiers absent without leave and only 160,000 in the field. Bell I. Wiley, The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy (1943; repr. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 142-43. In his study of Civil War desertions in the 44th Virginia Infantry, Kevin Ruffner has concluded that desertions for Company E, the only company comprised entirely of Richmond men, reached 30 percent in the 44th Virginia Infantry in the fall of 1862, although it declined in 1863, due, according to Ruffner, to a series of religious revivals that strengthened the men's commitment and to provisions in the 1862 Conscription Act which enabled the 44th Regiment to dismiss those recruits who were more likely to desert. Kevin Conley Ruffner, "Civil War Desertion from a Black Belt Regiment: An Examination of the 44th Virginia Infantry," in The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth-Century Virginia, Edward L. Ayers and John C. Willis, eds. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 90-95. James McPherson maintains that desertion rates for both the Union and Confederate armies remained relatively the same until late 1864, when an "epidemic" of Confederate desertions emerged amid growing beliefs that a Confederate victory was impossible. McPherson places overall desertion rates for Union and

The Richmond Riot

The largest bread riot in the Confederacy began in Richmond on the morning of April 2, 1863, when a delegation of women from the working-class community of Oregon Hill entered Capitol Square and demanded to speak with the governor about high prices in the market. When denied an audience, the delegation turned and joined a much larger assembly of women and girls who were marching in the direction of the city's business district, where they proceeded to break down shop doors with axes concealed in their clothing, and seize large quantities of bacon, flour, and other commodities, sometimes at gun- or knife-point. Eyewitness accounts of the crowd's size vary from the "few hundred women and boys" described by War Department clerk, John Beauchamp Jones, to the mob of five thousand reported by H.A. Tutwiler from his perch at the Bank Street Confederate Signal Office.

Upon hearing of the disturbance, Richmond Mayor Joseph Mayo rushed to the scene to read the women the Riot Act. He was joined by Governor Letcher, who ordered out the

Confederate armies at the war's end at 9.6 and 13 percent, respectively. McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 468. Richard Beringer, et al. agree with McPherson about the escalation of Confederate desertions after the mid- to late-1864 Confederate military reverses. Beringer et al., Why the South Lost the Civil War, 434-39. James Clark notes that, by February 1865, Confederate desertions "on a good day" averaged about 1,000 men absent without leave. James C. Clark, Last Train South: The Flight of the Confederate Government from Richmond (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 1984), 2.

Public Guard to suppress the disturbance; and by Jefferson Davis, who tried to mollify the women by tossing fifty-cent gold pieces into the crowd from a nearby carriage. When this didn't work, Davis gave the women five minutes to disburse before the Guard opened fire. In a matter of hours, the riot was over. Sixty-eight people--including forty-three women and twenty-five men--were taken into custody; those who avoided arrest made their way homeward with bounties of bacon, flour, and coffee to share with their working-class neighbors.⁷⁵

⁷⁵Second only in frequency to the evacuation and fall of Richmond in April 1865, the bread riot has been described by numerous eyewitnesses. See, for example, Elias Davis, Camp near Fredericksburg, to Virginia, his wife, 6 April 1863, Elias Davis Papers, SHC; Sallie Radford Munford, Richmond, to her mother, Elvira Peyton, 1 April 1863, Sallie Radford Munford Papers, VHS (Munford began her letter on April 1st but grew sleepy before it was finished; she resumed it again on April 2d, after the riot had occurred); Varina Howell Davis, Jefferson Davis, Ex-President of the Confederate States of America: A Memoir, (New York: Belford Publishers, 1890), vol. 2, 363-76; Josiah Gorgas, The Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas, Frank Vandiver, ed. (University, Ala: University of Alabama Press, 1947), 28; Jones, Rebel War Clerk's Diary, 284-86; Judith McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War, 202-03; Putnam, Richmond during the War, 208-10; Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, Reminiscences of Peace and War (New York: Macmillan & Co, 1904), 238-39; H.A. Tutwiler, Richmond, to Netta Tutwiler, 3 April 1863, T. C. McCorvey Papers, SHC; Fred Fleet, Richmond, to Benjamin Fleet, his father, 7 April 1863; in Benjamin R. Fleet, Green Mount: A Virginia Plantation Family during the Civil War, Betsy Fleet and John D.P. Fuller, eds. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1962), 216-17; John Townsend Trowbridge, The South: A Tour of Its Battlefields and Ruined Cities (Hartford, Conn.: L. Stebbins, 1867), 167; Mrs. E.C. Kent, Four Years in Secessia (n.p.: n.p., 1863), 24-25; Ernest Taylor Walthall, Hidden Things Brought to Light, (Richmond: Deitz Printing, 1933), 24; William S. White, "A Diary of the War, or What I Saw of It," in

The Confederate government attempted to raise an immediate wall of silence around the disturbance; but several anti-administration presses--one of which characterized the Confederacy's efforts to impose a silence as "the silliest expectation that ever entered the brains of men outside of strait-jackets"--were only too eager to report the incident to a curious public.⁷⁶ So for the

Richmond Howitzer Battalion (Richmond: Carlton McCarthy & Company, 1883), pamphlet no. 2, 166; Anita Dwyer Withers Diary, SHC; reminiscence of eyewitnesses in Richmond Dispatch 30 December 1888, 20 January 1889. Secondary histories of the Civil War and Richmond's role in it also include descriptions of the disturbance. See for example, Alfred Hoyt Bill, The Beleaguered City: Richmond, 1861-1865 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 165-66; F.N. Boney, John Letcher of Virginia (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1966), 189-90; W. Asbury Christian, Richmond: Her Past and Present (Richmond: L.H. Jenkins, 1912), 220-41; Virginius Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 181-82; Francis B. Simkins and James W. Patton, The Women of the Confederacy (New York: Garrett & Massie, 1936), 127; Massey, Bonnet Brigades, 171-74; Rable, Civil Wars, 108-11; Emory M. Thomas, rev. ed. The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865 (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 201-05; Emory M. Thomas, The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capital (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 119-20; Vandiver, Their Tattered Flags, 236-7; For a more detailed discussion, see Barber, "The 'Quiet Battles' of the Home Front War"; Michael A. Chesson, "Harlots or Heroines? A New Look at the Richmond Bread Riot," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 92 (1984): 131-75; William Kimball, "The Bread Riot in Richmond," Civil War Times Illustrated 7 (1961): 149-54; and Douglas O. Tice, "Bread or Blood," Civil War Times Illustrated 12.10 (1974): 12-19. An unpublished manuscript by David Maydole Matteson titled "Riots in the United States, 1641-1894" contains descriptions of the event, largely from the Richmond Examiner. David Maydole Matteson Papers, LC.

⁷⁶John Withers on behalf of Secretary of War James H. Seddon, Richmond, to the Richmond press, 2 April 1863; John Withers on behalf of Secretary of War James H. Seddon, to W.S. Morris, president of the telegraph company, 2 April

next few weeks, the Richmond papers were filled with descriptions of the court proceedings as the arrestees were brought to trial.⁷⁷

Richmonders, by this time, had grown cynical about the Davis administration's competence, so it would not be surprising to find them blaming the riot on food shortages caused by the Confederate government's ineptness. But although some referred to extreme poverty caused by government incompetence, most blamed the incident on the rioters themselves.⁷⁸ These accounts bristle with middle-class biases about the poor, and with gender-based prejudices against the female rioters who, most believed,

1863, both in O.R., series I, vol. 18, 958; Richmond Whig, 6 April 1863. The Whig actually correctly viewed what it termed as the "petticoat foray" as having political motivations brought about by disaffection with the Davis administration. Catherine Clinton is mistaken in her claim that "[g]overnment censorship suppressed news of such disturbances." In fact, the portion of the Southern press that was critical of the Davis administration was all too willing to report such outbreaks by mobs of half-starved women as evidence of government mismanagement. Catherine Clinton, Tara Revisited: Women, War, and the Plantation Legend (New York: Abbeville Press, 1995), 153.

⁷⁷For information on the trials, see the Richmond Dispatch, 7, 16 April; 4, 6, 8, 9, 26 May; 10 June 1863; 28 January; 1 March 1864; Richmond Enquirer 14 May; 10, 19 June 1863; Richmond Examiner, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 16, 24, 27, 30 April; 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 30 May 1863. Additional information on these trials can be found in the Hustings Court Minute Book for Richmond City, and in the Executive Papers of Governor John Letcher, both in LV.

⁷⁸Two of the most balanced eyewitness accounts are the ones provided by Judith Brockenbrough McGuire and John Beauchamp Jones. Judith McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee, 202-03; John B. Jones, Rebel War Clerk's Diary, 284-87.

had transgressed gender lines by engaging in public protest. "It cannot be denied that want of bread was at this time too fatally true," Sally Putnam later remembered

but the sufferers for food were not to be found in this mob of vicious men and lawless viragoesThe real sufferers were not of the class who would engage in acts of violence to obtain bread, but [rather] the most worthy and highly cultivated of our citizens, who by the suspension of the ordinary branches of business, and the extreme inflation in the prices of provisions, were often reduced to abject suffering.⁷⁹

Confederate First Lady Varina Davis noted that the rioters had bypassed several food merchants to empty a jewelry store and several clothing shops. "[I]t was not bread they wanted," Davis averred, "they were bent on nothing but plunder and wholesale robbery."⁸⁰ "It should well be understood that the riot yesterday was not for bread," testified Mayor Joseph Mayo during the trial of rioter Elizabeth Foy. "Boots are not bread, brooms are not bread, man's hats are not bread, and I never heard of anybody's eating them."⁸¹ In a letter back home to his father, Confederate soldier Fred Fleet saw the riot as being "concocted by Yankees, aided by their assistants in Richmond, the Dutch and the Irish."⁸² An anonymous letter

⁷⁹Putnam, Richmond during the War, 208-10.

⁸⁰Davis, Jefferson Davis, vol. 2 , 374.

⁸¹Richmond Examiner, 4 April 1863.

⁸²Fred Fleet, Richmond, to Benjamin Fleet, 7 April 1863, in Fleet, Green Mount, 216-17.

to the Richmond Whig described the "Holy Thursday mob," as "a throng of courtezans and thieves," "well-dressed, plump-cheeked women" who were aided in their "daylight burglaries" by substitutes, deserters, and "Mississippi wharf-rats." For this particular writer, the Richmond mob represented "the vice, the profligacy, the prostitution, the crime of the city, the elements which wage eternal war against society and against which society must wage eternal war."⁸³ The editor of the Richmond Whig called the women a mob of "myrmidon viragos."⁸⁴

Characterizations of the female rioters as viragoes, or unnatural or unfeminine women, or prostitutes continued as the women were arraigned. When she appeared before the court on the morning of April 4th, riot leader Mary Jackson was described as "a forty-year-old Amazon with the eye of the Devil" while Minerva Meredith--who was apprehended after she had commandeered a hospital wagon loaded with beef--was characterized as a "rawboned, muscular" woman a "full six feet high."⁸⁵ Mary Duke was described as "a finely dressed woman with a quantity of rouge upon her face; while rioters Elizabeth Ammons, Frances Kelley, Mary Woodward, and Minerva Meredith were all depicted as being "handsomely dressed in silks, satins, furs, and lace," an

⁸³Richmond Whig, 6 April 1863.

⁸⁴Richmond Enquirer, 13 October 1863.

⁸⁵Richmond Examiner, 4, 6 April 1863.

implication that they were prostitutes, who were frequently accused of dressing above their station.⁸⁶ This inference was spelled out even more clearly in an anonymous letter to the editor of the Richmond Whig on April 6th: "The females, a fraction of whom were respectable, were all comfortably clad, many of them were bedizened out in finery, which was not wanted to show their trade."⁸⁷

In fact, nothing could have been further from the truth. Testimony from the trials that was published in the Richmond papers reveals that many rioters were really women from the city's working-class community who had grown increasingly frustrated at their inability to provide for their families in the straitened Richmond economy.⁸⁸ At least twelve of the female defendants listed their addresses as Rocketts, Oregon Hill, or Penitentiary Bottom, working-class communities scattered throughout the city.⁸⁹ On the night before the disturbance, they had attended a large meeting of women at Belvidere Baptist Church in Oregon Hill, where they plotted their strategy of demanding

⁸⁶Richmond Examiner, 3, 4, 6, 7 April, 15 May 1863.

⁸⁷Anonymous letter to the editor, Richmond Whig, 6 April 1863.

⁸⁸Only one of the Richmond arrestees, fourteen-year-old Eliza Jane Palmeter, was later identified as a prostitute. She was eventually found guilty of grand larceny and sentenced to the penitentiary for a year. Richmond Examiner, 6 April, 10 October 1863.

⁸⁹Richmond Examiner 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 16 April 1863. Two male rioters also lived in working-class communities.

goods at government prices, and then taking them by force if government officials refused. The women all planned to be armed, and to leave their children at home.⁹⁰

Occupations for the rioters are difficult to ascertain, but at least seven women either worked for the Confederate government or had husbands who did. German-born Barbara Idoll was a government tentmaker; while Anne Enroughty worked as Confederate seamstress at Weisiger's sewing factory, one of several hundred Weisiger women who had apparently stayed away from work to participate in the raid.⁹¹ Cartridge makers Ann Donovan and Sarah Brooks both worked in the ordinance laboratory on Brown's Island; they were later fired for participating in the riot. Sarah Coghill's husband worked in a government shop at Tredegar, and Martha Marshall's husband was a Confederate shoemaker.⁹²

Several women also had menfolk in the Confederate army. Riot leader Mary Jackson and New Kent County

⁹⁰Richmond Examiner, 9, 2 April 1863

⁹¹Martha Jamieson claimed that about 300 hundred women from Weisiger's Pearl Street clothing factory were present at the disturbance. Testimony of Martha Jamieson at the trial of Mary Jackson, quoted in Richmond Examiner, 24 April 1863.

⁹²Richmond Examiner, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 16, 24 April 1863; Time Record Book for Female Employees, Richmond Arsenal, R.G. 109, Chapter IV, Vol. 99, NARA. Male rioters Andrew J. Hawkins, Francis Brown, and Thomas Palmer also worked for the Confederate government. Richmond Examiner, 4, 8 April, 30 May 1863.

resident, Margaret Pomfrey, both had sons in the Confederate army.⁹³ Mary Duke's husband was a soldier in the Army of Northern Virginia; her fifteen-year-old son, Andrew--who was left in charge of his three younger siblings while Duke served a term in the Richmond jail--had served for ten months as a drummer in the Irish Battalion under Stonewall Jackson.⁹⁴ Anna Bell and Frances Kelly were widows whose husbands may have died in the military.⁹⁵

Women had played central rôles in commodities riots before, both in Europe and the United States. E.P. Thompson and George Rudé found them to be the primary instigators of bread riots in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England and France; and Natalie Davis's examination

⁹³Richmond Examiner, 6 April, 15 May 1863. Jackson had recently attempted to obtain a discharge for her son.

⁹⁴A frail woman with a tendency to consumption, Duke was originally sentenced to a hundred-dollar fine and six months in jail, but was later pardoned by John Letcher after a heart wrenching letter from her son, Andrew, recounting how he sold newspapers on the street corner to feed himself and his three sisters, ages ten, seven, and two. Richmond Dispatch, 8 May 1863; Richmond Enquirer, 14 May 1863; Richmond Examiner, 15 May 1863; undated letter to John Letcher from Andrew Perdue, Pardon of Mary Duke, Executive Pardons, July 1863, Executive Papers of Governor John Letcher, LV. Several men in the crowd also had connections to the C.S.A. Thomas M. Palmer was a military surgeon at Davenport Hospital, and Robert W. McKinney was a soldier in Atkinson's Battery. Neither man appears to have taken any food or clothing; both were charged with inciting a riot. Richmond Examiner, 4, 6 April 1863.

⁹⁵Richmond Whig, 4 May 1863; Richmond Examiner, 1 March 1864.

of eighteenth-century France has concluded that, although riotous behavior by women temporarily inverted the social order, it was frequently sanctioned in communities where both women and men of the lower classes lacked more legitimate forms of political expression.⁹⁶ During the American Revolution, women had formed part of the Stamp Act mobs, and had broken into storehouses and stolen coffee and tea from merchants suspected of hoarding. In the depressed economy of the late 1830s, they had protested the rising price of flour.⁹⁷

But by characterizing the Richmond rioters as a mob of depraved women bent on looting stores of jewelry, silks, and other luxuries, the riot's critics attempted to discredit the women's motivations, trivialize their actions, and render the women undeserving of sympathy from decent citizens.⁹⁸ These accusations also helped deflect

⁹⁶E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the Crowd," 76-136; George Rudé, The Crowd in the French Revolution (London: Oxford University Press, 1968); Rudé, The Crowd in History; Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women on Top."

⁹⁷Gutman, "Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America," 60-61; Linda K. Kerber, Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in the American Revolution (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), 43-45.

⁹⁸Unfortunately, some Civil War historians have unquestioningly accepted these critical assessments of the Richmond rioters. Francis Simkins and James Patton have noted that the poorer class of Southern women "had always been hard to satisfy and strident in their complaints." Instead of being grateful for the "liberal charities of the period," they used wartime privation as a pretext for demanding more than these agencies were able to provide. Simkins and Patton, Women of the Confederacy, 124. And

attention from the legitimacy of their demands for food at a just price and their expectation that the Confederate government should assume some responsibility to see that the prices were fair.⁹⁹ They also sought to minimize the impact of the women's actions on the Confederate war effort and limit the riot's potential to spark similar disturbances in nearby locations.

More telling than these attempts to discredit the women and their protest were the actions of the Richmond Common Council. In a hastily called meeting the night of April 2, the Council denounced the bread riot as an "uncalled for" affair, perpetrated on the city by "base and unworthy women instigated by worthless men who are a disgrace to the City and the community."¹⁰⁰ Two days later, however, it moved to do what the Confederate

although Emory Thomas admits that "no informed citizen would deny that scarcity existed," he repeats, as fact, the biased descriptions plump rioters bent on plundering luxuries. Emory Thomas, Confederate State of Richmond, 120-22.

⁹⁹According to E.P. Thompson, the demand for food at a price which the community deemed to be fair was a fundamental principle of the crowd's "moral economy." Thompson, "Moral Economy of the Crowd," 79, 115-26.

¹⁰⁰Louis H. Manarin, ed. Richmond at War: Minutes of the City Council, 1861-1865 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 311-12. The newspapers claimed that the women were assisted by men who were draft dodgers, criminals, and immigrants who were ineligible for military duty. There is little in the newspaper accounts of the trial to substantiate these accusations. One of the male rioters was a physician at one of the military hospitals and several more were members of the city's Public Guard that had been called out to suppress the riot.

government living in its midst could not--provide for the relief of the city's most destitute citizens. On April 4, the council approved an elaborate plan to establish a centralized municipal relief program for the city's poor; and by April 15, the Richmond Free Market was opened to serve the needs of the city's deserving poor.¹⁰¹

Modelled along the lines of the free market that had been established in New Orleans, Louisiana, shortly after a riot by starving women there in 1861, the Richmond Free Market collaborated with the Overseers of the Poor and women's and men's voluntary associations who divided the city into twenty-four districts.¹⁰² Lady visitors from the Female Union Benevolent Society made home visits to the recipients located in their districts to judge for their "worthiness," based on the women's character and their destitute condition. If deemed deserving of help, the women received tickets that were redeemable weekly for merchandise.¹⁰³ To supply the market with food and other

¹⁰¹Manarin, ed. Richmond at War, 314-5; Richmond Whig, 15 April 1863.

¹⁰²Mary Elizabeth Massey, "The Free Market of New Orleans," Louisiana History 3 (1962); 202-20. By the end of the war, free markets created in response to Confederate women's food riots were also in place in Savannah, Georgia, Mobile, Alabama, and Charleston, South Carolina. Barber, "Quiet Battles of the Home Front War," 97-104; Richmond Sentinel, 7 April 1863.

¹⁰³Emory M. Thomas, "To Feed the Citizens: Welfare in Wartime Richmond," Virginia Cavalcade 22 (summer 1972): 22-29.

commodities, the Young Men's Christian Association and the Overseers of the Poor worked with local farmers and the city's attorney to purchase food and other commodities at reasonable rates. The Council adopted two additional resolutions: one to set aside \$20,000 "for the relief of such families of the soldiers in the field from the City of Richmond as may be in want"; and the second, to establish a fuel fund to provide wood to those in need.¹⁰⁴ Coming as they did on the heels of the Richmond riot, these measures must be seen as compelling evidence that the women's riot had, indeed, touched an important nerve in city politics. By August 1864, the Richmond Relief Committee, as it came to be known, was working in conjunction with both the Y.M.C.A. and the Union Benevolent society to provide more comprehensive assistance for "our soldiers' families and the poor of the city," a duty it continued to perform after the city surrendered to Federal forces in 1865.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

Some Civil War historians have argued that the Confederacy's inability to address the extreme poverty that lay behind expression of home front disaffection played an important role in the South's defeat. Charles Ramsdell has

¹⁰⁴Manarin, Richmond at War, 317-21; Richmond Whig, 15 April 1863.

¹⁰⁵Richmond Dispatch, 11 August 1864; Southern Churchman, 1 February 1865.

observed that, although the Confederacy was able to build a relatively effective army, it was only partly successful in supplying its needs and "failed completely to solve the problem of preserving the well-being and morale of the civilian population behind the lines," a failure which Ramsdell sees as "fatal" to the Confederate cause.¹⁰⁶ For Bell I. Wiley, the "failure of the Confederacy to alleviate the suffering of soldiers' families may have contributed more to Southern defeat than any other single factor."¹⁰⁷ Frank Owsley has maintained that the South was ultimately gripped by a "psychology of defeatism" that emanated, in part, from "the suffering of the soldiers and their families."¹⁰⁸

Recently, Drew Faust has revised assessments of Confederate women as super patriots by suggesting that they may have been even more disaffected than Southern men. According to Faust, as the war eroded Southern women's expectations for care and protection by Southern men, their

¹⁰⁶Ramsdell, Behind the Lines, 2-3.

¹⁰⁷Bell I. Wiley, Confederate Women, (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), 177; Bell I. Wiley, Plain People of the Confederacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), 64-69.

¹⁰⁸Owsley, "Defeatism in the Confederacy," 446-48. Richard Beringer, et al. dismiss the impact of homefront disaffection, claiming that precisely because some Southern states were able to mount successful relief efforts, the Confederacy was actually strengthened, not weakened, by these protests. Beringer, et al., Why the South Lost the Civil War, 226-36.

disaffection--as evidenced by urban food riots and disparaging letters from home--increased, sapping the Confederate soldier's will to fight and encouraging many to desert.¹⁰⁹ According to Faust, at times like these, published testimonials about women's loyalty which appeared in newspapers and wartime novels and short stories take on the character of propaganda aimed at socializing disaffected Confederate women into more appropriately loyal roles.¹¹⁰

The evidence from Richmond adds to Faust's assessment by demonstrating that commodities riots gave Southern women a powerful voice that they were able to use not only to critique the Confederate government but also to effect change. In Richmond and other urban locations, commodities riots by working-class women opened up a dialog about

¹⁰⁹Drew Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 1227-28. George Rable dismisses the importance of urban riots, maintaining that "[d]isgruntled women did not need to rebel; all they has to do was tell their men to come home." Rable, Civil Wars, 106-10.

¹¹⁰Drew Faust has suggested that this was indeed the case. Drew Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 1200-28. Of course, one of the flaws in Faust's argument is that the working-class women who rioted in Richmond were hardly the group of women who would have had either the time or education to read propagandistic novels like Augusta Evans's Maccaria. Other evidence from the correspondence of several Southern governors, however, most notably Zebulon Vance and Joseph Smith, indicate that pleas by Confederate wives for their men to return home do increase dramatically beginning in 1863. Even illiterate women sometimes found a willing amanuensis who would write these letters for them. Barber, "'Quiet Battles of the Home Front War,'" especially Chapter Three.

economic conditions with state and local officials that led to the establishment free markets and other relief mechanisms to relieve women's and children's wartime hardships. Although temporary, these fledgling programs demonstrated the political power behind women's wartime protests despite their political disfranchisement.

CHAPTER 7

TEACHERS AND WRITERS:

MIDDLE-CLASS WHITE WOMEN'S WORK IN POSTBELLUM RICHMOND

Although some wartime occupations for middle-class women came to an end in the spring of 1865, their need for employment did not. The war had left many Richmonders destitute and women's postwar work often spelled the difference between a family's success or failure. In the antebellum period, elite and middle-class women's work outside the home--unless disguised as charity--had been greeted with disapproval by critics who insisted that their only appropriate sphere of labor was the home. But wartime demands for government workers had drawn thousands of women into nursing or clerking under the rationale that this work was patriotic.

Many upper- and middle-class Richmond women whose husbands or fathers returned from the war unharmed were probably relieved to leave outside employment and return to their domestic duties. Thus, they have disappeared from the record of middle-class women's postwar work. But the Civil War operated as an economic leveller for many upper- and middle-class Southern families. Thousands of women

ended the war widowed or orphaned, or found themselves in such precarious financial situations that they were unable to relinquish the economic security an extra paycheck provided. In addition, emancipation had deprived many white female slaveholders of income derived from hiring their slaves out as factory hands, or as domestic workers in Richmond homes, hotels, or restaurants. Only a few middle-class Richmond women were able to transfer their wartime work experience as matrons or clerks into similar postwar employment. But some found work as teachers in the public school system that was created in Richmond as a condition of Virginia's Reconstruction. One or two others turned to careers in writing, and contributed to the emerging literature of the South's "Lost Cause" culture. (Chapter Ten.)

Teaching

A few Richmond women had made inroads into education before the war began, either as the operators of "dame schools"--small home schools for young children--or as teachers in one of the city's six female academies that educated the daughters of Richmond elites.¹ Most girls'

¹These schools were the Richmond Female Institute, a Baptist school founded in 1859; Hubert Lefebvre's School, one of the most popular schools for girls in the antebellum city; the Southern Female Institute; Miss Pegram's School; the Old Dominion Institute, and the Richmond Female Seminary.

schools offered curricula that included history, English, mathematics, natural science, and mental and moral philosophy, as well as the ubiquitous music, painting and fancy needlework that were commonplace in most girls' schools in the antebellum period.² The faculties and administrations of most of these antebellum institutions were dominated by men (many of the founders or administrators were clergy), but about ten women taught in these institutions in 1860, usually in the areas of language instruction, English, or vocal music.³

Women from religious communities also taught in several antebellum schools that served the needs of Richmond's growing Irish and German Catholic populations. Three sisters of the Daughters of Charity of St. Joseph,

²Advertisement for the Richmond Female Seminary, Richmond Enquirer, 12 January 1861; Advertisement for the Old Dominion Institute, Richmond Examiner, 9 July 1860; Circular of Miss Pegram's Boarding and Day School for 1861 and 1862 (Richmond: Macfarland & Ferguson, 1862); Advertisement for the Southern Female Institute, Richmond Enquirer, 7 July 1860; "Mr. Lefebvre's School," Richmond Examiner, 27 July 1860.

³Elva M. Jones and Margaret Brander taught primary and intermediate English at the Old Dominion Institute. Antionetta and Marietta Erba instructed students in voice and piano at Hubert Lefebvre's School. Mathilde Estevan, a teacher of vocal music, divided her time between Miss Pegram's School and the Richmond Female Seminary. At the Richmond Female Institute, male teachers shared responsibility for the curriculum with female teachers. This information was taken from advertisements for these schools in the Richmond papers. Richmond Enquirer, 12 January 1861; Richmond Examiner, 9 July 1860; Richmond Enquirer, 7 July 1860; Richmond Examiner, 27 July 1860; and Religious Herald, 19 August 1858. Also the Circular of Miss Pegram's Boarding and Day School for 1861 and 1862.

for example, operated St. Peter's School for predominantly Irish girls and boys.⁴ In May 1859, these women were joined by Sisters Mary Seraphine Pronath, Frances Borgia Fuhrman, and Fabiana Weber--three nuns from the School Sisters of Notre Dame who administered to the needs of sixty German Catholic children at St. Mary's School on Fourth Street.⁵ But of all the larger schools in antebellum Richmond, only Mary E. Pegram's nonsectarian school for girls in Linden Square was operated entirely by women. In 1861, it enjoyed an enrollment of 115 students.⁶

Initially, the war closed some of these antebellum schools and disrupted others. Under the Confederate conscription act, a few male teachers received exemptions from military service, but most were eligible for field duty, as were male students older than sixteen. As male

⁴James Henry Bailey, II, History of St. Peter's Church, Richmond, Virginia: 125 Years, 1834-1959 (Richmond: Lewis Printing Co., 1959), 11.

⁵Nine Notre Dame Sisters worked at the school from 1859 to 1868. Originally planned as a day school, St. Mary's became the "German Female High School" when the sisters added a course of high school instruction sometime in the early 1860s. In 1868, the work of the Notre Dame Sisters was taken over by Benedictine Sisters from the mother house in St. Mary's, Pennsylvania. In 1875, the name of the school was changed to St. Mary's Benedictine Institute. [Ignatius Remke], Historical Sketch of St. Mary's Church, Richmond, Virginia, 1843-1935. (Richmond: n.p., 1937), 8-15.

⁶Circular of Miss Pegram's Boarding and Day School for 1861 and 1862.

instructors departed for the front, women filled some of the teaching vacancies their absence created, both in schools and as private tutors in Southern homes. A number of these women were refugees who advertised for teaching positions in the "Situations Wanted" sections of the Richmond papers.⁷ "A YOUNG LADY, an exile from her home, wishes to become a Teacher," began a typical ad in 1864. "She is competent to teach the English and French languages and the rudiments of Latin, and is a thorough and elegant musician."⁸

Other positions remained unfilled, especially in all-boys' schools, or other institutions where male teachers predominated. The boys' section of St. Peter's School--which was taught entirely by men--was suspended from 1861 until 1867, when it was reorganized under the direction of Father Thomas Becker.⁹ Hubert LeFebvre's School for girls was also "broken up" when its largely male faculty enlisted in the army.¹⁰ Some larger girls' schools--including Mary Pegram's School and the Southern Female Institute--managed

⁷Southern Churchman, 19 June 1863; 16 March, 1 April 1864.

⁸Southern Churchman, 18 March 1864.

⁹Bailey, History of St. Peter's Church, 29.

¹⁰Sallie A. Brock Putnam, Richmond during the War: Four Years of Personal Observations by a Richmond Lady (1867; repr. New York: Time-Life Books, 1983), 189; Advertisement for the Southern Female Institute, Richmond Enquirer, 7 July 1860.

to remain open, although this sometimes meant holding classes in other locations as school buildings were pressed into use as military hospitals or offices for the Confederate government.¹¹

For some independent entrepreneurs, however, wartime disruptions spelled a complete financial disaster. By 1865, for example, fifty-eight-year-old Martha Rice was virtually penniless. A teacher for more than forty years, Rice had operated a private school in her home with the help of her son. His absence for military service cut the widowed Rice's income in half, while the rent for her school had increased rapidly in Richmond's inflationary economy. In November 1865, she pleaded with the city council for a loan of \$80 to \$100 to help her move to a less expensive location.¹²

¹¹The Richmond Female Institute building was requisitioned as a military hospital in 1862. Classes for the ninth and tenth sessions were held in the Richmond homes. Sallie A. Brock Putnam, Richmond during the War, 190; "History of the Alumnae Association of the Richmond Female Institute," paper presented at the 100th Anniversary Celebration, 1904, in Lily Becker Epps Papers, UVA; Richmond Female Institute Records, VHS; Mary Williams Taylor to James Taylor and Charles Elisha Taylor, 12 October 1862, Charles Elisha Taylor Papers, UVA. Part of the explanation for why some schools were able to continue while others were not lies in the fact that clergy were exempted from the wartime draft. So schools where clergy predominated--like the Richmond Female Institute and the Southern Female Institute--remained in session, even though their faculties were largely male.

¹²Martha C. Rice, Richmond, to the Richmond Common Council, 18 November 1865, Richmond City Papers, Minutes of the Common Council, Bundle dated 29 November 1865, LV. Hereafter, these records will be cited as MCC, LV. Rice's

Other women who faced the postbellum period without male support seized on home teaching as a discreet means of making a modest living. Jane Taylor Prichard, for example, opened a small day school for twelve students in 1866, in a converted bedroom of her parent's Richmond home. The mother of four, Prichard had returned to the city in 1862, shortly after her physician husband died in a yellow fever epidemic in Wilmington, North Carolina. By 1868, Prichard's student body had reached sixteen, enough to care for herself and her children in her parents' home.¹³

Hundreds more educated middle-class women chose to pursue careers in the Richmond public schools that were created in 1869 as part of the revised Virginia constitution. This constitution was drafted and adopted as a condition for rejoining the Union. A comprehensive history of education in Richmond remains to be written, but sketchy evidence from several histories of the city suggests that, in the antebellum period, many elite Richmonders had opposed proposals for a public education system, preferring to educate their daughters and sons in

letter makes no mention of whether her son survived the war.

¹³Mary Taylor, Richmond, to Charles Elisha Taylor, 11 October 1866; Mary Williams Taylor, Richmond, to Charles Elisha Taylor, 3 October 1866; Mary Williams Taylor to Charles Elisha Taylor, 18 December 1868, all in Charles Elisha Taylor Papers, UVA.

exclusive Richmond academies.¹⁴ The antebellum work of educating poor children of both races, thus, was left to private charity, either through Sabbath schools operated by Richmond churches, or day schools maintained by the city's orphanages.¹⁵

In the aftermath of the war, Northern white women and men provided much of the immediate postbellum education for Richmond's poorer Confederate orphans and ex-slaves, largely under the auspices of various missionary societies.

¹⁴Fragmentary data on the Richmond school system can be found in Michael B. Chesson, Richmond after the War, 1865-1890 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981); Marie Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls: Richmond Virginia and Its People (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); and Peter J. Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond: 1865-1890 (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1989). None offers a complete picture, however. For a discussion of Northern teachers in the postbellum South, see Jacqueline Jones, Soldiers of Light and Love: Northern Teachers and Georgia Blacks, 1865-1873 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Robert C. Morris, Reading, 'Riting, and Reconstruction: The Education of Freedmen in the South, 1861-1870 (1975; repr. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); and Henry Lee Swint, The Northern Teacher in the South, 1862-1870 (New York: Octagon Books, 1967). For a discussion of Northern teachers in postbellum Virginia, see Richard L. Morton, ed., "Life in Virginia by a 'Yankee Teacher,' Margaret Newbold Thorpe," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 64.2 (1956): 180-207. Thorpe was stationed at a school in Norfolk.

