

1998

"I feel quite independent now": The life of Mary Greenhow Lee

Sheila R. Phipps

College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

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<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-na70-x160>

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**"I FEEL QUITE INDEPENDENT NOW:"
THE LIFE OF MARY GREENHOW LEE**

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Sheila Rae Phipps

1998

UMI Number: 9920308

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APPROVAL SHEET


This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy



Sheila Rae Phipps


Approved, July 1998



James P. Whittenburg



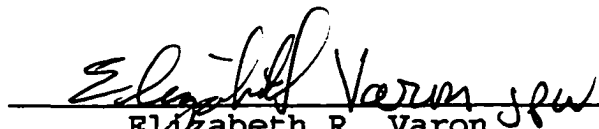
Leisa Meyer



Philip J. Funigiello



Ludwell H. Johnson, III



Elizabeth R. Varon
Wellesley College

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to Professor James P. Whittenburg for his administrative and scholarly guidance, for his willingness to patiently listen to all of the problems and questions that arose during this project, and for his sage counsel toward finding solutions. Professors Leisa Meyer, Philip J. Funigiello, Ludwell H. Johnson, and Elizabeth R. Varon of Wellesley College, the other members of the committee, also gave essential advice as well as direction for broadening this project in the future. In addition, the committee members facilitated completion of this final degree requirement on relatively short notice and, for that, I am especially grateful. Family and friends merit special thanks for their belief in me and the work that occupied much of my time. My son, Brian Phipps, offered calm and thoughtful assurances. My daughter, Brandi Phipps, took an active interest in my progress and added a great deal to the project by lending her graphic design skills to the illustrations included here. Finally, I must express my heartfelt gratitude to my mother, Shirlie Islay Smith Baber, for her invaluable assistance in researching, gathering tax data, computing numbers, proofreading, and cooking for me when necessary. Her most valuable gift to me, however, has been her example of courage, upon which I have drawn countless times.

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³*Ibid.*, 73, 168-169. Original owned by Hall Parke McCullough, New York; displayed at The Bland Gallery, Inc., New York.

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¹⁰*Ibid.*, 6-7. Loaned to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts by the Ambler family.

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¹²*Ibid.*, 116-117. Portrait owned by Mrs. Oswald Garrison Villard.

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¹⁷*Ibid.*, xviii.

¹⁸*Winchester, Virginia: The Virginia Gateway to the Shenandoah Valley*, Winchester Chamber of Commerce (Strasburg, Virginia: Shenandoah Publishing, Inc., 1929) 34.

¹⁹Colt, *Defend the Valley*, 7. Original property of Western Reserve Historical Society.

²⁰*Richmond Portraits*, 41. Portrait owned by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert A. Claiborne.

²¹"Winchester: Prize of War," map compiled by Wilbur S. Johnston (Winchester, Virginia: Winchester Printers, Inc., 1995).

²²Colt, *Defend the Valley*, 6. Original at Library of Congress.

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²⁹*Ibid.*, 105.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 103.

³¹*Ibid.*, 98.

³²*Ibid.*, 104.

³³*Ibid.*, 32.

³⁴Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 50. Lee's knitted socks are located at the Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

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³⁸Colt, *Defend the Valley*, 25. Photo property of Ann L. Barton Brown.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 328. Original property of Western Reserve Historical Society.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 271. Original property of Mrs. C. Marshall Barton, Jr.

⁴¹Delauter, *Winchester*, 100.

⁴²Colt, *Defend the Valley*, 195. Original property of Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 275. Original at Library of Congress.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 365. *Carte de visite* owned by Ann L. Barton Brown.

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⁴⁶See *The Winchester Star*, June 7, 1996.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- CWF** Research Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia
- CWM** Special Collections, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
- ESB** Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia
- HHG** Harriet Hollingsworth Griffith, Diary, Special Collections, Handley Library, Winchester, Virginia
- HL** Special Collections, Handley Library, Winchester, Virginia
- JC** Julia Chase, "War Time Diary of Miss Julia Chase, Winchester, Virginia," typescript, Special Collections, Handley Library, Winchester, Virginia
- JHU** Special Collections, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University
- JPC** John Peyton Clark Journal, typescript, Special Collections, Handley Library, Winchester, Virginia
- LC** Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
- LL** Laura Lee, "The History of Our Captivity," Diary, Special Collections, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
- LOV** Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia
- MCS** "Minutes of the Cerulean Society," Special Collections, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia

- MGL** Mary Greenhow Lee, (Mrs. Hugh Holmes Lee), Diary, Typescript, Handley Library, Winchester, Virginia
- MHS** Special Collections, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland
- MJCG/LC** Mary Greenhow Diary, Mary Greenhow Lee Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., microfilm
- MJCG/MHS** Mary Jane Charlton Greenhow, Diary, Mary Greenhow Lee Papers, Special Collections, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland, typescript
- MLG** Mary Lorraine Greenhow's Commonplace Book, 1829-1850, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland
- MSA** Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland
- OR** *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880)
- RG** Diary of Robert Greenhow, "An account of his journey from Washington, D.C. to Mexico City in 1837," Special Collections, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
- UVA** Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia
- VHS** Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia

ABSTRACT

This project is the biography of Mary Greenhow Lee, a southern woman whose life spanned most of the nineteenth century. Born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1819, into one of the wealthiest families of the city, she was raised in an environment of prestige and power and instructed in the behavior expected of a member of her social group. Through the course of her life, the wealth she had been born into disappeared, but her consciousness of prestige never left her. She married a lawyer of modest means in Winchester, Virginia, became widowed thirteen years later, lived through the Civil War in a border town coveted by both armies, then finally settled in Baltimore, Maryland, where she ran a boarding house to make a living until her death in 1907. The purpose of this study is to use a single personality from the past to examine life in the nineteenth-century South from a woman's perspective, using historic events as a backdrop to the narrative.

Although relatively unknown except by Winchester historians who have made use of her extensive and intensive Civil War journal, Mary Greenhow Lee's life subtly illustrates the role of women in nineteenth-century southern society. Her story is also useful for examining the frustrations and triumphs of women who lived in areas of conflict during the Civil War. Additionally, there are two threads that run throughout this biography. One is the way Lee's character aided her in making decisions and overcoming difficult situations, which is an essential tool for displaying the past since it highlights the human element. Mary Greenhow Lee's intelligence, wit, and defiant spirit drove her own history, and explains how she made the myriad choices confronting her through her life. The other element that ties this biography together is Lee's sense of social place: her *connexion*. Rather than a simple study of class, this biography looks at the very intimate workings of a network of southerners who felt comfortable with and relied upon each other. The war years disclose, however, that crisis could lead many members of this social group to create alliances with other classes for mutual support.

Finally, though this biography is organized chronologically, Lee's Civil War journal demands a thematic approach to the war years. For that chaotic portion of her life, this study examines specifically Mary Greenhow Lee's identity as a southern national, civilian reactions to life in a war zone, and the ways that Lee used her role as a woman to support Confederate soldiers while she manipulated and opposed Union occupiers in Winchester.

"I FEEL QUITE INDEPENDENT NOW:"

THE LIFE OF MARY GREENHOW LEE

INTRODUCTION

On Thursday morning, May 11, 1865, in the Sherrards' kitchen in Staunton, Virginia, Mary Greenhow Lee, a forty-five year old widow, learned to make bread. Lee, her niece Louisa Burweil, and Ella Stribling had gone to the Sherrards for breakfast, after which Jeannie Sherrard gave them their lesson in bread-making. Filled with enthusiasm at the prospect of making bread on her own, Lee hurried home to her rented house to try her "hand" at it. Even though this was her first attempt, she invited "the Catletts & Mrs. Johnson" for supper but, "being timid, they were afraid to leave home as another Brigade of Yankees came in" that morning. Still determined to share her first bread with friends, she "sent up...for Mr. & Mrs. Stuart & their family" to join her for supper. Instead of "Yankees," rain kept the Stuarts from joining her. She "was disappointed" because her "bread was very successful."¹

The first visitor to sample Mary Greenhow Lee's bread was Randolph ("Ranny") McKim, a young veteran, who came on Saturday to tea, which included slices of Lee's newest endeavor. McKim would have appreciated her efforts because he had suffered the trials of bread-making himself, "on the march," and without the most necessary ingredient: yeast. Innovative and hungry, the young soldier had put flour and water

¹Mary Greenhow Lee, (Mrs. Hugh Holmes Lee), Diary, Typescript, Handley Library, Winchester, Virginia, 822, (May, 11, 1865) hereafter cited as MGL. The original is also located in the Handley Library.