¹⁵Of course, few black children received any sort of education at all, although affluent free blacks had educated their children in private black schools with black teachers. Chesson, Richmond after the War, 100-01. Some poor black children received rudimentary educations in Richmond's black churches, sometimes from white missionaries. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 21-24.

By September 1865, for example, white teachers sponsored by the Soldiers' Memorial Society of Boston operated a free school for 400 orphans of Confederate soldiers at the Confederate Naval Laboratory near Hollywood Cemetery, furnished with desks from the former Confederate Congress.¹⁶ Within one month of Emancipation Day in April 1865, two thousand black children were attending day schools established by Northern missionary societies, such as the American Missionary Association, the New England Freedmen's Aid Society, and the American Freedmen's Union Commission. These missionary associations worked in conjunction with the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands to provide basic training in reading and arithmetic to black children and adults. In Richmond, a total of twenty women and five men--largely from Massachusetts and New York worked in these schools, with some sharing their time with schools in nearby Norfolk and Portsmouth.¹⁷ As a result of their efforts, by 1870, more than a third of the city's black population could read and write.¹⁸

¹⁶Richmond Dispatch, 30 June 1866.

¹⁷I have drawn these figures from a list of female and male teachers sent South by Northern missionary societies which appears in Swint, Northern Teacher in the South, Appendix III, 175-221.

¹⁸Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890, 38.

Northern teachers posed serious problems for many white Southerners, however, who resented their presence and were concerned about the cultural transmission of traditional white Southern values to succeeding generations of Southern children, both black and white. Many objected to lessons that portrayed Abraham Lincoln as a national savior or excoriated the valor of Confederate soldiers.¹⁹ On Richmond streets, Northern teachers were pushed and cursed, or spat upon by angry whites.²⁰ In many Southern locales, the remedy for this unwanted invasion was to train and hire white Southern women as teachers thus preserving white cultural integrity and helping assure white racial dominance in the postwar South.²¹

An 1868 commencement address delivered at the Richmond Female Institute the year before the Virginia constitution was ratified anticipated the importance of this expanded role for white Southern women. After alluding to women's wartime work of knitting socks for soldiers or keeping vigils at hospital bedsides, commencement speaker J.A. Chambliss, a Baptist minister, focused his remarks on the

¹⁹Entry dated 10 June 1865, Diary from April 27, 1865 to 1894, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

²⁰Chesson, Richmond after the War, 101.

²¹A more important means of achieving white dominance was through the systematic disfranchisement of black male voters and the terrorism of white supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. There was little or no Klan activity in Richmond in the 1860s and 1870s.

important postbellum work for Southern women in ministering to Confederate widows and orphans and in replacing "imported schoolmarmes and pedagogues" in the region's public schools. To Chambliss, "nothing [could] be more worthy of womanhood than to labor in this noble cause."²²

The Baptist newspaper, the Religious Herald, in which Chambliss's commencement sermon appeared, was also in the forefront in advocating teaching as a suitable postwar career for Southern women, although it continued to hold more reactionary views about educating women for positions other than teaching.²³ Between November 1865 and August 1866, the Herald published a series of essays promoting the founding of normal schools to train Southern women as

²²Commencement address for the Richmond Female Institute, Richmond Virginia, by Rev. J.A. Chambliss, reprinted in the Religious Herald, 9 July 1868.

²³An 1867 essay, for example, stressed the importance of a home-based education in the domestic arts for Southern women because [d]omestic life forms the sphere in which the woman is to move." According to the Herald, women's educations should emphasize English and history, leaving science, Latin and algebra for men, or for women planning to be teachers. Men should also have a grounding in ancient languages and mathematics. "Men need especially the cultivation of the reasoning faculties," the Herald writer observed, "For they are reasoning animals--women are much less so, and have much less need [of cultivating] this faculty." Religious Herald, 23 March 1867. The Religious Herald, by this time, was under the editorship of two prominent Richmond clergymen, Jeremiah Bell Jeter and Alfred E. Dickinson. After assuming control of the paper, Jeter and Dickinson introduced "The Home Circle," an entire page devoted almost entirely to sermons, vignettes, and poetry stressing women's domesticity. Virginia Baptist Historical Society librarian Darlene Slater believes this page was probably written and/or edited by Mary Catherine Jeter, Jeremiah Jeter's wife.

teachers in the primary grades.²⁴ "The abolition of slavery must necessitate a great change in the social and domestic condition of the Southern woman," began an essay which appeared in August 1866.

[H]aving deprived [Southern women] of the means of indulgence, and, in many instances, even of support, [it] has imposed on them the necessity of seeking employments suited to their sex and station. . . .The business of education in the South must henceforth, to a great extent, be committed to females. Heretofore, educated women among us have, with rare exceptions, been exempt from the necessity of making efforts for their own maintenance, and have, consequently, been unwilling to burden themselves with the care of a school. When female teachers have been needed, they have been imported from the North. . . . Taste, inclination, interest, not to say prejudice, demand that, from this time, Southern children shall be taught by Southern women.²⁵

As the Herald essayist implied, one reason for this shift was based on worries about preserving the Southern social order.²⁶ Another reason grew out of the need to provide impoverished middle-class Southern women with a

²⁴Religious Herald, 23, 30 November, 7 December 1865; 11 January, 7 June 1866.

²⁵Religious Herald, 9 August 1866.

²⁶Charles Regan Wilson maintains that by the 1880s, "Confederate veterans served as superintendents, principals, and teachers in private academies" while the "impoverished daughters of the prewar planter families . . . dominated the lower grades of Southern education. Because they retained their Old South--Confederate values, their presence in the classroom was a potent influence for traditions on another generation of Southerners." By the late nineteenth century, this influence extended to writing Southern textbooks. Charles Reagan Wilson, Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 138-60.

suitable occupation.²⁷ In 1860, white women had comprised approximately 25 percent of the ninety-eight teachers listed in the 1860 Richmond census.²⁸ By 1870, they totalled 67.9 percent of the 243 teachers who provided educations for white students in the city's public and private schools.²⁹ Although no women at all worked in institutions of higher education, such as the Richmond Medical School and the Richmond College, they comprised 98.3 percent of the sixty-two women and men who taught in the city's public primary, intermediate, and grammar schools for white girls and boys, and 62.1 percent of the faculties of the city's fifty-nine private day and boarding schools.³⁰ In addition, all of the city's parochial and

²⁷Richmond schools were segregated by race. Most middle-class blacks and whites who could afford them continued to support private, racially segregated schools for their children. Poorer white and black children attended the city's public schools, although enrollments fluctuated because these children sometimes worked in city factories. Chesson, Richmond after the War, 166-67. The majority of Richmond's public school teachers in the primary grades in 1871 were white women (61). There were eleven black public school teachers in 1871, eight of these were black women. Report of the School Board, 1870-71, MCC, LV. School principals and members of the Board of Education were white men. None of the Richmond sources is specific about whether any white female teachers ever taught in black public schools.

²⁸Schedule of Social Statistics, 1860 Census for Richmond, Virginia, NARA.

²⁹Schedule of Social Statistics, 1870 Census for Richmond, Virginia, NARA.

³⁰In the black schools, where all the faculty may also have been black, female teachers also outnumbered male teachers by a ratio of 2.7 to 1.

charity schools in 1870 were taught completely by women.³¹ By 1880, white female teachers in Richmond outnumbered male teachers by 3 to 1.³² In part, these Richmond ratios may have been the result of the city's rapidly growing school system; in part, they may reflect the movement of white educated Richmond men into more lucrative lines of work.

Richmond's ratios of female and male teachers were not necessarily typical of those in other Southern communities. A comparison of female and male teachers in the states of the former Confederacy in the late 1880s revealed that,

³¹Schedule of Social Statistics, 1870 Census for Richmond, Virginia, NARA. With the exception of a few private boarding schools whose faculties are known, it is impossible to provide a breakdown by gender for the antebellum period. The Schedule of Social Statistics in the 1860 Census for Richmond City, which provides information on the number of teachers in Richmond, makes no distinctions as to gender. At best, all that can be said for the immediate antebellum period is that, in 1860, ninety-eight male and female teachers worked in thirty-one Richmond public and private schools to provide educations for 2,760 students. Schedule of Social Statistics, 1860 Census for Richmond, Virginia, NARA. The information on black teachers comes from a School Board Report which was filed in the minutes of the Common Council. In these schools eight of the eleven black teachers were female, and three were male. Report of the School Board for the Scholastic Year 1870-71, Bundle dated September 1871, MCC, LV. At eleven in 1870, the number of black public school teachers was quite small. Under Readjuster rule in the early 1880s, however, the number of black schools expanded and the number of black school teachers tripled. In addition, black school enrollment expanded from 36,000 in 1879 to 91,000 in 1882. All was this was in fulfillment of campaign pledges made in return for black voter support. Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond Virginia, 1865-1890, 103.

³²Angela Catherine Bongiorno, "White Women and Work in Richmond, Virginia, 1870-1884" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1978), 25-26.

although women had made significant strides in the field of education, in only two states--Virginia and Louisiana--did the number of women teachers exceed the number of men. In Virginia, female teachers outnumbered male teachers by 4,165 to 3,258, or a ratio of 14:11; in Louisiana, this ratio was 27:23. In all of the other states except Mississippi, however, men outnumbered women, often by about 2:1. In Mississippi, the ratio of female to male teachers was an even 50:50.³³

In most states, women entering teaching were paid less than their male counterparts. An 1868 article in the suffragist newspaper, Revolution, compared salaries for female and male teachers in twelve northeastern and western states--where teaching often became identified as a woman's occupation in the antebellum period. In every instance, the salaries paid to male teachers exceeded those paid to women, usually by more than 50 percent. In Wisconsin, for example, male teachers received \$36.45 per month, while female teachers earned \$22. In New Hampshire, male teachers made \$24.35 per month, and female teachers, \$14.12. In one of the worst cases of all, male teachers in

³³A.D. Mayo, Southern Women in the Recent Educational Movement in the South, Don T. Carter and Amy Freidlander, eds. (1892; repr. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978).

Maine were paid \$28.50 a month, nearly three times the \$10.50 paid to the state's female instructors.³⁴

Several historians have argued that, as teaching became a "feminized" profession, teachers' salaries fell.³⁵ The evidence for Richmond suggests that the importance Virginians placed on having Southern women as teachers of white Southern children (instead of Chambliss's "imported schoolmarms and pedagogues") may have controverted this trend. According to a Richmond school board report filed in 1871, although female teachers were concentrated in the elementary and primary grades, both female and male instructors received the same rates of pay, although that rate varied according to the level being

³⁴Revolution, 16 April 1868, 227.

³⁵Alice Kessler-Harris, Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 56-57. Kessler-Harris notes that, in Massachusetts, between 1840 and 1865, the proportion of male teachers dropped from 50 to 14 percent, while the number of female teachers rose during the Civil War. According to Kessler-Harris, "[w]omen's lower pay and higher turnover rates would contribute to feminizing the profession permanently." Kessler-Harris, Out to Work, 68. Drew Faust's and Anne Scott's research suggests that the feminization of teaching in the South occurred after, and as a result of, the Civil War. Drew Gilpin Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 82-88; Anne Firor Scott, rev. ed., The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 110-18. All subsequent citations are to this edition of Scott's book.

taught.³⁶

By the 1880s, teaching had become a viable option for several hundred white Richmond women. But perhaps even more important than the number of women who turned to teaching in the postwar decades were the thousands of working-class girls and boys who were able to attend schools for the first time following the implementation of Richmond public school system in 1869 and the subsequent

³⁶With the exception of the normal schools where female teachers outnumbered male teachers by a ratio of 5:2, male teachers predominated in schools for advanced learning. The normal school may have been established to train black women and men as teachers. No salary figures for these schools exist but they were presumably higher than any amounts paid to teachers working in the lower grades. Schedule of Social Statistics, 1870 Census for Richmond, Virginia, NARA. Grammar school teachers Julia Whiting, Mary Ann Fulton, and Jennie B. Howard, for example, each received \$60 per month, while primary school teachers Lucy Hockaday and Mrs. H.A. Apperson were paid \$45 and \$40, respectively, depending on the level of primary education each women taught. Laura C. Richards and Hattie E. Rogers earned \$50 each for providing instruction to intermediate boys and girls. In each of these cases, according to the School Board report, the women received exactly the same amount as male teachers providing the same level of instruction. Richmond Dispatch, 4 January 1870; Report of the School Board for the Scholastic Year, 1870-71, Bundle dated September 1871, MCC, LV. Black female and male janitors for the city's sixty-five white and black public schools earned between \$2 and \$25 per month. Virginia may have been in the forefront of this trend. George Rable has noted that, in 1870, Virginia was the only Southern state to employ more than a thousand women as public school teachers. However, Rable's argument, in general, goes against the conclusions of both Scott and Faust, arguing that Southern women opened more private schools but "they by no means replaced men." My research suggests that, for Virginia at least, Rable is probably mistaken. George C. Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 277.

training and hiring of competent female teachers. Although the number of children employed in factory work in Richmond increased dramatically between 1870 and 1880, education provided many of these children with at least a fundamental literacy.³⁷

Writing

Writing or editing was another postbellum occupation that attracted a tiny group of white, upper- and middle-class women. Northern women had written domestic novels since the 1840s and 1850s, but, with the exception of Augusta Evans's 1860 novel, Beulah, most Southern women had not. During the war, however, some Richmond women became fictional propagandizers of Confederate patriotism and Southern women's wartime roles, often as a means of supplementing family income.³⁸ Constance Cary Harrison,

³⁷In 1870, there were 858 child factory laborers of both races; in 1880, there were 2,113. In addition to manufacturing tobacco products, Richmond children in 1880 worked in box factories, iron foundries and machine shops, and saddleries. They also manufactured furniture and worked in the city's publishing houses. Chesson, Richmond after the War, 166-67; Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 209.

³⁸For a discussion of domestic novelists in the United States, see Ann D. Wood, "The 'Scribbling Women' and Fanny Fern: Why Women Wrote," American Quarterly [need date/vol]: 2-24; Henry Nash Smith, "The Scribbling Women and the Cosmic Success Story," Critical Inquiry [need vol](September 1974): 47-70; Ann Douglas, "Heaven Our Home: Consolation Literature in the Northern United States, 1830-1860," American Quarterly (December 1974): 495-516; and Barbara Berg, The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, The Woman and the City, 1800-1860 (1979; repr.

for example, penned brief articles and patriotic serials for the Magnolia and the Southern Illustrated News under the pen names of "Refugitta" and "Secessia," while her mother and aunt nursed Confederate soldiers at Richmond's Winder Hospital.³⁹ Benetta Valentine, the unmarried

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), especially Chapter Six. For a discussion of Southern women writers, see Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," Journal of American History 76.4 (1990): 1200-28; and Drew Gilpin Faust, "A War Story for Confederate Women: Augusta Jane Evans's Macaria," in Drew Gilpin Faust, Southern Stories: Slaveholders in Peace and War (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 160-73. European women also produced this genre. See Bonnie Smith's discussion of domestic novelists in Northern France in her Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), especially Chapter Eight.

³⁹Constance Cary [Mrs. Burton] Harrison, Recollections Grave and Gay (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 118. See, for example, "A Confederate Christmas," Magnolia, 3 October 1863, and "A Woman of the World," Magnolia, 14 November 1864. Born on April 25, 1843, Constance Cary Harrison published more than thirty fictional works including novellas, short stories, children's fairy tales, essays, plays, and social commentaries during a career that spanned from the Civil War to the second decade of the twentieth century. The daughter of Archibald Cary, a lawyer and newspaper editor, twelve-year-old Harrison was living in Alexandria, Virginia, with her widowed mother, Monimia Fairfax Cary, when the Civil War began. After Alexandria was overrun by Federal troops, Harrison and her family moved to Richmond, where Monimia Cary worked as a Winder Hospital matron. In November 1867, Constance Cary married Norvell Burton Harrison, Jefferson Davis's private secretary who had been instrumental in securing the ex-president's release from a Union prison. After the war, the Harrisons moved to New York City, where Burton Harrison practiced law until his death in Washington, D.C., in 1904. It was there that Constance Harrison raised her three sons and developed her career as a writer. Her eldest son, Fairfax, later became president of both the Southern Railway Company and the Chicago, Indianapolis & Louisville Railway Company. Her

daughter of an illustrious and multi-talented Richmond family, enjoyed wartime success as a writer of poems, short stories, and brief essays on a variety of subjects including the Civil War, slavery and slave treatment, religion, the South, and motherhood. Her most famous Civil War poem, "Marse Robert Is Asleep," which offers a highly romanticized view of Southern slavery, was published repeatedly in newspapers and periodicals throughout the South.

Because most women wrote in anonymity at home, writing provided a respectable source of income for women whose husbands or fathers were ill, improvident, or dead. In the postwar decades, pro-South writings by Southern women and men took on added significance as contributions to the literary discourse surrounding the Lost Cause (Chapter Ten.). Shortly after the war, for example, several women who had lived and worked in the Confederate capital published wartime diaries or recollections as a means of valorizing both their own wartime experiences and the heroism of Southern men. Other women wrote historical sketches of Confederate heroes, such as Robert E. Lee. As a result, women were able to tap into a lucrative market for Southern memorabilia in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, as Southerners attempted to have what

second son, Francis, served two terms as governor of the Philippines. A third son, Archibald, died as a young adult.

they considered "the real history of the war" written into the historical and literary canon.⁴⁰

In 1866, Judith Brockenbrough McGuire, the middle-aged wife of an Episcopal clergyman and educator, rushed a version of her diary into print, detailing her life and work in the Confederate capital, including the heroism and suffering of dozens of male kin in the service of the Confederate army. By 1867, it was in its second edition.⁴¹ Chimborazo matron Phebe Pember returned to Georgia after the war and wrote a reminiscence from her

⁴⁰Nina Silber has described another body of literature which developed during this same period of time, primarily out of middle- and upper-class Northerners' attempts to interpret, metaphorically, the reunion of North and South. Much of this "reconciliation literature" constructs a "gendered view of the postwar Dixie that very much fit[s] with [Northerners'] concerns about subduing the South under Northern political and economic authority" usually by recounting tales of manly Northern men, cowardly or effeminate Southern men, and spiteful she-rebels. As Reconstruction came to an end in the late 1870s, these literary "subduings," frequently took the form of marriages between Southern women and Northern men. Nina Silber, The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 19 and 63. Although she was a Southerner by birth, several of Constance Cary Harrison's later writings--"Cherrycote" and A Virginia Cousin--fit into this genre. Unfortunately, Silber's study only focuses on the contributions of Northern men. Constance Cary Harrison, A Virginia Cousin and Bar Harbor Tales (1895; repr. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969); and Constance Cary Harrison, An Edelweiss of the Sierras, Golden-Rod, and Other Tales (1892; repr. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969) [Includes "Cherrycote."].

⁴¹Judith Brockenbrough McGuire, Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War, 2d ed. (New York: E.J. Hale & Son, 1867; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1972).

wartime diary. It was first published as A Southern Woman's Story in 1879.⁴²

Kate Mason Rowland, who spent the wartime years working at Richmond's Confederate Naval Hospital, co-edited the Civil War diary of Julia LeGrand, and published a volume of chivalric Southern poetry by a Georgia physician.⁴³ Rowland's sister, Emily Mason, wrote a history of Robert E. Lee, and edited a collection of wartime poetry accumulated from Confederate newspapers on Mason's travels throughout the South. The proceeds from this volume were intended for educating the daughters of

⁴²Phoebe Yates Pember, A Southern Woman's Story (New York: G.W. Carleton, 1879). Of course, Mary Chesnut is the most ubiquitous Southern diarist, but there were dozens more women and men whose wartime narratives came into print in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

⁴³Julia LeGrand, The Journal of Julia LeGrand: New Orleans, 1862-1863, Kate Mason Rowland and Mrs. Morris L. Croxall, eds. (Richmond: Everett Waddy, 1911); and Francis Orray Ticknor, The Poems of Frank O. Ticknor, M.D., K[ate] M[ason] R[owland], ed. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1879). Later, Rowland published historical sketches of Robert Carter and Captain John Smith, as well as two-volume biographies of both George Mason of Virginia, and Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Kate Mason Rowland, "Robert Carter of Virginia," Magazine of American History 30.3 (September 1893): 114-136; Kate Mason Rowland, "The Tasker and Barnes Families," Dixie Magazine 2.3 (September 1899): [pp.??]; Kate Mason Rowland, Captain John Smith, Soldier and Historian (n.p.: n.p., 1893); Kate Mason Rowland, The Life of George Mason, 1725-1792, 2 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1892; Kate Mason Rowland, The Life of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, 1737-1832, 2 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1898).

deceased Confederate soldiers as teachers in Southern schools.⁴⁴

Other writings by Benetta Valentine and especially by Constance Cary Harrison stress the theme of Southern and Northern reunification which enabled their work to reach a broader audience that transcended regional lines and, in the case of Harrison, helped establish her career as a writer of popular fiction in the late nineteenth century.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Emily V. Mason, Popular Life of Gen. Robert E. Lee (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1872); Emily V. Mason, ed. The Southern Poems of the War (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1867).

⁴⁵Although never a prodigious writer, by the mid-1880s, Valentine's poem "North and South" had become so popular that it was often sung at joint gatherings of Confederate and Union veterans to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne." "North and South," a song sheet prepared for the Grand Democratic Jubilee, 18 November 1884, Sarah Benetta Valentine Papers, VM. Harrison's writing enjoyed such popularity by the end of the nineteenth century that, in 1893, she was asked to edit the volume on periodical literature for the Library of the Woman's Building at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Although this list is not exhaustive, Harrison's publications--in addition to A Virginia Cousin and Edelweiss of the Sierras--include the following: The Anglomaniacs (1890; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1977); Tea at Four O'Clock (Chicago and New York: Dramatic Publishing Company, 1892); The Carcellini Emerald, with Other Tales (1899; repr. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969); A Daughter of the South and Shorter Stories (1892; repr. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1969); The Circle of a Century (New York: Century Co., 1899); A Bachelor Maid (New York: Century Co., 1894); Flower de Hundred: The Story of a Virginia Plantation (New York: Cassell, 1890); A Princess of the Hills: An Italian Romance (Boston: Lothrop, 1901); Belhaven Tales; Crow's Nest; Una and King David (New York: Century Co., 1892); The Count and the Congressman (New York: Cupples & Leon, 1908); An Errant Wooing (New York: Century Co., 1895); Folk and Fairy Tales (London: Ward & Downey,

Conclusion

In the postwar South, the overwhelming need for work continued the movement of middle-class white women into the workforce that had started during the war. But Confederate defeat meant that these women's postwar employment would not follow the trajectories established by their wartime labor as hospital matrons and government clerks. In the decades after the war, a few upper- and middle-class Richmond women channeled their wartime prose into postwar writing that praised the valor of Confederate soldiers and hallowed and sanctified their cause. (See Chapter Ten.)

Many more found work as teachers in the city's public schools, an unintended consequence of the war that had been mandated for Virginia as a condition of Reconstruction.

1885); Good Americans (New York: Century Co., 1898); Jefferson Autographs: The Last Royal Governors of Virginia and Their Patriot American Contemporaries (n.p.: n.p., n.d.); Latter-Day Sweethearts (New York and London: Authors & Newspapers Association, 1906); The Merry Maid of Arcady; His Lordship; and Other Stories (Boston and London: Lamson, Wolfe & Co., 1897); The Mouse-Trap, A Comedietta in One Act (New York: DeWitt's, 1892); The Old-Fashioned Fairy Book (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1884); A Son of the Old Dominion (Boston: Lamson, Wolfe & Co., 1897); The Story of Helen of Troy (New York: Harper, 1899); Sweet Bells Out of Tune (New York: Century Co., 1893); Sylvia's Husband (New York: D. Appleton, 1904); A Triple Entanglement (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1899); Two Strings to Her Bow, A Comedy in Two Acts (New York: DeWitt's, 1892); The Unwelcome Mrs. Hatch: A Drama of Everyday Life (New York: C.G. Burgoyne, 1901); and The Well-Bred Girl of Society (Philadelphia: Doubleday & McClure, 1898). Harrison also published essays in History of the City of New York: Its Origin, Rise, and Progress, ed. by Martha J. Lamb. 2 vols. (New York and Chicago: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1877); and A House Party, ed. by Paul Leicester Ford. (Boston: Small, Maynard & Company, 1901).

For educated Richmond women, teaching provided them with expanding postwar employment in a profession that did not stigmatize them for working outside the home. By 1880, Southern women in Richmond and elsewhere had come to dominate the profession in the South, at least in the primary and secondary grades, as women had done in the North several decades earlier.⁴⁶

⁴⁶By 1880, teachers' colleges had been established for women in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama. Anne Scott, Southern Lady, 110-15; Drew Faust, Mothers of Invention, 251. In 1894, the Richmond Female Institute became the Women's College of Richmond. "History of the Alumnae Association of the Richmond Female Institute--Woman's College of Richmond" (Paper presented at the 100th Anniversary Celebration, 1904), Lily Becker Epps Papers. UVA. When asked to reflect on the Civil War's effects on Southern women's education, one Tennessee woman made the following observation: "Formerly the ultimatum of a Southern's girl's existence was marriage, and an old maid was an object of pity. Now, thanks to the public schools, any girl, however humbly born, may secure an education and by the force of her intellect command an honorable position in the best society." Wilbur Fisk Tillet, "Southern Womanhood as Affected by the War," Century Magazine 43 (November 1891): 11. Emphasis mine.

CHAPTER 8

TEXTILE WORKERS AND CIGARETTE GIRLS:

WORKING-CLASS WOMEN AND WORK IN POSTBELLUM RICHMOND

White working-class women in Richmond had labored outside the home for decades before the war, but their work was usually in low-paying jobs that were extensions of women's domesticity--especially in the needlework trades. During the war, however, several hundred working-class women had earned incomes as munitions workers that would have been impossible for them to attain by sewing. With the furling of the Confederate flag, however, munitions work came to an end.

Evidence on the postwar employment of working-class Richmond women is quite scarce, but the picture that it provides suggests that these women faced extremely limited options for work that would provide them with even a modest income.¹ Some Richmond working-class women no doubt

¹Other alternatives that were available to Northern women--especially various forms of domestic work--were performed in the South almost exclusively by black women. Tracey Weis has noted that the number of black men involved in domestic labor--butlers, porters, valets, and drivers, for example--declined following Emancipation, as other forms of work became available to them. But black women continued to perform most of the domestic labor in white middle- and upper-class households, because they had fewer

"retreated" into sewing; their numbers increased dramatically during the five years following the war, although the population declined during this period and refugees and government workers returned to their homes. By the 1870 census, 470 women identified themselves as seamstresses, a compared with 103 in 1860.² This dramatic expansion of the profession, coupled with the absence of government contracts, meant that seamstresses often faced stiffer competition for jobs and usually earned comparatively less money than they had during wartime.³

A few experienced seamstresses may have tried to establish themselves as dressmakers for wealthy women; between 1866 and 1882, women comprised between 85 and 100 percent of the city's dressmakers and mantua makers listed in the city directories. But few individual women remained in the occupation for very long, proof, no doubt, of the impossibility women faced of making a decent living at

alternatives. Tracey M. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom: Domestic Service and Household Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1850-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1994), 26-27. Angela Bongiorno says that black domestics constituted 90 percent of domestic workers in the postwar decades. The remaining 10 percent were white immigrants. Angela Catherine Bongiorno, "White Women and Work in Richmond, Virginia" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1987), 20.

²Manufacturing Schedule for the 1870 Richmond Census, NARA.

³By 1866, seamstresses had experienced a 25 to 30 percent drop in wages. Richmond Whig, 16 January, 2, 25 June, 4, 11 July 1866. A portion of this loss may have been offset by a decline in inflation rate.

dressmaking. Of the women whose names were listed in city directories published between 1866 and 1882, only three enjoyed dressmaking careers of more than ten years' duration.⁴

Other laboring women worked in the city's textile mills during the late 1860s and 1870s, while a few more may have slipped into casual prostitution, an occasional resort for impoverished working-class women who sewed. (Chapter Four) Between 1874 and 1880, however, the percentage of white working women who made their living with a needle declined as increasing numbers of white female laborers found employment in cigarette manufacturing, a new occupation for working-class white women that opened in the mid-1870s. By 1880, white and black seamstresses constituted 16.3 percent (N=470) of female laborers listed in the manufacturing schedule of the 1880 Richmond census, while the percentage white and black women who processed chewing and smoking tobacco was 76.3 (N=2,193).⁵

⁴Richmond City Directory, 1866; Richmond City Directory, 1870-71; Richmond City Directory, 1875-76; Richmond City Directory, 1881-82. (All of these are in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.) None of the twenty women who listed themselves as dressmakers in the 1866 city directory were engaged in this same line of work by the time of the 1870 directory was published. Of the twelve women listed in the 1870 directory, only three--Ellen Richardson, Ellen Thomas, and Mrs. E. Erambert--appeared in the 1881-82 city guide.

⁵Manufacturing Schedule for the 1880 Census, Richmond, Virginia. The remaining workers manufactured boxes (3.3 percent); baked bread, made candy, worked as shoemakers's helpers, sold patent medicines, made furniture, and did

Textile Work

Some working-class women in postbellum Richmond probably looked for work in one of the city's textile factories that had employed approximately 170 women and girls on the eve the Civil War.⁶ During the war, these companies had worked at peak capacity in day and evening shifts, turning out osnaburgs, sheeting, and woolens for the Confederate army.⁷ Female operatives at the Crenshaw Woolen Works earned \$7.50 per week, a salary that was 50 percent higher than the average yearly wage of most government seamstresses (Chapter Four).⁸

But the Crenshaw mill--which manufactured blue and gray uniform cloth, stocking yarn, and blankets for the Confederate army--was completely destroyed by fire in 1863

"hairwork."

⁶There were four textile mills in Richmond and Manchester in 1861, but no records showing the gender distribution of textile workers in these factories has survived. Of the 700 workers who labored in Richmond's three textile factories on the eve of the Civil War, I am estimating that at least 150 were women and girls, based on the fact that women constituted 19.2 percent of the labor force at the Crenshaw Woolen Works when it opened in October 1861. According to a city directory for 1858-59, about 200 male and female operatives manufactured blankets and woolen cloth at the Virginia Woolen Company on 12th Street, while another 530 workers produced cotton osnaburgs, sheeting, and shirting at the Manchester Cotton Factory and the James River Manufacturing Company, both located in Manchester. Richmond City Directory, 1858-59, LC.

⁷Osnaburg is a heavy, coarse, unbleached cotton fabric, usually woven in a plain weave.

⁸Richmond Enquirer, 16 October 1861.

and had not been rebuilt.⁹ And by March 1866, work at the two Manchester mills--the Manchester Cotton Mill and the James River Manufacturing Company--was so slow that night work was suspended.¹⁰ One month later, the Manchester Cotton Mill was considering closing its doors for good, while workers at the James River Manufacturing Company were on two-thirds time.¹¹ By 1870, only 150 women were listed as textile workers on the Richmond census.¹²

No cotton mill workers have left recollections of their life and work in Richmond like the accounts Lucy Larcom and Harriet Robinson wrote about the Lowell mills in Massachusetts in the 1830s and 1840s. But evidence from a series of letters written to the Richmond Dispatch by a self-styled cotton mill operative suggests that cotton mill work in the late 1860s may have been one of the least desirable occupations for white working-class Richmond women.¹³ "I am nothing but a humble factory girl," began

⁹Richmond Examiner, 16 May 1863.

¹⁰Richmond Dispatch, 5 March, 1866. I am speculating that this was the reason for the James River Company going on two-thirds time. Another reason for these night closures, however, could have been the Struggle letters, especially the letter appearing in the Dispatch on February 15, 1866. See below.

¹¹Richmond Dispatch, 13 April 1866.

¹²Bongiorno, "White Women and Work in Richmond, Virginia," 31.

¹³The city had two cotton mills in 1880: the Old Dominion Cotton Mill and the Marshall Manufacturing Company, each employing about 150 women. Bongiorno, "White

the author of the first letter in 1866, "but a mighty ambition struggles in my soul."¹⁴

In reality, "Struggle," was not really a factory girl at all, but rather William E. Hatcher, minister to the Manchester Baptist Church that served many working-class families.¹⁵ Through the persona of "Struggle," Hatcher provided readers of the Dispatch with a stringent critique of the difficulties of working-class life in a community where unpainted and haphazardly-arranged houses leaked and flooded with every rain.¹⁶ On the corners, "Manchester Windeaters"--red-eyed men with no work or no visible means

Women and Work in Richmond, Virginia, 1870-1884," 22. The women Hatcher describes probably worked at the Manchester Mill or one of the other mills in the city of Manchester.

¹⁴Richmond Dispatch, 27 January 1866.

¹⁵The letters were part of a scheme between Hatcher and Henry K. Ellyson, the editor of the Dispatch, to expose Manchester's problems at the same time that they helped to increase the newly-reorganized paper's circulation. Although the paper didn't publish all the letters Hatcher submitted--it refused to publish his exposé of Manchester's prostitutes, titled "The Manchester Street Sweepers," for example--those they did publish created a furor in the Richmond and Manchester communities and also netted Struggle at least two proposals of marriage. Their more important consequence was the election of a reform ticket in Manchester which addressed many of the problems the letters described. When Hatcher received a call to a larger church in Baltimore, the letters ended. Charles Hartwell, "Struggle's Hoax," Richmond Times-Dispatch, 5 July 1936, magazine section, p. 4. I am indebted to Gregg Kimball at the Valentine Museum for first providing me with this information. Gregg D. Kimball, "The Working People of Richmond: Life and Labor in an Industrial City, 1865-1920," Labor's Heritage 3.2 (April 1991): 49, and 64, fn. 21.