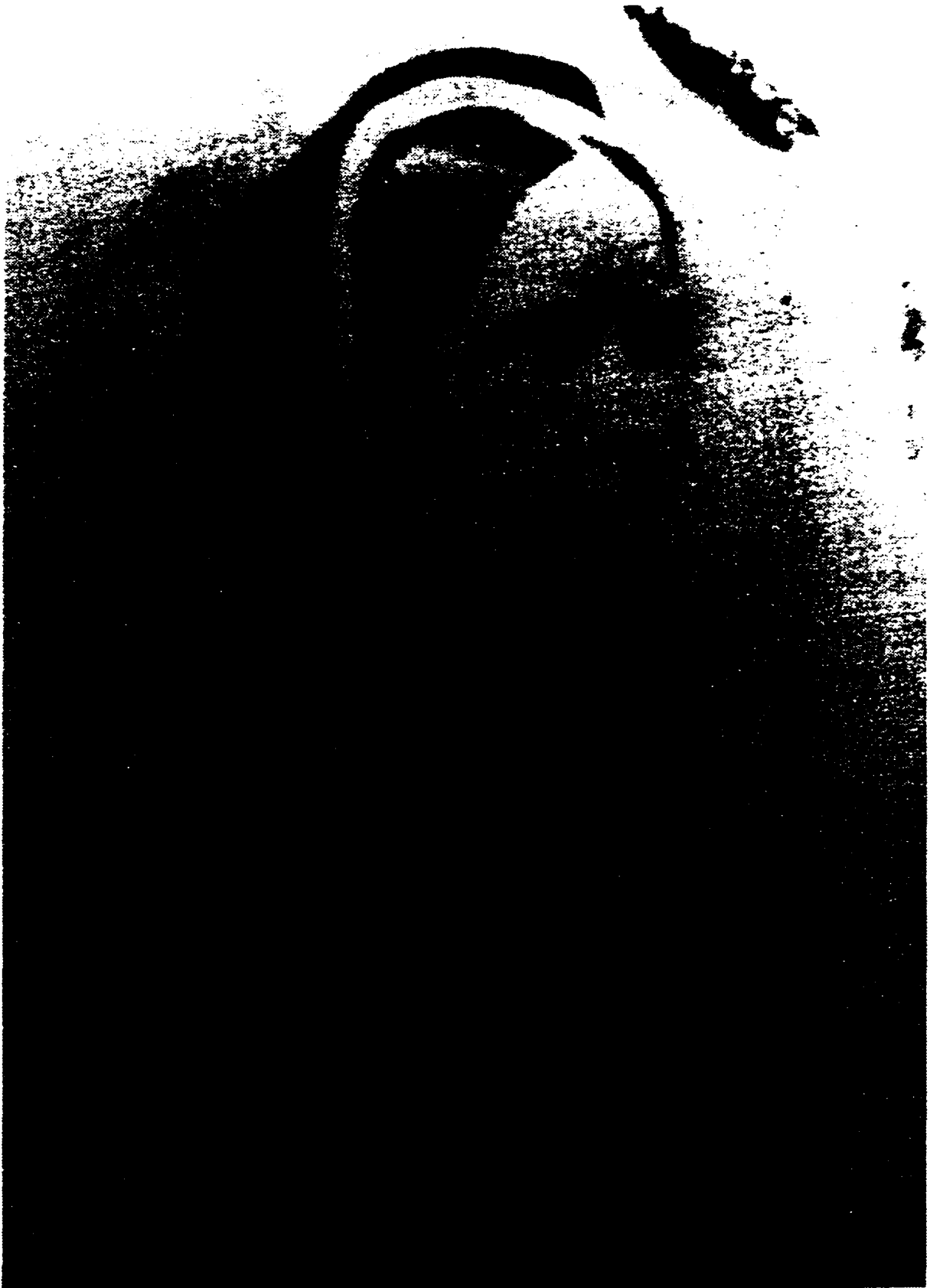
together, wrapped "the dough round [his] ramrod," and leaned "it up before the fire to bake," producing "a loaf of bread about three feet long and one-eighth of an inch thick."²

With the war over, however, McKim was again at liberty to enjoy the warmth of bread made properly, baked in an oven, and served on real dishes, even though most of those dishes and silver cutlery were on loan from Lee's friends, and the wood for the fire and ingredients for the tea donated to the widow out of friendship. Despite her straightened circumstances and her patchwork furnishings, however, Lee played her role as hostess, serving McKim bread, which "proved a grand success." As she recorded the event in her journal, she announced: "I feel quite independent now."³ This brief episode in a life lived for eighty-seven years defines Mary Greenhow Lee, the subject of this biography. *[See illustration 1]*

The story of how she came to be in Staunton, in one sense, describes her character, and in another, marks a watershed in her life. She had been banished from Winchester, Virginia, in February for various reasons but mostly for the "annoyance" she continually gave Federal officers, in direct contrast to the care she had given Confederates such as Ranny McKim. The episode also points to the culture in which Lee lived. Women of Lee's era were measured by their ability to provide nutritious meals, including bread. She had always counted on her slaves to perform this duty for her but war and banishment had deprived her of slaves and, although she had hired a young cook

²Rev. Randolph Harrison McKim, *A Soldier's Recollections: Leaves from the Diary of a Young Confederate* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1911) 43.

³MGL 816 (April 16, 20, 1865), 817 (April 21, 23, 25, 1865), 823 (May 13, 1865).



1. Mary Greenhow Lee

in Staunton, the woman was "a novice" and Lee admitted to "not know[ing] how to teach her in the plain branches." War propelled Lee into "the servant problem" and left her to provide the best, most complete, meals for her friends and family on her own.⁴

It is a sign of her character, however, that Lee did not fear taking on this new chore herself, nor did she lack confidence in exposing her first try to dinner guests. She risked the ridicule of her peers if her bread had not turned out well. Bread-making is not an exact science in which merely measuring ingredients, temperature, and time will always produce the same results. It requires the senses of sight and touch to know the dough's readiness to move from one stage to the next. When the practiced eye and hand note that the dough has a dull sheen yet no longer sticks to the palm of the hand, then the kneading is done. When an impression in the dough fills in quickly, signaling that it has risen to its fullest point, it is ready for baking. All of these sense perceptions require time and experience to develop. Yet Mary Greenhow Lee's confidence and enthusiasm led her to invite critics to supper even as she waited for the bread to come out of the oven.⁵

Although the Stuarts did not attend the debut of Lee's first bread, the fact that she invited them points to another defining characteristic of Mary Greenhow Lee. Mr. Stuart was Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart, one of the most economically and politically powerful men in Virginia. Stuart had served in the Virginia House of Delegates, the

⁴Alan Grubb, "House and Home in the Victorian South: The Cookbook as Guide," 154-175, in Carol Bleser, ed., in *In Joy and In Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991) 171; MGL 818 (April 25, 1865).

⁵I would like to thank my mother, Shirlie Islay Smith Baber, for patiently teaching me the art of bread-making, a process that feeds the soul as much as the bread feeds the body. During the lessons I felt an ancient connection to the long line of women from whom I am descended, learning the tricks they had all passed down through the ages.

State Senate, and the United States Congress and, under President Millard Fillmore, served as Secretary of the Interior.⁶ Financially, Stuart was one of the healthiest men in his area. In 1860, he paid 1.5% of the aggregate taxes collected on land in Augusta County, 4% of the aggregate assessed in personal property, and owned 3.3% of the total number of slaves in his jurisdiction.⁷

Though virtually homeless, living partially on the charity of others in Staunton, and only months away from taking in boarders in Baltimore to make a living, Mary Greenhow Lee considered herself the Stuarts' social equal, and felt comfortable enough in their company to invite them to taste the results of her first bread-making endeavor. To explain Mary Greenhow Lee's status, I have borrowed a word from her personal lexicon: *connexion*. The thread of Lee's *connexion* that runs through this biography complicates the normal attributes given to the term *elite* because economic standing and political power had less to do with this network's self-perception of social status than did various other factors. *Visitable*, another term Mary Greenhow Lee adopted as part of her vocabulary from an early age, was the contemporary rubric symbolizing qualities which safeguarded gentility, insuring against indiscriminate socializing. These qualities included strong family heritage, a good education, piety, and an easy familiarity with the social

⁶Alexander F. Robertson, *Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart, 1807-1891: A Biography* (Richmond, Virginia: The William Byrd Press, Inc., 1925) 184-199; Paul Brandon Barringer, James Mercer Garnett, and Rosewell Page, eds., *University of Virginia: Its History, Influence, Equipment and Characteristics with Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Founders, Benefactors, Officers and Alumni* (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1904) 334-335; Garland R. Quarles, *The Story of One Hundred Old Homes in Winchester, Virginia* (Winchester, Va.: Farmers & Merchants Bank, 1967) 56-57; MGL 804 (March, 20, 1865), 816 (April 17, 1865), 817 (April 22, 1865), 822 (May 11, 1865), 830 (May 31, 1865), 846 (July 17, 1865), 853 (August 11, 1865), 858 August 21, 1865.

⁷Augusta County Personal Property and Land Tax Lists, 1860, Archives, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia. Hereafter LOV.

graces.⁸ Lee used the term *connexion* to denote her social equals, those who were *visitable*, who fit into her social comfort zone.