¹⁶Richmond Dispatch, 24 February 1866.

of support--taunted the cotton mill girls as they picked their way home along the broken pavements of Manchester's streets.¹⁷ Gambling dens beckoned to the unsuspecting patrons who were quickly fleeced of their earnings by fast-talking card sharps and their shills.¹⁸ "Does the humanity of the stockholder experience no motions of pity for the fatherless, brotherless girl?", Struggle demanded. "Are there no dangers that hang about her in her friendless journey?"¹⁹

In the mills, young girls--whom Struggle described as being "driven from their happy homes by the fortunes of war"--labored for twelve hours in the sickening heat, drenched in perspiration.²⁰ At 8 p.m., they stepped, thinly clad, into the "raw, piercing air" and made their way home, unescorted, along the darkened Manchester streets.²¹ "Is it remarkable," Struggle wondered, "if we fall victims to pneumonia or consumption?"

Ah, well, if we die, few weep; no bells are tolled; the stockholders smile as before at growing dividends, and pause not to ask whose

¹⁷Richmond Dispatch, 3, 24 February; 5 March 1866. According to Hatcher, "windeaters" were men who performed no labor and owned no property. In another reference, Hatcher suggested that they are red-eyed from weeping for the fallen Confederacy.

¹⁸Richmond Dispatch, 7 June 1866.

¹⁹Richmond Dispatch, 8 February, 12 May, 2 June 1866.

²⁰Richmond Dispatch, 8, 15 February 1866.

²¹Richmond Dispatch, 3 February 1866.

life was taken to make them rich; and our places are soon filled.²²

For Struggle, these cotton mill workers were not bound together by a sense of equality and "common friendship" (as the Lowell girls had been), but divided by competition caused by too little work and a desire to "take care of number one."²³ Although some girls sought refuge in matrimony, to Struggle this often only saddled them with husbands who depended on their meager earnings for whiskey and support.²⁴

Struggle's characterizations of the sexually vulnerable and economically exploited cotton mill workers were intended to tug at his readers' heartstrings and alert them to the corruption of Manchester city politics. But although Hatcher's exposés led to the election of reform-minded politicians who worked to clean up Manchester's grog shops and gambling dens, the work of the cotton mill operatives apparently continued unchanged, although in the opinion of many white Richmonders it had probably gotten worse. An 1871 article on Manchester's laboring women reported factory conditions similar to the ones described by "Struggle" some five years earlier, except that by this

²²Richmond Dispatch, 8 February 1866.

²³Richmond Dispatch, 31 January 1866.

²⁴Richmond Dispatch, 30 April 1866.

time, white women and girls were reported to be laboring in sweltering factory rooms alongside black men.²⁵

Cigarette Rollers

Although much of the above account suggests that the laboring options of poor and working-class white women were bleak through much of the latter 1860s and early 1870s, the horizon brightened, somewhat, in 1874, with the expansion of the cigarette manufacturing industry in the city--a direct result of the increased popularity of cigarettes during the American Civil War.²⁶ In the antebellum period, the tobacco products of choice for men throughout the United States were either chewing tobacco or cigars, the manufacture of which, in the South, employed large numbers of black men and women. In 1860, more than 3,200 black men and women manufactured plug chewing tobacco and, for a short time after the war's end, plug production

²⁵"Laboring Women," Southern Churchman, 5 October 1871.

²⁶According to Nannie Tilley, a number of reasons have been suggested for why cigarettes became popular during this period of time. Among these are the increased development and cultivation of Bright tobacco which was more suitable for cigarette production; the development of the friction match which made lighting cigarettes easier; the shortage in the South of products used to sweeten and flavor chewing tobacco, such as sugar and licorice; and the quickened tempo brought about by the war which led to an desire for faster psychological and physiological effects of nicotine. Nannie Tilley, The Bright-Tobacco Industry, 1860-1949 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 497-98.

continued to dominate the Richmond tobacco trade. But by the early to mid-1870s, the chewing tobacco market was increasingly overtaken by a growing national demand for cigarettes.²⁷

The first Richmond company to capitalize on this trend was Allen & Ginter--the city's largest tobacco processor--which manufactured 2.5 million cigarettes in 1874.²⁸ By 1882, it was producing 550 million cigarettes per year. Although plug tobacco production continued to be dominated by blacks, the production of cigarettes ushered large numbers of white women and girls into tobacco processing.²⁹ Unlike white cotton mill workers who, by 1871, worked in rooms with black men, white cigarette rollers labored in groups of fifty to a hundred or more in racially segregated "cigarette rooms," thus immediately

²⁷These figures for black tobacco workers are taken from the Manufacturing Schedule of the 1860 Census for Richmond, Virginia, NARA. For a detailed discussion of chewing tobacco production, see Tilley, Bright-Tobacco Industry, especially pp. 489-97; and [Mrs. M.P. Handy], "In a Tobacco Factory," Harper's New Monthly Magazine 47 (October 1873): 713-19.

²⁸For a discussion of Lewis Ginter and his contributions to Richmond and its economy, see Virginius Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 246-7.

²⁹An 1868 newspaper account of a sexual scandal at Greanor & Wynne's tobacco warehouse suggests that a few impoverished white women may have been engaged in tobacco work before the 1870s as strippers and folders making \$4 per week. Traditionally, tobacco stripping was done by black women. Southern Illustrated News, 21 November 1868.

rendering cigarette work a more acceptable form of work for white women in the racially charged atmosphere of 1870s Richmond.

In the cigarette rooms, women sat at grooved tables or desks, rolling and cutting cigarettes, or packing them in boxes bearing labels with names such as "Little Beauties," "Opera Puffs," or "Richmond Gems." By 1883, white cigarette rollers comprised 500 of Allen & Ginter's 650 employees (76.9 percent of the workforce) and earned between \$4.50 and \$9.00 per week, based on a piece rate of \$.50 per 1,000 cigarettes. The workers' production was monitored by a numbering system that required each roller to wear a number which corresponded to a number on a 3-pound can of shredded tobacco located at her side. The tobacco was charged to the roller, who was expected to produce 1,000 cigarettes from each can. An 1883 visitor to the Allen & Ginter plant noted that "practiced hands" were able to roll "from fifteen to eighteen thousand cigarettes per week," and that skilled packers learned how to grasp, "without counting," the proper amount of cigarettes for a twenty-smoke pack.³⁰

Two Allen & Ginter advertising lithographs (figs. 8.1 and 8.2) produced during this period shed additional light not only on women's role in cigarette production but also

³⁰"The Cigarette Manufacture," Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper 10 February 1883 (Winter Supplement): 419.

on the image of this work that Allen & Ginter hoped to convey to the public.³¹ Figure 8.1 shows a cigarette rolling room where more than twenty white women are seated at small desks, facing each other in rows. Several women appear to be involved in conversation, while a few seem to stare idly into space, a suggestion, perhaps, that cigarette work moved at a more leisurely pace than most other forms of factory labor. At least eighteen women are visible in the room which is lighted by two tall windows at the end, each bearing a pair of diaphanous lace curtains.

In figure 8.2, twelve cigarette packers are seated at desks, filling packets with "Virginia Brights" from a pull-out tray. At their feet, labelled boxes bear the Allen & Ginter name. Most of the women whose faces are visible in these two lithographs are young; all are white. Each woman is modestly and demurely dressed, usually in a shawl-collared dress with a long apron. Many have their hair secured in a bun or gathered at the nape of their necks.

The women's delicate features and modest attire typify nineteenth-century images of female respectability and might be interpreted as Allen & Ginter's way of suggesting that cigarette manufacturing was an acceptable line of work for respectable working-class white women, or more impoverished middle-class women forced into labor outside

³¹I am indebted to Conley Edwards of the Library of Virginia for sharing these lithographs from his personal collection with me.

the home as a result of the war. All the women in the lithographs labor in clean, comfortable, homelike surroundings, supervised by their peers, a message similar to one projected by textile manufacturers in the antebellum New England as a means of encouraging rural girls from farming communities to enter factory work.³²

Other evidence from the lithographs, however, suggests that cigarette manufacturing was not without its drawbacks. The women in figure 8.2, for example, are seated in backless chairs which would certainly be uncomfortable for women required to lean over a table for eight or ten hours a day. In addition, the workers in figure 8.1 appear to be crowded together into long rows with relatively little space to move around, or to escape in case of a fire. Although there are windows in both illustrations, it is hard to imagine that they would be opened to permit ventilation, as breezes would tend to blow loose tobacco and cigarette papers around.

³²Thomas Dublin, Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1820-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979). A similar message was contained in some of the writings which appear in The Lowell Offering, a newspaper produced by the Lowell operatives. Benita Eisler, ed., The Lowell Offering: Writings by New England Mill Women (1840-1845) (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977); Kimball, "The Working People of Richmond," 49, and fn. 25; Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890, 120. By 1885, Allen & Ginter had also created a library and was holding an annual fancy-dress ball for its white female workers. Other amenities included dressing rooms and recreation areas. Bongiorno, "White Women and Work in Richmond, Virginia," 33.



Figure 8.1. Cigarette Rollers in Richmond, Virginia
(Source: Conley Edwards, Private Collection)



Figure 8.2. Allen & Ginter Cigarette Rollers
(Source: Conley Edwards, Private Collection)

In 1880, there were forty-four cigarette manufacturing firms in Richmond.³³ The growth of the cigarette industry in the 1870s and 1880s also stimulated the development of other forms of manufacturing including the productions of paper labels and cigarette boxes. By 1880, the Randolph Paper Box Company had hired about 500 white women to manufacture boxes for cigarettes and cigars.³⁴

Conclusion

By 1880, more than a thousand white Richmond women labored in industrial manufacturing, including cigarette rolling, paper box manufacturing, and textile work, while an additional four hundred continued to eke out a living by sewing. Government demands for uniforms and ammunition had provided working-class white women with steady wartime employment, some of which was exceedingly well-paid. But work in the late 1860s and early 1870s had been curtailed as manufacturers scaled back production and lowered their

³³By 1890, the number of white female workers had risen to more than 1,300. James K. Sanford, A Century of Commerce, 1867-1967 (Richmond: Chamber of Commerce, 1967), 22. Peter J. Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond: 1865-1890 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 211.

³⁴Bongiorno, "White Women and Work in Richmond," 31. Additional white women, mostly German immigrants, also worked at home during this time for the Millhisser Bag Company, stringing bags for chewing tobacco and cigars. Joseph G. Robert, Gottwald Family History: The First Century of the Gottwalds and the Freyfogles in Richmond, Virginia, 1822-1922 (Richmond: William Byrd Press, 1984), 58.

rates. Eventually, however, the growing popularity of cigarettes--one of the war's unanticipated consequences--provided working-class women with a new source of income that provided laboring women in Richmond with a steady source of employment until sometime in the mid-to-late 1890s.³⁵

³⁵Eventually, of course, hand-rolled cigarettes were replaced by machine-rolled ones. In 1890, Allen & Ginter installed the first Bonsack cigarette machine in their Richmond factory. Bongiorno, "White Women and Work in Richmond, Virginia," 35.

CHAPTER 9
CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS: RICHMOND WOMEN AND
THE CIVIL WAR CHURCHES¹

Many Southern men who shouldered arms in 1861 believed that they were involved in a "holy war" in which God was on their side, a view that was shared by many Southern women. "God is our Creator, our Ruler, the Inspirer of our statesmen, the Leader of our Generals, the Courage of soldiers, the Comforter of our bereaved ones, and our everlasting Hope," declared Sarah Benetta Valentine to her brother, Edward, in January 1863, shortly after Confederate losses at Antietam and Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation completely dashed Southern hopes of diplomatic recognition by England and France. "We care not for the nations of Europe--when God's appointed hour has come, He will give us that name which we now, through His might, give ourselves."² "The windows rattled in the casements and

¹Although this chapter focuses primarily on women in Richmond's Protestant churches, it also includes information on Jewish women. Richmond Jews typically referred to their synagogues as "churches" during this time.

²Sarah Benetta Valentine, Richmond, to Edward Virginius Valentine, Paris, France, 27 January 1863, Sarah Benetta Valentine Papers, Ms. C57, VM.

the house seemed to shake from its foundations," Lucy Fletcher wrote during the fighting near Richmond in September 1864, "but God has not permitted our enemies to triumph, nor will He give our beautiful city into their hands--of this I feel assured."³

From the early 1830s, Southern clergymen had been among those who responded to abolitionist attacks by mounting elaborate theological justifications of slaveholding which they continued to repeat through the 1840s and 1850s and into the war itself.⁴ When the cannons roared over Fort Sumter in April 1861, many of these ministers became "warrior priests" who blended piety to God with patriotism for the Confederacy and waged war from the pulpit in fiery sermons that celebrated Confederate victories, mourned their defeats, and promised death and destruction to the Northern foe.⁵ One Richmond

³Entry dated 2 September 1864, Keystone Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

⁴In January 1861, for example, the Baptist newspaper the Religious Herald published four lengthy essays in defense of slavery written by Thornton Stringfellow, a Culpeper, Virginia, preacher who rationalized Southern slaveholding through the examples of such "princely slaveholders" as Joseph, Jacob, and Isaac. Religious Herald, 3, 10, 24, and 31 January 1861. For a discussion of Stringfellow, see Drew Gilpin Faust, "Evangelicalism and the Proslavery Argument: The Reverend Thornton Stringfellow of Virginia," in Drew Gilpin Faust, Southern Stories: Slaveholders in Peace and War (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 15-28.

⁵Elaine Forman Crane has discussed the importance of the pulpit in helping to shape parishoners' loyalties during the American Revolution. Although the majority of

pastor mustered young men into the Confederate army following a Communion service conducted at an altar draped in a Confederate flag.⁶ A few Southern clergymen like General Leonidas K. Polk and Basil Manly joined the Confederate army themselves and were held up as exemplars of "Christian soldiers" worthy of emulation.⁷ Still more

the Southern clergy solidly supported the South during the American Civil War, their voice was crucial in maintaining Southern loyalty, especially after 1863. Elaine Forman Crane, "Religion and Rebellion: Women of Faith in the American War for Independence," in Religion in a Revolutionary Age, Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia for the United States Capitol Historical Society, 1994), 52-86. For the American Civil War, see W. Harrison Daniel, "A Brief Account of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in the Confederacy," Methodist History 6.2 (January 1968): 26-40.

⁶Entry dated 30 [September 1865], Diary dated September 1865 to February 1867, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

⁷A bishop in the Episcopal Church, Polk commanded the right wing of the Army of Tennessee under Braxton Bragg from 1862 till his death on June 14, 1864, in the campaign to defend Atlanta. A notorious troublemaker, Polk frequently disobeyed orders and quarreled continuously with his commanding officers, claiming that he only took orders from "Jefferson Davis and God." James M. McPherson, Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 290; Shelby Foote, The Civil War: A Narrative, vol. 1: Fort Sumter to Perryville (New York: Random House, 1958), 774, and vol. 3: Red River to Appomattox (New York: Random House, 1974) 345-57; E. Susan Barber, "Braxton Bragg and the Politics of Command" (Paper presented at the Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, April, 1983), 3-10; and A. James Fuller, "Chaplain of the Confederacy: A Biography of Basil Manly, 1798-1868" (Ph.D. diss., Miami University, 1995). Basil Manly was the father of Abby Manly Gwathmey; his son, Basil Manly, Jr., was a co-founder of the Richmond Female Institute, where Abby Manly met and married her husband, Henry Gwathmey.

volunteered their time conducting prayer vigils and religious revivals in the camps to help soldiers resist the temptations of gambling, heavy drinking, profanity, and pornography that many feared were rampant in the camps and threatened to sap the Confederate army of its fighting strength.⁸ Between 1862 and 1864, the Virginia Conference

⁸For a discussion of camp revivals, see Drew Gilpin Faust, "Christian Soldiers: The Meaning of Revivalism in the Confederate Army," in Drew Gilpin Faust, Southern Stories, 89-109. Faust relies heavily on the Baptist Religious Herald to make her case for a revival of religion in the camps and a concomitant declension in church attendance and support on the home front; but evidence for her description can also be found in other religious presses, such as the Episcopal Southern Churchman. For reports of religious revivalism, see Southern Churchman 8, 29 August, 31 October, 7 November, 26 December 1862; 1, 8, 29 May, 5, 12, 19 June, 4, 25 September, 2, 16 October, 11 December 1863; 8 January, 19 February, 1, 15 April, 6 May, 12 August, 21 October, 23 November 1864. According to W. Harrison Daniel, 141 ordained Methodist clergy and more than thirty-five male missionaries served as chaplains and soldiers in the Confederate armies. Civilian ministers also devoted either all or part of their time to conducting revivals and visiting the sick, for which they were paid \$250 per month. Daniel, "Brief Account of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South," 27-36. A general discussion of Baptist missionaries and revivals in the army can also be found in Fannie E.S. Heck's, In Royal Service: The Mission Work of Southern Baptist Women (Richmond: L.H. Jenkins for the Education Department, Foreign Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention, 1913), 90. For a discussion of religion and the war in the North, see Phillip Shaw Paludan, "A People's Contest": The Union and the Civil War, 1861-1865 (1988; repr. New York: Harper & Row, 1989), especially Chapter Fourteen. For expressions of concern about profanity and drunkenness, see, for example, Religious Herald, 23 May, 15 August, 3 October 1861; 13, 20 February, 24 April, 3 July 1862; Southern Churchman, 13 December 1861; 10, 31 January, 7 February, 7 March, 18 April, 6, 20 June, 19 September 1862; 23 October, 25 December 1863, 15 March 1865. The churches also worried about the effects of gambling. Religious Herald, 12 June; Southern Churchman, 21 October 1862; 29 April 1864. Discussions of colportage activity and reports by

of the Soldier's Tract Association for the Methodist Church, South collected over \$175,000 to print and distribute more than 17 million pages of tracts, 70,000 hymnals, and 20,000 Bibles to soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia. In addition, it published two free semi-monthly newspapers, the Soldier's Paper and the Army and Navy Herald.⁹

By defining Confederate troops as "Christian soldiers" white Southerners also erased the wartime contributions of thousands of Jewish men who served in the Confederate army or held government posts. Southern Jews often contributed to their own erasure by adopting an assimilationist profile as a way to avoid Southern wartime anti-Semitism that blamed Jewish merchants for the rise in market prices.¹⁰

colporteurs abound in the pages of the Religious Herald. For some examples, see Religious Herald, 4, 12 June, 11 July 1861; 13 February, 10 April 1862; 21 April, 5 May 1864.

⁹Daniel, "Brief Account of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South," 37.

¹⁰Catherine Anne Wilkinson, "To Live and Die in Dixie: German Reform Jews in the Southern United States" (B.A. thesis, Princeton University, 1990); James L. Apple, "Jewish-Christian Relations from 1861 to 1881" (Term paper, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1965), in the AJA; Martin Sklar, "'And the Walls Came Tumbling Down': Jews in the Old South, 1840-1861" (B.A. thesis, Princeton, 1981). In 1905, the Richmond Times-Dispatch claimed that between 10,000 and 12,000 Southern Jewish men had fought for the Confederacy, including twenty-four staff officers, eleven naval officers, and David DeLeon, the first Confederate Surgeon General. Of course, this group also includes Confederate Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin. Richmond Times-Dispatch, 4 August 1905. Some examples of wartime anti-

If Southern men were asked to become "Christian soldiers," then Southern women were called upon to become a Christian "home guard" to fight the war at home through volunteer work for the Confederate armies and by maintaining churches in the men's absence. An article in the Religious Herald in March 1862 characterized the Southern woman as the soldier's "intercessor," "nurse," "exemplar," and "benefactress," whose prayers and repeated acts of service and kindness "alleviate[d] his privations" and "serve[d] to hold him steadfast in the way of honor."¹¹ A letter from "True Witness," published at about the same time in the Southern Churchman, called upon Southern women to keep their "Christian armour" burnished and the "family altar alive."¹²

Everywhere women were urged to combine their religious devotion with patriotic zeal and to join men in the battle not only for freedom, but also for the preservation of the Christian social fabric of the white South by conducting women's prayer vigils for troops marching into battle; contributing money to colporteurs; sending religious tracts

Semitism can be found in Southern Punch, 17 October, 7 November 1863, and Southern Churchman, 6 February 1863.

¹¹"What Woman Has Done and Should Do," Religious Herald, 6 March 1862.

¹²Southern Churchman, 7 March 1862.

to soldiers, and insisting on sobriety in the camps.¹³ An 1862 article in the Southern Churchman urged Southern women to "use their influence to prevent the distillation of fruit" into liquor by recommending that it be dried, instead, for consumption by the army.¹⁴ Religious newspapers frequently carried emotional accounts, usually by Army chaplains, of wayward soldiers brought to the altar of the Lord through the prayerful intercession of their mothers, wives, sisters, or sweethearts. Typical of these was the conversion account of "Charlie," a Confederate soldier rescued from the paths of wickedness by the prayer his mother included with a box of camp-bound clothes and delicacies.¹⁵

Bringing their menfolk to a closer relationship with God was hardly a new role for women in the wartime South. Throughout the antebellum period, gendered notions about both Southern and Northern women defined a similar role based on beliefs about women's greater piety and spirituality.¹⁶ But with the coming of war, these

¹³Religious Herald, 6, 20 March 1862; 2 April, 10 September 1863; Southern Churchman, 24 January, 22 August 1862; 12 June, 20 November 1863.

¹⁴Southern Churchman, 22 August 1862.

¹⁵Southern Churchman, 8 January 1864.

¹⁶Barbara J. Berg, The Remembered Gate: Origins of American Feminism, The Woman and the City, 1800-1860 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 77-79; Barbara Leslie Epstein, The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America (Middletown,

antebellum beliefs were overlaid with a patina of patriotism--for either the Confederacy or the Union--and given a greater urgency. As the war drew more and more men into military duty, women were pressed to render additional Christian service. In Richmond and other Southern locales, part of this additional service involved keeping Sunday Schools in session in the men's absence by becoming Sunday School instructors, a duty that, in the Southern churches in the antebellum period, was performed by men.¹⁷

Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1981); Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1830-1860," American Quarterly 18 (1966): 151-74.

¹⁷Anne Boylan's study of Sunday Schools in the nineteenth-century United States concludes that the majority of Sunday School teachers were women and most Sunday School superintendents were men. Boylan's study is based primarily on evidence from Sunday School unions in New York and Philadelphia and, with the exception of a brief discussion of Sunday Schools for slaves, devotes little attention to the ways in which the South may have differed from this Northern model. In addition, although Boylan documents the expansion of the Sunday School movement throughout the United States in the 1870s and 1880s, she does not cite the Civil War as contributing to this expansion. Anne M. Boylan, Sunday Schools: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1988). Jean Friedman does not specifically address the Sunday School movement in her analysis of Southern evangelical Protestantism, but she makes a strong claim that women in the Southern evangelical churches endured a more patriarchal church structure which not only forbade them to speak or pray in public, and denied them a voice in church affairs by excluding them from voting at, and sometimes even from attending, congregational meetings, but also exposed them to a "sexual double standard in church discipline," which held women accountable to a higher level of behavior than that required of men, and punished women more severely for their transgressions. According to Friedman, Southern men were frequently charged with lesser offenses such as drinking, dancing, and disorderly conduct, while women were more

Richmond women who believed that God had sided with the South responded to Confederate defeat in a variety of ways. Presbyterian minister's wife Lucy Fletcher displayed a mixture of emotions that ranged from fury to measured contrition. "May God keep me now & ever from a spirit of rebellion against Him," she confided to her diary in July 1865, following a passage expressing her outrage over the "lazy & discontented freedmen & women, Yankee soldiers, & adventurers, male & female," she described as "swarming" the city streets.¹⁸ In a contentious letter written to her unsympathetic Northern sister a month later, she displayed a sense of humility that was nevertheless leavened by assertions about the "rightness" of the Confederate cause. "I wrote my sister. . .a letter," she later observed

kindly but firmly telling that while we felt humbled on account of our sins as a nation towards God, we were more than ever convinced of the justice of our cause and had no repentance, politically, for the course of action we had pursued.¹⁹

likely to be charged with sexual transgressions, such as abortion, adultery, fornication, and bastardy, behaviors which involved both men and women but for which women were held solely responsible. Jean B. Friedman, The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South, 1830-1900 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 3-14, and 113.

¹⁸Entry for July 1865, Keystone Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

¹⁹Entry for August 1865, Keystone Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

For Fletcher, the South's "sins towards God" were less the result of slaveholding than of excesses of immorality--drinking, swearing, and gambling, and the South's movement away from devotion to the churches which she believed had emerged during the war.

Emma Mordecai reacted to news of Lee's surrender with a vague sense that God was somehow chastising or testing the South, coupled with a resignation to God's judgment. "I felt utterly miserable," she wrote.

That the earth might open & swallow us all up was the only wish I could form. Gradually we felt that all was in the hands of God, and that He had willed this in His unerring wisdom, and that we must submit ourselves to him--that in thus doing, we were not humbled before our foes but before God.²⁰

From a refugee camp on Belle Isle, Mississippian Ann Webster Christian was unwavering in her conviction of God's benevolent protection. "Great & manifold have been our trials & afflictions," she wrote in December 1865, "but they have been exceeded by our mercies & we may still say 'Bless the Lord, O my soul & forget not all his benefits.'"²¹

²⁰Entry for "Friday morning [17 April 1865], Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS.

²¹Entry dated 31 December 1865, Ann Webster Gordon Christian Diary, Mss. 5:1 C4626:1, VHS. Christian had refuged to Richmond from Coventry, Mississippi, in 1862. Her Richmond home was destroyed by fire on April 3, 1865. She continued to live at the Belle Isle encampment at least until March 1866.

If the war's close caused some women to question their religious/political convictions, it did not lead to a contraction but rather to an expansion of Richmond women's church-related duties, as female parishoners focused their efforts on three crucial postbellum enterprises: the repair and reconstruction of church buildings damaged by four years of warfare; the creation of homes for aged female congregants, some of whom were the widows of Confederate soldiers; and the extension of women's foreign and domestic missionary work, which eventually involved the creation of autonomous women's missionary associations in most Southern denominations. Although Sunday School teaching and rebuilding churches were usually endorsed by male clergy and laity, the creation of separate foreign missionary associations raised concerns that missionary women had somehow slipped the reins of male authority. This ultimately led to a re-examination of the appropriate role for women in the church that continued throughout the 1870s and 1880s.

Sunday School Teaching

In most of Richmond's thirty-two churches, with the exception of infant classes or an occasional class specifically directed at women, Sunday School teaching

during the antebellum period was dominated by men.²² Appeals for Sunday School teachers and descriptions of their duties which appeared in the Baptist newspaper, Religious Herald, during this period of time, were consistently addressed to the church "brethren" and seldom referred to any sort of Sunday School work by women.²³

Concerns about a wartime decline in male teachers in Baptist congregations in Washington, D.C., surfaced as early as July 1861; but many Richmond congregations appear to have weathered the initial loss of male teachers caused by voluntary enlistment. The passage of the Confederate Conscription Act of April 1862, however, and its gradual extension to include all white men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five drained the city's churches of male workers and forced a curtailment of many church-related activities.²⁴ Worries about shortages of Richmond

²²Richmond Enquirer, 2 January 1860. Among Richmond's houses of worship there were seven Methodist churches, five Baptist churches, five Episcopal churches, five Presbyterian churches, two Lutheran churches, three Catholic churches, and one Disciples of Christ. There were also three Jewish synagogues.

²³Southern Churchman, 26 September 1862.

²⁴The Confederate States of America passed the first military conscription act in the history of the United States in April 1862, one year before the Union passed a similar measure. This act first made all able-bodied white men between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five liable for three years of military service, although it exempted government workers, teachers, the clergy, and others in war-related industries. In October 1862, the Confederate legislature passed what later became known as the "twenty nigger law," because it provided exemptions for one white

teachers began to appear in June 1863 and became acute by early March 1864, when a report on Sunday School activity revealed that only six Sabbath Schools were in session in all the Baptist churches in the Richmond/Henrico area, because of a sharp decline in the number of men available for Christian service.²⁵

Concern about this decline in Sunday School activity was exacerbated both by the closure of many of Richmond's private schools due to the military enlistments of male instructors, and the influx of thousands of Confederate government workers and civilian refugees, newcomers who, according to a letter in the Religious Herald by Basil Manly, Jr., were "chiefly of the worldly, self-seeking, money-loving sort," hardly destined to fill the city's churches on Sunday mornings.²⁶ By the spring of 1863, the

man on a plantation having twenty or more slaves. Later legislation (February 1864) extended the age of eligibility to between seventeen and fifty and closed loopholes which permitted wealthy men to hire substitutes. McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 180-82.

²⁵Religious Herald, 4 July 1861; 2, 16 April, 25 June, 2 July, 5 October, 19 November 1863; 2 March 1864. Religious Herald, 23 July 1863. At the time of the March 1864 report, there were thirty-one Baptist churches in the Richmond/Henrico district. A Richmond exception to this mid-war crisis over Sunday school teachers was Centenary Methodist which, reported a decline in scholars rather than a shortage of teachers. Report to the Fourth Quarterly Conference by Centenary Methodist Church, Richmond, 1 October 1861, Steward's Book, Centenary Methodist Church, Richmond, LV. For a general discussion of wartime decline in the Methodist Church, see Daniel, "Brief Account of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South," 39-40.

²⁶Religious Herald, 9 July 1863.

Southern Churchman complained of "a new phase of boy-life," in which scores of Richmond boys could be seen "fishing, or playing, or engaging in something they ought not to be," which, for the Churchman, included "selling newspapers, idling round corners," and helping "to make all as wicked as they are."²⁷ Although these activities sound rather tame, articles appearing in the secular presses during the same period of time related accounts of roving gangs of older boys who battled each other with rocks along the city's streets, sometimes injuring innocent passersby, and of grown men and boys who skinny dipped in the James River, to the dismay of the city's more respectable citizens.²⁸ For many Richmonders, these manifestations of unruliness combined with an increase in the cases of petty larceny, public drunkenness, and assault and battery that filled the Richmond courts revealed a community increasingly out of control.²⁹

Baptist leaders responded to these real and perceived threats to social order by initiating a "missionary

²⁷Southern Churchman, 15 May 1863.

²⁸Richmond Examiner, 4 April 1863; Michael B. Chesson, "Harlots or Heroines? A New Look at the Richmond Bread Riot," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 92.2 (April 1984): 135. Chesson cites accounts largely from the Sentinel.

²⁹By December 1863, the Southern Churchman was reporting that the "criminal business of our courts is at least seventy-five per cent larger than before the war." Southern Churchman, 11 December 1863.

campaign" to minister to the newcomers' needs "by enlisting them and their children in the Sunday schools."³⁰ To compensate for the labor demands additional Sunday Schools would entail, they directed their appeals for Sunday School teachers at Baptist women. "Of all the varied and multiplied calamities which this relentless war has entailed upon [us]," began the author of an article in the Religious Herald in October 1863,

as Sunday School teachers we have had our share to bear. Two long weary years ago we saw many of our best superintendents, preachers, and scholars, buckle on their armour and leave vacant cherished positions of usefulness. . . . [O]ne of the great obstacles to be met by many of our [Sunday] schools is a lack of fresh teachers Now, cannot the older brethren in our churches, who have never taught, be induced to come in now, just for the time, and supply the places of young men in the army? . . . The ladies, too, even for boys, make the best teachers in the world. They are ever ready to any good word and work. Many a male class, now without a teacher, might be supplied by our Christian sisters and mothers.³¹

Another article by an author known only as "C" encouraged Baptist women to become Sunday School recruiters as well and to "prepare essays [on the importance of Sunday School work] which will be read Sabbath after Sabbath." "[S]peak of the school [to parents and children]," the writer urged, "and give them no rest, until every one, both

³⁰Religious Herald, 9 July 1863.

³¹Religious Herald, 15 October 1863. A similarly worded appeal had appeared in the Religious Herald on April 2, 1863.

young and old, are members of the school, either as teachers or scholars."³² Although "C" praised Baptist women for the important role they were about to undertake, the writer also chided them for neglecting their churchly duties in favor of war work by recounting the story of a "noble-spirited lady" who rode on horseback from door-to-door throughout her mountain community, collecting blankets for needy soldiers. "Now suppose," its author mused,

the same energy and zeal were put forth this spring, that our Sunday schools might be large and flourishing, what happy results would follow! . . . [W]hile you have proven yourselves so useful and efficient in our present struggle for independence, so that your praise is on every tongue, be [not] less industrious, less efficient in behalf of that cause [the Sunday schools], which should be dear to every Christian heart!³³

Some Baptist women probably responded to the Herald's 1863 campaign; but as subsequent conscription legislation passed in late 1863 and early 1864 further narrowed the pool of available male teachers, Baptist minister William E. Hatcher stepped up the demand for female substitutes in a series of four articles aimed at recruiting Sunday School

³²Religious Herald, 2 April 1863.

³³Religious Herald, 2 April 1863. Worry about Southern women diverting themselves from churchwork can also be found in the Religious Herald, 25 June 1863. This fear also surfaced in discussions about using churches for hospitals (Chapter Three). Southern Churchman, 8 May, 22 August 1862.

teachers for the 1864 season.³⁴ In his opening message titled "Organize Your Schools," Hatcher urged his co-religionists in Richmond and throughout the state to begin planning for a "Sunday school in every neighborhood" by mounting a three-pronged campaign aimed at canvassing the community churches for Bibles and religious primers; providing clothing for needy children unable to attend school without it; and recruiting female teachers for classes of children of both sexes.³⁵

No wartime or immediate postwar minutes for Richmond's Baptist Sunday schools have survived, so it is impossible to know exactly how many Baptist women may have become involved in Sunday School education as a result of Hatcher's appeal.³⁶ But a statistical report appearing in the Religious Herald in May 1866 attests to the Sunday Schools' postwar vigor and suggests that instead of prompting a contraction in women's Sunday School duties,

³⁴Much of the evidence from the Herald suggests that Sunday School teaching and attendance may have been seasonal, attracting greater participation and support from ministers, parents, teachers, and students during the spring and summer months, and then either reducing or suspending activity during the more inclement months of the fall and winter, especially in rural congregations. For example, see the Religious Herald, 2 April 1863. The dates for Hatcher's articles in the Religious Herald are 24 March, 21 April [two articles], and 5 May 1864.