On the other hand, Lee used the word *class* to express difference, the difference between others and herself. "That class," for Lee, could mean various groups of people: those with less education and less prominent heritage; northerners, or Union officers and soldiers during the war. She even assigned people to "that class" if they betrayed less optimistic hopes for the South during the war than she held. In other words, Lee rarely used *class* as a term for her own group, but more for those who were outside of the category to which she assigned herself.

Lee's use of the term *class* agrees with studies of southern social structure. Although by the time of the Civil War the South had developed an aristocracy of sorts, privileged southerners merely operated under the assumption that they existed primarily as independent, self-sufficient units, only occasionally benefiting from being included in the society of comparably advantaged people. In other words, the southern aristocracy was not a self-conscious class. Southern whites who would not be termed *elite* were also unaware of their membership in any category. Small slaveholders and nonslaveholders,

⁸MGL 866 (September 7, 1865); *Etiquette at Washington: Together with the Customs Adopted by Polite Society in the Other Cities of the United States*, 3rd Ed, Baltimore: Murphy & Co., 1857, 45-50; Mary Jane Charlton Greenhow, Diary, Mary Greenhow Lee Papers, Special Collections, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland, typescript, 12 (9/23/1837), hereafter MJCG/MHS. [For Mary Greenhow's 1837-1838 diary, I used the typescript located at the Maryland Historical Society for most of the references used in this dissertation. The original is on microfilm at the Library of Congress, however, and cited as Mary Greenhow Diary, Mary Greenhow Lee Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. The original contains a list of family births and deaths, and a list of parties, which I use for this project to a limited extent. To distinguish between the two, the typescript will be cited as MJCG/MHS and the original on microfilm will be cited as MJCG/LC.] The term *connexion* had been used in Lee's family for some time. In an 1812 advertisement announcing an expansion in his medical practice, Mary Greenhow Lee's uncle, James Greenhow, stated "Doctor Greenhow will receive into his shop as students two young gentlemen of respectable *connexions*, and good educations." *The Enquirer*, Nov 6, 1812. Emphasis added.

likewise, did not think of themselves as members of a clear-cut social group.⁹

This seeming unawareness of stratification in southern society begs the question of how these people had any sense of social place. Class consciousness develops, however, only in opposition to another class. Indeed, a class is usually other-defined, initially located and labeled by those not included; *class* for nineteenth-century southerners meant people in whose company they did not feel at ease and with whom they did not relate. For Mary Greenhow Lee, *connexion* referred to those with whom she did feel comfortable, who met her requirements for social inclusion.¹⁰

Diminishing fortunes did not seem to make a great difference within the *connexion*; disparity in economic power was an acknowledged fact of life. A history of family wealth—or obvious economic potential—could earn one a place in the group. Although her father ranked in the ninety-eighth percentile of taxable wealth for Richmond when Mary Greenhow Lee was born in 1819, her own economic holdings ranged near the bottom of the *connexion* relative to her own generation.¹¹

⁹Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "W. J. Cash and Southern Culture," in Walter J. Fraser, Jr., and Winfred B. Moore, Jr. (eds.), *From the Old South to the New: Essays on the Transitional South* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981), 195-214; Bill Cecil-Fronsman, "The Common Whites: Class and Culture in Antebellum North Carolina," (Ph.D., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1983), University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, MI, 1985, 3, 12-21.

¹⁰For a discussion of class identification see Edward P. Thompson, "Eighteenth-Century English Society: Class Struggle Without Class?" in *Social History* 3 (1978) 133-165, 149. For a postmodernist dialogue on the topic see Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds, *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 1996) 411-440.

¹¹Marianne Patricia Buroff Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia: the Town and Henrico County to 1820," Ph.D. Diss., University of Michigan, 1975 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1975) 124; Land Tax Records and Personal Property Tax Records, Richmond City and Henrico County, 1819 and 1830, LOV; 1860 Personal Property and Land Tax Records for Richmond City, Staunton, Winchester, and the counties of Albemarle, Augusta, Clark, Dinwiddie, Fairfax, Frederick, Harrison, Henrico, and Loudoun, Archives, LOV.

Looking at 1860 in isolation, all of Lee's friends owned slaves, but in Winchester several of the members claimed only one or two slaves, while others in the town owned as many as five. Mary Greenhow Lee paid personal property taxes on two slaves for her household. For those of her friends who lived in rural areas, the numbers ranged from four to thirty-nine. Personal property values spread from the lowest (her cousin George Charlton in Petersburg) at .03% of the total taxable wealth of his community, to her neighbor Philip Williams at 5%. Lee herself hovered near the lower end at .08%. For land taxes, Joseph Sherrard held the lowest position in her *connexion* at .01%, with the highest, Nathaniel Meade, editor of the *Winchester Republican* and a farmer in Clark County, assessed at 2.8% of that district's total taxes on land. Mary Greenhow Lee paid .3% of Winchester's land taxes for her house on Market Street. Clearly, uniformity of wealth was not a characteristic of this group of Virginians.¹² Even through widowhood and war, Mary Greenhow Lee's social position as a member of this group--the *connexion*--remained a constant throughout her life and is a continuing thread in her biography.

That Lee found several friends in Staunton to assist her and loan furnishings and donate food to her, is an example of another point relevant to her life story. An analysis of Lee's *connexion* is also the study of a community. Of over 650 names taken from her diaries and journal, the known population of her world, approximately one-third have been identified in some detail. Several members played vital roles in Lee's life; many moved only on its periphery. In addition, Lee's South was not the plantation, but rather

¹²*Ibid.* In order to draw economic comparisons between the members of this group, and because they were from various jurisdictions, I divided each person's tax liability for slaves, personal property, and land taxes by the aggregate assessment for his or her particular jurisdiction. Admittedly, this is still a rough comparison, but it does give some idea of how widely the valuations of economic wealth differed within the group.

the urban, South. The *connexion* tied these areas together. Some of this population farmed, but the property owned by many in the group was measured in lots rather than acres and their primary income came from professions, not crop yields. They were lawyers, doctors, merchants, and coal dealers. Some sold tobacco in various forms. Others were respected clergymen. Still others taught in universities and wrote textbooks.¹³

Lee's own life supports this picture of the urban *connexion*. She was born and grew up in Richmond, Virginia, but also spent time with friends and family in Williamsburg and Washington, D. C., during her youth. After marrying Hugh Holmes Lee in 1843, she moved to his home in Winchester, in the Lower Shenandoah Valley where Lee practiced law until his death in 1856. Their house remained Mary Greenhow Lee's home until her banishment in 1865. After wandering in exile throughout that summer, she finally relocated in Baltimore where she lived out the rest of her life.

Other than a small number of letters found in a few archives, the three most important sources available for this biography are a diary Lee kept from September, 1837, to April, 1838 when she was eighteen years old, a small diary kept in the fall of 1842, and her Civil War journal. This journal begins on March 11, 1862, on the eve of the first Union occupation of Winchester, and ends on page 891, in November 1865, the day she signed a lease on her first house in Baltimore.

When a rich and detailed journal like Mary Greenhow Lee's is available, it is appropriate to sift her words finely for a clue to the dynamic effect of war on women. One insightful woman's journal can be a psychological road map to her emotional and

¹³MGL, 873 (September 27, 1865).

physical struggles throughout the war. Historians such as George C. Rable and Drew Gilpin Faust have tapped this journal for insight into women's wartime experiences; and Winchester historians have made extensive use of it to create narratives of the many events that kept the town in turmoil throughout the Civil War.¹⁴

Research into what other people had to say about Lee proved productive to a very limited extent. Sources written by some of her best friends have not surfaced, and there are almost none which give the critical view of Lee that might have balanced the picture shown here. I approached her diaries and journal, however, as though they were tools she used to explain herself to others and to draw strength for an understanding of her Self as she overcame difficult situations.

Many southern women took up pen and what paper they could find to record their experiences throughout the Civil War. Mary Chesnut's war journal is well-known, but the journal that went into print was not the one she wrote during the war. For almost twenty years Chesnut stewed over how she should present her account of the war to the public. According to the standards of model behavior for nineteenth century women, Chesnut felt she should not have a public voice, so she worked at leaving references to

¹⁴George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Roger U. Delanter, Jr., *Winchester in the Civil War* (Lynchburg, Virginia: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1992); A. Bentley Kenney, "The Devil Diarists of Winchester," in *Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society Journal*, Vol. V, 1990: 11-27; Garland R. Quarles, *Occupied Winchester: 1861-1865* (Winchester, Va: Farmers & Merchants Bank, 1976). Since Faust uses Mary Greenhow Lee's Civil War journal extensively for her work in *Mothers of Invention*, and since she uses many of the same direct quotations that I use here, some readers might wonder why I do not cite Faust more often in this biography. It should be noted that many of the interpretations I make here I had made in my thesis, entitled, "As If I were a Confederate Soldier': Mary Greenhow Lee and the Civil War She Waged in Winchester, Virginia," for my M.A. degree granted in May of 1996, emerging simultaneously with Faust's *Mothers of Invention*. Therefore, I did not draw on Faust's work, but on my own.

her own feelings out of her journal, yet still recreating her wartime experiences.¹⁵ According to Melissa Mentzer, Chesnut's solution was to assign some of her own judgments to that of a friend, thereby exposing her opinions to public view without risking condemnation for having them, and left some of her opinions completely out of her published work. As Mentzer so aptly puts it, Mary Chesnut had to "speak from the margins of her text rather than the center as women speak from the margins of society, sometimes claiming an identity, sometimes anonymously."¹⁶

Mary Greenhow Lee, however, had no problem claiming her identity, even though she suspected that her journal might eventually be read by others. Her entry for October 27, 1862, begins: "What do you think—all you who may hereafter read my journal, what do you think has happened to-day—I must lead you to it by degrees," introducing her account of a visit from General "Stonewall" Jackson.¹⁷ She was already gaining a reputation as a staunch and assertive Confederate and assumed Jackson's visit to be a high compliment to her for her efforts. The beginning of her entry for that day reveals she had begun to imagine a wider audience than her intended reader. Clearly not shy about revealing her opinions on public policy, Lee learned to create a dramatic effect to reflect the position in which she perceived her Self to be.

When Lee began her journal, she was really beginning a letter to no one in particular to "pass away...dreadful hours of suspense" when she knew that Confederate

¹⁵Melissa Mentzer, "Rewriting Herself: Mary Chesnut's Narrative Strategies," in *Connecticut Review* 1992 14(1): 49-56, 50.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 51, 52.

¹⁷MGL, 249 (October 27, 1862).

troops were evacuating Winchester and Union troops were just outside of town. Eventually, however, she clearly appropriated the journal as a place to "talk over" the events of her day with her Self. Lee did not make an entry in her journal for Friday, January 23, 1863. She reported the next night that "as I had nothing particular to say to myself in my journal, I skipped a day."¹⁸

In a sense, journals are a forum for writers to display their actions and feelings for reappraisal. On another level, a journal can be a stage for interaction where writers can reconstruct the scenes of important events between themselves and an "Other," the responses of which help to define a writer's definition of his or her "Self." If the reactions of a friend are positive, the writer will note a level of affirmation about his or her "Self." Likewise, if the recorded reactions of an enemy are negative, the writer's words will reflect some satisfaction as well. Whatever the case, a journal can be searched for clues about the writer's expectations, both of the "Self" and of the "Other" in each situation.¹⁹

To her journal, for example, Mary Greenhow Lee continually reiterated that the "Yankees" had no control over her because she "never ask[ed] favors of them." Instead of asking, Lee stated: "I *make* them do...for me."²⁰ Lee believed this about her "Self" and her belief was reinforced as she played the scenes over in her journal, thus giving her the quality of control she aspired to, and confidence for her next confrontation. In

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 301 (January 24, 1863).

¹⁹Richard D. Logan, "Reflections on Changes in Self-Apprehension and Construction of the 'Other' in Western History," in *The Psychohistory Review* Vol. 19, No. 3 (Spring 1991), 296-323, 295, 298.

²⁰MGL, 7 (March, 13, 1862), 733 (December 7, 1864), 730 (December 3, 1864), 763 (January 23, 1865), 697 (September 30, 1864), emphasis added.

addition, the way that Lee obtained personal power in these situations could help us redefine power for use in women's history, to replace the generalized notion of women as oppressed and powerless with a picture of how women of the past found sources of control for their lives, and politicized their needs to at least acquire a perception of strength. As Linda Gordon has suggested, "to be less powerful is not to be powerless," and Mary Greenhow Lee's life illustrates the unique ways she found to take command in her own life.²¹ A woman who stated, "I do what I think right & am willing to take the consequence," does not fit the image of the helpless, powerless southern Lady.²²

The war did not defeat Mary Greenhow Lee, and neither did the loss of her slaves. Through the war, she had feared that her slaves might leave her, and wondered how she would manage her household without them, but they were a burden to her as well. In the end, she left them and, once she learned how to make bread without them, felt "quite independent," suggesting that she had also felt fettered under slavery. Simply learning to make bread, a chore for which she had always relied upon her slaves, gave her a feeling of independence even in the middle of uncertainty. This does not mean that Lee was an anomaly. Possibly our standard image is wrong.

Regarding slavery, my treatment of the institution in this biography of a woman who grew up in the antebellum South requires comment. Since Mary Greenhow Lee was born into an environment in which slavery was an accepted part of the landscape, I have not highlighted her relationship with slaves in a separate section except where it bears on

²¹Linda Gordon, "What's New in Women's History," in Sneja Gunew, ed., *A Reader in Feminist Knowledge* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991) 73-82: 75-77.

²²MGL, 552 (February 6, 1864).

the narrative. Taken together, my interpretation of Lee's association with her slaves and her opinions about the institution reflect that Lee was no more or no less affected by slavery than were her contemporaries. Living during an era in which one race assumed dominance over another was all Mary Greenhow Lee had known. Therefore, my decision to treat her attitude about slaves as customary by weaving in my interpretation at only those points when slavery became remarkable to her was made consciously to match the era's tapestry of life between the races.

Mary Greenhow Lee was a fascinating and lively woman but what can a biography of one woman, no matter how interesting, contribute to our understanding of the past? In answer, I offer two prime examples of biographies that do that very well, one focusing on the end of the eighteenth century, and the other dealing with the Civil Rights Movement in the twentieth. As Laurel Thatcher Ulrich has shown using Martha Ballard's diaries, one woman's life and the ways she accommodated the changes in it reveal a great deal about women's culture and the balance it has provided to their communities.²³ The second example is the biography of Fannie Lou Hamer by Kay Mills, which portrays a spunky, unassuming woman who, almost by virtue of accidentally being in the center of the storm, got caught up in a major historic event, similar to Mary Greenhow Lee's experiences.²⁴

In both of these cases, history surrounding the subjects of the biographies supplies the background for the narrative, but the most informative aspect of the works is the

²³Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

²⁴Kay Mills, *This Little Light of Mine: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer* (New York: Dutton Publishers, 1983).

intimate knowledge of the historic player herself, how personality, character, skills, and goals made it possible to deal with particular challenges. In other words, a biography is a microscopic look at the past. As Joan W. Scott has argued, the impressions of historic events upon women can change "the standards of historical significance," by showing how personal experiences can act on public matters as much as the reverse.²⁵ Furthermore, while thematic history searches for change through time, a biography often locates constants through change, as I have done for Mary Greenhow Lee's life in the form of her sense of social place—her *connexion*—and her strong character.

In addition, biographies afford a chance to apply multiple methods of inquiry. I have to a limited extent applied the approach to women's history suggested by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich in *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750*, that of looking at the several roles women assume during their lives. Ulrich outlines this structure by giving examples of several different women and how their particular characters and circumstances created the appearance of the role they played.²⁶ As Allan F. Davis has shown in *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams*, this method works well to illustrate the life of one woman. In the case of Addams, Davis uses both her local role of maternal figure and the national role of peacemaker to explain who she was.²⁷ With Mary Greenhow Lee, I have tried to create a composite of her character by showing who she was as a daughter, a sister, an aunt,

²⁵Joan W. Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) 20.

²⁶Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

²⁷Allan F. Davis, *American Heroine: The Life and Legend of Jane Addams* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

a wife, a friend, a slaveholder, a patriot, a rebel, and a survivor. The effect is to complicate the picture of Mary Greenhow Lee to keep her from being placed in a single category, which is the way we should think about all historic figures.

A biography of a woman who lived through the Civil War can dissect the elements of debate concerning where southern women stood at the end of the war, whether empowered, further subjugated, or remaining in place on the pedestal they had occupied in the Old South.²⁸ A more intensive study of one woman's experiences, though unable to sort out the confusion, at least can help explain it. Lee did not lose faith in the Cause, nor did she resent the sacrifices she made for it. She put her energy into Lost Cause associations after the war for the same reason she agreed to secession: to protect and preserve the Old South's traditions, including her gendered position. Although from a twentieth-century vantage point we might argue with Mary Greenhow Lee that the work she performed during the war proved her right to a political voice, that would have been a radical notion for a woman steeped in nineteenth-century southern culture. She wanted her men to regain their political power, and she wanted to retain her right to be exempt from that responsibility. To request more of her would be asking too much.