³⁵Religious Herald, 24 March 1864.

³⁶Telephone conversation with Fred Anderson, Director of the Virginia Baptist Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia, 29 September 1995.

the war's close in 1865 may have led to a redoubling of efforts on the part of Richmond Baptists to engage women in ministering to the needs of the city's unchurched population. By May 1866, the community's seven white Baptist churches could boast of an enrollment of 1,962 pupils and 250 teachers.³⁷ (Table 9.1)

Table 9.1 White Baptist Sunday School Attendance, Richmond, Virginia, April 1867

Church	Teachers	Pupils
First Baptist	63	517
Second Baptist	35	289
Grace Street	31	256
Belvidere	16	105
Leigh Street	58	458
Manchester	36	282
Sidney Chapel	11	44
<u>Total</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>1,962</u>

Source: "Report of Baptist Sunday School Meeting, 16 March 1866," Religious Herald, 17 May 1866. The sex of these teachers is unknown.

The Baptists were not the only denomination in which women assumed expanded Sunday School duties during this

³⁷"Richmond Sunday School Statistics," Religious Herald, 17 May 1866. By February 1867, figures for teachers and pupils at the five Baptist churches in the city proper had declined by 4 percent and 15 percent, respectively, probably a reflection of the departure of some of the refugees. Religious Herald, 14 February 1867. The five city churches were First Baptist, Second Baptist, Leigh Street Baptist, Grace Baptist, and Belvidere Baptist. The churches not reporting in February 1867 were Manchester Baptist Church and Sidney Chapel. Moderate decline in rural communities during winter months was typical when inclement weather prevented church attendance. It is difficult to say whether this amount of decline was typical for Richmond, however. "Shall It Be Done?" Religious Herald, 12 February 1867.

period of time. Presbyterian minister's wife, Lucy Fletcher, embarked on a Sunday School career in 1864, teaching an unruly class of young boys who worked at the government shops and frequently tried her patience with what Fletcher described as their "precious wickedness."³⁸ Fletcher continued her Sunday School work in the postwar period, starting a Sunday School program for children in Staunton, Virginia, when her family relocated to a parish there in 1869.³⁹ A list of Sunday School teachers for St. Paul's Episcopal Church in December 1862 shows that female teachers outnumbered male teachers there by more than three to one.⁴⁰

Other denominations reported flourishing Sunday School movements in the mid-to-late 1860s, which may or may not have been due to the increased labor of female parishoners.

³⁸Entry dated 2 October 1864, Sabbath Notebook Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

³⁹Entries dated n.d. March, 4 April, and n.d. July 1869, Diary 1869-1870, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU. Fletcher was ill and troubled about her marriage during much of this period and, thus, paid less attention to precise dates in her diary.

⁴⁰Vestry Book No. 2, pp. 467-8. St. Paul's Church Records, VHS. The list shows the names of twenty-eight female teachers (mostly single women) and eight male teachers. Five additional male teachers were listed as being in the Confederate army, with one, Colonel Richard H. Cunningham, having been killed in battle. St. Paul's Vestry Minutes were burned in the Richmond fire, and were "reconstructed" in the postwar period by Rector Thomas S. Ellis. Although lists of Sunday School teachers may be contained in the postwar records, I have unfortunately been unable to locate any thus far.

By May 1866, the city's white Methodist churches reported an average weekly attendance of 1,266 pupils.⁴¹ And between 1867 and 1868, the city's seven white Episcopal churches showed an increase in both teachers and scholars of more than thirteen percent.⁴² But since none of these statistics ever break down the number of Sunday School teachers by gender, it is difficult to say for sure how many women may have participated in the Sunday School renaissance. What is more easily apprehended is the fact that, in the absence of regular schooling, religious school education such as this frequently provided the only formal education many poor white children received until the start of the Richmond public school system in 1869.

Domestic Reconstruction

While some women concentrated their energies on tending to the spiritual education of the Richmond's children, many others focused their postbellum attention on physically rebuilding churches ravaged by the war, a process Jean Friedman has referred to as "domestic

⁴¹Religious Herald, 17 May 1866.

⁴²Southern Churchman, 14 November 1867, 20 February 1868. In November 1867, there were 167 teachers and 980 pupils. By February 1868, these figures had increased to 189 and 1,113, respectively.

reconstruction."⁴³ For decades before the war began white Richmond women, like their sisters throughout the Northern and Southern United States, had engaged in a variety of fundraising activities to maintain and beautify their churches through intensely female activities like sewing circles, church fairs, or mite societies.⁴⁴ Between 1848 and 1860, the Sewing Society of Monumental Church raised more than \$3,000 to pay for new gas lighting, paint, and building repairs. In 1857, a portion of the money was also contributed to the church's operating expenses.⁴⁵ At St. James's Episcopal, the Sewing Circle raised \$850 in 1839 for a church organ, while the Juvenile Sewing Society for

⁴³Jean Friedman uses this term to describe the rebuilding of Southern churches after the war largely through women's fundraising activities. Friedman, Enclosed Garden, xiii.

⁴⁴Mite societies were women's charitable organizations in which women were each given "mite boxes" to keep at home and contribute small sums of money to whenever possible, preferably daily. For a general discussion of women's church-related organizations, see Nancy F. Cott, Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1789-1835 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977), especially Chapter Four; Epstein, Politics of Domesticity; Lori D. Ginzberg, Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Anne Firor Scott, Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1991); and Friedman, Enclosed Garden.

⁴⁵George D. Fisher, History and Reminiscences of the Monumental Church, Richmond, Virginia, from 1814 to 1878 (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1880), 248-66.

young girls gave the new congregation Bibles, and communion cups and patens.⁴⁶

In the immediate postbellum period, Richmond women put their fundraising skill to work to repair church edifices damaged by the war.⁴⁷ Between January and May 1866, women from at least eight of the city's white churches--Centenary Methodist, Leigh Street Baptist, Grace Baptist, United Presbyterian, Broad Street Methodist, St. James's Episcopal, Monumental Episcopal, and First Baptist--held a series of bazaars aimed at either repairing or rebuilding churches.⁴⁸ Typical of these was the Grace Baptist bazaar begun on April 2, 1866, and held on successive evenings for about a week. Part of the fund raiser involved a "feast" during which women sold various foods and desserts from elaborately decorated tables placed in the shops of sympathetic merchants. Mary Williams Taylor--a twenty-six-

⁴⁶Murray M. McGuire, "A Centennial Address Delivered at St. James's Church, Richmond, Virginia, November 3, 1857," in Murray M. McGuire and John B. Mordecai, St. James's Church, 1835-1957 (Richmond: n.p., 1958), 7-8. A paten is a metal plate upon which the eucharist is placed for Communion.

⁴⁷Jean Friedman argues that this postbellum work allowed Southern women to create--for the first time--autonomous permanent organizations. She argues that the activities of these organization fed into memberships in both the W.C.T.U. and autonomous foreign and domestic Southern missionary societies for women. Friedman, Enclosed Garden, 111. The Richmond evidence supports her conclusions.

⁴⁸Richmond Dispatch, 27, 31 January, 27 February, 24, 31 March, 25 April, and 2 May 1866; Religious Herald, 5 April 1866.

year-old graduate of the Richmond Female Institute and a member of Grace's Young Ladies' Sewing Circle--sold fancy cakes and ice cream with four or five of her friends at a lavishly decorated table in Blair's Store on the corner of Eighth Street and Main.⁴⁹ In addition to plying their patrons with both dainties and "solid viands," the lady managers at the Leigh Street fair, which lasted for an entire month, provided them with the opportunity of listening, for the price of admission, to "Bacon and Greens," a popular address delivered by Southern humorist and newspaper editor George W. Bagby.⁵⁰

Although Richmond women raised a considerable amount of money that was used to repair damaged roofs, repaint buildings darkened by soot, shore up weakened foundations, or refit Sunday School rooms, some clergyman objected to church fairs as questionable forms of fundraising. A Religious Herald writer complained in January 1867 that women involved in some church fairs permitted the sale of intoxicating beverages, or used lotteries or games of chance to auction off valuable articles.⁵¹ Others observed that fairs fostered greed through their

⁴⁹Mary Taylor, Richmond, to Charles Elisha Taylor, Charlottesville, 5 April 1866, Charles Elisha Taylor Papers, UVA. Charles Taylor was a student at the University of Virginia.

⁵⁰Richmond Dispatch, 31 March 1866.

⁵¹Religious Herald, 17 January 1867.

extravagant prices, and negated opportunities to practice true Christian charity.⁵² A Presbyterian minister objected to the flirtatious behavior that often accompanied such events, complaining that "the merchants often attract[ed] more attention than the merchandise."⁵³ Despite these critiques, however, this fundraising technique was tolerated because it served as the linchpin of women's charitable work in the churches throughout the late nineteenth century.

Whereas antebellum women's fundraising was more episodic in nature, with the women having little say in how the money was spent, postbellum fundraising often became an integral part of a church's operating budget. As a result, some women began to insist on a broader and more permanent role in church affairs. The history of women's fundraising at Centenary Methodist Church helps to illustrate this point.

Centenary Methodist Church began its existence in 1810 in a small Methodist meeting house in the heart of the city. In 1839, the congregation moved to a new sanctuary a few blocks away where, by 1841, the Ladies' Sewing Society had raised nearly \$1,200 to help liquidate the mortgage.

⁵²Religious Herald, 17 January 1867; Southern Presbyterian and Presbyterian Index, 1 June 1871.

⁵³Southern Presbyterian and Presbyterian Index, 1 June 1871.

During the war, Centenary women briefly operated a hospital in the Sunday school room after the battle of Second Manassas, and collected clothing for needy children through the Dorcas Society, an activity they continued throughout the 1870s and early 1880s.⁵⁴ Shortly after the war, the church undertook a massive remodeling campaign which left it more than \$8,000 in debt.⁵⁵ In February 1866, Centenary women held a week-long fair to help reduce some of the expense.⁵⁶ During the next few years, Centenary women continued to make regular contributions to defray church costs, which minister R.N. Sledd dutifully included in his reports to the Quarterly Conference.⁵⁷

By the early 1870s, two new women's fundraising groups were formed. On July 23, 1872, thirteen women formed the Young Ladies' Circle of Industry. An organization of

⁵⁴Richmond Enquirer and Examiner, 9 January 1868; Floyd S. Bennett, Methodist Church on Shockoe Hill: A History of the Centenary Methodist Church, Richmond, Virginia, 1819-1960 (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1962), 183. In 1877, the Dorcas Society also opened a school for 362 children. I have developed this history of the church largely from two church histories, Edith Denny White's The Elect Ladies of Centenary: The Story of the Organization and Development of the Women's Work of Centenary Methodist Church, Richmond, Virginia, through One Hundred and Fifty Years, 1810-1960 (n.p.: Women's Society of Christian Service, 1984), and Bennett's Methodist Church on Shockoe Hill.

⁵⁵Bennett, Methodist Church on Shockoe Hill, 58-99, and 182-86.

⁵⁶Richmond Dispatch, 27 February 1866.

⁵⁷Bennett, Methodist Church on Shockoe Hill, 73.

young, single women, its purpose was to raise money for the church through the sale of fancy needlework and other fundraising events. In 1874, the Circle of Industry was joined by the Ladies' Church Improvement Society, an organization of adult women who accumulated funds to equip and furnish the church parsonage. During the next five years, these two organizations--usually working independently of each other--made curtains for the parsonage, created a church library, bought a baptismal font, and hired an alto soloist. They also carpeted the Infant and Male Bible School classrooms; donated \$300 toward the purchase of a new church chandelier; and had seventy-five pew cushions recovered at a cost of \$1,000. In 1875, they even purchased spittoons for the church sanctuary, prompting one amateur church historian to observe that although "[i]t was not respectful in the house of the Lord, even in the church basement, to hold a bazaar or sell dinners, . . . it was not so disrespectful for a man to chew tobacco [in church on Sunday]." ⁵⁸

By 1877, Circle of Industry treasurer Jennie Jones reported a sum of \$1,602 raised for the purchase of the church's first pipe organ. A year later, the Church Improvement Society contributed \$712 toward operating expenses for the church and parsonage. By 1878, the Centenary women's fundraising efforts had become so

⁵⁸White, Elect Ladies of Centenary, 17-34.

important in meeting day-to-day expenses that the church's Official Board rescinded its ruling against holding basement "sociables," despite strict rules in most Methodist churches at the time that prohibited church use "for anything other than religious purposes."⁵⁹

By 1880, the work of the Circle of Industry and the Church Improvement Society had become so central to keeping the church and the parsonage in good repair that their members petitioned Centenary's Official Board for representation on the church's Board of Stewards, a subcommittee responsible for seeing that the parsonage and church were well maintained.⁶⁰ Although Centenary's two historians are silent on how the women's petition was received, Edith Denny White's account suggests that there was controversy. While Floyd Bennett goes to great lengths to stress the harmonious relations that he claims always existed between Centenary's all-male governing body and the church's women, White's account, written at about the same time, bristles with hints of contention between the two. For White, the issue of women as members of the Board of

⁵⁹Bennett, Methodist Church on Shockoe Hill, 72-75. The "Official Board" is the name given to the governing bodies of the Methodist churches. Comprised of the church laity, these organizations work with the ministers to oversee the day-to-day operations of individual congregations.

⁶⁰The Board of Stewards is a subcommittee of the Official Board; its duty is to maintain the physical structures of the sanctuary and the parsonage.

Stewards was "[a] really burning question" that took more than "ten years of urging" to resolve.⁶¹

At times, women's attempts to use their fundraising expertise to flex their political muscle met with short-term failures which, in the long run, only served to underscore their importance to the institution's fiscal health. On May 25, 1875, a group of women from Beth Shalome Synagogue submitted a petition to the congregation's board of directors asking for three things: shorter Sabbath services, better harmonizing in the singing and responses, and replacement of the temple's gender-segregated seating with the mixed family seating currently in vogue in many Reform congregations.⁶² The petition was

⁶¹White, Elect Ladies of Centenary, vi. In 1890, after a decade of requests, women representatives were finally appointed to Centenary's Board of Stewards. One year earlier, in 1889, women at St. James's Episcopal Church formed the Peterkin Guild, named in honor of the Reverend Joshua Peterkin, the church's pastor since 1854. The Peterkin Guild purchased kitchen and dining room equipment, arranged for cleaning the church and parsonage, cleaned the church vestments, and arranged for lawn care. McGuire, "Centennial Address Delivered at St. James's Church," 29. According the church's historians, the Peterkin Guild was "by far the most important. . .and most indispensable of all church organizations." Minor T. Weisiger, Donald R. Traser, and E. Randolph Trice, Not Hearers Only: A History of the St. James's Episcopal Church, Richmond, Virginia, 1835-1985, Margaret T. Peters, ed. (Richmond: St. James's Church, 1986), 37.

⁶²Petition to Beth Shalome Congregation, 25 May 1875, in Miscellaneous Records of Congregations Beth Ahabah and Beth Shalome, Ms. #298, AJA. Begun in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1824, Reform Judaism stressed the religious equality of women in marriage, in divorce, and in child naming practices. By the 1840s Reform congregations permitted the religious confirmation of both girls and boys

signed by thirteen women, all of whom were either related to influential men in the congregation or were women of influence in their own right.⁶³ At the bottom of the petition, the women included a subtly veiled threat calculated to remind the board of the women's role as the

(bat and bar mitzvahs) at puberty. In 1840, New York Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise introduced the first "family pews" into the Albany Congregation to replace seating arrangements in which women were confined to a partitioned area to the side of the main seating, or else restricted to a balcony. He also advocated voting rights for Jewish women and their right to hold elective office in congregations. Another Reform rabbi, New York's Max Lillienthal also allowed women to sing in the choir. Despite his record, historian Jacob Marcus maintains that it would be an overstatement to declare Wise a feminist. Instead, according to Marcus, Wise simply "wanted Jewish women to enjoy that same status as women in Protestant congregations." Jacob Rader Marcus, The American Jewish Woman, 1654-1890 (New York: KTAV Publishing, 1981), 7-8, and 56-58. Historian Karla Goldman tells me that Beth Shalom's petition is "extremely rare." She knows of no other petition such as this being written by women in any other Jewish congregation in the United States during this period of time. Conversation with Karla Goldman, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 7 June 1996.

⁶³The signers included Rebecca Myers, the seventy-two-year-old sister of Richmond attorney Gustavus A. Myers and a former president of the Hebrew Ladies' Memorial Association, her younger sister, Ella, and their first cousins, Julia and Harriet Myers, who were also in their seventies. Other signers were Kate (Mrs. Alfred) Moses, Mrs. Edward Cohen, and Mrs. Ezekiel J. Levy, the wife of a commanding officer of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues, a local military unit which had served Richmond with distinction from the first battle of Manassas to the surrender at Appomattox Court House. Ezekiel J. Levy was a former congregation president. In January 1874, Alfred Moses and Edward Cohen had been chosen to serve on a committee overseeing the sale of the old synagogue building on Mayo Street and the selection of a site for a new temple. Herbert T. Ezekiel and Gaston Lichtenstein, The History of the Jews of Richmond from 1769 to 1917 (Richmond: Herbert T. Ezekiel, printer, 1927), 252-3; Caroline Cohen, Records of the Myers, Hays, and Mordecai Families from 1701 to 1913 (n.p.: n.p., n.d.), 5-7.

temple's most skilled fund raisers. "We have been informed your Board contemplates attempting a new Synagogue in a more suitable location," the women wrote. "We wish you success and promise our earnest [sic] co-operation when ever it is desired."⁶⁴

The petition was reviewed by the congregational board which approved each article and appointed a committee of three to meet with Rabbi Isaac P. Mendes to discuss their implementation. A Sephardic Jew and a strong opponent of what he considered to be "radical" Judaic reforms, Mendes rejected the women's proposal a few weeks later. The petitioners' short-term defeat was perhaps a long-run victory. Although the congregation's women continued to worship in gender-restricted seating, Beth Shalome also never built a new synagogue. In 1891, it sold its Mayo Street location to Moses Montefiore, a Russian-Jewish congregation organized in 1886, and began holding worship services in the meeting hall of Lee Camp of the United Confederate Veterans.⁶⁵

⁶⁴Petition to Beth Shalome Congregation, 25 May 1875, in Miscellaneous Records of Congregations Beth Ahabah and Beth Shalome, Ms. #298, AJA.

⁶⁵A concise account of this event can be found in Ezekiel and Lichtenstein, History of the Jews of Richmond, 253-54. Rebekah Kohut, My Portion: An Autobiography (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1925), 14; Miscellaneous Records of Congregations Beth Ahabah and Beth Shalome, Ms. #298, AJA. Unfortunately, the Beth Shalome minutes are maddeningly silent about the dynamics of this particular event, so it is impossible to know the precise bearing the rejection of this petition may have had on Beth Shalome's closure.

Although the Beth Shalome petition failed to produce the desired reforms, its existence is evidence of the women's growing desire for a stronger voice in their congregation's religious life. Evidence from other religious denominations throughout the city suggests that this was not an isolated event. In the decades following the Civil War and Reconstruction, women in other Richmond churches joined their Jewish sisters in an effort to extend their influence within the city's houses of worship, partly as a result of the growth of women's roles within the churches during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Homes for Aged Women

Disturbed by the plight of elderly female parishoners left penniless by the war, Baptist and Episcopal women in Richmond devoted a portion of their postwar organizational and fundraising activities to creating homes for aged women within their denominations. In February 1875, women representing the city's white Episcopal churches met and formed an association "to provide a home for female members of the Protestant Episcopal Church. . .who are in reduced circumstances, and unable to procure for themselves an adequate support."⁶⁶ A month later, they opened the

⁶⁶Constitution and By-Laws of the Protestant Episcopal Church Home, Richmond, Virginia, Protestant Episcopal Church Home for Ladies Records, VHS. Hereafter, these

Protestant Episcopal Church Home for Ladies in a house on Fourth Street provided by Frederick W. Hanewinckel, a wealthy benefactor and a St. James's vestryman.

The Baptist Home for Aged was opened a few years later on January 1, 1883, the culmination of two years of energetic fundraising begun after a mass meeting of Baptist women in 1881 at Richmond's First Baptist Church. By late September 1882, women from four of the city's white Baptist churches had accumulated more than \$6,100 toward the purchase of a suitable building "with ample grounds, situated in the western section of the city" and had engaged the services of matron Sarah Ellett, at a salary of \$10 per month. In January 1883, the Home was consecrated in a ceremony conducted by six of the city's Baptist clergy.⁶⁷ The Baptist Home was sustained by a three-tiered system of membership dues, occasional bequests, special Thanksgiving offerings, annual bazaars, and systematic investments in municipal bonds and stocks, a fundraising strategy mirroring the one adopted by Richmond's Female Humane Association (Chapter Five).⁶⁸

records will be cited as PECHL Records.

⁶⁷William R.L. Smith, History of the Baptist Home for Aged Women, Richmond, Va. (Richmond: L.H. Jenkins, 1922), 5-16.

⁶⁸Membership in the association operating the Baptist Home for Aged Women was divided into three classes: Annual members who paid \$5 per year; Life Members who paid \$50; and Patrons who paid \$1,000 to endow a room in the Home bearing their name. By 1891, the Baptist Home for Aged

Like many antebellum benevolent associations formed by Northern and Southern women, the day-to-day operations of both homes were supervised by boards of lady managers, usually influential women in the church who voted on the admission of new residents; made staffing decisions; arbitrated disputes between inmates and employees; inspected the kitchen and dining room; visited inmates' rooms; and raised money.⁶⁹

Membership in both institutions at the beginning was quite limited. During the first four years of its existence, only twelve women were admitted to the Protestant Episcopal Home, although more than twenty-five

Women possessed a modest endowment composed of city and state bonds, and railroad and bank stocks. Smith, Baptist Home for Aged Women, 16-32.

⁶⁹Wherever possible, each woman entering the Home was required to pay a one-time admission fee of \$200 that was invested to help cover operating expenses. Article V, Constitution and By-Laws of the Protestant Episcopal Church Home, Richmond, Virginia (Richmond: William Ellis Jones, printer, 1885), 6, in PECHL Records, VHS. In addition, the Board of Managers occasionally held "pound parties" which were charitable donations of one-pound packages of food or other needed items. A pound party in December 1876, for example, netted 600 items, several of which were more than one pound in weight, including a barrel of apples, a barrel of potatoes, a barrel of flour, eight hams, one tongue, one round of beef, and several pieces of china. Minutes for 1 December 1876, Minute Book Volume 2, 1875-1881, PECHL Records, VHS. In 1878, an anonymous benefactor donated a pound of silver coins, a donation which was repeated in 1879. These cash donations formed the basis of an endowment which was invested to pay operating expenses. Richmond Dispatch, 1 January 1879.

women applied.⁷⁰ Decisions for admission were often based as much on a tough-minded acknowledgement of economic realities as they were on a mixture of patriotism, elitism, and altruism. Louisa Cosnahan and Charlotte Carter were both Confederate widows in feeble health when they became residents of the home, but other women were probably accepted because they were the relatives of clergymen or influential parishoners who could afford the \$200 admission fee.⁷¹ Martha and Anne Archer, for example, were elderly

⁷⁰Richmond Dispatch, 1 January 1878. Early in their deliberations, the Board of Managers decided to "regard with strict secrecy every thing that transpires at its meetings." Minutes for 1 April 1876, Minute Book Volume 2, 1875-1881. As a result, their decisions surrounding applications for admission are fragmentary and incomplete for some women and completely nonexistent for many others. Twenty-three of these applicants were admitted. General Correspondence, 1875-1882; Minutes, 1875-1891. By the time the Home moved to a new location in 1908, it had received a total of forty-one white women. Register of Ladies at the 4th Street Home, 1875-1909. All in PECHL Records, VHS. By 1891, ten women were residents of the Baptist women's home, although only seven appear to have been destitute. Smith, Baptist Home for Aged Women, 26.

⁷¹Forty-eight-year-old Louisa Cosnahan was the widow of Captain James B. Cosnahan, a Williamsburg lawyer who died during the war. By the time of her admission in 1881, Cosnahan was in frail health, living with her daughter, and contributing to her support by taking in sewing. Mrs. E.J. Cosnahan, Smithfield, Virginia, to Mrs. James [Mary] Werth, Richmond, 27 September 1881. Charlotte Carter, a widow whose home in Loudon County, Virginia, had been "ravaged by the two armies and completely broken up," had conducted a boarding school, until 1877, when cataract surgery on both eyes in 1877 forced her into poverty. Mrs. C[harlotte] C. Carter, to Mrs. James [Mary] Werth, 21 March [1881]; Letter from George Rheuling, M.D., Baltimore, Md., 22 March 1881; Letter from Julian J. Chisolm, M.D., Baltimore Eye and Ear Institute, Baltimore, Md., 28 March 1881. All of these letters are in the General Correspondence Files, PECHL Records, VHS.

sisters whose brother was a former Virginia senator. Before the war, they had owned more than 250 slaves on plantations in Virginia and Mississippi. The sisters were admitted to the Home together in April 1880.⁷² Fifty-year-old Sallie McGuire was the childless widow of the Reverend Edward McGuire, a well-loved Episcopal clergyman from King George County.⁷³ Some of the more desperate cases were denied, suggesting that part of the Board's strategy was to reject truly destitute applicants who would only drain the association's coffers without attracting any additional revenue to keep the Home solvent.⁷⁴

⁷²R. H. Meade, to the Board of Managers, 10 February 1880; John B. Harvie, to the Board of Managers, 5 March 1880; Mary E. Harvie, to the Board of Managers, 5 March 1880, all in General Correspondence Files, PECHL Records, VHS.

⁷³Emmy C[rump] Lightfoot, to "Mollie" [Mary] Werth, 28 May 1881; General Correspondence Files, PECHL Records, VHS.

⁷⁴Ellen Cave, for example, was described as often being "without food and scarcely raiment." M.J. Fulton, to [Mary Werth], April 1876. Mrs. J.A. Hunter was a former Winder hospital matron whose application bore numerous testimonies to her wartime work as a Winder Hospital matron. She was described as being "without a single tie of kindred blood" and living in "an uncongenial home" in Florida with "a spendthrift nephew." Annie B. Fuller, to Mrs. [Mary] Werth, 15 October 1878; Annie B. Fuller, to Mrs. [Mary] Werth, 1 January 1879; the Reverend R. H. Weller, Rector, St. John's Church, Jacksonville, Florida, to [Mrs. Werth], 28 July 1879; Dr. R. Lewis, to Mrs. [Mary] Werth, 29 January 1879; Mrs. J.A. Hunter, Washington, D.C., to [Mrs. Mary Werth] 30 January 1879; Nannie Taylor Griffith, to [Mary] Werth, 7 February 1879; Miss Annie B. Fuller, to Mrs. [Mary] Werth, 11 February 1879, all in the General Correspondence Files, PECHL Records, VHS. Both women were rejected, Hunter because she was not a member of the Richmond Diocese.

Although the history of the Baptist Home for Aged Women provides little information on admission policies, its modest endowment fund and the presence of a few affluent female residents who were former patrons of the association may have enabled it to avoid some of the more draconian measures that shaped the Protestant Episcopal Home's admission policies in the late nineteenth century. In addition, unlike the Protestant Episcopal Home which considered applications from female congregants throughout the Richmond diocese, the Baptist Home for Aged Women limited its admissions exclusively to Richmond residents.⁷⁵

Female Missionary Societies

Women's postbellum organizational activity that focused on domestic reconstruction or the plight of indigent women was welcomed by the city's white churchmen of all denominations because these organizations were consistent with commonly held beliefs about women's appropriate role within the church and the importance of their domesticity. These groups also existed under the protection and support of men who, at various times, offered financial advice, directed the organizations' work, conducted portions of the meetings, and appointed women to

⁷⁵Of the Baptist Home's ten residents in 1891, only seven appear to have been destitute. Smith, Baptist Home for Aged Women, 26.

leadership positions. Men also served the much needed role of incorporators, lending their names to acts of incorporation that permitted married women to conduct organization business despite laws of coverture.

The creation of foreign female missionary associations during this same period of time, however, carried no such male imprimatur, in part, because these missionary groups eventually sought to establish their autonomy from male foreign mission boards and, in part, because their formation suggested that women's views of the appropriate goals and objectives of foreign missionary service differed from those embraced by men. As a result, the creation of autonomous female foreign missionary associations evoked harsh criticism, first directed at the associations themselves, but later absorbed into a more general debate about the appropriate role of women in the churches.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Northern women in the Congregational Church formed the first denomination-wide missionary board in 1868, followed by the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) in 1869; the Presbyterian Church (North) in 1870; and the Northern Baptists in 1871. In 1872, United Brethren women organized themselves into a similar group, followed by the Free Baptists in 1873, and the Dutch Reformed churches in 1875. The Protestant Episcopal Church set up a women's society in 1868, although with far less controversy than that experienced by women in other denominations, largely because of the exemplary work of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, a religious order for Episcopal women that, for some years previous, had ministered to the church through the establishment and operation of hospitals, schools, penitentiaries, and orphan asylums. In 1878, women in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South joined in foreign missionary work with their Northern sisters, followed by the Lutherans in 1879. Noreen Dunn Tatum, A Crown of Service: A Story of Woman's Work in the Methodist Episcopal

In some denominations, Richmond women's interest in foreign and domestic missions actually predated the Civil War by at least fifty years.⁷⁷ Women at the First Baptist Church formed one of the earliest women's missionary groups in Richmond in 1813.⁷⁸ By 1834, a women's foreign mission group at the Third Baptist Church in Richmond supported the Virginia Foreign Mission Society with "their prayers,

Church, South from 1878-1940 (Nashville, Tenn.: Parthenon Press, 1967), 22; R. Pierce Beaver, American Protestant Women in World Mission: History of the First Feminist Movement in North America (1968; Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, Publishing, 1980), 87-100; and Fannie E.S. Heck, In Royal Service, 99; "The Spirit of Missions," Southern Churchman, 22 August 1867; "To the Friends of Sisterhood," Southern Churchman, 17 October 1867; and "Ministering Women," Southern Churchman, 5 November 1868. For a general discussion of women's foreign missionary associations and their relationship to a gender crisis in the churches, see Patricia R. Hill, The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Missionary Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870-1920 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), and Beaver, American Protestant Women in World Mission. An earlier version of Beaver's thesis was published as All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Mission (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1968).

⁷⁷Both of these forms of missions activity were frequently undertaken by a single denominational agency in the early nineteenth century. As mission work grew and expanded, most denominations formed separate, and sometimes competing, boards for foreign and domestic missionary work. My discussion in this chapter concentrates on foreign missionary work among white Richmond women because it appears to have engendered the greatest disapproval.

⁷⁸Catherine B. Allen, Century to Celebrate: History of the Woman's Missionary Union (Birmingham, Ala.: Woman's Missionary Union, 1987), 17.

counsel, and contributions."⁷⁹ By 1838, this association had contributed more than \$170 for the printing and distribution of a Burmese Bible, and the education of Burmese girls.⁸⁰ In 1856, students at the Richmond Female Institute created a missionary society with a \$1,000 donation from the school's co-founder in honor of his mother.⁸¹ By the time the war began in April 1861, this missionary group at the Institute supported a school for Chinese girls under the superintendence of Martha Foster Crawford, the wife of a Baptist missionary.⁸²

Presbyterian women in antebellum Richmond and Manchester formed two missionary groups: the Female Domestic Missionary Society of Richmond and Manchester and the Foreign Missionary Society of Third Presbyterian

⁷⁹Religious Herald, 14 March 1834, quoted in Annie Florence Weeks, Grace Baptist Church, Richmond, 1833-1958 (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, 1958), 4.

⁸⁰Religious Herald, n.d., quoted in Annie Florence Weeks, Grace Baptist Church, Richmond, 1833-1958, 6.

⁸¹Catherine B. Allen, Laborers Together with God: 22 Great Women in Baptist Life (Birmingham, Ala.: Woman's Missionary Union, 1987), 40.

⁸²First Baptist Church, The First Century of the First Baptist Church of Richmond, Virginia (Richmond: Carlton McCarthy, 1880), 237; Mrs. M.F. Crawford, "To the Young Ladies of the Missionary Society of the Richmond Female Institute," Religious Herald, 25 April 1861. Ironically, with the exception of one female teacher who was eventually excluded from church membership for some unidentified transgression, all of the school's teachers were Chinese men, three of whom had converted to Christianity.

Church.⁸³ Episcopal women at St. Paul's Church supported a colporteur in the Kansas territory in 1857; Episcopal women at St. James's Church devoted a portion of the \$3,000 they raised in 1858 to developing a Sunday School for three hundred black Richmond children and adults at St. Phillip's African Episcopal Church.⁸⁴ By 1860, the Ladies' Aid Society of Grace Episcopal Church also earmarked part of their contributions to overseas missions.⁸⁵

During the Civil War and early postbellum period, contributions for foreign missionary activity in several denominations plummeted. Contributions to the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, which had totaled more than \$40,000 in 1860, fell to less than \$9,000 in 1863. In the first year of Reconstruction, they dropped

⁸³Lois A. Boyd and R. Douglas Brackenridge, Presbyterian Women in America: Two Centuries of a Quest for Status (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1983), 7-9.

⁸⁴A colporteur was an individual who delivered Bibles and religious tracts to people living in remote areas or to those whom a particular denomination considered part of the "unchurched." "Constitution and By-Laws of the Sewing Society of St. Paul's Church, Richmond," Appendix II in Elizabeth Wright Weddell, St. Paul's Church, Richmond Virginia: Its Historic Years and Memorials (Richmond: William Byrd Press, 1931), vol. 2, 595; Wiesiger, Traser, and Trice, Not Hearers Only, 22. St. Phillip's Church closed in 1868, in part, according to an article in the Southern Churchman, because of a decline in interest on the part of white Episcopalians. Southern Churchman, 23 April 1868.

⁸⁵William H. Gaines, A History of Grace and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, (Richmond: Grace and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, 1987), 8.

to \$7,000.⁸⁶ But as Southern congregations shaken by the ravages of war repaired their damaged edifices and reinvigorated their fragile congregations, foreign and domestic missionary work in the Southern churches began to flourish once more. By the late 1860s and early 1870s, denominational newspapers like the Religious Herald, the Southern Churchman, and the Southern Presbyterian and Presbyterian Index, routinely included reports from foreign missionaries in Africa, South America, and Asia, or domestic missionaries operating schools for the children of American Indians.⁸⁷

In postbellum Richmond, women began to form new foreign missionary associations or resurrect groups suspended during the war. A group of women from Third Presbyterian Church gathered in the home of Susan Carrington to resume the foreign mission work they had abandoned during wartime.⁸⁸ At Centenary Methodist in 1875, members of the Circle of Industry and the Ladies'

⁸⁶Heck, In Royal Service, 89-90; Allen, Century to Celebrate, 18-19.

⁸⁷Southern Presbyterian and Presbyterian Index, 23 June, 2 November 1871; Religious Herald, 14 July 1870, 13, 20 April, 13 July. 17 August 1871.

⁸⁸Mr. Edwin Pleasants, "Historical Sketch of the Third Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Virginia," paper presented at the Seventy Fifth Anniversary Celebration of Third Presbyterian Church, 22 May 1910, reprinted in Third Presbyterian Church, The First Hundred Years (Richmond: The Centennial Commission of the Third Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Virginia, 1935), 34.

Church Improvement Society banded together to form the Women's Missionary Society, after listening to a lecture on Chinese footbinding by Mrs. J.W. Lambuth. During its early years, the Centenary group supported mission schools in Shanghai and Soochow. Within a short period of time, it was joined by two additional groups--one at Trinity Methodist Church and the other at Clay Street Methodist. By 1879, these three Richmond societies together were providing scholarships for four "Bible women," two in China and two in Brazil.⁸⁹

In 1872, the women at Grace Street Baptist Church formed a missionary association under the leadership of

⁸⁹White, Elect Ladies of Centenary, 45-48; Tatum, Crown of Service, 22. A "Bible woman" was a native-born Christian woman of a particular country taught to read and write so she could read the gospel and distribute Bibles to other native women on her visits to their homes. Typically, most Bible women were trained to read Bibles in their own language, which were provided in translation through the foreign mission boards of the various churches. The same term appears to have applied in the same way in the Baptist missionary associations. Religious Herald, 4 February 1864; and Heck, In Royal Service, 94. Although the use of Bible women was usually connected to foreign missionary service, the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church also employed Chinese Bible women to bring the gospel to immigrant Chinese women on the West Coast of the United States. Ruth Esther Meeker, Six Decades of Service, 1880-1940: A History of the Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church (n.p.: Continuing Corporation of The Woman's Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1969), 285. Ellen Ross uses the term "Bible women" to describe the activities of women who ministered to working-class Londoners during the late nineteenth century and sometimes provided out-of-work laborers with infant layettes. Ellen Ross, Love and Toil: Motherhood in Outcast London, 1870-1918 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 110.

Mary Catherine Jeter. A long-time supporter of women's work in foreign missions, Jeter had attended a meeting of women during the Southern Baptist Convention in Baltimore in 1868, where she heard Ann Graves, the mother of missionary Rosewell Graves and a member of "First Female Baptist," discuss the importance of women in mission work in China, since male missionaries were not permitted to enter the women's homes "to Christianize them."⁹⁰ During its first year, this organization collected more than \$1,200 to support the work of sisters Edmonia and Lottie Moon, two of the first single women ever to engage in missionary work in China under the auspices of the Southern Baptist Convention.⁹¹

As women gathered in meetings to listen to mission field reports, they realized that they shared a concern for gender issues such as Chinese footbinding, African bride

⁹⁰First Baptist Church of Baltimore was nicknamed "First Female Baptist" because of its liberal position on the role of women in the church. At "First Female Baptist," women were permitted to vote in congregational meetings and serve on church-wide committees with male members, functions normally prohibited throughout the Southern Baptist Convention during this period of time. Allen, Century to Celebrate, 23.

⁹¹Heck, In Royal Service, 101. Born December 12, 1840, in Albemarle County, Virginia, Charlotte "Lottie" Diggs Moon was given a classical education at the Albemarle Female Institute in Charlottesville, Virginia. In 1873, she journeyed to North China to join her younger sister, Edmonia, who had been sent the year before. The two sisters operated a school until Lottie's death in Manchuria, December 12, 1912. Lottie and Edmonia's uncle, James Barclay, had been a missionary to Jerusalem. Heck, In Royal Service, 101, and 262.

prices, and polygamous marriages that were not necessarily endorsed with equal fervor by male missionaries or the male-dominated foreign mission boards whose focus was on the Christianization of native men. As a result, throughout the rest of the 1870s and most of the 1880s, the women in several Southern denominations moved to establish autonomous denomination-wide foreign mission groups that were not just interested in saving souls, but also in addressing problems facing women in the countries being served. Although they eventually succeeded in creating autonomous missionary organizations in the Baptist and Methodist churches, in the process, Southern women evoked a discourse of opposition that fueled a growing debate in the Southern churches about woman's proper sphere.

Southern Baptist and Methodist women who tried to form separate, denomination-wide missionary groups during the 1870s operated in what one church historian has called a "climate of hostility," emanating from the male clergy and laity. An 1874 proposal by women from the Methodist Church, for example, was initially met with stern disapproval from male church leaders, who argued that "the women would run into debt, [that] they could not keep accounts, [and that] none had ever had experience in presiding over a meeting or speaking in public." This measure was finally approved four years later at the General Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, despite objections

that the organization was too controversial and doomed to failure.⁹²

Baptist women who attempted to form a similar organization in the Southern Baptist Convention during the same period of time faced opposition that stemmed from fears that "a women's missions organization [would be] a competitor, not a helper," in the important work of Christianizing "heathen" populations. Some critics also worried that women's movement into foreign mission work might encourage some women to try to leave home and enter the ministry.⁹³

Richmond women played key roles in the founding of both of these missionary organizations. Centenary Methodist chapter president Eliza Lewis Carter Harrison, for example, headed the Methodist Woman's Missionary Society's newly-created Virginia Conference.⁹⁴ Richmond women also hosted the meeting of Southern Baptist women

⁹²White, Elect Ladies of Centenary, 41.

⁹³Allen, Century to Celebrate, 30-31.

⁹⁴Ibid., 43-44. The organizing pattern of the Woman's Missionary Society in the Methodist Church, South appears to have differed somewhat from the plan followed by the Baptists' Woman's Missionary Union. Whereas the Union was formed from, first, individual and, then, state missionary associations, the Society went straight from local groups to the creation of a Convention-wide body, with the interim state agencies created shortly thereafter. White, Elect Ladies of Centenary, 59; and Theodore L. Agnew, "Reflections on the Woman's Missionary Movement in Late 19th-Century Methodism," Methodist History 6.2 (January 1968): 15.

that led to the creation of Woman's Missionary Union in the late 1880s.⁹⁵ During this group's formative years, Richmonders Mary Catherine Jeter, Jennie Hatcher, and Abby Manly Gwathmey all served as Virginia Committee presidents. Gwathmey also later served at the third Woman's Missionary Union president.⁹⁶

Although most laymen and clergy had long approved of women's local missionary societies that collected monies for distribution by the Foreign Mission Board, male reaction to independent denominational groups was swift and furious. "You can't overthrow Peter and Paul," one Kentucky layman warned. "If you vote for this organization, God only knows what the women will do. Nobody on the face of this earth will be able to manage them, and they will be in danger of wrecking the whole business."⁹⁷

⁹⁵On May 11, 1888, at an Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Richmond, thirty-two female delegates from twelve Southern states formed the Woman's Missionary Union, after a long and frequently contentious struggle with the Foreign Mission Board. Two hundred women were present at its formation, a hundred of them from Richmond. Sensing history in the making, Abby Manly Gwathmey brought her twin daughters, Maria and Alberta, to witness the event. The history of this organization has been aptly told by Catherine B. Allen in Century to Celebrate.

⁹⁶Jeter and Hatcher were both wives of Richmond clergy. Gwathmey was Union president from 1894 to 1895; she also served as the Union's Recording Secretary, Virginia Committee Vice-president, and a delegate to the Foreign Mission Board. Allen, Laborers Together with God, 38-44.

⁹⁷Quoted in Allen, Century to Celebrate, 45.

Reactions like these followed the formation of similar groups in other denominations. An editorial in the Southern Presbyterian and Presbyterian Index, following the creation of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in 1871, accused that organization of "driving a separating wedge into the family compact" by its decision to promote and financially support the work of missionary wives, "[thus] making two, if not three parties, where the Lord Jesus expressly declared that there should be but one."⁹⁸ By more specifically defining the role of the missionary wife through their promise of a fixed salary and a plan of work, the writer charged that the Society's actions struck at the heart of the marriage contract, upsetting traditional expectations that the missionary wife's husband would serve as "her chief advisor, not only in relation to her domestic duties, but equally in relation to any active duties she must assume."⁹⁹

Buried in portions of the article praising women's earlier missionary work, however, was another reason why the writer, and the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, was upset. Although local missionary groups had "acted in accordance with the advice of their pastor" by sending the

⁹⁸Southern Presbyterian and Presbyterian Index, 25 July 1872. The Old and New Presbyterian churches reunited in 1869.

⁹⁹Southern Presbyterian and Presbyterian Index, 22 July 1872.

"fruits of their efforts to the Board to be used for general missionary purposes," this new organization proposed establishing an autonomous central committee charged with the ability to make decisions about which missionaries it would support and in what manner. Since the Women's Foreign Missionary Society had already accumulated \$18,000 during the first six months of its existence, and had promised to raise an additional \$32,000 by the year's end, it appears as if the more pressing concern to the Foreign Mission Board was the loss that this agency's formidable fund-raising talent would represent in the male Foreign Mission Board's ability to propose and execute programs. For the writer, controlling the women's missionary group was "a matter of momentous importance to the cause of truth, purity, and righteousness, that the [association's] interest and. . .sympathies be guided in the right channel."¹⁰⁰

Although the writer admitted to a "lurking suspicion that the Board had not heretofore shown fair-play to the female portion of the heathen world," he closed by insinuating that the creation of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society might also bear some relation to the ongoing discussion of woman's rights taking place "throughout the whole country, but especially in the North," a statement calculated to pique the anxiety of

¹⁰⁰Ibid., emphasis mine.

white male Southerners already reeling from more social change than they ever hoped to bear, and fearful of the National Woman Suffrage Association's recent excursions below the Mason-Dixon line.¹⁰¹

Criticisms such as these also drew their strength from a gendered discussion within many Southern denominations in the late 1860s and early 1870s about the appropriate role

¹⁰¹For a discussion of the attempts to silence Presbyterian women in missionary associations, see Boyd and Brackenridge, Presbyterian Women in America. By May 1870 Richmond women were among those who formed the Virginia State Woman Suffrage Association, following visits by Paulina Wright Davis and Matilda Joslyn Gage in January and March 1870 as part of National Woman Suffrage Association's effort to create a base of support in the South. The Virginia suffrage organization was led by forty-three-year-old Anne Whitehead Bodeker, the daughter of Manchester cotton mill superintendent, Joshua Whitehead, and wife of German-born Richmond druggist, Augustus Bodeker. Other Richmond female members included Anna Bodeker's sister, Elizabeth Hoppe; Susan Pellet, a former member of the Ladies' Defense Association and a Richmond schoolteacher; Elisa Washburne; Georgianna Smith; Elizabeth Van Lew; and Eliza Langstedt. Membership in the Association was minuscule; meetings held in 1870 and 1871 frequently attracted more men than women. Richmond Dispatch 9 May 1870; Ladies' Defense Association Records, ESBL. Male supporters included men from the radical wing of Richmond's Republican party, among them, judges John C. Underwood, Westal Willoughby, and Lysander Hill, and Ralza Manly, a white Northerner and former U.S. Army chaplain who travelled to Richmond after the war to educate former slaves. Sandra Gioia Treadway, "A Most Brilliant Woman: Anna White Bodeker and the First Woman Suffrage Association," Virginia Cavalcade 43.4 (spring 1994): 166-77; Sarah Graham Hunter, "Woman Suffrage in Virginia: The Equal Suffrage League and Pressure Group Politics," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 101.2 (April 1993): 227-50; Suzanne Lebsock, "woman Suffrage and White Supremacy: A Virginia Case Study," in Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism, Nancy A. Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsock eds. (Urbana: University of Illinois, Press, 1993), 62-100.

of women in the church that emanated less from women's rights agitation in the North than it did from a perceived sense of women's growing power within the Southern churches, now sharpened by their expanded roles during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Between February and April 1868, and again between May and September 1871, for example, this discussion found its way into the pages of the Richmond-based Baptist newspaper, the Religious Herald. The timing of these two discussions coincided with the expansion of women into broader postbellum roles, as "domestic reconstructionists" and as foreign and domestic missionary association workers, sharing the "white man's burden" of bringing the light of Christianity to the heathen masses.¹⁰² Comments on both of these occasions focused on two key issues: the right of women to speak, pray, and sometimes preach in public; and the right of women to vote in congregational meetings.¹⁰³

Many clergy and laymen agreed with the Baptist minister Andrew Broaddus who maintained that women had important roles to play by instructing children, or bringing the gospel to unchurched females, or by supporting

¹⁰²The reference, here, is to Rudyard Kipling's poem of the same name.

¹⁰³Religious Herald, 20 February, 19 March, and 2, 9, and 23 April 1868; 25 May, 22, 29 June, 3, 27 July, 3, 17, 31 August, and 7 September 1871.

foreign and domestic missionaries with mite box funds.¹⁰⁴ Like Broaddus, most also stopped short of approving either political or religious suffrage, or permitting women to share the pulpit, an image which The Southern Presbyterian and Presbyterian Index condemned as "a shocking impropriety, even if it were not manifestly unscriptural."¹⁰⁵ According to Broaddus, allowing women to speak and pray aloud in churches would set them on a continuum which would lead to their becoming

public lecturers on science, politics, or anything else. If it is seemly for them to be political speakers, then they should be invested with the right of suffrage, and made eligible for political offices. . . . The principle that sanctions the public religious preaching of women leads, logically and practically, to all these results. We suspect that in the disregard of the divine rule in this matter commenced that corruption of taste and manners which has developed, of late years, "the strong minded women," who, dissatisfied with their sex, are battling to secure the rights without the responsibility of men.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴"Should Women Speak in Public?" Religious Herald, 20 February 1868; "The Sphere of Woman's Usefulness," Religious Herald, 14 May 1868.

¹⁰⁵"Woman's Work in the Church," Southern Presbyterian and Presbyterian Index, 20 June 1872.

¹⁰⁶"Should Women Speak in Public?" Religious Herald, 20 February 1868. Broaddus reiterated his position in 1871, in a series a letters to the Herald between himself, and James S. Purefoy, of Forestville, North Carolina, who took the opposite view. In these later essays, Broaddus linked public speaking women to the leaders of the Paris Commune, Victoria Woodhull, Charles Darwin, and Julia Ward Howe, "the infidel leader of the 'women's rights' party in America," which he termed as a bunch of "crowing hens." "Reply of Rev. James S. Purefoy," Religious Herald, 22 June 1871.

On the issue of church voting, Broaddus and others insisted that allowing women a congregational franchise would subvert "the relation of subordination which God originally established between the sexes," an argument he also used to explain why women should not speak in public.¹⁰⁷

Although some women and men challenged Broaddus's assertions, women's rights was an extremely sensitive issue in the postbellum South, in part because of continued Southern animosity toward Northern morés but more importantly because Southerners, more than people living in any other region of the United States at the time, feared the chaos that they believed would result from further inverting what they perceived as the "natural order." As a result, Southern women's foreign missionary associations attempted to assuage male anxieties during much of this time by terming themselves as auxiliaries and by distancing themselves from the controversial and potentially divisive issue of women's enfranchisement.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷"Do the Scriptures Forbid Females from Voting in Church Meetings?" Religious Herald, 13 July 1871, emphasis in the original.

¹⁰⁸Both the Baptist Woman's Missionary Union and the Methodist Woman's Missionary Society included carefully worded clauses in their constitutions and by-laws--which were patently false--disavowing any intention to seek organizational autonomy, although it is clear that, from the beginning, the women had determined to create independent agencies. The Woman's Missionary Union also avoided using its formal name until the early 1890s, even though it had been in informal usage among Union members since the early to mid-1880s. At the Union's

Some branch agencies also avoided the controversy surrounding women speaking in public by continuing the practice adopted by other women's organizations in the antebellum period: they invited prominent, sympathetic men to conduct their meetings. The first meeting of the Virginia Conference of the Methodist Woman's Missionary Society, for example, was conducted in tandem by Julianna Hayes and the Reverend A.W. Wilson, with Wilson standing behind the podium and relaying the seated Hayes's comments and instructions to the assembly.¹⁰⁹

Others deflected the force of such criticism by shifting the debate to discussions of women's maternalism and the role women had played in organizing schools, building orphanages, operating soup kitchens, collecting clothes for the needy, erecting homes to care for the sick and elderly, and accumulating Sunday school libraries. At times, however, this maternalist agenda brought the new female mission societies into collision with male-dominated foreign mission boards. On the issue of temperance, for example, the Woman's Missionary Union risked challenging the Southern Baptist Convention by passing a resolution opposing the sale and consumption of liquor and forming an

organizational meeting in Richmond in 1888, Texas delegate Fannie Davis proclaimed that the organization was "not for 'woman's rights,' . . . we have our rights, the highest of which is service." Allen, Century to Celebrate, 44-47.

¹⁰⁹White, Elect Ladies of Centenary, 43-44.

informal alliance with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), even though the Convention had rejected a temperance proposal at its 1888 meeting.¹¹⁰ Despite its WCTU connections, however, the Union also stopped short of following the WCTU into the campaign for woman suffrage.¹¹¹ According to Union historian, Catherine B. Allen

The crossroads between women and missions created a wide but well-fenced arena in which the WMU grappled with social issues. Issues strictly of concern to women, but not to missions, fell on the fence and received only casual nods. . . . Woman suffrage, for example, was not identified as either friend or foe of missions, and accordingly received no official attention.¹¹²

Conclusion

By the time Beth Shalome Congregation closed the doors of its Mayo Street synagogue for good, white Richmond women had made significant strides in expanding their influence in the city's churches. As an auxiliary army, they had labored through the Civil War to care for the sick and

¹¹⁰The Southern Baptist Convention did not endorse the activities of the WCTU until 1912. A number of Union members belonged to the WCTU, distributed WCTU pamphlets, and accompanied Frances Willard and other WCTU members on their trips to the South, but only one or two worked for women's enfranchisement.

¹¹¹The two organizations even shared similar slogans: The WCTU slogan was "For God and Home and Native Land"; the WMU's was "For God and Home and Every Land." Allen, Century to Celebrate, 238-39.

¹¹²Allen, Century to Celebrate, 234.

wounded, and bring spiritual consolation to those in despair. In the men's absence, they had helped to keep wartime Sunday School classes in session and, in the aftermath of defeat, they had raised money to repair and rebuild ruined churches.

In the process, they gained a greater sense of their own organizational abilities and a vision of an enhanced role for themselves within the religious community. For the women at Richmond's St. James's Episcopal Church or Centenary Methodist, this vision was expressed by their appointment as church stewards. For the women who headed Richmond's Protestant Episcopal Church Home for Ladies, or the Baptist Home for Aged Women, this vision was defined as a new mission to elderly women impoverished by the war. For still others, the vision set them on the path of creating foreign missionary associations at both the local and denominational levels.

From the early nineteenth century, American women had achieved their greatest organizational successes in areas of social reform where their activities coincided with and reinforced gendered beliefs about their greater piety and morality in relation to men, so it is not surprising that Richmond women made some of their most significant postwar gains in the Southern churches. But as the history of women's foreign missionary work reveals, the expansion of these roles was not without its limitations. In the

postwar South, these limitations included the need to reassert the subordination of Southern women in a society already suffering from the social dislocation incident to Emancipation. As a result, Southern women's missionary work often became the site of intense postwar debates over their appropriate sphere not only in the Southern churches but in Southern society as well.

CHAPTER 10
LADIES' POSTBELLUM ASSOCIATIONS AND
THE DISCOURSE OF THE LOST CAUSE

In the decades following the war, Southern white women and men went about the task of claiming and cherishing their distinctive Southern past. Central to this reclamation was the creation of a plethora of organizations--veterans associations, historical societies, cemetery groups--that re-fought the war in hundreds of personal narratives that were delivered as speeches at public assemblies or published in newspapers or literary magazines. By the end of the century, Richmond women and men had formed at least five cemetery associations, several chapters of the United Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and homes for elderly veterans or their female dependents. In 1876, the Southern Historical Society, dedicated to producing a "true history" of the War between the States, moved to Richmond from New Orleans, and began publishing yearly volumes containing

personal narratives, official documents, poetry, and military rosters.¹

While these organizations helped Southerners come to terms with their past, other activities enabled them to lay claim to a dominant role for themselves in the new Southern society that was rising from the war's ruins. In part, this involved claiming large portions of public space for statues of Confederate heroes and restoring historic sites whose connections could be traced to the war. In Richmond, this activity was expressed through the development of Monument Avenue and the move to save the Confederate White House from destruction. Women played significant roles in this "Lost Cause" culture in Richmond, both through their roles as chief mourners of dead Confederate soldiers and through their efforts to preserve and protect the architectural icons of the Cause for future generations.

The Lost Cause

¹The Southern Historical Society was founded in 1869. Original founders included ex-Confederate generals Robert E. Lee, Braxton Bragg, Jubal Early, Wade Hampton, Richard Taylor (a son of ex-President Zachary Taylor), Dabney H. Maury, P.G.T. Beauregard, Simon Buckner, and D.H. Hill, as well as Dr. Joseph Jones (a son of Georgia minister Charles Colcocke Jones), and New Orleans clergyman Benjamin Palmer. "Sixth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the Southern Historical Society for the year ending October 19th, 1878," Southern Historical Society Papers 6 (July-December 1878): 244-45; Gaines M. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 50-51.

The term "lost cause" probably originated with Edward A. Pollard, the wartime editor of the Richmond Examiner, whose 750-page history of the war bearing that title was published just a year after the Confederate armies laid down their arms.² While not every Southerner approved of Pollard's interpretation, his assertion that "[d]efeat has not made 'all our sacred things profane'" no doubt resonated in the hearts and minds of many Southern women and men struggling to regain their intellectual and moral compass in the face of humiliating defeat.³ "The war has left the South its own memories, its own heroes, its own tears, its own dead," Pollard continued,

Under these traditions, sons will grow to manhood, and lessons sink deep that are learned from the lips of widowed mothers. It would be immeasurably the worst consequences of defeat in this war that the South should lose its moral and intellectual distinctiveness as a people, and cease to assert its well-known superiority [sic] in civilization, in political scholarship, and in all the standards of individual character over the people of the North. . . . That superiority the war has not conquered or lowered; and the South will do right to claim and cherish it.⁴

²Edward A. Pollard, The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates (New York: E.B. Treat & Co., 1866).

³Pollard, Lost Cause, 751. Gaines Foster has observed that many ex-Confederate soldiers believed Pollard lacked the military expertise to render an accurate history of the war and that his interpretation was too biased in favor of his native Virginia. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 49.

⁴Pollard, Lost Cause, 751-52.

Charles Regan Wilson has described the Lost Cause as a regionally specific "civil religion" complete with rituals, iconography, and theology that provided Southerners with solace in the face of wrenching loss and helped shape their postwar identity as a distinctive regional culture.⁵ Gaines Foster rejects the notion of the Lost Cause as a civil religion, maintaining, instead, that it was simply a cultural "tradition" which helped ease Southerners' adjustment to the New South and provided "social unity during the crucial period of transition," but one which they readily discarded in the early twentieth century, once it had outlived its usefulness.⁶ A major distinction between Wilson's and Foster's interpretations is that Wilson sees the Lost Cause as more romanticized, backward-looking, and reactionary, whereas Foster maintains that it "did not signal the South's retreat from the future," but rather "supported the emergence of a New South."⁷ In fact, both interpretations contain nuggets of truth.

⁵For Wilson, the Lost Cause religion was also a form of Judeo-Christian existentialism that attempted to reconcile profound feelings of "[d]efeath, poverty, guilt, disillusionment, isolation, [and] dread for the future." Charles Reagan Wilson, Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 9-17.

⁶Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 7-8.

⁷Ibid., 6.

Burying Latané

Since the colonial period, women had traditionally participated in the process of preparing bodies for burial. In the absence of professional undertaking, many eighteenth-century communities relied on women and men who functioned as "layers out of the dead," assisting family members in the process and washing, dressing, and arranging the deceased for interment.⁸ Nineteenth-century expectations concerning appropriate gender roles for women entrusted them with, among other things, the spiritual well-being of their families, a duty which extended to assuring their loved ones a safe passage to the afterlife through proper devotion to prayer and worship. Preparing bodies for burial continued to play a part in this obligation.

The cult of mourning that emerged in the early nineteenth century, encouraged women, especially those of the middle class, to assume central roles in the observance of highly ritualized mourning customs touching every facet of public and private life.⁹ By the mid-nineteenth

⁸Martha Pike and Janice Armstrong, A Time to Mourn: Expressions of Grief in Nineteenth Century America, (Stony Brook N.Y.: The Museums at Stony Brook, 1981), 15.

⁹The main factors in this cult of mourning were the creation of new rural garden cemeteries in the 1830s, the development of undertaking as a profession, the publication of a new genre of "consolation literature," and a highly encoded set of bereavement practices, especially affecting dress and comportment. For a detailed discussion of this cult of mourning see Karen Haltunnen, Confidence Men and

century, this mourning cult had spawned a growth industry of immense proportions that provided every possible article

Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), especially Chapter 5; Ann Douglas, The Feminization of American Culture, 1977 ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1988), especially Chapter 6; Ann Douglas, "Heaven Our Home: Consolation Literature in the Northern United States, 1830-1880," American Quarterly 26 (1974): 496-515; Martha V. Pike, "In Memory Of: Artifacts Relating to Mourning in Nineteenth Century America," in Rituals and Ceremonies in Popular Culture, ed. by Ray B. Browne, pp. 297-315, (Bowling Green, Oh.: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1980); David E. Stannard, "Where All Our Steps Are Tending: Death in the American Context," in A Time to Mourn: Expressions of Grief in Nineteenth Century America, ed. by Martha V. Pike and Janice Gray Armstrong, pp. 19-30, (Stony Brook, N.Y.: The Museums of Stony Brook, 1981); Lou Taylor, Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History (London: Allen & Unwin, 1983). Nearly all of these sources rely almost exclusively on Northern evidence to make their case, and few credit the Civil War with influencing mourning practices. In fact, the two most important sources, Douglas's Feminization of American Culture and Haltunnen's Confidence Men and Painted Women make little or no mention of the war at all, while Pike and Armstrong, in their preface to A Time to Mourn, go so far as to reject the war as an influence, stating that mourning customs in America were already well established before the war began and must be seen in the greater context of mourning ritual in Europe and America throughout the nineteenth century. Although it is true that the first garden-type cemetery, Mount Auburn, opened near Boston, Massachusetts, in 1831, this does little to negate the impact of more than 600,000 deaths in a short four-year period on the practices surrounding bereavement in the United States. Although the cult was already underway by 1861, these deaths must be seen as an important factor in its persistence in the United States well into the late nineteenth century. The North moved more rapidly in the direction of the professionalizing undertaking in the mid-nineteenth century, but the development of undertaking as a profession in the South was more gradual. Charles Reagan Wilson, "Funerals," in Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 478-79. For information on Southern mourning customs, see Patricia R. Loughridge and Edward D.C. Campbell, Jr., Women in Mourning (Richmond: Museum of the Confederacy, [1984]).

needed to signify that a death had occurred.¹⁰ In their black bombazine dresses, heavy veils, and jewelry fashioned from the hair of the deceased, middle-class women frequently became the primary purveyors of this message to the outside world.¹¹

With its unprecedented loss of life, the American Civil War deepened the importance of this role for American women, and extended it to include caring for deceased men who were neither close kin nor members of the immediate community.¹² During the war, hospital matrons like Phebe Pember routinely washed and dressed corpses and carried them to local cemeteries in hospital ambulances, while

¹⁰Taylor, Mourning Dress, 154.

¹¹According to Martha Pike, during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, etiquette books typically devoted at least one chapter to a discussion of the appropriate accoutrements of mourning which extended from clothing to such things as black-bordered handkerchiefs, stationery, and cartes des visites, fans, parasols, and blued steel straight pins topped with jet beads for securing mourning veils. Bombazine was a favorite fabric of mourning attire for women because it was not shiny. By comparison, most books devote little attention to mourning attire for men, who often simply complemented their grey or black clothing with armbands or hatbands of black crepe. Of course, highly elaborate mourning costumes were expensive and thus could only be worn by affluent women. Poorer women either ignored the custom completely, or made do by dyeing existing clothing. Pike, "In Memory Of," 306-11; Taylor, Mourning Dress, 290; Loughridge and Campbell, Women in Mourning, 8-17.

¹²Drew Gilpin Faust, "Race, Gender, and Confederate Nationalism: William D. Washington's Burial of Latané," in Southern Stories: Slaveholders in Peace and War, by Drew Gilpin Faust (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 156.

other women were called upon to officiate at funerals when no male clergy were available. Women grew so accustomed to the gruesome realities of death that they reacted to them as matter-of-factly as Adelaide Clopton did in this letter to her mother, Nannie:

Mr. Currie died of an illness of two hours and a half. His health has been indifferent for a long time. Mrs. Currie was in Buckingham and he was on a visit to her when his death occurred. .
 .[When] Mrs. Currie brought the body down, it was in a very advanced stage of decay; it was in a coffin within a coffin yet the corruption came thro' and fell on the floor, we had to put sand around the coffin, and next morning early when the coffin was moved, it just ran as if poured from an open vessel. The house was like a charnel-house, and kept me sick all the time.¹³

After this graphic description, Adelaide Clopton launched into a discussion of her canning and preserving activities, an indication that she, at least, viewed preserving dead bodies for burial in the context of women's other domestic duties.

Richmond artist William D. Washington captured the greater significance this act had assumed for Southern women during the Civil War in The Burial of Latané, a painting based on a real-life incident in which Catherine Brockenbrough and several of her female relatives buried Lieutenant William Latané, a twenty-nine-year-old doctor who was the only Confederate soldier killed in J.E.B.

¹³Adelaide Clopton to Nannie Clopton, 10 July 1862, Clopton Family Correspondence, ESBL.

Stuart's famous ride around McClellan's troops shortly before the opening of the Seven Days' campaign in the summer of 1862.¹⁴ When Latané's body was brought to Brockenbrough's Summer Hill farm, the women washed it and committed it to the soil without benefit of male clergy, assisted only by a lone male slave who dug the grave and stood on the edge of Washington's painting, witnessing the scene. When Washington began to cast his painting in 1864, prominent Richmond women, including Jennie Pegram, Mattie Paul, Lizzie Giles, and Mattie Waller, served as the models.¹⁵ After the war, Thompson's painting became a primary icon of the Lost Cause through the sale of engravings which were, ironically, largely the work of northern print makers. Mrs. William Lyne later remarked that the painting symbolized "the sacredness of those days

¹⁴The painting was based on a poem by John Thompson that was published in the Southern Literary Messenger and reprinted in Richmond papers shortly after the burial took place.

¹⁵John R. Thompson, "The Burial of Latané," Southern Churchman, 10 October 1862; William D. Washington, The Burial of Latané, oil on canvas, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia; Mary Newton Stanard, Richmond: Its People and Its Story (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1923), 193-93; Drew Faust, "Race, Gender, and Confederate Nationalism," 148-59; Mark E. Neeley, Jr., Harold Holzer, and Gabor S. Boritt, The Confederate Image: Prints of the Lost Cause (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), xii. Imogen Warwick and Annie Gibson were models for the two young girls.

when the women of the South had to take the place of men and even read the burial service for the dead."¹⁶

White Richmond women extended this wartime duty into the postbellum period by forming at least five organizations whose primary purpose was to care for the bodies of dead Confederate soldiers who had streamed into Richmond and its hospitals from battlefields throughout Virginia.¹⁷ Southern women who joined these groups and participated in the yearly ceremonies did so not just out of their obedience to notions of women's domestic duty, but also out of their greater loyalty to their fallen nation.

¹⁶Mrs. William Lyne, "Restoration of Arlington Mansion," quoted in Neely, Holzer, and Boritt, The Confederate Image, xiii.

¹⁷The Hollywood Memorial Association, the Ladies' Memorial Association for the Confederate Dead at Oakwood, and the Hebrew Ladies' Memorial Association were all formed during this period of time. See the Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association, Register of the Confederate Dead Interred in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Va. (Richmond: Gary, Clemmitt & Jones, 1869), preface; minutes, 19 April 1866, Minute Book, Records of the Ladies' Memorial Association for the Confederate Dead at Oakwood, ESBL, hereafter cited as LMACDO; George Jacobs to Mrs. R. C. Levy, Richmond, Virginia, 17 May 1866, George Jacobs Correspondence, Correspondence File, AJA. Evidence for the Manchester and Shockoe Hill Cemetery associations is extremely sketchy, so I have not included them in this discussion of Richmond cemetery associations. Ten women from the Shockoe Hill group signed an undated letter to the Richmond Common Council asking for funds. Letter to the Richmond Common Council from the Ladies of Shockoe Hill Cemetery, n.d., Richmond City, Minutes of the Common Council, LV. In June 1866, the Manchester association had at least twenty-four members. By this time, however, the group was encountering criticism from those who believed the association should concentrate its efforts on supporting the widows and orphans of deceased soldiers. Richmond Dispatch, 29 June 1866.

Thus a formerly private domestic activity was transformed, through the crucible of war, into a public act of patriotic duty that became part of the culture of the Lost Cause.