Additionally, while composite studies claim that women soon became tired of war and wished it over, won or lost, Mary Greenhow Lee's story sheds light on the realities

²⁸See Rable, *Civil Wars*, 227, 288; Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970) 81-102; Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 251. These three works define the debate over where southern women stood at the end of the war. Scott, in her seminal work on the subject, argues that women had learned to be more publicly active and took part in rebuilding the South. Rable's "change without change" position projects women basically in the same place at war's end, weak and overshadowed by men. Faust's position on the subject is that women had learned to be self-sufficient by necessity and were not willing to give up those advances. The difference between Scott's and Faust's conclusions is that Faust sees women in the New South mistrustful of men and working under the mantle of the Lost Cause, embittered over the loss of the war, while Scott's is a more positive picture of involvement.

of their days. It is true that she at times became disheartened and depressed and wanted the war to end; but she provided insight as to why she might have left the impression that she was giving up. "I always write at night, when completely fagged out," she explained, and "I fear I give a weary view of matters."²⁹ There was only one outcome of the war that she could accept, but the time of day when she wrote her thoughts shadowed her reflections with weariness. She wanted her readers to understand, however, that she felt more optimistic than her words might imply. Possibly other women's Civil War diaries received a similar tainting. The dark and brooding comments that we have tallied up into a general surrender of will might be explained in part by the lateness of the day as much as the length of the war.

The types of sources available for the first half of Mary Greenhow Lee's life drive the organization of Chapters I and II. Although it would seem more appropriate to begin the story of her life by centering on her relationships with immediate family members, the available information for that focus was written at the time she was reaching adulthood. To reduce chronology confusion, Chapter I begins with her birth and concentrates on her family background and the physical world into which she was born. Chapter II looks more closely at her family bonds and at Mary Greenhow Lee's nature and the genesis of her rebellious spirit. Chapter III is a study of Winchester, the town she adopted when she married Hugh Holmes Lee. Since sources are slim on her marriage years, her involvement in Winchester society must stand in for the particulars of that relationship. The end of the chapter comes when her husband died, leaving Mary Greenhow Lee a widow in 1856, a major turning point in her life. Lee's rich Civil War

²⁹MGL, 419 (June 19, 1863).

journal demands a shift from a chronological to a thematic treatment, and leaves the biography hovering over the war years for four chapters. Chapter IV concentrates on Lee's southern nationalism and Chapter V describes Winchester's position in the war and the turmoil that fueled Lee's active involvement in the war. Chapters VI and VII describe the gendered ways that Lee waged war, first in a practical sense, and then psychologically. The end of Chapter VII illustrates how traditional periodization should be adapted for women's history. The watershed for Lee's life was not the end of the war in April of 1865, but her banishment from Winchester in February. Chapter VIII describes how she handled her displacement and then chronologically follows through to the end of her life in Baltimore.

Before beginning this biography, yet another point can be made about Lee's bread-making episode by characterizing the company she kept that morning she learned the art. With the exception of Ella Stribling who was thirty-two, all of the women who breakfasted with Lee that morning in May were half her age.³⁰ She preferred the company of young people; they tapped into her youthful spirit and sense of fun. Mary Greenhow Lee was a woman of courage who had a horror of mice and bats, but refused

³⁰Hugh Milton McIlhany, Jr., *Some Virginia Families* (Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Co., 1962) 41. This source supports the theory of an urban *connexion*, as well as the ways that the *connexion* wove their web that is alluded to throughout this biography, though not emphasized. Ella Matilda Stribling was the daughter of Francis Taliaferro Stribling and Henrietta Frances Cuthbert Stribling. Dr. Stribling served for years as the Superintendent of the Western State Hospital in Staunton. In 1867, Ella Stribling married Hugh Lee Powell of Leesburg, a nephew of Mary Greenhow Lee's late husband, Hugh Holmes Lee. Members of the *connexion* tended to marry each other. Distance between urban areas did not hamper that tendency. In addition, Hugh Powell was obviously named after his uncle, Hugh Holmes Lee, as was one of his first cousins. Hugh Powell, whose parents were William A. Powell and Lucy Peachy Lee Powell, named his first daughter Lucy Lee Powell, thus continuing the family *connexion* through the names of his children. The marriage and naming practices of Mary Greenhow Lee's *connexion* support the same tendency found by Jane Turner Censer in her study of antebellum North Carolina planter families. See Jane Turner Censer, *North Carolina Planters and their Children* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984) 7, 32-33.

to fear invading armies.³¹ She exhibited a willful character, high intelligence, quick wit, and appreciated well-written books, bright people, and good music. In her youth she was slightly irreverent. As a mature woman, her faith was sometimes her only comfort. She had a fondness for champagne and oysters, and a passion for ice cream.³² Although she could be ultra-critical of others, she also had a lovely ability to laugh at herself. Mary Greenhow Lee lived in a world unfamiliar to us now but the full story of how she placed her Self in that world also reveals seamless similarities between the present and the past.

³¹MGL 305 (February 3, 1863), 457 (August 12, 1863).

³²*Ibid.*, 874 (October 1, 1865), 890 (November 12, 1865), 891 (November 14, 1865), 586 (April 30, 1864), 637 (July 12, 1864), 838 (June 21, 1865); MJCG/MHS 71 (March 12, 1838), 72 (March 15, 1838), 73 (March 21, 1838), 75 (March 25, 1838), 76 (March 25, 1838).

CHAPTER I
"MY BIRTHDAY -- I HAVE SPENT IT PROFITABLY."¹

On September 9, 1819, in Richmond, Virginia, at that time of evening when autumn competes with summer for dominance, candlelight could be seen through a few of the many windows of the large house on Capitol Street; smoke rose from the central chimney. Passersby would not have guessed the heightened level of anticipation circulating throughout the house. Most of the twelve household slaves were no doubt carrying out their customary evening duties; but some hastened to perform special tasks, on orders of the people attending to Mary Lorraine Greenhow, concentrating on the labor of giving birth. Candlelight blended shadows in the room as she met each contraction, and flickered deep golden lights on the mahogany bedstead supporting her.²

Downstairs Robert Greenhow probably waited for word on his wife's progress. He might have passed the time working at his desk, trying to concentrate on many of the business details demanded of a merchant and landlord, while he sipped coffee hot enough to scald most people, just the way he liked it. Or it is possible that he filled the time standing at one of the windows facing the State Capitol, contemplating the world his

¹MGL, 227 (September 9, 1862).

²Personal Property Tax Lists, Richmond City, Virginia, 1815, 1819, LOV.

newest child was fighting to enter.³

Gazing past the trees and shadows of the capitol lawn, Greenhow might have pondered on the economic problems Richmond faced. Indeed, the whole nation had been experiencing bank and business failures to an alarming degree. Greenhow's own extensive properties had plunged in value by 20% from the previous year; but others were facing difficulties more severe, some had lost half the values on their property. Prices on "necessaries" were rising, too. The cost of flour at \$15 or \$16 a barrel, was four to five times more than it had been just a few years earlier. Richmond itself was thinning out as citizens moved off to find better opportunities elsewhere. The financial panic was one of the first depressions of its kind for the United States, a new nation feeling its way into modern capitalism, realizing how erratic the economic cycles could be.⁴

The city lived under the threat of a deadly disease as well. From the domed building across the way, Greenhow's friend, Peter V. Daniel, Virginia's Lieutenant Governor, had issued an order of quarantine for all ships entering state ports from Baltimore, Charleston, and Cuba to protect Virginians from the "malignant and contagious fever" raging in those areas.⁵

Though Greenhow might have been concerned as he waited for word on his wife,

³MJCG/MHS, 78 (April 11, 1838); MJCG/LC, list of family births and deaths; Mary Wingfield Scott, *Houses of Old Richmond*, (Richmond, Virginia: The Valentine Museum, 1941) 57-61.

⁴Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 294, 295, 298; Richmond City Personal Property Tax Lists, 1818, 1819, LOV. On the reasons for the Panic of 1819, see Steven Watts, *The Republic Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America, 1790-1820* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987) 319.

⁵*Richmond Enquirer*, September 11, 1819. Orders were issued on August 19, 1819.

he no doubt reasoned that he had the intelligence and resources to provide the best protection possible for his youngest child. Surveying his surroundings, his experienced eye would have taken in the mahogany dining table in the next room, and remembered that he had enough matching chairs on hand to seat sixty guests. The piano offered hours of entertainment, the silver tea service added luster to their afternoon ritual, carpets cushioned their walk in various rooms through the house, and a carriage with two horses was available to take them wherever they needed or wanted to go. His home, at least, would offer a comfortable immediate world to the newest Greenhow, no matter what other evils raged outside.⁶

At twenty minutes to nine, any worries that might have been plaguing Robert Greenhow were probably interrupted by the piercing infant cry cutting through the stillness. He checked his gold watch to note the time, then waited to be summoned to his wife's side.⁷

When this particular child entered the world into the relatively abrasive world of sheeting, light, drafts, and human hands, her infant cry probably did not require much encouragement. Given the control she attempted to maintain over her environment throughout the rest of her eighty-seven years, it would have been uncharacteristic of Mary Jane Charlton Greenhow to remain silent at her very first opportunity to protest.

This imagined scene beginning the life of this biography's subject describes the first environment known to Mary Greenhow Lee. To understand who she became, the

⁶Richmond City Personal Property Tax Lists, 1815, 1819, LOV.