Formed between 1866 and 1867, the Hollywood Memorial Association and the Ladies' Memorial Association for the Confederate Dead at Oakwood shared the major portion of this responsibility, with Hollywood Cemetery receiving the bodies of those men who died in hospitals in the western portion of the city, and Oakwood receiving the bodies of those who died in the eastern sector.¹⁸ The Hebrew Ladies' Memorial Association tended the graves of Jewish soldiers, and smaller cemetery associations, about which very little is known, cared for Confederate dead in Manchester Cemetery and in the cemetery on Shockoe Hill.¹⁹

Although the three larger associations relied on religious affiliation as an important criterion for

¹⁸Mary Mitchell, Hollywood Cemetery: The History of a Southern Shrine, (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1985), 51.

¹⁹W. Asbury Christian, Richmond: Her Past and Present (Richmond: L.H. Jenkins, 1912), 517; Michael B. Chesson, Richmond after the War, 1865-1890 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981), 17. The number of Confederate Jewish veterans buried in this cemetery was extremely small, only five members of the Light Infantry Blues, three other men from units in South Carolina, Texas, and Louisiana, and Miss Belle T. Lyons, a clerk in the Confederate Treasury Department. Hebrew Cemetery Records, BAMAT. The Confederate Section at Hollywood Cemetery also contains the remains of a woman, Catherine Hodges, who worked as a nurse in Richmond hospitals. Mitchell, Hollywood Cemetery, 51. Despite its size, the ceremonies conducted by the Hebrew Ladies' Memorial Association in the late 1860s drew large crowds. Southern Opinion, 23 May 1868.

membership, with the exception of the Hebrew Ladies' Association which drew its members solely from women of the Jewish faith, membership in the remainder of these groups was ecumenical in scope. The executive committee of the Oakwood association included women who identified themselves as Episcopalians, Quakers, Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, and Disciples of Christ, while the vice-presidents chosen at the first meeting of the Hollywood association represented six of the city's major denominations.²⁰ Both the Hollywood and Oakwood associations adopted a two-tiered system of membership that admitted "properly vouched for" women and young girls drawn from the professional and semi-professional classes. All were expected to pay annual dues of \$1 per year or \$10 for a life membership.²¹

Both organizations also raised additional funds through annual bazaars, lectures, tableaux, and other

²⁰Minutes, 19 April 1866, Minute Book, LMACDO, ESBL; Mitchell, Hollywood Cemetery, 64-68.

²¹Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association, Register of the Confederate Dead Interred in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Va., n.p.; Minutes, 10 April 1866, LMACDO Records, ESBL. As late as 1915, the Hollywood Association's dues remained unchanged. See Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association, Our Confederate Dead, (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1915), 20. A handful of men and boys also became affiliated with the groups, usually as life members. Of the thirty-nine men and boys who joined the Oakwood cemetery association in 1866, for example, thirty-two, or 82 percent, purchased lifetime memberships. Most male lifetime members listed their residence as someplace other than Richmond. Membership Roster, LMACDO Records, ESBL.

dramatic presentations. They also appealed periodically to the Richmond Common Council for cash donations; the free use of gas for fundraising benefits; the passage of city ordinances protecting cemetery property from defacement; or for a new fence to protect the soldiers' section from trespassers.²² A bazaar held in the spring of 1867 was typical of the kind of fund raisers in which the women engaged. Occupying three floors of Robert F. Morrison's warehouse on the corner of 15th and Main, the bazaar lasted two weeks, and included the sale of war mementoes, fancy needlework, inkstands made from the bones of horses killed in battle, porcelains of Robert E. Lee, refreshments, and an auction of letters signed by well-known Confederate generals. This bazaar netted the Association \$18,000 on an initial investment of \$154.

Little concrete evidence survives concerning the relative size and membership of either of the two larger associations; but it seems that Oakwood, which claimed 328 members in 1866, was probably the smaller of the two, and drew its membership from a less affluent portion of the population.²³ An 1868 article in the Southern Opinion

²²Mitchell, Hollywood Cemetery, 71-2; bundles dated 11 February 1867, November 1871, 15 June 1870, and June to October 1877, Richmond City Papers, Minutes of the Common Council, LV.

²³Appeal to the Ladies' Memorial Association for the Confederate Dead at Oakwood Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia, n.d., Records of the Ladies' Memorial Association for the Confederate Dead at Oakwood, ESBL. According to Michael

criticizing the Hollywood association's financial operations referred to the Oakwood association's "comparatively obscure membership" and its "limited means."²⁴ By comparison, the sixteen women who functioned as Hollywood's first governing body included the wives of four doctors, a druggist, a land agent, a judge, the owner of one of the city's largest flour mills, and a lawyer and bank president, as well as an unmarried daughter of one of Richmond's most prominent Jewish families.²⁵

The centerpiece of each association was an elaborate spring ceremony to commemorate fallen Confederate soldiers by decorating their graves with bouquets and floral wreaths. The Oakwood Association chose May 10, the anniversary of Stonewall Jackson's death, as the date of their first graveside observance in 1866, while the

Chesson, "Shockoe Hill Cemetery, opened in 1826 on the extreme northern edge of the city, was the cemetery for most antebellum middle- and upper-class whites. . . .Beginning shortly before the war, whites who could not afford lots elsewhere were buried at Oakwood Cemetery, northeast of Church HillHollywood. . .became both socially and symbolically the most important of Richmond's postwar cemeteries. . . .It was established in the 1840s by a group of prominent Richmonders who desired a rural cemetery like Mount Auburn, which they had seen on a visit to Cambridge [Massachusetts]." Chesson, Richmond after the War, 18.

²⁴Southern Opinion, 30 May 1868.

²⁵Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association, Register of the Confederate Dead Interred in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Va.; Christian, Richmond: Her Past and Present, 318, 363, 369-70, and 462; Myers/Mordecai/Hays Family Papers, VHS.

Hollywood Association selected May 31st for its celebration.²⁶ All the stores and businesses in Richmond usually closed for the Hollywood celebration; and school children were given a holiday so they could participate in the city-wide parade which attracted thousands of spectators. In May 1868, for instance, a procession of 20,000 made its way to Hollywood carrying "floral chaplets, crosses, wreaths, festoon, and bouquets" which had been fashioned into floral arrangements in the days preceding the event from flowers donated to the various Richmond

²⁶Southern Opinion, 16 May 1868; Southern Opinion, 6 June 1868; Mitchell, Hollywood Cemetery, 68-71. In 1885, at the urging of General Anderson, the Oakwood association shifted its graveside service to May 30, "to join with other Associations in the endeavor to make the Confederate Memorial Day a National Holiday by celebrating it on the day for the Federal Memorial." This move proved unsuccessful, however, because attendance by clergy, military associations, and the general public at the Oakwood service dwindled, no doubt due to competition with the celebration conducted by the larger and apparently more popular (or powerful) Hollywood association. By 1886, Oakwood returned to its traditional May 10th date, which it continued to observe until well into the twentieth century. Minutes, LMACDO Records, ESBL. As late as 1922, the Oakwood association was still holding its celebration on or around the May 10th anniversary of Jackson's death. In Richmond, today, ceremonies remembering the Lost Cause are still held along Monument Avenue, a major boulevard in the west end of the city containing statuary to fallen Confederate heroes. Called the Massing of the Flags, this ceremony, conducted by the Richmond chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, is held on or around June 3rd. Angie Parrott, "'Love Makes Memory Eternal': The United Daughters of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia, 1897-1920," in The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth-Century Virginia, Edward L. Ayers and John C. Willis, eds. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 219-238.

churches.²⁷ Twenty-three military companies from Richmond, Manchester, Norfolk, and Hampton, and a contingent of cadets from the Virginia Military Institute accompanied the marchers, while the Brook Avenue and Rocketts omnibuses provided free transportation for residents living in the city's east and west ends. At the grave of J.E.B. Stuart, a dense crowd formed to view the newly unveiled bust by local sculptor, Edward Virginius Valentine, inscribed at the base with the words of his sister, Benetta: "Dead, yet Alive--Mortal, yet Immortal."²⁸

This use of omnibuses to transport participants to the cemetery site suggests the determination of the female organizers to include all members of the white community in the celebration. Located on the flats extending to the east, where Shockoe Creek meets the James River, Rocketts was the location of Richmond's tobacco warehouses, flour mills, and iron foundries, as well as home to the Irish and German immigrant working-class section of the city. During the war, it had been an important industrial and manufacturing center for the Confederacy. Twice in 1866, it had been the scene of racial tension between whites living in Rocketts and blacks living nearby on the grounds

²⁷Southern Opinion, 6 June 1868.

²⁸Mitchell, Hollywood Cemetery, 68-71. Cavalry officer J.E.B. Stuart was killed in May 1864 during a skirmish with Union troops near Yellow Tavern.

surrounding the former Chimborazo Hospital.²⁹ Although more affluent and less turbulent than Rocketts, Brook Road to the north of Richmond was more remote from the capital and was formerly used primarily as a route for transporting goods into and out of the city.³⁰

In the years to follow, events such as this one became annual celebrations in Richmond and elsewhere throughout the South, as women in other Southern communities formed memorial societies of their own.³¹ With the Confederacy in ruins, it was left to Southerners to reclaim the honor and glory of their "Lost Cause" from the scrap heap of defeat. Beginning during the war, Southern women and men had taken up their pens to chronicle the brave deeds of the Southern armies and the patriotism of its valiant women who stoically endured privation as part of their patriotic

²⁹Chesson, Richmond after the War, 103.

³⁰Emory M. Thomas, The Confederate State of Richmond: A Biography of the Capital (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 16-17; Chesson, Richmond after the War, 7 and 123; Stanard, Richmond: Its People and Its Story, 220; and Samuel J.T. Moore, Jr., Moore's Complete Civil War Guide to Richmond, rev. ed. (n.p.: n.d., 1987).

³¹LeeAnn Whites is currently at work on the cemetery associations in Georgia. LeeAnn Whites, "Women and the Lost Cause or 'Stand by Your Man: The Ladies' Memorial Association and the Reconstruction of White Manhood in the New South" (Paper presented at the Ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, 11-13 June 1993, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York).

duty.³² Now, with the South defeated, they shifted their attention to honoring the memory of "the most defeated of Southern men," whose acts of heroism were likely never to appear in accounts of the War written in the North.³³ By setting into motion ceremonies designed to remind all Southerners of their sacrifice, the women of the cemetery associations participated in the process of preserving the memory of those who had given their lives to protect Southern women and the Southern home, thus assuring that these men would remain "Dead, yet Alive--Mortal, yet Immortal," in the minds of their country.³⁴ By focusing these ceremonies on the sacrifices of Southern men, the

³²Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," Journal of American History 76.4 (1990); 1200-28. For a more pessimistic evaluation of Civil War literature, see Daniel Aaron, The Unwritten Civil War: American Writers and the Civil War, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

³³This phrase comes from LeeAnn Whites, "'Stand by Your Man.'" In her paper, Whites also suggests that Confederate women's attachment to the Confederacy carried over into their participation in white supremacy movements such as the Ku Klux Klan. Although white Richmond women participated in a "genteel" form of white supremacy embodied in the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and the Confederate Memorial Literary Society, I have found no evidence of their involvement in terrorist organizations like the Klan in Richmond.

³⁴By 1900, these ladies' cemetery societies were organized into a regional organization: the Confederated Southern Memorial Association. Mrs. R.H. Lawrence, "Confederate Organizations: Their Purposes and Achievements," ESBL.

women also deflected attention from their own heroic contributions.³⁵

In addition to the yearly graveside observances, the women of Hollywood undertook two additional long-term goals aimed at reclaiming the Confederacy's honor. In 1866, they began work on a project "to erect a chapel or suitable monument" to commemorate all who died, and, in 1870, they turned their attention to the job of returning to Southern soil the remains of all Confederate soldiers who were buried near the Gettysburg battlefield site in Pennsylvania.³⁶

The association's original plan called for a separate monument for each state that had contributed men to the Southern armies. When this scheme proved too costly, it was abandoned in favor of installing a single monument

³⁵Gaines Foster has commented that, by the turn of the century, reunion celebrations organized by Confederate veterans' groups more frequently invited Southern women to participate in historical tableaux. Usually, these women were young, unmarried women who were chosen on the basis of their familial connections to Confederate patriots. Confederate President Jefferson Davis's daughter, Winnie, became a favorite at these ceremonies, which often became occasions to reinforce Southern women's subordinate role. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 136-37.

³⁶Additional short-term goals included accurately identifying all existing Confederate graves in the cemetery and publishing a guide showing their location; erecting granite blocks at the corners and along the sides of the individual sections; levelling, grading, and rolling the sections, carriage ways, and footpaths; installing granite drainage gutters; and planting ornamental trees and shrubs. Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association, Register of the Confederate Dead Interred in Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, Va., preface, 71-2, 83-92.

built from granite blocks hewn from the James River quarry. Designed by Charles Dimmock, the Memorial Granite Pile, in the shape of a huge Egyptian-style pyramid, measured forty-five feet square at the base and ninety feet high. Erecting it did not come cheaply: it cost the association \$26,000 and necessitated the extension of their fund raising efforts throughout the South.³⁷ Members of the Richmond-based group worked with women in other Southern states who operated as local agents to solicit contributions on the Association's behalf. In North Carolina, for example, Bessie Drury and Nannie Davis sought donations for the Association in Charlotte and New Berne, while other female agents collected money in Raleigh and Wilmington.³⁸ Interstate fund raising efforts such as these elevated Hollywood Cemetery's importance as a national Confederate shrine at the same time that it provided the Hollywood women with experience in conducting a project of regional and quasi-national scope. This expertise would prove useful in Hollywood's campaign to

³⁷Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association, Our Confederate Dead, frontispiece; Mitchell, Hollywood Cemetery, 73-4. Later, this monument was sometimes referred to as the "Pyramid Monument." Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association Our Confederate Dead, 10.

³⁸E.H. (Mrs. William) Brown, Richmond, to Mrs. Bessie Drury, Charlotte, North Carolina, 12 October 1866; Nannie Davis, New Berne, North Carolina, to Bessie Drury, Charlotte, North Carolina, 13 December 1866, Drury Lacy Papers, SHC.

return the Confederate dead at Gettysburg battlefield to Southern soil.³⁹

Between October 1863 and March 1864, the bodies of 3,564 Union soldiers who died in the battle were disinterred and relocated in the new national battlefield cemetery at Gettysburg which Abraham Lincoln dedicated on November 19, 1863, while the bodies of slain Confederate soldiers lay in mass graves or sometimes shallow trenches, with as many as 150 bodies to a trench. Skeletal remains were scattered throughout the Pennsylvania farmland, often exposed to full view and occasionally treated with disrespect by Pennsylvania farmers who considered their presence a nuisance and an interruption to the rhythm of the growing season.⁴⁰

The recovery of these bodies was a huge undertaking, and one for which the Association, despite its former successful fund raising, was ill-prepared to accomplish. Nearly three thousand Confederate soldiers lay in the fields of Gettysburg, and the cost of removing them was estimated to be nearly \$10,000.⁴¹ Still the women remained undaunted. Rejecting a suggestion that they

³⁹The Memorial Granite Pile was installed in a lavish ceremony in 1870, after two years of vigorous fund raising. Mitchell, Hollywood Cemetery, 73-4; Richmond Whig, 1 June 1870.

⁴⁰Mitchell, Hollywood Cemetery, 83-86.

⁴¹Ibid., 85-86.

petition the Pennsylvania legislature to help defray the cost, the women chose, instead, to rely on Southern resources to underwrite the project. At the 1871 Memorial Day celebration, they raised approximately \$4,000 through donation boxes placed strategically throughout the cemetery, and, by September 1872, the first bodies began to arrive. By October 1873, the Powhatan Steamship Company had delivered a total of 2,935 bodies to Rocketts' Wharf for reinterment in Hollywood.

The women negotiated with the Pennsylvania father and son team of Samuel and Rufus Weaver who identified the remains before they were shipped South. This was a gruesome and time-consuming project which involved searching the bodies for marks of identification and, occasionally, reassembling bodies dismembered by cultivation or neglect. But, although they performed their duties with diligence and great care, the Weavers were never fully compensated for the work. When the project was completed in 1873, the Hollywood association still owed the men more than \$6,000, and, although Rufus Weaver pursued the Association until the beginning of the twentieth century, the debt was never paid, in part because the association's financial resources were being diverted to

the campaign to erect a statue to ex-Confederate General Robert E. Lee (See below).⁴²

By the early 1870s, the Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association and the cemetery it represented had become a powerful force in the iconography of the Lost Cause. In Hollywood, nestled among the boxwood and elders were the bloody fruits of Williamsburg, Seven Pines, Mechanicsville, Gaines' Mill, Cold Harbor, Savage's Station, Frazier's Farm, Malvern Hill, Sharpsburg, Gettysburg, Fort Harrison, Yellow Tavern, Drewry's Bluff and many other fields, where Confederate valor illuminated the pages of history.⁴³

By restoring these Confederate dead to their native soil the Hollywood women gained the respect and admiration of a grateful South; by becoming the custodians of the South's "martyred heroes," the women extended their role as protectors of children to that of being guardians of the Confederacy's "fallen sons."⁴⁴

⁴²Mitchell, Hollywood Cemetery, 87-92, and 112-13. Other projects in the late nineteenth century prevented the Association from resolving the debt: a campaign to restore the Confederate White House in the early 1890s; the installation of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Libby Hill in 1894.

⁴³Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association, Our Confederate Dead, 9. These words are inscribed on the base of the Memorial Granite Pile.

⁴⁴LeeAnn Whites, "The Civil War as a Crisis of Gender" (Paper presented at LeMoyne College, Syracuse, New York, spring 1989, 8-11); I am indebted to Robyn Muncy for suggesting this paper to me; Donna K. Krug, "The Enemy at the Door in the Confederacy: A Crisis of Honor" (Paper presented at the Southern Historical Association Conference, Lexington, Kentucky, 10 November 1989); and Drew Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 1200-28.

Stone Heroes

Decorating graves in annual memorial day celebrations serves to illustrate Charles Reagan Wilson's point that the Lost Cause was a romanticized backward-looking movement. Yet, other activities by Richmond women validate Gaines M. Foster's contention that the Lost Cause culture provided white Southerners with a usable past that helped them bridge the chasm between the Old South and the New South, while reasserting their social and cultural dominance in the region by claiming increasingly large portions of public urban space for monuments and museums commemorating the South's role in the Civil War. In her analysis of Confederate monument building in Wilmington and Raleigh, North Carolina, Catherine Bishir has identified two distinct phases: the installation of funereal markers and cemetery statuary during the first phase which lasted from the late 1860s to the 1880s; and a second phase, beginning in the 1890s, which involved the movement of Confederate monuments out of cemeteries to occupy open public spaces along urban thoroughfares or in courthouse greens or town squares.⁴⁵

The second phase of monument building began early in Richmond, stimulated in part by Robert E. Lee's death from a stroke in 1870. By the mid-1870s Richmond women from the

⁴⁵Catherine W. Bishir, "Landmarks of Power: Building a Southern Past, 1885-1915," Southern Cultures Inaugural Issue (1993): 5-10.

Hollywood Cemetery Association had organized as the Ladies' Lee Monument Association and were hard at work alongside the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia, a group of Confederate veterans headed by ex-Confederate General Jubal T. Early, raising money throughout the South to commission a massive statue in Lee's honor. Before long, these two groups were embroiled in a heated dispute over the control of funds, the design of the sculpture, its eventual location, and even the material from which it was made.⁴⁶ In the early 1880s, these disagreements were resolved by Virginia Governor Fitzhugh Lee and the Richmond Common Council through the creation of an independent organization, the Lee Monument Association whose board of directors was composed of government leaders and women from the Ladies' Lee Monument Association, who had raised the bulk of the money to bankroll the project.⁴⁷ Although the

⁴⁶Marie Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls: Richmond, Virginia, and Its People (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 188-89, 207-210; Virginus Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 241-43 (All subsequent citations are to this edition); Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 98-100; and Christian, Richmond: Her Past and Present, 323. Jubal Early seems to have opposed decisions concerning nearly facet of the project, including the choice of a French sculptor (Jean Antoine Mercié) over Richmond's own Edward Virginus Valentine, and also the use of Maine marble, which he considered a mark of regional disloyalty.

⁴⁷According to both Tyler-McGraw and Foster, the Lee Monument Association eventually resolved most of the objections raised by Early and the Association of the Army of Northern Virginia in favor of the women. Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 189; Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 100.

Lee statue was not unveiled until May 1890, its beginnings in the early 1870s places Richmonders, and especially Richmond women, well in the forefront of this second phase of monument building.

While Confederates in Raleigh and Wilmington chose to install their monuments in "prime civic spaces" such as Raleigh's Union square, the ladies of the Lee Monument Association placed the massive Lee statue on eleven acres of undeveloped land outside the city's western boundary. The land was donated to the project by Richmonder Otway Allen, a former Confederate veteran.⁴⁸ Over the next thirty-five years, as Lee's statue was joined by towering likenesses of Stonewall Jackson, J.E.B. Stuart, Matthew Fontaine Maury, and Jefferson Davis, Monument Avenue grew in importance both as a residential community for white urban elites on the city's West End and as a locus for public celebrations perpetuating the culture and ideology of the Lost Cause.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Bishir, "Landmarks of Power," 5; Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, 242. By 1892, Allen's donation was annexed to the city. Tyler-McGraw, At the Falls, 207-09.

⁴⁹The Stuart and Davis monuments were installed in 1907; Stonewall Jackson's, in 1919, and Matthew Fontaine Maury's, in 1929. Maury was a native Richmonder and a Confederate naval officer crediting with developing the technology that was used to mine the James River to protect it from amphibious attack. By 1921, the Confederate heroes immortalized in stone along Monument Avenue were joined by the Battle Abbey, a museum formed by Confederate veterans that became the repository for paintings and manuscripts depicting the history of the South during the Civil War. In 1946, the Battle Abbey became the home of the Virginia

Conclusion

One of the most important and enduring social roles for white women in the South after the Civil War was their creation of ladies' memorial associations whose primary purpose was to set in motion a series of ritualized observances aimed at preserving the memory of dead Confederate soldiers as the fallen heroes of a noble, albeit lost, cause.⁵⁰ Relying on organizational skills formed in the benevolent groups of the antebellum period and refined in the soldiers' aid societies and gunboat associations of the wartime years, urban women in Richmond and all over the South organized cemetery associations to redeem the honor of Confederate soldiers and retell the history of the Civil War from the Southern perspective.

Over time, many of these cemetery associations evolved into chapters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, a regional organization dedicated, in part, to assuring that white Southern children of succeeding generations learned the "real" history of the war for Southern independence through the publication and dissemination of classroom

Historical Society. In 1996, after considerable discussion, Richmonders finally broke with Confederate tradition regarding Monument Avenue by installing a statue of African-American tennis champion, Arthur Ashe. Dabney, Richmond: The Story of a City, 304-05, 349.

⁵⁰Charles Wilson, Baptized in Blood; Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 36-46; Whites, "'Stand by Your Man'"; Bishir, "Landmarks of Power," 1-45.

texts that lauded Confederate victories and portrayed Northerners as depraved and godless marauders bent on destroying a near-idyllic Southern society. In Richmond, the Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association would also later provide the nucleus of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society, an organization whose goal was the accumulation of an archive of Confederate memorabilia that became the basis for the extensive holdings of the Museum of the Confederacy, the premier research facility for contemporary historians examining the American Civil War from the Confederate perspective.⁵¹

As they reclaimed historic buildings and erected statuary in honor of those who died, white women in Richmond and elsewhere throughout the former Confederacy put their mark on the physical and cultural landscape of New South cities that emerged from Reconstruction. At the same time, the women's efforts helped reassert and extend the influence of a conservative Southern culture that demanded their continued subordination to white Southern

⁵¹Amy Feely, "Southern Lady Meets New Woman: Women of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society and the Lost Cause in Richmond" (Paper presented at the Northern Virginia Community College Conference on the History of Women in the Chesapeake, 15 November 1996, Annandale, Virginia). The Confederate Memorial Literary Society was formed by a group of women from the Hollywood Association in 1890 to save the Confederate White House from destruction. Although much of the Museum of the Confederacy's collections document the Civil War from the military perspective, its holdings also contain useful information describing the role of Southern women.

men. In the process, the Confederate "sisterhood" that emerged briefly in the gunboat societies and female militias was subverted. While earlier groups made some claims to equality, the latter clearly placed Southern women in a subordinate role in Southern society.

At the same time that Richmonders erected monuments to Confederate heroes like Robert E. Lee, J.E.B. Stuart, and Stonewall Jackson, they also unveiled a single statue to Virginia's Confederate women. But instead of depicting real women like Sally Tompkins or Maria Clopton, they chose to represent Confederate women, symbolically, through the mythical goddess Minerva, mourning the loss of her dead sons. By this image, Richmonders not only erased the identities of real Confederate heroines, they also focused attention on women's traditional role as mothers whose primary wartime contribution was to sacrifice sons to the war.⁵²

⁵²The statue, Virginia Mourning Her Dead, depicts a seated Minerva, clad in armor. In her left hand, a Confederate flag is lowered to the ground in defeat. At her feet is a large, ivy-covered scroll. The original bronze sculpture was installed at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia, on June 23, 1903, to commemorate ten V.M.I cadets killed in the battle of New Market on May 15, 1862. In October 1914, Richmond sculptor Moses Ezekiel presented a bronze model of his statue to the women of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society. In his remarks at its unveiling, Confederate veteran John Lamb called attention to the many Virginia mothers who "sent their sons into battle in the spirit of the Spartan and Roman matrons" and whose "patient waiting at home" furnished "the most striking example of devotion to duty this world has ever known." Moses Jacob Ezekiel, Memoirs from the Baths of Diocletian, Joseph Gutman and Stanley F.

Chyet, eds. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), 103-111, 402; John Lamb Papers, MC3 L-544, ESBL; Moses Ezekiel, Virginia Mourning Her Dead, three-quarter size bronze replica, 1900, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia. Sally Tompkins was later memorialized in a stained glass window at St. James's Episcopal Church in Richmond in 1960. Richmond Times-Dispatch, 13 March 1960.

CHAPTER 11

"THE WHITE WINGS OF EROS": MARRIAGE AND FAMILY RELATIONS IN CONFEDERATE AND POSTBELLUM RICHMOND¹

Maris Vinovskis's analysis of the Civil War's demographic impact on Newburyport, Massachusetts, as well as its cost in "human capital" for the entire United States, raises important but as yet relatively unexamined questions concerning the effects the loss of such large numbers of marriageable men had on marriage patterns in the postwar decades. In raw numbers, the deaths of 618,222 Confederate and Union soldiers make the Civil War more costly in human terms than the aggregate of all other American wars combined until the war in Vietnam. In relation to figures for the population-at-large, these wartime casualties represent a stunning 181.7 men per 10,000 individuals in the population, a figure only approached in its numerical impact by the casualty rate of 117.9 per 10,000 suffered during the American Revolution.²

¹Southern Punch, 12 September 1863.

²Maris Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? Some Preliminary Demographic Speculations," Journal of American History 76.1 (June 1989): 34-58,

There is a sadder regional corollary to this general reality. The imbalance of the nation's white population in the 1860s meant that these battlefield losses had a proportionally greater impact on the South, where 18 percent of all the white men between the ages of eighteen and forty-three lost their lives, as compared to 6 percent of Northern white men from this age group. These statistics imply that the Civil War did not just cut deeply into the personal relationships of all white Southerners living at the time, but also influenced marriage patterns in the postwar decades.

Historians still know little about the Civil War's toll on individual marriages or on family relations strained by separation and loss, though two recent articles have begun to explore this important topic through their discussions of the war's impact on the marriages of elite white Southerners or its effect on Reconstruction-era divorces in three counties in upcountry North Carolina.³

especially tables 1 and 2. This essay has been reprinted in Toward a Social History of the American Civil War: Exploratory Essays, Maris A. Vinovskis, ed. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 1-30. All citations are to this reprinted version. Vinovskis's figures are for white and black soldiers and sailors between the ages of thirteen and forty-three.

³Stephanie McCurry, "The Politics of Yeoman Households in South Carolina"; Joan Cashin, "'Since the War Broke Out': The Marriage of Kate and William McLure"; and Victoria Bynum, "Reshaping the Bonds of Womanhood: Divorce in Reconstruction North Carolina," all in Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War, Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 22-

This chapter makes a contribution to this discussion by analyzing the demographic impact of the war on the age and availability of marriage partners for white Richmonders between 1860 and 1880 and postwar changes in marriage and family relations for a few white families.

The Richmond Marriage Register

In the early 1850s, Virginia passed an ordinance creating a bureau of vital statistics whose purpose was to compile data on the state's births, marriages, and deaths. According to this law, ministers solemnizing marriages were required to provide the bureau with pertinent information regarding the date the ceremony was performed, the names of the bride and groom and their parents, the respective age and marital status of the bride and groom, their race, and the groom's occupation and city or county of residence.⁴ A sampling of the Richmond Marriage Register from 1860 to 1880 provides some revealing glimpses into white patterns of marriage in the capital city that help answer questions about the war's demographic impact. I compiled this sample

42; 200-12 and 320-224; Carol Bleser and Frederick Heath, "The Clays of Alabama: The Impact of the Civil War on a Southern Marriage," and Sarah Woolfolk Wiggins, "A Victorian Father: Josiah Gorgas and His Family," both in In Joy and in Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South, 1830-1900, Carol Bleser, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 135-53 and 233-52.

⁴Marriages were registered in the city or county of the bride's residence.

by recording the age, race, and marital status for each bride and groom listed in the Richmond marriage register for the months of March, June, September, and December, for each year between 1860 and 1880, with the exceptions of the years 1864, 1866, and 1868, for which no information has survived.⁵ June and December were popular months for Southern weddings, so data retrieved from these two months were chosen because they were likely to yield the most marriages of any months in a given year. March and September were selected as a means of balancing the weddings throughout the calendar year. I also kept a list of clergy performing these ceremonies as a means of verifying that all denominations were represented in the marriage register record.⁶ In addition, I collected information on the groom's occupation as a way to see if the sample couples were from all economic sectors in the population.

The 2,600 marriages contained in this group embrace a broad cross-section of the city's racial, economic, and

⁵I also did not collect any information on the pre-1860 period, as that information was only haphazardly recorded at the end of each year, is fragmentary, and in poor condition. Although my intent was to examine white marriage patterns, I collected data on black marriages with the thought that this data might prove useful in determining whether any perceived trends during this time were race-specific.

⁶Of the 234 clergymen whose names appear on the registers, I have been able to correctly identify a little more than thirty percent, both by race and denomination.

religious divisions. (See Table 11.1.) With the exception of Quaker unions, the Richmond sample includes marriages performed by both white and black clergy from the city's major denominations--Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Unitarian-Universalists, Disciples of Christ, Catholics, German Lutherans, and Jews. A survey of 85 percent of the grooms' occupations demonstrates that the marriage register sample also represents a significant proportion of the occupations available to white and black Richmond men during this period of time, and appears to include individuals from almost every sector of the economy. Therefore, in addition to the lone architect and the single groom identified in the records as a "wharf rat," the sample includes hundreds of white and black men who labored as factory hands, brickmakers, construction workers, tobacco hands, policemen, printers, and machinists, as well as independent entrepreneurs--bakers, confectioners, butchers, barbers, hostlers, and barkeeps. Richmond's white elites are represented in the marriages of the city's manufacturers, "gentlemen," and lawyers. Percentages of white and black marriages in this sample also roughly correspond to the percentage of whites and blacks in the Richmond population in 1870 and 1880.

Table 11.1. Grooms' Occupations, Marriage Sample for
Richmond, Virginia, 1860-1880

Occupation	White	Black	Total
Agent ^a	13	0	13
Architect	1	0	1
Baker	18	5	23
Banker/Stock Broker	6	0	6
Barber	4	18	22
Bar/Restaurant Keeper	10	10	20
Blacksmith	24	26	50
Bookkeeper	13	0	13
Boxmaker	5	0	5
Brickmaker	6	4	10
Butcher	21	4	25
Cigarmaker	9	0	9
Clergy	4	0	4
Clerk	75	4	79
Coachmaker	9	0	9
Confectioner	7	3	10
Construction Worker ^b	151	37	188
Cooper	6	20	26
Doctor/Druggist	30	1	31
Driver	9	92	101
Engineer	18	1	19
Entertainer ^c	5	2	76
Factory Hand	8	216	224
Farmer ^d	98	17	115
Furrier	2	0	2
Gardener	3	10	13
Gentleman	4	1	5
Hotel Keeper/Hostler	5	8	13
Huckster	4	11	15
Iron Workers	58	13	71
Laborers	87	251	338
Lawyer	18	1	19
Liveryman/Stableman	4	0	4
Locksmith	3	0	3

^aReal estate, insurance, or railroad agents have all been included, here.

^bThis category includes bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers, plasterers, painters, glaziers, and roofers.

^cActors, musicians, theater performers.

^dOnly twenty-six of these were Richmond residents, a fact which underscores the nature of the city's industrial economy.

Table 11.1. Grooms' Occupations, Marriage Sample for
Richmond, Virginia, 1860-1880(cont'd.)

Occupation	White	Black	Total
Machinist	50	3	53
Manufacturers	14	0	14
Mechanic	15	7	22
Merchant/Storekeeper	146	8	154
Miller	4	5	9
Millwright	1	0	1
Munitions	5	0	5
Nailmaker	3	1	4
Oysterer	3	1	4
Papermaker	4	0	4
Police/Fireman	22	3	25
Porter	7	29	36
Printer	24	0	24
Railroad Worker	19	9	28
Saddler	7	0	7
Sash and Blind Maker	3	0	3
Servant	4	14	18
Servant to Doctor	1	9	10
Shoemaker	21	28	49
Soldier/Sailor	42	3	45
Stone Mason	30	3	33
Tailor	14	0	14
Tanner	3	0	3
Teacher ^e	11	1	12
Teamster	7	10	17
Telegrapher	6	0	6
Tinworker	12	2	14
Tobacco Hand	3	25	28
Tobacco Manufacturer	4	0	4
Tobacconist	36	8	44
Waggoner	3	0	3
Waiter	2	43	45
Watchman	11	1	12
Wharf Rat	0	1	1
Wheelwright	2	1	3
TOTAL	1277	970	2247

Source: Richmond, Virginia, Marriage Register, 1860-1880,
Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

^eIncludes one college president.

Of the 2,600 marriages retrieved in this sample, more than 1,500 were unions between white brides and grooms. (See Table 11.2.) Only three black marriages were registered for the period between 1860 and 1865, but as these registrations contained no information as to the ages or marital status of the partners, they have not been included in the Richmond sample. After the war, however, black marriages were recorded in far greater numbers and sometimes eclipsed the yearly number of marriages registered for whites, despite the fact that blacks were proportionally fewer than whites in the Richmond population. Peter Rachleff has commented that, in the years immediately following Richmond's surrender, Richmond blacks solemnized their relationships in mass wedding ceremonies conducted either in the city's black churches or at the Freedmen's Bureau. The marriage register sample shows that proportionally more black marriages were actually registered in 1871-74, however, after Reconstruction in Richmond had ended.⁸

⁸Peter J. Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond: 1865-1890 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 15. One explanation for this discrepancy might be a reluctance by black Richmonders to comply with the law requiring registration. In 1870, the percentage of black marriages in the Richmond marriage sample were a few percentage points less than the percentage of blacks in the Richmond population. Blacks comprised 45.3 percent of the population, but only 42.8 percent of the marriages registered that year.

The Richmond sample also shows the relative impact of the Panic of 1873 on the ability of white and black Richmonders to marry. The decline in white marriages in the sample from 104 in 1873 to 89 in 1874 and 91 in 1875 and the subsequent rebound to 111 in 1876 suggests that white Richmonders might have chosen to delay marriages during 1873 and 1874 due to unemployment or a drop in wages. White marriages declined again in 1876 and 1877 when, according to Peter Rachleff, the recession in Richmond entered a second trough.⁹ Black marriages were also affected, although the timing varied somewhat. The precipitate drop in black marriages from 106 in 1874 to 65 in 1876--a decline of 39 percent, supports Marie Tyler-McGraw's claim that the recession affected black workers more severely than it did whites. By comparison, the decline in white marriages was only 15 percent between 1873 and 1874.¹⁰

⁹Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 80; Michael B. Chesson, Richmond after the War, 1865-1890 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981), 161-62.

¹⁰Marie Tyler McGraw, At the Falls, 183.

Table 11.2. White and Black Marriages
Richmond, Virginia, 1860-1880

Year	White	Black	Combined
1860	29	---	29
1861	35	---	35
1862	83	---	83
1864	73	---	73
1865	69	---	69
1867	73	58	131
1869	121	59	180
1870	83	62	145
1871	98	92	190
1872	102	95	197
1873	104	80	184
1874	89	106	195
1875	91	65	156
1876	111	76	187
1877	81	97	178
1878	76	120	196
1879	90	97	187
1880	101	87	188
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>1,509</u>	<u>1,094</u>	<u>2,603</u>

Source: Marriage Register, Richmond, Virginia, 1860-1880, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Age at Marriage

One measure of the effects of the Civil War on white Richmond marriages is the age at first marriage. During the war, Richmonders frequently spoke of a "marriage frenzy" that gripped the wartime city, propelling large numbers of Confederate brides and grooms on the road to wedded bliss.⁸ "There is something in the atmosphere on

⁸Southern Punch, 12 September 1863. Alice Wise, Richmond, to her sister-in-law Jean Whitewell, 11 November 1864, Peter and Frank Wise Papers, DU. "Jane," Richmond, to Mrs. Guthrie, 7 January 1865, Thomas H. Gee Account Book, UVA. These accounts were seconded by Ordnance Department chief, Josiah Gorgas, who reported "much marriage and giving in marriage" in the city during that period of time, despite the fact that everyone was "depressed and somber"

even sulphurous battle days," murmured a writer in Southern Punch in 1863, "that makes the white wings of Eros--the pleasantest and the sweetest of the minor gods of Olympus--swift to reach the fair votaries of hymen."⁹ In a letter to her sister-in-law, Jean Whitewell in November 1864, Richmonder Alice Wise reported fifty-two marriages in the fall and winter of 1864.¹⁰ Wise's observation was echoed in a letter written two months later by a woman identified only as "Jane," who related an amazing ninety-six weddings in twenty days' time.¹¹

On the basis of such anecdotal evidence, George Rable has argued that, as the Civil War depleted the home front of eligible bachelors, white Southern women "swarmed around

about the war's progress. Josiah Gorgas Journal, Ms. 279-z, SHC. Although not nearly as dramatic, the Richmond Whig reported a 15.8 percent increase in the number of marriage license applications by between 1861 and 1864, as compared with the number of applications during the four-year period before the war began. Richmond Whig, 2 January 1871. Of course, the population of Richmond had grown considerably during this period, although no wartime censuses of the city were ever taken.

⁹Southern Punch, 12 September 1863. The writer of this article continued by urging Confederate women "to patriotically marry" early in order to provide a crop of new recruits to help whip the Yankees.

¹⁰Alice Wise, Richmond, to Jean Whitewell, her sister-in-law, 11 November 1864, Peter and Frank Wise Papers, DU.

¹¹"Jane," Richmond, to Mrs. Guthrie, 7 January 1865, Thomas H. Gee Account Book, UVA.

any potential beaux left at home."¹² Based on similar information provided by women in Chester, South Carolina, and Lexington and Winchester, Virginia, Drew Faust has observed that so many men departed from Southern communities that "the Confederate homefront became a world of white women and slaves." According to Faust, sometimes this departure was so excessive--especially in Alabama and North Carolina--that citizens wrote to state governors demanding an explanation.¹³

Given these conclusions, it might be possible to assume that white single women in wartime Richmond rushed into marriages at early ages, for fear their potential partners would be killed in battle. Conversely, in the postbellum period, given the war's alarming death rate for white, marriage-age men, it is plausible that some Richmond women might have been forced to delay first marriages until a later age, due to a dearth of suitable partners. But as information from in Table 11.3 demonstrates, however, neither of these changes occurred. Throughout the entire wartime and postbellum periods, most white Richmond brides in the Richmond marriage sample continued to make their

¹²Rable, Civil Wars, 51 and 271. Rable claims that hasty marriages escalated at the outbreak of the war and then continued throughout the late 1860s.

¹³Drew Gilpin Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), especially Chapter Two: "A World of Femininity: Changed Households and Changed Lives."

first trip down the aisle between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-two, a figure slightly higher than the one noted by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese for white slaveholding women in the antebellum South, but an age that is duplicated by the median age at first marriage for black Richmond brides.¹⁴

Only twice during the entire eighteen-year period, did the median age for the city's white brides rise to the age of twenty-three, once in 1867--during a period when white women and men in Reconstruction Richmond had to sign an oath of allegiance to the United States government before a marriage license could be issued--and for a second time in 1873, when a reduction in wages for many workers caused by the Panic of 1873 may have induced some to postpone their nuptials.¹⁵

¹⁴Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, "Family and Female Identity in the Antebellum South," in In Joy and in Sorrow, 270, fn. 35. For a discussion of Southern black marriages as revealed in the marriage registers, see Herbert G. Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), especially chapters One and Nine. Unfortunately, none of Gutman's tables analyze the median age of brides at first marriage.

¹⁵Leslie Winston Smith, "Richmond during Presidential Reconstruction, 1865-1867" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1974), 53; Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 80-81; Chesson, Richmond after the War, 161-62. I have chosen to use the median age rather than the mean (or average) age because the median reflects the central tendencies of a particular group and is not distorted by aberrations from the norm. The average age of marriage for white brides during the period ranged from 21.5 to 22.8 for most years in the sample with later ages of marriage for the years 1862, 1879, and 1880. In those years, the average age of marriage for white brides was 23.8, 23.3, and 23.5, respectively. At this time, no other statistical studies of marriage have been done for other Southern or Northern

Table 11.3. Median Age at First Marriage,
White and Black Women,
Richmond, Virginia, 1860-1880

Year	White	Black
1860	21.0	---
1861	22.0	---
1862	22.0	---
1863	22.0	---
1865	21.0	21.0
1867	23.0	22.0
1869	21.0	22.0
1870	22.0	22.0
1871	21.0	22.0
1872	21.0	22.0
1873	23.0	22.0
1874	22.0	22.0
1875	22.0	23.0
1876	21.0	22.0
1877	21.0	22.0
1878	21.5	22.5
1879	22.0	22.0
1880	21.0	

Source: Marriage Register, Richmond, Virginia,
1860-1880, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

One reason for this persistence of age at first marriage may be that wartime Richmond may not have experienced a severe wartime shortage in marriage-age men, due to the large number of men who either remained in, or emigrated to, the city on business for the Confederate government. Of the 222 marriages in the sample that were performed between April 1861 and April 1865, nearly 40 percent involved grooms who were either identified as soldiers or sailors, or else men who worked in some war-related occupation usually exempt from field duty--contract

wartime communities, so comparisons with white women in other locations is currently impossible.

surgeons, civilian hospital workers, government gunsmiths and munitions workers, machinists, blacksmiths, clerks, telegraphers, or ironworkers.

The letters and diaries of some of the city's single white women also suggest a surplus rather than a shortage of marriageable men. Troops marching through the capital blew kisses to Richmond women who waved handkerchiefs or tossed them pincushions, bookmarks, pocket Bibles, and other mementoes. Soldiers stationed in the city paid sometimes nightly visits to girls in the community. During a three-week period in March 1862, for example, one young sixteen-year-old received six visits from at least four different gentlemen callers--Confederate officers who often visited in pairs--and made three trips to the campgrounds where she was entertained with band concerts, dress parades, or company drills. On one of these excursions she also toured a young officer's private quarters.¹⁶ Mollie Lyne and Lucy Bowles each received valentines from soldiers

¹⁶Entries dated March 7 through March 28, 1862, Diary of an Unknown Diarist, VM. For additional evidence on wartime courtship, see Louse Wigfall (Mrs. D. Giraud) Wright, A Southern Girl in '61: The Wartime Reminiscences of a Confederate Senator's Daughter (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1905), excerpted in Katharine M. Jones, ed. Ladies of Richmond, Confederate Capital (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), 117-119.

from Co. G of the 1st Virginia volunteers, professing love and inviting them to attend a Valentine-day party.¹⁷

Young women who worked in the government departments also encountered admirers--and potential husbands--among their coworkers. A clerk in the Confederate Ordnance Bureau, Mattie Pierce enjoyed the attention of two workplace beaux during early June 1864. Eugene Desdunes, a suitor who worked in the office of the Second Auditor, sent Pierce a basket of cherries. "Please receive these few cherries," he wrote in an attached note, "they cannot be eaten up by a most [sic] lovely mouth than yours."¹⁸ Pierce's second admirer, a Post Office clerk who signed himself only as "E.C.B.," wrote to her on June 10, 1864, proposing an assignation. "[T]ake the Capital Square on your way home at 3 o'clock," he suggested. "I will be around."¹⁹

Constance Cary embarked on a wartime courtship with her future husband, Burton Norvell Harrison, during the time that both were employed by the Confederate government, Cary in one of the city's military hospitals, and Harrison,

¹⁷"To Miss Mollie Lyne" from an unknown admirer, 14 February 1863; E.T. Snead to Lucy J. Bowles, 1 February 1862, Valentines File, ESBL.

¹⁸Eugene Desdunes to Mattie Pierce, Richmond, 4 June 1864, Dorsey and Coupland Papers, Ms. 39.1 D73, WM.

¹⁹E.C.B., Post Office, Richmond, to Mattie Pierce, 10 June 1864, Dorsey and Coupland Papers, Ms. 39.1 D73, WM. Emphasis in the original.

as an aide to Jefferson Davis.²⁰ War Department clerk Parke Chamberlayne fell in love with, and married, former Confederate soldier, George W. Bagby, who worked for the Confederate government.²¹ Stephen Habersham, the surgeon-in-charge of Phebe Pember's Chimborazo ward, divided his time between three Richmond women--Jinny Pollard, Alice Magill, and Carrie Stuart.²² Rosa Young fell in love with her future husband, a doctor, while the two cared for her wounded brother at Seabrook Hospital.²³ Cartridge maker Delia Daily married David Gaines on August 26, 1866. A Richmond soldier assigned to Company B, of the 38th Light Artillery, during the fall and winter of 1864, Gaines repeatedly went a.w.o.l. from his Petersburg location to return to Richmond and court his future bride. On one

²⁰Cary and Harrison began taking horseback rides to local battlefield sites and walks to Hollywood cemetery. Constance Cary Harrison, Recollections Grave and Gay (New York: Charles Scribners' Sons, 1911), 126.

²¹Lucy Park Chamberlayne Bagby, "The Chronicle of Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby," Bagby Family Papers, VHS; hereafter this will be cited as Bagby Chronicle.

²²Phebe Yates Pember, Chimborazo Hospital, Richmond, to Mrs. J.F. [Lou] Gilmer, 30 December 1863, Phebe Levy Pember Papers, SHC, reprinted in A Southern Woman's Story, Bell I. Wiley, ed. (St. Simons, Ga.: Mockingbird Press, 1959), 132.

²³Young's brother, Lawrence, had been wounded in the leg, requiring an amputation above the knee. Rosa Young's future husband was her brother's attending surgeon. Entry dated 17 May 1864, Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS.

occasion, he was forced to sit astride a cold cannon barrel all night long as punishment.²⁴

Widows

Although some couples came through the war with their marriages intact, at least one Southern woman in three ended the war in mourning, as compared with one woman in six in the North.²⁵ No reliable single source exists that provides Civil War casualty rates for Richmond or even the state of Virginia, so it is difficult to tell how many widows there were in the city at the end of the Civil War. Although regimental histories number into the hundreds, few

²⁴In 1916, the Dailys celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary by passing out one-dollar gold pieces to their three oldest grandchildren. Author's interview with Mrs. Doris Rose Pearson, 3806 Seminary Avenue, Richmond, Virginia, Thursday, March 16, 1995. In all, the Gaineses were parents to ten children, at least seven of whom lived to adulthood.

²⁵The precise number of Confederate and Union widows is impossible to obtain (See Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War?" and Holmes, "'Such Is the Price We Pay,'" for a discussion of the difficulties in calculating Civil War casualties, especially for the South, where many records were destroyed by fire at the war's end.), but estimates based on research by Maris Vinovskis and Amy Holmes have placed the number at slightly more than 185,000. Of these, 77,400 were widows of Confederate soldiers. Given the smaller white population base in the South from which the soldiering population was drawn, this meant that one in every three soldiers' wives in the South ended the war as a widow, as compared to one in every six in the North. Maris A. Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War?" and Amy E. Holmes, "'Such Is the Price We Pay': American Widows and the Civil War Pension System," both in Toward a Social History of the American Civil War: Exploratory Essays, Maris A. Vinovskis, ed. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1-30 and 171-196.

concerning Virginia or Richmond units contain any information on the number of battlefield losses, including the handful of recently-published volumes that are part of the proposed 125-volume regimental history series published by H.E. Howard.

A preliminary examination of the casualty rates for eight companies of the 1st Virginia Infantry, which were composed of nearly a thousand men residing in Richmond, and in Henrico and Chesterfield counties, indicates that casualty rates varied widely from unit to unit depending on the part each one played in various military engagements. A part of the 25th Regiment, the 1st Virginia Infantry saw action at First Manassas, Seven Pines, the Seven Days Battles, Second Manassas, Antietam, Gettysburg--where they were part of Pickett's Division, Cold Harbor, and the Siege of Petersburg. The 126 men who served in Company I suffered a casualty rate of 20.6 percent, which is higher than that suggested by Vinovskis. Other units, such as Company K, known as "The Richmond Rifles," lost relatively fewer men in battle, largely because this company, which was composed of German, Prussian, Bavarian, Italian, and Irish immigrants, contained men whose skills as puddlers, rollers, locksmiths, carpenters, tinsmiths, and gunsmiths were in such great demand that nearly one-seventh of the company privates were discharged and detailed to Richmond on government work. An additional seven privates were

independent shopkeepers and tradesmen who were unwilling or unable to be absent from their livelihoods for extended periods of time; they hired substitutes to take their places.²⁶

Women living in Richmond learned of their husbands' deaths in a variety of different ways which often depended upon their class or their husbands' position in the Confederate military hierarchy. During First Manassas, for example, Jefferson Davis sent a series of telegrams to officers' wives living at the Spotswood Hotel, informing them of the battle's progress and that one woman's husband had been killed.²⁷ Hetty Cary Pegram, a bride of only three weeks, was carding wool in a military ambulance a

²⁶This analysis is based on comparing the names of men listed as serving in Richmond military units in Asbury Christian's Richmond: Her Past and Present with information from the military service records of these same soldiers which are compiled in regimental histories. Asbury Christian, Richmond: Her Past and Present (Richmond: L.H. Jenkins, 1912), 547-76; Lee A. Wallace, Jr., 1st Virginia Infantry, 3d ed. (Lynchburg, Va.: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1985); Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of Confederate Armies: Virginia (New York: Facts on File, 1972); Kevin C. Ruffner, 44th Virginia Infantry (Lynchburg, Va.: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1987). For a related discussion of desertion in the 44th Virginia, see Kevin Conley Ruffner, "Civil War Desertion from a Black Belt Regiment: An Examination of the 44th Virginia Infantry," in The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth-Century Virginia, Edward L. Ayers and John C. Willis, eds. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 56-78.

²⁷Margaret Sumner McLean, "A Northern Woman in the Confederacy," Harper's Monthly Magazine 128 (February 1914): 443-44. This article has been excerpted in Katharine M. Jones, ed. Ladies of Richmond, Confederate Capital (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), 74-75.

short distance from the battlefield when her husband, John Pegram, was shot through the heart.²⁸ Far more women learned of the tragic loss by scanning the lists of wounded and dead that were published in Richmond papers or appeared on the city street corners whenever a battle raged. Some were informed weeks later in letters written by company commanders or their husbands' comrades in arms, long after their husbands' remains had been dumped into rude graves in distant soil, often without a ceremony to mark their passing.²⁹ Winchester, Virginia, refugee Cornelia Peake McDonald discovered her husband's death when she walked into a room in a Richmond home to find his body lying on a makeshift bier.³⁰ The body of Constance Harrison's cousin, Randolph Fairfax, was brought to his family's

²⁸Constance Cary [Mrs. Burton] Harrison; Recollections Grave and Gay (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 201-05. Hetty Cary's husband, General John Pegram, was killed in February 1865 near Hatcher's Run during the Petersburg campaign. Accounts of Hetty Cary's brief marriage are repeated in many personal narratives of the war.

²⁹See my discussion of the burials of Confederate soldiers at Gettysburg, for example, in Chapter Ten.

³⁰Cornelia Peake McDonald, A Diary with Reminiscences of the War and Refugee Life in the Shenandoah Valley, 1860-1865, Hunter McDonald, ed. (Nashville, Tenn.: Cullom & Ghertner, 1934), quoted in Ladies of Richmond, Confederate Capital, Katherine M. Jones, ed. (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962), 237-40.

Richmond home, wrapped in an army blanket and still wearing the clothes in which he died.³¹

Suzanne Lebsack's study of Southern women in antebellum Petersburg has shown that poverty, young children, and a more advanced age often influenced widows' decisions to re-wed. Less affluent women remarried sooner and with greater frequency than women of means, who tended to remain unmarried if finances would allow.³² For widows with young children, often the only way out of dire poverty was a hasty second marriage, sometimes wearing black as an indication that the period of bereavement for their first husbands was not yet over.³³

³¹Harrison, Recollections Grave and Gray, 96. Fairfax was shot through the head at Antietam; he was laid, uncoffined and still wearing the same clothing, on the altar in St. James's Church for his funeral.

³²Suzanne Lebsack, The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 26-27. Other who have written on the effects of widowhood and remarriage include Linda K. Kerber, Women of The Republic: Intellect and Ideology in the Revolutionary America (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), 92-93 and 141-47; Joy Day Buel and Richard Buel, Jr., The Way of Duty: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary America (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984); Drew Faust, Mothers of Invention; Christine Stansell, City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986); Julia Cherry Spruill, Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies (1938; repr. New York: W.W. Norton, 1972); and Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865 (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

³³In one Petersburg marriage that took place late in the war, the bride--who was probably in half-mourning wore gray; all the bridesmaids wore black. Alfred Hoyt Bill, The Beleaguered City: Richmond, 1861-1865 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 308, fn. 4.

Remarriage was not always an option for white Richmond widows, however. Evidence from the Richmond marriage sample indicates that, between 1865 and 1869, white widows married at a higher rate than white widowers. From 1874-1880, however, this trend was reversed, and white widowers remarried with much greater frequency, sometimes at rates that were double or triple those for widowed females (See Table 11.4). In addition, white widowers were more likely to choose single brides, some of whom were twenty or more years their junior. Between 1867 and 1880, 12.4 percent (N=26) of white widowers wedded brides who were at least twenty-one years younger, as compared with slightly less than 1 percent (N=6) of white grooms during the period from 1860 to 1865. In part, this was because, by 1880, there were 4,600 more white women than white men in the Richmond population.³⁴ By comparison, only one white widow for the entire period from 1860 to 1880 married a similarly younger groom. It is impossible to tell from the marriage register data exactly how many of these second unions were dictated by all of the circumstances Lebsack describes, or how many

³⁴In 1880, there were 34,111 white women and 39,483 white men in the Richmond population. 1880 Census for Richmond, Virginia, NARA. In 1860, there were 1,000 more white men than white women in Richmond. In her sample of the 1880 Richmond census, Angela Bongiorno has estimated that widows represented 14.4% of the city's white working women. Three-fourths of this group were between the ages of 37 and 65. Bongiorno, "White Women and Work in Richmond, Virginia," 13-15.

might have been predicated on sincere feelings of love and affection. But deaths of marriage-age men clearly made it easier for widowers to marry than it had been before.

Table 11.4. White Widows and Widowers as a Percent of All Marriages, Richmond, Virginia, 1860-1880

Year	Widows	Widowers
1860	17.2	10.3
1861	2.9	11.4
1862	9.6	18.0
1863	11.0	26.0
1865	25.0	17.4
1867	24.7	17.8
1869	16.5	11.5
1870	9.6	9.6
1871	7.1	13.2
1872	12.7	10.8
1873	17.3	16.3
1874	18.0	21.3
1875	6.6	26.3
1876	6.3	14.4
1877	8.6	17.3
1878	10.5	7.9
1879	8.0	16.9
1880	11.2	9.9

Source: Marriage Register, Richmond, Virginia, 1860-1880, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

For young, affluent, childless widows like Hetty Pegram, the loss of a spouse, however keenly felt, was not the financial burden it represented for the countless wives of ordinary foot soldiers, men who earned a private's pay of \$11 a month, and whose deaths set their surviving spouses and children on a downward spiral of impoverishment. Confederate widows, and especially those with young children, constituted one of the most impoverished groups in postwar Richmond. Some needy women

and children accepted help from the U.S. Sanitary Commission and the Union army, both of which provided government rations to all who applied. Others sought aid from various Richmond charities, including the Soup Association, the Y.M.C.A., or the Dorcas Society.

As demand outstripped the ability of these agencies to succor the city's indigent population, many poor white women and children entered the city's Alms House. During the late 1860s and early 1870s, the number of destitute white women and children in the Richmond Alms House was double or triple that of poor white men. In early 1869, for example, 106 white women and children resided in the city's white Alms House, as compared with 46 white men. In 1870, these figures were 109 and 52, respectively.³⁵

³⁵Report of a committee appointed to examine the Alms House, 27 February 1869; Bundle dated 15 March 1869, Report on the Alms House for 1860 and 1870, No bundle date; Annual Report for the City Alms House, 1 March 1869, Bundle dated 2/28/1869; all in Richmond City Papers, Minutes of the Common Council, LV. Hereafter these will be cited as MCC, LV. Alms House reports are very scarce in the Richmond City Papers after this time. This last Alms House report reveals that despite the amounts of assistance provided to the city's indigent whites, the largest category of recipients of aid in the late 1860s were impoverished Richmond blacks, and especially black women and children. By comparison, Priscilla Ferguson Clement's analysis of nineteenth-century Philadelphia concludes that, although women impoverished by the Civil War received a sympathetic hearing, other indigent Philadelphia women faced a reduction in relief in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Priscilla Ferguson Clement, "Nineteenth-Century Welfare Policy, Programs, and Poor Women: Philadelphia as a Case Study," Feminist Studies 18.1 (spring 1992): 35-58.

In February 1862, the Republican Congress passed legislation providing pensions both for disabled Union veterans and the widows and children of Union soldiers and sailors.³⁶ No such federal pension benefits, however, were ever paid to Confederate veterans or their families who were blamed for starting the rebellion in the first place. Like all the Southern states that seceded from the Union, Virginia eventually created a pension program in the late 1880s to assist the families of those who fought and died for what was now being referred to as "The Lost Cause."³⁷ This pension relief came too late for hundreds

³⁶Throughout much of the late nineteenth century, additional legislation extended these benefits eventually to include pensions paid to all Union soldiers who served honorably for ninety days or more, or their surviving dependents, thus making the pensions paid to Union veterans and their survivors the first old-age pension program for U.S. citizens, and the precursor of the Social Security Act legislation passed during the New Deal which ushered in the welfare state. By 1893, more than 41 percent of the federal budget was devoted to Civil War pensions for Union veterans and their families, funded in part by tariffs paid to the U.S. government by white Southerners. The last Union veteran survived until 1956; the last Confederate veteran, until 1957. As of the late 1970s, two hundred Civil War widows and children were still on the Federal pension rolls. Robert Bremner, The Public Good: Philanthropy and Welfare in the Civil War Era (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 145; and Theda Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1992); and Megan McClintock, "Civil War Pensions and the Reconstruction of Union Families," Journal of American History 83.2: (September 1996): 456-80.

³⁷Virginia's Confederate pension program took the form of three major pieces of legislation enacted in 1888, 1900, and 1902, that established and subsequently extended the criteria for claiming and awarding relief. Smaller provisions throughout the period made minor adjustments and

of white Richmond women in need of help in the years immediately following the war.³⁸

Alarmed at the plight of the city's aging and destitute Confederate widows, civic-minded elite Richmond women formed two associations in the 1870s and 1880s to

attempted to streamline its efficiency as state and federal bureaucracies expanded with sometimes lightning speed in the late nineteenth century. Typically, most programs--including those in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Texas--compensated wounded veterans and rates significantly higher than those paid to families of those who had died, a suggestion that white Southerners placed a greater value on live Confederate heroes than they did on the families of men who had made the ultimate sacrifice. In most states, it was possible for veterans to receive amounts that were double the one paid to widows with dependent children. In Virginia, widows under the 1888 Act received \$30 per month, while those awarded benefits under the 1900 Act had to make do on monthly allotments of \$25. Although some Virginia widows receiving benefits under the 1902 Act were awarded between \$20 and \$30 a month, amounts consistent with those paid under the earlier legislation, many were paid between \$7 and \$10, the most penurious amount paid to Confederate widows by any state in the former Confederacy. I have developed this discussion of pension legislation from the introductions to Virginia's Confederate Pension Rolls in the Library of Virginia and Bulletin No. 8, General Headquarters, Sons of Confederate Veterans, 12 November 1940, Civil War Collection, Mss. 39.1 C76, WM. For a discussion of pension legislation, see Megan J. McClintock, "Civil War Pensions and the Reconstruction of Union Families," Journal of American History 83.2 (September 1996): 456-80; and Amy Holmes, "Such Is the Price We Pay": American Widows and the Civil War Pension System," in Toward a Social History of the American Civil War: Exploratory Essays, Maris A. Vinovskis, eds. (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 171-95.

³⁸According to Kerber, Revolutionary War widows were not awarded pensions until 1832. Linda K. Kerber, Women of the Republic, 92.

provide them with help.³⁹ In January 1875, for example, women from the city's Episcopal churches organized the Protestant Episcopal Church Home for Ladies an institution which has been discussed in Chapter Nine. In 1883, Presbyterian women established the Exchange for Woman's Work, a charitable association that operated a store through which "needy gentlewomen" sold their domestic handiwork, which included cakes, pickles, preserved fruit, various forms of needlework, and "ornamental and artistic" articles "of the best grade."⁴⁰ Although they claimed to have "no limitations which would. . .exclude any class of needy female," both were designed to aid genteel women who had lost their incomes as a result of the war, leaving the poorest women to fend for themselves.

³⁹Richmond men also formed organizations designed to benefit Confederate soldiers and their dependents, including a project sponsored by Richmond Baptists to educate orphaned Confederate children, and an association to supply artificial limbs to amputees.

⁴⁰First Annual Report of the Exchange for Woman's Work of Richmond, Va., for the Year Ending March 1st, 1884 (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1884), 5, in Richmond Exchange for Women's Work Papers, 1883-1957, Ms. #C37, VM. In the late nineteenth century, women's exchanges such as these were founded in a number of Southern and Northern cities, including New Orleans, Baltimore, New York City, and Brooklyn. Founded in 1878, the Women's Exchange in Baltimore is still in operation, with a sales room in the front that features fancy needlework, and a lunchroom in the back that caters to businesses along the city's Charles Street corridor. All of these exchanges were predicated on the notion that the discreet and anonymous sale of women's domestic handiwork was the most appropriate form of employment for genteel women in the late nineteenth century.

Two Confederate Marriages

Recent examinations of the war's impact on Southern marriage have suggested that the social and economic crises accompanying defeat and Reconstruction left Southern husbands demoralized and their masculinity undermined, whereas Southern wives emerged from the war stronger and more optimistic about the future. Carol Bleser and Frederick Heath's analysis of the Alabama Clays, for example, has shown that Virginia Tunstall Clay emerged from the war as the dominant marriage partner, while Clement Clay's eleven-month incarceration as a prisoner-of-war at Fortress Monroe and his postwar financial failures left him depressed and dependent on his wife. Joan Cashin's analysis of the marriage of Kate and William McClure suggests that William McClure's wartime absence from the couple's South Carolina plantation for duty in the Confederate army left his wife enmeshed in a struggle over running the plantation. By the war's close, Kate McClure had succeeded in wresting control from the McClure's white overseer and was managing the plantation according to her own vision, often in ways that contradicted the advice sent by William McClure in his frequent letters home.⁴¹ An

⁴¹Bleser and Heath, "The Clays of Alabama," in In Joy and in Sorrow, 135-53, and Joan Cashin, "'Since the War Broke Out,'" in Divided Houses, 200-12. Anne Scott in The Southern Lady is relatively silent on the impact of the war on Southern marriage, devoting only a handful of pages to descriptions of antebellum marriages and nothing to the question of postbellum change.

analysis of the experiences of two Richmond couples--Lucy and Patterson Fletcher and Parke and George Bagby--suggests that the strains of postwar defeat and financial ruin could even be felt in marriages where husbands were not Confederate soldiers.

Thirty-nine-year-old Lucy Fletcher and her forty-six-year-old husband, Patterson, had been married for fifteen years and were the parents of five children, aged twelve to one, when the Civil War began. Their counterparts, nineteen-year-old Parke Chamberlayne and thirty-three-year-old George Bagby were both single. By the time the war was over, the Bagbys had been married for two years and were the parents of an infant daughter, Virginia. By 1882, young Virginia Bagby was joined by nine other siblings, seven of whom survived childhood, despite a potentially deadly attack of scarlet fever in the late 1870s which afflicted five of the Bagby offspring.

Neither Patterson Fletcher nor George Bagby served in the Confederate army, although both were committed secessionists who remained fiercely loyal to the Confederate cause. A Presbyterian minister, Patterson Fletcher was exempt from military duty, but made repeated trips to visit the Richmond encampments, preaching sermons, delivering bibles and religious tracts, and conducting revivals for troops stationed in the area. Deemed unfit

for duty because of a severe case of dyspepsia and a weak constitution, George Bagby made his Confederate loyalties known through his columns in a number of Southern newspapers. Although sometimes openly critical of Jefferson Davis, Bagby also appears to have worked for the Confederate government in some official capacity. When the city fell on April 3, 1865, he was on hand to help pack up government papers and flee the city with the remnants of the Confederacy. Like their husbands, Parke Bagby and Lucy Fletcher were spirited rebels who contributed their labor to the war. Parke Bagby worked as a Confederate Treasury clerk; Lucy Fletcher volunteered her time in the city's hospitals or cared for sick and wounded soldiers in her home.

Although neither man saw military service, both families suffered wartime anxiety and grief over kinfolk slain in combat or captured by the enemy. Parke Bagby's twenty-two-year-old brother, Ham, enlisted in Company F of the 21st Virginia Infantry in April 1861. In July 1862, he was apprehended during a cavalry raid at Gettysburg and spent the next two-and-a-half years as a prisoner of war at Johnson's Island near Sandusky, Ohio, and later at Fort Delaware. He was released in a prisoner exchange in March 1865.

Two of Lucy Fletcher's brothers--Abner and John Walton--and a younger brother of Patterson Fletcher's were

all Confederate soldiers. John Walton was killed during the fighting in the Wilderness in the spring of 1864; his brother Abner was wounded in the leg and captured less than a month earlier, during skirmishing along the Rapidan River, where Patterson Fletcher's brother also died in battle.⁴² Three additional siblings of Lucy Fletcher-- Edward, Richard, and Robert Walton--lived in areas that were invaded by Union troops. Richard Walton's home in nearby Harrisonburg was taken over as a field hospital in June 1862; Robert's and Edward's communities were overrun by federal forces in the closing months of the war.⁴³

In addition to the grief occasioned by battlefield losses, Lucy Fletcher endured the added strain of a family split by its loyalties. Although Lucy, her parents, and most of her brothers were staunch Confederates, two additional Walton siblings who lived in the North--Lucy's brother, Evarts, and her sister, Eliza Walton Clarke--opposed slavery and retained their Union loyalties. Despite his convictions, Evarts Walton managed to maintain close ties to his Southern family, occasionally penning his sister, Lucy, a note inquiring about her safety or offering to send supplies. Eliza Clarke, however, remained

⁴²Entries dated 22 June 1862, 23 October 1863, Keystone Diary; 14 April 1864, Loose Diary Sheets, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

⁴³Entries dated 22 June 1862, 28 March and 27 September 1865, Keystone Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

unyieldingly critical of her Confederate relatives long after the war had ended. Clarke's harsh comments wounded her sister deeply.⁴⁴ They also deprived Lucy Fletcher of her beloved sister's comfort as the Fletcher marriage crumbled with Southern defeat.