⁷*Ibid.*; MJCG/LC, list of births and deaths.

first step is to study the world of her origin, to get as close to her roots as possible. Who Robert Greenhow was, how he conducted his life, and the degree to which he felt comfortable in his environment says a great deal about the strong woman he raised, providing the example of the patrician values of civic obligations she would later exhibit. Additionally, although she was raised in one of the wealthiest surroundings in Richmond, Mary Greenhow Lee would one day feel just as satisfied with her "comfortable little room" in her modest Winchester home.⁸ Ultimately, it was not the extent of material possessions that mattered to her, but the degree to which she had the power to control her surroundings.

The world of wealth and public responsibility Robert Greenhow provided for his family was, in part, a legacy of his own beginnings: the first from his father, John Greenhow; the second arising out of the time and place of his boyhood. John Greenhow migrated to America from Staunton, near Kendal, in Westmoreland County, England, in the middle of the eighteenth century, settling at Williamsburg, Virginia's colonial capital.⁹ Greenhow opened a store near Bruton Parish Church on Main Street about 1754. The establishment proved a success, offering "wine by the pipe, cask, gallon, or quart," beaver traps, yard goods, salt sacks, frying pans, and corks, among various other merchandise for home and farm. Greenhow advertised his store's location "near the Church," in 1755; but a sign of his success is that other Williamsburg proprietors began

⁸MGL, 490 (October 9, 1863).

⁹John Greenhow gravestone, Bruton Parish Church, Williamsburg, Virginia. According to the gravestone, Greenhow was born November 12, 1724. Kendal is located in northern England, an area sparsely populated at the beginning of the eighteenth century and noted for its woolen industry. See *Historical Atlas of the World*, Newly Revised Edition (New Jersey: Hammond, Inc., 1995) 36.

using Greenhow's store as a landmark in their advertisements at least by 1767.¹⁰ John Greenhow married Judith Davenport, daughter of Joseph and Margaret Davenport of Williamsburg, in November, 1759, signifying that the immigrant from England had proven himself sufficiently worthy in both financial and social terms to gain acceptance by the Davenports. Judith's father served as Clerk of the Hustings Court for James City County, and as the Williamsburg Town Clerk.¹¹

John and Judith Greenhow had two children, Robert, born in May 1761, and daughter Ann, before Judith, "a sincere Christian...lov'd [and] valu'd," died on January 4, 1765.¹² John married again, this time to Elizabeth Tyler of Charles City County, and an aunt of John Tyler who would become President of the United States. Out of this marriage, Robert Greenhow gained five half-brothers and three half-sisters. When Elizabeth died of smallpox in 1781, John Greenhow married Rebecca Harman, daughter of Benskin Harman, with whom he had one more daughter.¹³

Before John Greenhow died in 1787, he had fathered eleven children in three marriages, accumulated property in and around Williamsburg and had extended his holdings to a store and four lots on Shockoe Hill in Richmond. The Greenhows lived in the "large and commodious Dwelling House on the main street" of Williamsburg, but Greenhow also owned at least six houses on the back street and four hundred acres on the

¹⁰Notes on Colonial Lot 159, Research Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.

¹¹Greenhow Family Papers, *William & Mary College Quarterly*, Series 1, Vol. 7, 1898-1899, 17.

¹²*Ibid.*; Judith Greenhow gravestone, Bruton Parish Church, Williamsburg, Virginia.

¹³John and Elizabeth Greenhow gravestones, Bruton Parish Church, Williamsburg, Virginia; *William & Mary College Quarterly*, Series 1, Vol. 7, 1898-1899, 17.

east end of the town adjacent to the Public Gaol and framed on the north and west by streets that were both named "Greenhow." According to the advertisement announcing the sale of his estate, Greenhow owned "a number of valuable slaves," livestock, "elegant household Furniture," including "a beautiful keyed chamber Organ and a Spinnet," and "london built town" silver coffee and tea pots monogrammed with the initials "JG."¹⁴

Robert Greenhow grew up, then, the oldest child in a sizeable family of comfortable circumstances, and in a town that had been designed to reflect its importance to both the Virginia colonists and England's crown. He also grew up during the era when colonists struggled to separate from that Crown. By the time Robert Greenhow was born, Williamsburg had a population of a thousand residents and about two hundred dwellings. When the Assembly was in session, however, the town could swell significantly in numbers, as Burgesses arrived to conduct the colony's business. Men who had stood for election in their home counties, who had taken over leadership roles in the colony came to Williamsburg when the Governor called. As young Robert Greenhow grew up learning within his home how to create and maintain a successful business, he also no doubt watched with interest, as just outside of his home, political leaders gathered to discuss the issues of the day.¹⁵

At just the point in a child's life when he or she realizes there are such things as

¹⁴Photostatic copy of Williamsburg Plat in "Williamsburg, the Old Colonial Capitol," by Lyon G. Tyler, Colonial Williamsburg Research Department; notes on Colonial Lot 159, Research Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia, hereafter CWF; Last Will of Robert Greenhow, Richmond Hustings Court Book 8, 263, LOV.

¹⁵Norman K. Risjord, *Jefferson's America, 1760-1815* (Madison, Wisconsin: Madison House, 1991) 22-23; Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988) 85, 93.

political issues and persuasive skills, Robert Greenhow witnessed the most tumultuous political events in Virginia's history. The town and times of his boyhood were clearly pulsing with the atmosphere of change, with both the anxiety and the hope that only rapid change can generate. From church to tavern, revolutionary rhetoric bounced off of walls and must have affected the young boy. The Raleigh Tavern, among other taverns in town, housed some of the legislators, or hosted them as they gathered for discussion and debate. Since Robert Greenhow's uncle, Anthony Hay, owned and managed the Raleigh Tavern, it is logical to assume that young Robert spent some of his free time there, and probably knew first hand something of the frenzy of debate. It could even be possible that young Robert Greenhow watched as the Burgesses, who had resolved to set June 7, 1774, as a day of fasting and prayer in sympathy for Boston's blockaded port, were prorogued by Lord Dunmore from the Hall of the Capitol. On a scale of momentous events, watching the disbanded Burgesses walking resolutely down the street from the Capitol to Raleigh Tavern to conduct their extralegal business, must have been close to the top for an eighteenth-century lad.¹⁶

Clearly, Robert Greenhow did become aware of the events surrounding him and caught the fervor of patriotism. If, as Rhys Isaac argues, being a member of a community "unanimously roused in support of its dearest rights" communicated to those citizens the "Anglo-American ideal of civic virtue," then Robert Greenhow's future as a civic leader was styled by the revolutionary generation in which he was raised. And if, as Isaac also suggests, military exercises "provided opportunities for the self-

¹⁶Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982) 216, 217, 243, 254; *William and Mary Quarterly*, Series 1, Vol. 7, 1898-1899, 17; Virginius Dabney, *Virginia: The New Dominion* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989) 119-121.

presentation of the warrior that was expected to exist in every free man," then Greenhow was further impressed with the responsibilities of leadership.¹⁷

In June 1775, at fourteen years of age, Robert Greenhow joined a group of young men who formed a military corps in Williamsburg. They chose Henry Nicholson as their captain, and adopted the Backcountry uniform of huntingshirts and cockades, fastening the "Liberty or Death" motto to their breasts. On June 3, soon after Virginia's colonial governor, Lord Dunmore fled from Williamsburg to a British man-of-war in the York River, the group of young men, according to Greenhow, broke into the "magazine and armed themselves with...blue painted stock guns," believing that "they could...perform all the evolutions of the manual exercise far better than the soldiers who were daily arriving from the adjacent counties."¹⁸ Robert Greenhow had his first—and last—experience with open warfare that night. Although others in the group went on to fight within the ranks of the state service during the Revolution, Robert Greenhow or his father, John, purchased "the services of a substitute," and remained at home, serving in a "junior company whose duty was confined to the immediate protection of Williamsburg and the neighboring banks of the James River."¹⁹

After attending William & Mary College, Robert worked with his father in the store, but also took on civic obligations in Williamsburg, serving several years as Mayor,

¹⁷Isaac, *Transformation*, 255-256.

¹⁸Dabney, *Virginia*, 130; Robert Greenhow's obituary in the *Richmond Enquirer*, July 3, 1840; "Affidavit of Robert Greenhow," *Genealogies of Virginia Families in the William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc., 1982) 15-16.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

and two terms as the representative of James City County in the state legislature.²⁰ Greenhow's public service reflects the ideology of republicanism that emerged out of the struggles of rebellion, war, and state- and nation-building. To the Revolutionary generation, republicanism meant that politics, economics, and society were interdependent. Civic virtue was at the heart of this ideology, demanding that personal success equalled a moral obligation to serve society.²¹ What it meant for the Greenhows was success as merchants and active participation in community.