The Civil War destroyed family fortunes at the same time that it deprived Confederate men, whose manhood and honor were already shattered by Northern victory, of another layer of their identities as family providers.⁴⁵ Although neither Patterson Fletcher nor George Bagby had well-paying jobs before the war began, both men emerged from the war unable to provide for their wives and children. The closing of the Duval Street church left Patterson Fletcher without a job, and the impoverishment of other Presbyterian congregations which he served placed his family in extremely reduced circumstances. In the fall of 1865, when the Fletchers were forced to rely on beans, rice, and hardtack provided by the federal government, Patterson Fletcher suffered a total mental and physical collapse that left him unable even to operate the boys'

⁴⁴Both eyewitnesses and Civil War scholars have commented on the postwar rage and hostility of Southern women. See Nina Silber, "Intemperate Men, Spiteful Women, and Jefferson Davis," in Divided Houses, Clinton and Silber, eds., 283-305.

⁴⁵For a discussion of the effects of defeat on Southern men, see LeeAnn Whites, "The Civil War as a Crisis of Gender," and Nina Silber, "Intemperate Men, Spiteful Women, and Jefferson Davis," both in Divided Houses, Clinton and Silber, eds., 3-21, and 283-305.

school which had become the family's only reliable source of income in the wake of Duval Street's financial decline. Fletcher quickly recovered his health after a visit to his parents' Rockingham County farm, but, throughout much of the 1870s, his difficulties in providing a reliable source of income frequently forced his family to the threshold of need.

George Bagby's wage-earning capacities were also seriously impaired by Confederate defeat. Until he received a political appointment as state librarian in 1870, Bagby eked out what Parke Bagby later referred to as a "precarious existence" through his work as a newspaper editor and travelling lecturer. The income derived from these two occupations often fell short of the Bagbys' growing family's demands.

Both Parke Bagby and Lucy Fletcher engaged in a series of household economies designed to help their husbands and alleviate family suffering. Lucy Fletcher sold her clothing, rented out rooms in her home to a series of white and black boarders, foreswore the purchase of meat, and put her seventeen-year-old son, Wattie, to work rolling and selling cigarettes.⁴⁶ Later, when Patterson Fletcher's acceptance of a call to a congregation near Staunton failed to yield the expected compensation, Lucy Fletcher and her

⁴⁶Young Walton Fletcher did not work in a cigarette factory, but rather rolled the cigarettes at home.

children made do by accepting donations of food, cash, and cast-off clothing sent to them by family members and some of their parishoners. In addition, Patterson Fletcher and his daughter, Nannie, operated a school for girls and boys on the grounds of the manse.

In 1866, while George Bagby traveled throughout the country delivering lectures, a pregnant Parke Bagby moved with her two children to Middleburg, Virginia, where she operated the boarding department of a school for boys opened by her cousin, Virginius Dabney. When Dabney took a second wife in 1867, Bagby moved to Orange Court House, Virginia, where she lived for a time with her mother in a home rented by her brother, Ham. Throughout much of the late 1860s, Bagby and her family lived off the largess of family and friends whom she visited for sometimes lengthy stays.

Although George's appointment as state librarian in 1870 probably brought the Bagbys a modicum of financial security, the birth of a fourth child and Parke Bagby's subsequent two-year illness caused by puerperal fever she contracted during the delivery drained the couple's resources. A series of account books kept by Parke Bagby during the 1870s demonstrate the way the demands of her rapidly expanding family often continued to outstrip George's abilities to provide. Many of the invoices for a variety of expenditures made between 1865 and 1880 include

notations to creditors explaining why the bill could not be paid.⁴⁷

Other account book evidence implies that the Bagbys' distress caused by George's financial shortcomings might have been a source of marital friction. An entry for December 12, 1874, for example, carries the following plea: "Let me endeavor with all my power and strength to keep the debt from growing larger. God knows how hard I try to do my duty. If George would only think so."⁴⁸ Another entry a month later cautioned to "Keep Down Debt."⁴⁹ An occasional heavily underlined entry for "alcohol" suggests that George Bagby may have coped with his financial ineffectiveness by drinking.

Other account book evidence documents the precipitate drop in George Bagby's income, from \$132 a month during the early 1870s, to \$70 a month or less following his ouster from the Library in 1878, a event which prompted Parke

⁴⁷Typical expenditures included ice, coal, food, rent, drugs, hats, wood, and baby carriages, as well as services provided by laundresses, dressmakers, physicians, and jewelers. Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby Account Books covering the periods 1857-1879; 1870-1875; 1874; two for 1876; 1879; and 1879-1882, all in Sections 135 and 136, Bagby Family Papers, VHS.

⁴⁸Entry dated 12 December 1874, Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby Account Book, 1870-1875, Section 135, Bagby Family Papers, VHS. Emphasis in the original.

⁴⁹Entry dated January 1875, Account Book, 1874, Lucy Parke Chamberlayne Bagby Account Books, in Bagby Family Papers, VHS. Parke Bagby later remarked that it took her nearly sixteen years to pay of the indebtedness the couple incurred during this time.

Bagby to embark on a career as a boarding house operator. In 1879, she rented a house at 813 E. Grace Street where she lived and worked throughout much of the early 1880s. Following George's death from cancer in 1883, Parke Bagby returned to the clerical work she had learned during the Civil War, accepting a post in the office of Virginia's Second Auditor which she held for more than twenty-one years.

Parke and George Bagby may have dealt with the marital discord attendant on George's ineffectiveness as the family provider by deciding to live apart. Despite their financial burdens, the Bagbys maintained separate residences throughout much of the late 1870s and early 1880s, even during times when both were living in Richmond, and were only reunited under one roof for a brief period of time preceding George's death.⁵⁰

Marital discord seems to have attended the Fletchers' financial problems as well. By the late 1870s, Patterson Fletcher had become a bitter, spiteful man whose angry outbursts marred the family peace and left his wife and children longing for the times when his work kept him away.

⁵⁰In a society where divorce was a less available option, other nineteenth-century couples adopted this strategy for dealing with marital stress. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Henry B. Stanton, for example, spent a large portion of their married life living in separate residences. Elisabeth Griffith, In Her Own Right: The Life of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 79-80, 86-88, 120, 188-90, 213-14.

"Their father is away tonight," Lucy Fletcher wrote at the end of an evening with her children in September 1870

and we all had a pleasant time in my chamberMy heart beats painfully & my nerves are a quiver from head to foot as soon as my husband begins to elevate his voice. . . .It is so inexpressibly mournful to see the unhappy effect of their father's harshness & want of self control upon the children, & I have had in past years to do and say so much to maintain his authority & prevent them from doing things that would excite him, that I have feared they would become utterly discouraged & hardened. I no longer have the heart to keep up such constant restraint, & altho' I try to make all possible allowances for him, & do not suffer them to speak unkindly or disrespectfully of him, I can see that he is alienating their respect & affection.⁵¹

Patterson Fletcher's attacks on his children and perhaps also on his wife continued to escalate in the 1870s, as the financially straitened Staunton congregation repeatedly reneged on its payment of his salary. A number of these outbursts culminated in harsh, public tongue-lashings filled with litanies of the children's personal shortcomings. Never a woman of robust health, Fletcher endured a series of stress-related ailments during this

⁵¹Entry dated September 1870, Brown Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU. Fletcher's diary entries during this period are filled with oblique references to family turmoil, which may have included physical as well as verbal reprisals. Some portions of the record were completely excised or else obliterated by heavy pencil markings when Fletcher edited her diaries in the late 1890s. Diaries documenting domestic violence in the nineteenth century are rare. For another example, see Madge Preston, A Private War: Letters and Diaries of Madge Preston, 1862-1867, Virginia Walcott Beauchamp, ed. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987).

period in her life, including headaches, neuralgia, and physical and mental fatigue. "I am satisfied that my disease is more mental than physical," she confided in her diary in March 1869, "& it mortifies me that I have not strength to bear up under the cares & trouble which oppresses me."⁵² Thirty years later, the painful recollection of this troubled time may have prompted her to excise portions of her diary that may have documented other verbal assaults.

Whereas Parke and George Bagby coped with marital tensions by living apart, her husband's angry tirades encouraged Lucy Fletcher to turn inward upon her faith. "I am learning to think more of our Saviour as a pattern, an example for our imitation," she wrote during an extremely trying period in the summer of 1869, "to dwell more on the perfections of his character, his misery & long suffering with his loving, but erring disciples."⁵³ She also began to rely more heavily on her son Wattie as a source of comfort. "He is so gentle & thoughtful of my wishes & comfort," she observed about her eldest son, "seems to sympathize so tenderly with the trials which beset my daily

⁵²Entry dated March 1869, Diary 1869-1870, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

⁵³Entry dated 28 September 1869, Brown Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU.

path & does all in his power to relieve me of every care."⁵⁴

Emancipation and Household Labor

The emancipation of slaves which accompanied the city's surrender in 1865 forced a re-negotiation of labor relations as white and black Richmonders, in particular, struggled to articulate the parameters, and limit the effects, of emancipation. When they took place within white households, these labor negotiations carried the potential to disrupt the tranquility of family life. As white Richmond men tried to cope with Confederate defeat, black men moved to assert their dominance over their own families by controlling the labor of their female kin. As white Richmond women struggled to maintain their privileged positions in Southern society, positions that rested largely on the labor of slave domestics, black women sought to redirect their productive energies to their own families.⁵⁵

With the exception of manufacturing enterprises like Tregedar Iron Works and the tobacco factories, which employed large numbers of slaves during the antebellum

⁵⁴Entry dated 7 August 1869, Brown Diary, Lucy Muse Walton Fletcher Papers, DU. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁵LeeAnn Whites, "The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender," and Nina Silber, "Intemperate Men, Spiteful Women, and Jefferson Davis, both in Divided Houses, Clinton and Silber, eds., 3-21, and 283-305.

period, few white slaveholding families in Richmond and its environs supervised slave populations approaching the size of those found on large plantations in the Deep South. Nearly half of all white Richmonders in the early 1860s, however, including "[i]ndustrialists, artisans, factory workers, and even laborers," were relieved of routine household duties by at least one or two domestic "servants" who were either family slaves or were hired from Richmond slaveholders or their agents.⁵⁶

Before the war, slave labor was central to the domestic tranquility of Rosina Mordecai's Rosewood farm located on the city's western edge. Rosina Mordecai was the widow of Emma Mordecai's brother, Augustus, who had died in 1947. By 1864, Rosina Mordecai's white household included her seventeen-year-old daughter, Augusta, and her sister-in-law, Emma Mordecai. Rosina's three sons, William, George, and John, were on military duty with the Richmond Howitzers.

The Mordecai household was tended by a family of slaves which included Cyrus or "Cy" and his wife, Sarah; their sons, Alick and Little Cyrus; their twelve-year-old daughter, Georgiana; and their married, pregnant daughter, Lizzie, whose husband, Phil, worked nearby. Another twelve-year-old-girl, Mary, was probably Lizzie's older child. Two older daughters of Cy and Sarah--Caroline and

⁵⁶Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 16-26.

Martha--worked on "Westbrook," an adjoining farm owned by Rosina Mordecai's brother, John Young. Other Rosewood slaves included Alfred, Massie, Fleming, Moses, and George, who, among his other duties, drove the family carriage.

While Cyrus, Little Cy, and Massie labored in the fields, Cyrus's wife, Sarah, worked in the Mordecai kitchen preparing the family's meals with the assistance of her daughters Mary and Georgina. As the Union siege settled over Petersburg, Virginia, in the late summer and early fall of 1864, the Mordecai women, both black and white, labored together in the family household: preserving peaches, collecting elderberries for making ink and shoeblack; and fashioning a new rag carpet for the dining room floor. Emma's slave, Moses, a bricklayer by trade, repaired the family's fireplace, while Fleming, a hired "cow boy," accompanied his seventeen-year-old mistress, Augusta, on horseback rides to a neighbor's farm.⁵⁷

In the wake of Richmond's surrender, Cyrus moved to consolidate his family with himself at the head by declaring his intentions to quit the Mordecai household and take his wife and children with him. He also sent word to Rosina's brother, John Young, demanding the return of Martha and Caroline, who had worked on the Youngs' Westbrook farm since they were children. On April 14th,

⁵⁷Entries dated 4, 22 August, 12, 16 September; 1, 2 November 1864, Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS.

Cyrus placed Caroline at work in the household of a "negro woman in the neighborhood" under a hiring agreement he had negotiated. Cyrus's announcement threw the Mordecai women into "great grief" and "loss," which stemmed, in part, from the fact that Rosina and Gusta were "very much attached" to the two young girls, but also because Mary and Georgina provided a great deal of "useful" labor that freed the household's white women from a portion of the domestic drudgery.⁵⁸

The return of Rosina Mordecai's three sons--William, George, and John--from the Confederate army on April 15th ushered in a new round of deliberations between the Mordecais and their former slaves. Whereas Emma had described Cyrus's tone in his earlier meetings with Rosina Mordecai as angry and insolent, she characterized his interviews with the Mordecai men as being conducted in tones that were more measured and respectful. For a few days, a tentative peace settled over the household as Cyrus and the Mordecai men discussed the nature and length of the work Cyrus's family would perform and the compensation they would receive. Before long, however, this momentary calm was broken by "high words" between Cyrus and William Mordecai, as each man struggled to assert his control of the household labor. When Cyrus finally claimed that the Mordecai's "kitchen belonged to him because he had helped

⁵⁸Entry dated 13 April 1865, Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS.

cut the timber to build it" and that he was "entitled to the farm [too] after all the work he had done," William Mordecai responded by ordering Cyrus and his family to leave.⁵⁹

As Cyrus prepared to move his family to a rented house on the turnpike road, the Mordecais scoured the community to find suitable replacements. By May 6th, they had contracted with Susan, a former slave from a nearby farm. who agreed to attend to the milking and prepare the family's breakfast. A day later, they hired Annie, a white orphan from the city's Female Humane Asylum which, anticipating a shortage of black domestic workers, had passed a resolution permitting a larger number of white female orphans to be placed in Richmond households.⁶⁰ When Annie proved to be unsatisfactory, the Mordecai women were left to rely on the services of an untrained former field hand who arrived at Rosewood farm a few days later with her two young sons.⁶¹

As Cyrus's family took their leave of the Mordecais on the evening of May 5th, Cyrus and Rosina Mordecai tried to bridge the gap that lay between them. According to the record in Emma Mordecai's diary, what followed was a

⁵⁹Entry dated 4 May 1865, Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS.

⁶⁰Entries dated 6, 7, 11 May 1865, Emma Mordecai Dairy, VHS.

⁶¹Entry for 16 May 1865, Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS.

touching but tense scene in which Cyrus expressed "regret for his improper conduct and was very much affected at parting with her." Overcome with emotion, Rosina gave them all presents of old clothing, meat, meal, and potatoes.

The absence of reliable domestic service for herself and her daughter Augusta was more than Rosina Mordecai could bear. A woman often plagued by a host of infirmities, she took to her bed for more than three days, prostrated with "nervous suffering and mental torture," which Emma Mordecai was able to relieve only by her own prodigious domestic labor and three-and-a-half quarts of whisky supplied on the authority of the Union Provost Marshal.⁶²

The conclusion of Emma Mordecai's Rosewood diary a few days later draws to a close this portrait of the effects of emancipation on one white Richmond household. As Tracey Weis's study of domestic service in postbellum Richmond has shown, however, economic changes would make it possible for men like Cyrus and Phil increasingly to find work away from the household setting. But for women like Sarah and her daughters, domestic service in white women's households

⁶²Entries dated 7, 11, 13, 15, and 21 May 1865, Emma Mordecai Diary, VHS.

would form the mainstay of their employment for the rest of the nineteenth century.⁶³

Conclusion

Examinations of the Civil War's impact on Northern and Southern marriages have only just begun, and a great deal more research will have to be undertaken before historians will have a clear picture of how wartime casualties affected marriage patterns for white women and men in both regions. The difficulty of penetrating the veil of privacy that most nineteenth-century Americans raised around their most intimate relationships also complicates the process of discovering the war's long-term effects on marriage and family relations.

Evidence from the Richmond marriage register suggests that reports of a marriage frenzy sweeping the wartime city were probably overblown. The reason more marriage licenses were issued and more marriages were celebrated during the wartime years may simply be that more people were living in the city at the time. Richmond may have been an exception in this case, however, because of its role as the

⁶³Tracey Weis has argued that black men were able to escape postemancipation domestic labor as other kinds of work became available to them, but that black women were not because no other options for work emerged for them during this time. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 26-28. Weis's research agrees with and supports the earlier findings of Angela Marie Bongiorno, "White Women and Work in Richmond, Virginia, 1870-1884" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1978), 20.

Confederate capital and as the focal point for much of the fighting in the war's eastern theater meant that it did not suffer in wartime imbalance in the sex ratio other communities claimed. The story of these other communities deepens and complicates the eventual synthesis.

The war erased family fortunes and rendered most Richmonders at least temporarily poor. In addition, the emancipation of Richmond slaves at the war's end forced a restructuring of domestic relationships between ex-slaves and their former mistresses that not only severed lines of authority and control but also ended white and black relationships extending back for generations. As Richmonders coped with poverty and defeat, some did so in the context of intimate relationships that were rubbed raw from four years of warfare. But of all these Richmonders, the women who ended the Civil War clad in mourning--like their counterparts at the end of the American Revolution--were likely among the most impoverished women in the postwar city. And like those earlier widows, these women suffered the disadvantages of living in a society that placed a greater emphasis on enshrining the memory of dead heroes than it did on caring for the wives and children of those who had died.

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSION

Margaret Higonnet has observed that civil wars have the greatest potential to substantially alter the condition of a country's women. "Once a change in government can be conceived," she writes, "sexual politics can also become an overt political issue. . . . [C]ivil war serves as emblem and catalyst of change in the social prescription of sexual roles."¹ But Southern white women, like Southern white men, had not gone to war to change their way of life; they had taken up arms to prevent change from happening. They did not succeed. Change came to Southern society and its women nonetheless, not only through emancipation that was the result of Confederate defeat, but also from the very act of fighting the war itself.

Regardless of the place they occupied in antebellum society, all white women in Richmond were touched by the fire of four years of fighting that seared its images into their individual and collective consciousness. From the

¹Margaret R. Higonnet, "Civil Wars and Sexual Territories," in Arms and the Woman: War, Gender, and Literary Representation, Helen M. Cooper, Adrienne Auslander Munich, and Susan Merrill Squier, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 80.

firing on Fort Sumter to the early 1880s most--if not all--of the women in this study continued to number their days according to the contours of the Civil War and Reconstruction. The war propelled thousands of middle-class Richmond women into work for the Confederate government and made patriotic martyrs out of young working-class girls who sacrificed their lives to manufacture bullets. The war bit deeply into their private roles as wives, sisters, and mothers, depriving them of their menfolk and leaving scars, for many, that time could not erase.

One of the most immediately transformative effects of the war was the erasure of family fortunes that levelled the economic playing field in Richmond, at least temporarily. Even some of the city's more affluent women ended the war mired in debt. Confederate matron Sally Tompkins depleted most of her family's fortune caring for injured Confederate troops. When she died in 1915 at the age of eighty-three, she was living in the Sheppard Street Home for Needy Confederate Women, an institution established in Richmond in the late nineteenth century to care for the indigent female relations of Confederate veterans.²

Middle-class women who had expected to work just for the war's duration found themselves in need of permanent

²Sally Louisa Tompkins Papers, ESBL.

peacetime employment, despite the disappearance of their warwork. While the war created permanent jobs in clerking and nursing in the North, in Richmond it did not. The same was true for working-class Confederate women who also saw their postwar labor circumscribed by the Confederacy's collapse. In The Southern Lady, Anne Firor Scott has remarked that "[s]ignificant social changes have a way of taking place while people are looking the other way."³ And, indeed, it might be argued that some of the more positive wartime changes for Richmond women came through channels they least expected and in ways that were fraught with irony because they came as a result of Confederate defeat. Such was the case with Richmond women's postwar work.

By the early to mid-1870s, two new occupations opened for middle- and working-class women, neither of which had been foreseen before the war began and both of which had important wartime connections. During the early 1870s increasing numbers of women in Richmond and elsewhere throughout Virginia took up teaching positions in the public schools that had been mandated during Reconstruction as a condition for Virginia's readmission to the Union. Because Richmonders were anxious to have their children

³Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930, rev. ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 110; all subsequent citations are to this edition.

know the true story of the "war for Southern independence," teaching became worthwhile and highly compensated work for white Richmond women. As a result, women's colleges and normal schools for educating female teachers were established bringing Southern women's education on a par with that of Northern women a few decades earlier.

By the mid-1870s, white laboring women also found unexpected work manufacturing cigarettes, a new form of tobacco product whose fast-growing popularity derived precisely from physical and psychological effects attributable to the war itself.⁴ Cigarette work was portrayed as a cleaner, more respectable, and better compensated form of employment than textile work and sewing. Promises of a homelike atmosphere and amenities such as libraries, exercise rooms, and Sunday picnics attracted hundreds of young women who flooded the factories in the 1880s and 1890s. Hundreds more entered factories to manufacture paper boxes, an ancillary industry whose growth was tied to cigarette production.

One area where Richmond women had enjoyed a significant measure of antebellum power was in the city's churches. Although Baptist and Methodist women were prohibited from voting or even attending congregational meetings and Jewish women in the Beth Shalome congregation

⁴Nannie Tilley, The Bright-Tobacco Industry, 1860-1949 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948), 497-98.

were still required to worship in gender-specific seating, women in the city's antebellum churches had managed to carve out a crucial niche for themselves as church fund raisers. In the postwar period, female parishoners widened this niche considerably as they brought their fundraising talent to bear on repairing and refurbishing sanctuaries damaged by battle and caring for elderly women left destitute by the war. During the men's absence, they had also stepped into the breech to keep Sunday schools in session, a nontraditional role for Richmond women but a vital wartime contribution--at least in some Richmonders' eyes--given the influx of rowdy, drunken, swearing, Confederate soldiers and government sycophants who enabled the Richmond and Manchester grog shops, gaming tables, and brothels to do a brisk business.

During the 1870s and 1880s, women in several denominations attempted to extend their influence even further by creating independent foreign missionary groups focused on bringing the message of the gospel to native women in Africa and China and alleviating some of the gender-specific hardships Chinese and African women faced. The creation of autonomous foreign missionary societies provoked a firestorm of controversy from male clergy and parishoners who accused the women of overreaching their appropriate place in Southern society. As Suzanne Lebsock and George Rable have cautioned us to remember, the

undertow of Southern patriarchy was both strong and deep-- even in this most industrialized of Southern cities.⁵ The emancipation of slaves that followed Confederate defeat stripped away an important aspect of white Southern men's dominance and control; another measure of that control was the subordination of Southern women. Therefore Baptist and Methodist Richmond women who attempted to create autonomous missionary groups in the 1870s and 1880s did so in the context of a society anxious to keep any more change from happening.⁶

Richmond's role as the capital of the Confederacy was not forgotten when the war was over. In the decades following Confederate defeat, this Southern metropolis was transformed into an urban shrine to the South's "Lost Cause." Hundreds of white women organized Confederate memorial societies in Richmond to honor the bravery of slain Confederate soldiers and assure that their names

⁵Suzanne Lebsock, The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983), 247-48.

⁶And more ambitious attempts to broaden the parameters of women's sphere met with defeat. A fledgling suffrage organization that took shape in Richmond in the 1870s soon withered and died due to a lack of female support. Sandra Gioia Treadway, "A Most Brilliant Woman: Anna White Bodeker and the First Woman Suffrage Association in Virginia," Virginia Cavalcade 43.4 (spring 1994): 166-77. These seeds of suffrage in Virginia would lie on fallow ground until brought to life by other Richmond women who were a generation removed from the fighting. Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

would not be forgotten. During the 1870s and 1880s, these cemetery associations moved beyond their yearly grave-decorating observances to engage in other kinds of activities--erecting Confederate statuary, restoring historic Civil War houses, sponsoring essay contests, writing text books--all of which were designed to reassert white Richmonders' dominance on the urban and cultural landscape and impose their romanticized vision of Southern society on succeeding generations.

Women played an important role in this transformation process. By the end of the nineteenth century, a portion of the Hollywood Cemetery Association had evolved into the Confederate Memorial Literary Society that labored to amass a vast collection of Civil War cultural icons--uniforms, guns, swords, battle flags, personal diaries and reminiscences. By the turn of the century, the Confederate Memorial Literary Society would be joined by several Richmond chapters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, an organization devoted at getting the "true history" of the South and its peculiar institution into the historical canon. But the social vision these groups struggled to preserve was one that relegated Richmond women to the same type of subordinate roles they had experienced before the war began.⁷

⁷Angie Parrot, "'Love Makes Memory Eternal': The United Daughters of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia, 1897-1920," in The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth-

Drew Faust, George Rable, and others have pointed to the impact made by the absence of white men on the Southern homefront. As men went off to war, they write, Southern women faced communities bereft of men.⁸ The anticipated drain of eligible bachelors forced many women into hasty marriages after either brief or nonexistent courtships. My study of marriage patterns in Richmond, Virginia, provides an exception to this rule. In Richmond, no such wartime shortage of marriageable men occurred, largely because of Richmond's unique position as the capital of the Confederacy. As a result, throughout the war, women continued to marry at precisely the same age as their antebellum sisters. As the Richmond population contracted with the postwar departure of government workers and refugees, however, the war's long-term devastating losses, as described by Maris Vinovskis, can be seen in the differing rates of remarriage for white widows and widowers.⁹

Century Virginia, Edward L. Ayers and John C. Willis, eds. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 219-238.

⁸Drew Gilpin Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), especially Chapter Six; George C. Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1989), especially Chapter Three.

⁹Maris A. Vinovskis, "Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War? Some Preliminary Demography Speculations," in Toward a Social History of the American Civil War:

Most studies of white women during the American Civil War focus on elite plantation women of the slaveholding class. My study of Richmond, Virginia, focuses on the experiences of women in a highly industrialized urban setting and, thus, partially restores the voices of white working-class women to the historical narrative through its examination of the Richmond bread riot and the Brown's Island explosion. It also sheds light on the patriotic contributions of women from Richmond's Jewish population, despite widespread anti-Semitism in the South during the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Anne Scott's examination of the effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction posited a tidal wave of change that transformed Southern women into the "New Women" of the twentieth century South.¹⁰ My study of white women in Richmond, Virginia, however, reveals a far more complex pattern in which the advances Richmond women made were often unsought, unintended, or else served to reinforce more traditional expectations about Southern women's roles as defined by the patriarchal structure of Southern society.

Exploratory Essays (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 1-30.

¹⁰Anne Scott, Southern Lady, 81-133.

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- Aron, Cindy Sondik. "'To Barter Their Souls for Gold': Female Federal Clerical Workers in Late Nineteenth-Century Maryland." Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 1981.

- Blair, William Alan. "Virginia's Private War: The Contours of Dissent and Loyalty in the Confederacy, 1861-1865." Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1995.
- Bongiorno, Angela Catherine. "White Women and Work in Richmond, Virginia, 1870-1884." Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1978.
- Brown, Elsa Barkley. "Uncle Ned's Children: Negotiating Community and Freedom in Postemancipation Richmond, Virginia." Ph.D. diss., Kent State University, 1994.
- Cole, Stephanie. "Servants and Slaves: Domestic Servants in the Border Cities, 1800-1850." Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1994.
- Fuller, A. James. "Chaplain of the Confederacy: A Biography of Basil Manly, 1798-1868." Ph.D. diss., Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 1995.
- Golden, Alan Lawrence. "Castle Thunder: The Confederate Provost Marshal's Prison, 1862-1865."
- Krug, Donna Rebecca Dondes. "The Folks Back Home." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Irvine, 0199.
- Sklar, Martin. "'And the Walls Came Tumbling Down': Jews in the Old South, 1840-1861." B.A. thesis, Princeton, 1981.
- Smith, Leslie Winston. "Richmond during Presidential Reconstruction, 1865-1867." Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1974.
- Varon, Elizabeth. "'We Mean to Be Counted': White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia." Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1993.
- Weis, Tracey M. "Negotiating Freedom: Domestic Service and Household Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1850-1880." Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1994.
- Wilkinson, Catherine Anne. "To Live and Die in Dixie: German Reform Jews in the Southern United States." Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1990.

Conference Papers

- Ash, Steven B. "War and Society: New Directions in Virginia History." Paper presented at the Virginia Historical Society Conference on New Directions in Virginia History, Richmond, Virginia, October 1990.
- Barber, E. Susan. "Braxton Bragg and the Politics of Command." Paper presented at the Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference, Annapolis, Maryland, April 1983.
- Chesson, Michael B. "Richmond Jews and the Bread Riot of April 2, 1863: Myth and Reality." 6th Annual Conference on the Jewish Experience in the South of the Southern Jewish Historical Society. Mobile, Alabama, 1981.
- Feely, Amy. "Southern Lady Meets New Woman: Women of the Confederate Memorial Society and the Lost Cause in Richmond, Virginia." Paper presented at the Northern Virginia Community College Conference on the History of Women in the Chesapeake in the Nineteenth Century, Annandale, Virginia, November 1996.
- Hess, Earl J., Jr. "The 'Face of Battle' and the Experiences of Combat in the Civil War." Paper presented at the 55th Annual Meeting of the Southern Historical Association, Lexington, Kentucky, November, 1989.
- Krug, Donna. "The Enemy at the Door in the Confederacy: A Crisis of Honor." Paper presented at the 55th Annual Meeting of the Southern Historical Association, Lexington, Kentucky, 1989.
- Mitchell, Reid. "The Union Soldier and the Local Community." Paper presented at the 55th Annual Meeting of the Southern Historical Association, Lexington, Kentucky, 1989.
- Program Committee of the Ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women. Transformations: Women, Gender, Power. Program Guide for the Ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, 11-13 June 1993.
- "Third Street Presbyterian Church: 150th Anniversary History, 1835-1985." Paper presented in honor of the church's 150th anniversary, Richmond, Virginia, 1985.
- Treadway, Sandra G. "Women in Virginia." Paper presented at the Virginia Historical Society Conference on New

Directions in Virginia History, Richmond, Virginia, October 1990.

Varon, Elizabeth. "From Partisanship to Sectionalism: White Women's Political Consciousness in Virginia, 1840-1861." Paper presented at the Ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, 11-13 June 1993.

Wheeler, Marjorie Spruill. "'Southern Suffragists and the Rejections of 'Indirect Influence.'" Paper presented at the Ninth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, 11-13 June 1993.

Whites, LeeAnn. "The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender." Paper presented at LeMoyne College, Syracuse, New York, n.d.

Whites, LeeAnn. "Women and the Lost Cause or 'Stand by Your Man': The Ladies' Memorial Association and the Reconstruction of White Manhood in the New South." Paper presented at the Ninth Berkshire Conference of the History of Women, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York, 11-13 June 1993.

Miscellaneous

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Field, Connie [producer/director]. The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter. Clarity Productions, 1980.

Pearson, Doris. Interview with E. Susan Barber, 16 March 1995, Richmond, Virginia .

Washington, William D. The Burial of Latané, oil on canvas, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

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David A. Grimsted
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December 1986
Thesis: "'The Quiet Battles of the Home Front
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of a Confederate Welfare System"
Thesis Advisor: David A. Grimsted
- B.A., College of Notre Dame of Maryland
May 1984, summa cum laude
Double Major: History and English

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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Dame of Maryland
- Fall 1996 to Summer 1997: Lecturer, College of Notre Dame
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- Spring 1988 - Summer 1996: Associate Faculty (Adjunct)
College of Notre Dame of Maryland
Subjects taught: U.S. history, European women's
history, political science, and women's studies
- September 1985 - June 1992: Teaching Assistant
University of Maryland, College Park

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- September 1993 - May 1995: Editorial Associate,
Feminist Studies
- January 1993 - September 1994: Editorial Associate,
AHA Guide to Historical Literature,
University of Maryland, College Park
- December 1992 - April 1993: Editor, National American Woman
Suffrage Association (NAWSA) Collection, American
Memory Project, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

February 1987 - February, 1988: Managing Editor
The Maryland Historian, Vols. 17.2 and 18.1

SERVICE TO THE COLLEGE OF NOTRE DAME OF MARYLAND

September 1996 - present: Faculty Advisor to Lesbians and
Friends (LAF)
January 1996 - present: coordinator, Women's Information
Network
October 1996 - April 1997: coordinator, Notre Dame
Clothesline Project

SERVICE TO HISTORY DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

September 1986 - September 1987: Graduate Student
Representative, Graduate Committee
Fall 1991: Graduate Student Representative, Review
Committee for American Women's Historian

PAPERS

- "'Cartridge Makers and Myrmidon Viragos': White Working-
Class Women in Confederate Richmond," presented at the
SAWH Fourth Southern Conference on Women's History,
Charleston, South Carolina, June 12-14, 1997
"Percussion Caps and Flannel Shirts: Working-Class Women in
Confederate Virginia," presented at the Northern
Virginia Community College Conference on Women of the
Chesapeake, NVCC, Annandale, Virginia, November 15,
1996
"White Women's Organizations in Civil War and
Reconstruction Richmond," presented at the Graduate
Student/Faculty Colloquium, University of Maryland,
May 3, 1995
"Cartridge Making in Confederate Richmond," presented at
the Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia, March 10,
1995
"Braxton Bragg and the Politics of Command," presented at
the Phi Alpha Theta Regional Conference, U.S. Naval
Academy, April 1983 Received honorable mention

PUBLICATIONS

- "'Anxious Care and Constant Struggle': The Female Humane
Association and Richmond's Female Orphans,"
(forthcoming, University of Georgia Press)

AWARDS

Walter J. Rundell, Jr. Graduate Award in American History,
Department of History, University of Maryland, College
Park, 1992 (shared)
Mellon Research Fellowships, Virginia Historical Society,
July 1991 and July 1993
Hearst Travel Grants for Historical Research, Department of
History, University of Maryland, College Park, 1990,
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PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Historical Association - 1989 to present
Berkshire Conference of Women's Historians - 1991 to
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Organization of American Historians - 1989 to present
Phi Alpha Theta - 1982 to present
Southern Association for Women Historians - 1997
Southern History Association - 1989 to 1995