In June 1786, Robert married Mary Ann Wills, daughter of Elias Wills from Fluvanna County. On August 29 of the next year John Greenhow died "after a very short illness," leaving Robert as sole executor of his estate. Robert advertised the public sale of his father's property in September of that year, but then purchased the property himself, or at least a portion of it, at auction.²² Robert Greenhow now advertised as

²⁰John B. Danforth and Herbert A. Claiborne, *Historical Sketch of the Mutual Assurance Society of Richmond, Va., from its Organization in 1794 to 1879* (Richmond: Wm. Ellis Jones, Book and Job Printer, 1879, Reproduced by Duopage Process in the U. S. of America, Micropublishers, Micro Photo Division, Wooster, Ohio) 126, original at the LOV; *Richmond Enquirer*, July 2, 1840; reprint of advertisement from the *Virginia Argus*, June 6, 1804, announcing that those who had been selling lottery tickets for the college should turn the money in to Robert Greenhow, *William and Mary Quarterly*, Series 2, Vol. 4, 121-122. Danforth and Claiborne state that all of John Greenhow's sons attended William & Mary College, but do not give the dates and their names are not shown in college records. Given the polish writing skills Greenhow displayed, and his fluency in French, it is probable that he was educated in a college setting, and it makes sense that he would have attended the institution closest to home. There is no record, however, of when he did. The fact that Claiborne was a friend of the family lends weight to his personal knowledge of the fact that Greenhow did attend William & Mary College.

²¹Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1980) 6-8.

²²Michael E. Pollock, *Marriage Bonds of Henrico County, Virginia, 1782-1853* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company) 71; John Greenhow's gravestone, Bruton Parish Church, Williamsburg, Virginia; notes on Colonial Lot 159, CWF; Fillmore Norfleet, *Saint-Mémin in Virginia: Portraits and Biographies* (Richmond, Virginia: The Dietz Press, Publishers, 1942) 169. In 1788, Robert Greenhow's name appears in the tax transfers as the owner of "4 lots via John Greenhow." John Greenhow's estate paid taxes on 296 acres in 1788, but on only 141 acres in the years 1789-1793. Tax records show that John Greenhow's estate paid no taxes on land in 1794, but Robert Greenhow paid taxes on the 141 acres that year. In 1801, Greenhow insured his property, which matches the location of his father's house and

"Robert Greenhow, Merchant in Williamsburg" in the *Virginia Gazette and Richmond Chronicle*, but moved his family, which by this time included their ten-year-old son, Robert Greenhow, Jr., to Richmond in 1810.²³ In effect, he followed the capital, since it had been moved to Richmond from Williamsburg in 1780. Other friends and family members had migrated to Richmond earlier and Greenhow's business dealings, involvement in establishing an Academy of Science and Fine Arts in Richmond in 1786, and social visits to friends and family in Richmond had already provided the Greenhows an easy familiarity with the city. In a form of cultural exchange, the Greenhows replicated the social activities they enjoyed in Richmond at their home in Williamsburg. In 1808, a Julia F. Pagaud attended a "tearing Ball at Mr. Greenhow's" that was characterized by one other guest as a "six hundred squeeze; *a la mode de Richmond*."²⁴

[See illustrations 2, 3, and 4]

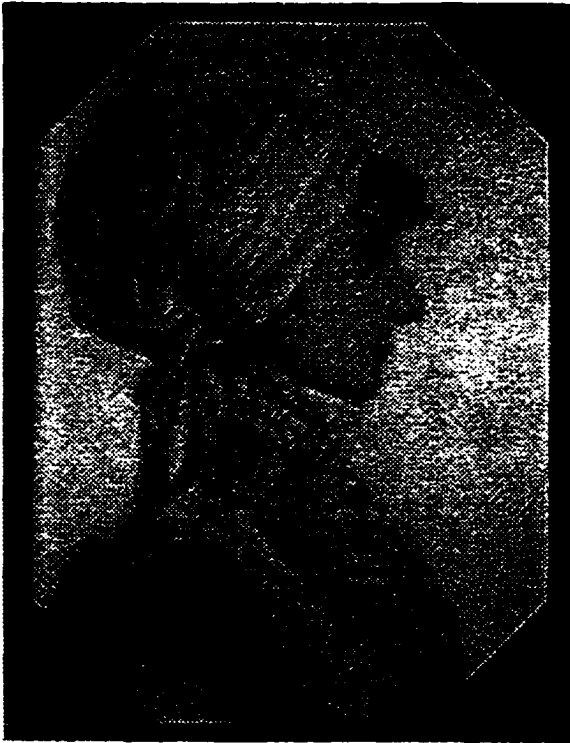
The Greenhows settled into a home on West Franklin Street and prepared to take an active part in the development of Virginia's new and growing capital.²⁵ The urban

also the "Lumber House," for a total of \$9200, his estimate for replacing the buildings.

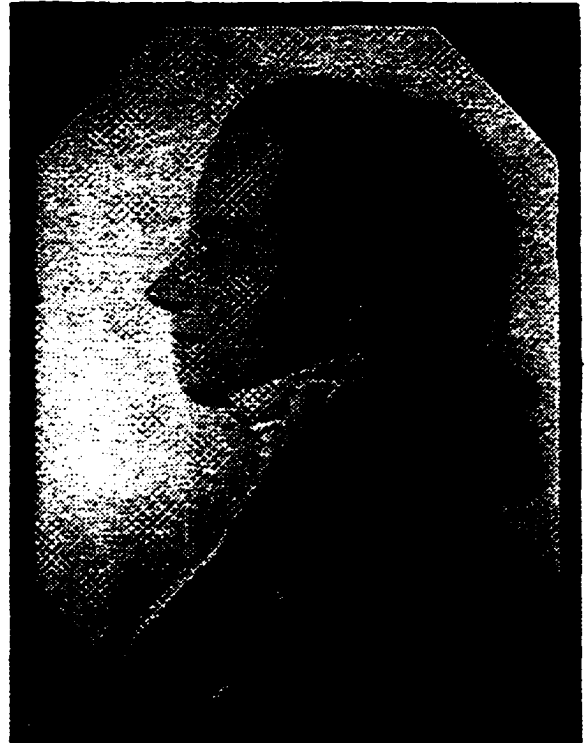
²³"Robert Greenhow, Merchant in Williamsburg," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd Series, Vol. V, 1925, 125-126.

²⁴Norfleet, *Saint-Mémin*, 168, 11, 37-42, 72; Henrico County Land Tax Lists, 1809, 1810, LOV; "Colonial Lot 159," 6, CWF. Letter from which this section was taken is in the Research Department at the Foundation, letter from Julia F. Pagaud to Joseph Prentis, Suffolk, March 21, 1808. During Aaron Burr's trial for treason in 1807, Richmond filled with the curious and concerned to catch details of the proceedings and, perhaps, glimpses of some of the participants. With the curious came the opportunistic, including Charles Févret de Saint-Mémin, a French emigré and portrait artist. He set up shop in Mrs. Harris's Boarding House near the Custom House and advertised "LIKENESSES in a style never introduced before, in this country," in the *Virginia Argus* and the *Enquirer*. Three of the likenesses created by Saint-Mémin that year were of the Robert Greenhow family, done in crayon, for a price of eight dollars each. Husband's and son's profiles are facing to the right; wife's to the left, designed for placement on the wall to appear that husband and son were facing wife and mother.

²⁵Scott, *Houses*, 59.



2. Mary Ann Wills Greenhow, c. 1807



3. Robert Greenhow, c. 1807



4. Robert Greenhow, Jr., c. 1807

connexion for this group of southerners included a strong link between Williamsburg and Richmond. Family already situated in Richmond probably helped in the transition. Brothers John, George, Samuel, and James Greenhow had moved from Williamsburg before the turn of the century. Most of them, like Robert, followed in their father's footsteps. All but James opened stores in Richmond, then added to their income through the accumulation of real property. By supporting their families through more than one source and by taking an active part in their community, they were living up to the ideal of civic humanism within which they grew to adulthood. Those who believed in the patrician ideal of virtue felt obliged to extend themselves in economic pursuits not just for the good of their families, but also to afford them the time and resources for public service.²⁶ Economic advantage coupled with civic responsibility meant that republicanism was working.²⁷ The Greenhow men of this generation all seemed to fit this ideal. Economically flexible and patriotic, the Greenhows supported their families through more than one means, and served their community when asked.

John died in 1795, at only twenty-six years of age, but had entered the mercantile trade in Richmond and in Fredericksburg before his death. Samuel and George also continued in their father's trade, opening stores and buying up property. James, however, set up a medical practice, eventually moving into a small brick and frame house on Fifth and Clay Streets, with his office on the corner.²⁸ James Greenhow did not

²⁶Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 23-24.

²⁷McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 17-19, 21, 22, 45.

²⁸Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 270; *William and Mary College Quarterly*, Series 1, Vol. 7, 17; Mary Wingfield Scott, *Old Richmond Neighborhoods* (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet & Shepperson, Inc., 1950) 279.

become the financial success that his father and older brother did, but he built a solid reputation as a physician often called on to attend to some of the most respected people in the community.²⁹

In 1812, Dr. Greenhow advertised that he would be "receiv[ing] into his shop as students two young gentlemen of respectable connexions, and good educations," indicating that he expanded his practice by training young doctors.³⁰ In 1815, just before he died, Dr. Greenhow was mentioned as one of the "most eminent physicians" in Richmond.³¹ He traveled to Philadelphia late that year for special medical attention. Writing to his wife Lucy in December, he reported that two weeks earlier the doctors there had performed an operation on him for his "fistulous affections," and he felt much better within a few days. By the time of this letter, he was so weak from "chills & fevers & a most troublesome cough" that he had to dictate the letter rather than write it himself. Although he had good hopes for his progress at the time he wrote, he had probably died before the letter reached home with his "best wishes" for his wife and

²⁹Julian P. Boyd, "The Murder of George Wythe," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Series 3, Vol. XII, No. 4, October 1955, 512-542, 518, 519, 527; W. Edwin Hemphill, "Examinations of George Wythe Swinney for Forgery and Murder: A Documentary Essay," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Series 3, Vol. XII, No. 4, October 1955, 543-574, 557. For example, George Wythe, the revered law professor from William and Mary, migrated to Richmond in 1789, and settled into a yellow house on the corner of Fifth and Grace Streets. When his grandnephew, George Wythe Sweeney, added yellow arsenic to Wythe's coffee one morning in 1806 in hopes of using his inheritance to pay off gambling debts, James Greenhow helped perform the autopsy on Wythe's body.

³⁰*Enquirer*, November 6, 1812, LOV.

³¹Quote of Dr. Joseph Trent, in Wyndham B. Blanton, *Medicine in Virginia in the Nineteenth Century* (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, Inc., 1933) 246. Trent named Greenhow a "bold phlebotomist," due to his habit of bleeding patients in the winter months, considered a risky practice by some doctors.

"Dear children," of which he left eight, one as yet unborn.³² Lucy Greenhow and her children remained in Richmond and were important elements to Mary Jane Greenhow's childhood.

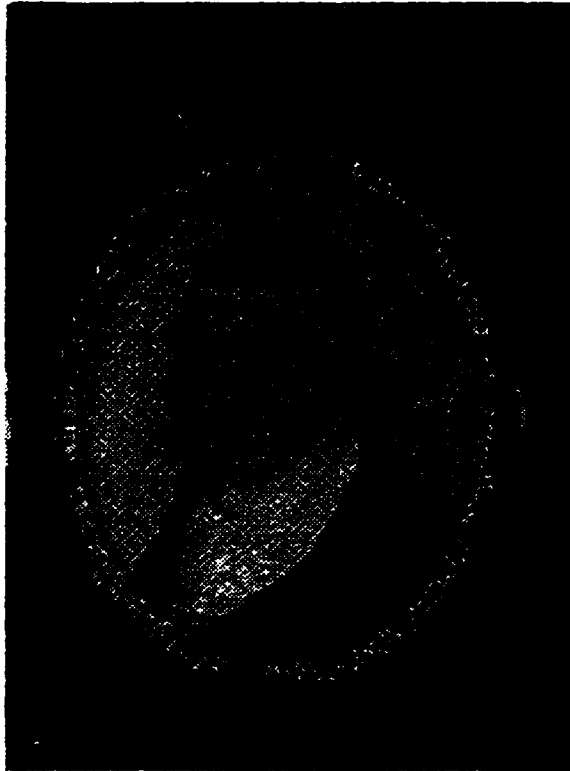
Samuel Greenhow died in 1815 as well. Like his older brother, Samuel had added Richmond property to his assets through the years, one of which he rented to Aaron Burr for a time, but never amassed holdings equal to Robert's. He had been a successful merchant in the city and also in Fredericksburg, served on the City Council, was vestryman for St. John's Church and treasurer of the Bible Society of Virginia, and became principle agent for the Mutual Assurance Society in 1808.³³ As agent for the Mutual Assurance Society, Samuel corresponded with Thomas Jefferson regarding some misgivings the ex-president had about the future of the company. Hoping to insure his mills, Jefferson had sent in a report on their size and construction, but then heard that the Society was close to bankruptcy. Although Greenhow assured him of the company's solvency, Jefferson decided to wait longer before signing on.³⁴ [See illustration 5]

Greenhow had more success in persuading Jefferson to donate money to the Bible Society of Virginia, although it took no little effort. Jefferson was reticent for several

³²Letter from James Greenhow to Lucy Greenhow, December 11, 1815, Claiborne Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, hereafter VHS; "Hayes Family," *Genealogies of Virginia Families: From the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc., 1981) 959-960.

³³*Richmond Portraits in an Exhibition of Makers of Richmond, 1737-1860* (Richmond, Va.: The Valentine Museum, 1949) 83; Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 270; Danforth and Claiborne, 126; W. Asbury Christian, D.D., *Richmond, Her Past and Present* (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1973) 46-47. The Mutual Assurance Society was begun by W. F. Ast, originally from Prussia, and chartered by the state legislature in 1794.

³⁴Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Sam Greenhow, November 7, 1809, Letters of Thomas Jefferson, from the Presidential Series by the Library of Congress, microfilm.



5. Samuel Greenhow

reasons, not the least of which was his fear that the Society advanced the goals of a single denomination. Greenhow assured him that the membership was broad-based, "the result of that perfect toleration secured to us, in all matters relative to religion."³⁵

Jefferson worried also that handing out bibles was meddlesome, and questioned whether it was even necessary. He argued that when he was young and "intimate with every class," he had never been in any home where a bible was not in evidence. Greenhow assured him, however, that "Bibles are wanted in our Country, by persons too poor to purchase them." The scarcity of bibles, Greenhow believed, was from "a cause well calculated to reduce the number." The culprit was "Luxury, so rapidly increasing among us, and so baneful to the peace of Society." Bibles, freely given, were the answer. The new testament, according to Greenhow, contained "the most perfect...System of Morals" and presented "the most correct principles of Civil liberty." If, Greenhow argued, "bibles were given to Citizens of the poorer class," be they believer or "unbeliever," it might "excite" them "to make greater exertions to teach their children to read, and thus increase the Stock of knowledge." As for meddling, Greenhow played on Jefferson's own background by saying, "If an intelligent Patriot believed that he could do some great good to his Country, he would not wait to be sollicitated [sic]." Agreeing with Greenhow that "there never was a more..sublime system of morality delivered to man than is to be found in the four evangelists," Jefferson sent him fifty dollars.³⁶

George Greenhow advertised "Family flour, of superior quality, for sale," in June

³⁵*Ibid.*, letter from Samuel Greenhow to Thomas Jefferson, November 11, 1813, letter from Jefferson to Greenhow, January 31, 1814, letter from Greenhow to Jefferson, February 4, 1814.

³⁶*Ibid.*

of 1812. The flour might have been stock he sold through his store, or that produced on his farm in Henrico County. George also built homes for rental and for sale. The high-quality workmanship in these structures gave his houses a healthy reputation for durable construction; but his property holdings dwindled until there were none listed in the city land tax lists in 1835, four years before his death. George's main civic importance to the town lay in his role as Commissioner of the Revenue, making him an important member of municipal government, and a household name throughout the city, at least once a year.³⁷

Given that all of the Greenhow brothers were occupied in the same profession in such close proximity to each other, it might be suspected that they would have indulged in a healthy competition, but none of the sources reflect those sentiments. In fact, an 1802 letter from George Greenhow to General John Preston, while Robert was still doing business in Williamsburg, reflects just the opposite. Preston had asked George to supply goods to his brother Thomas, which he had done, but then, considering Thomas Preston's location, suggested that he might find it "more convenient to supply himself at Williamsburg," at Robert's store. "I have given him a Line to my Brother residing there," George wrote Preston," and requested him also to open an account."³⁸ Even after Robert moved to Richmond, there was still no apparent animosity between the fraternal merchants, suggesting that the affection of family members overrode

³⁷*Enquirer*, June 12, 1812, October 9, 1812; *Henrico County Land Taxes, 1815-1826*; *Richmond City Land Taxes, 1810-1835*, LOV, Richmond; Scott, *Neighborhoods*, 150; Danforth and Claiborne, *Historical Sketch*, 126.

³⁸Letter from George Greenhow to General John Preston, Horseshoe Bottom, Montgomery County, January 19, 1802, Preston Family Papers, VHS.

considerations of finances for these men, even though Robert threw himself into the business with a vengeance.

When Robert Greenhow moved to Richmond, it could just barely be called a city. Established by William Byrd II in 1733, Richmond's population stood at a little under 5,000 residents by 1810.³⁹ Initially, merchants ran the city. By 1819, they comprised forty-six percent of the occupations, with artisans and craftsman running second at thirty-five percent, and manufacturing at the bottom at four percent.⁴⁰ [See illustration 6]

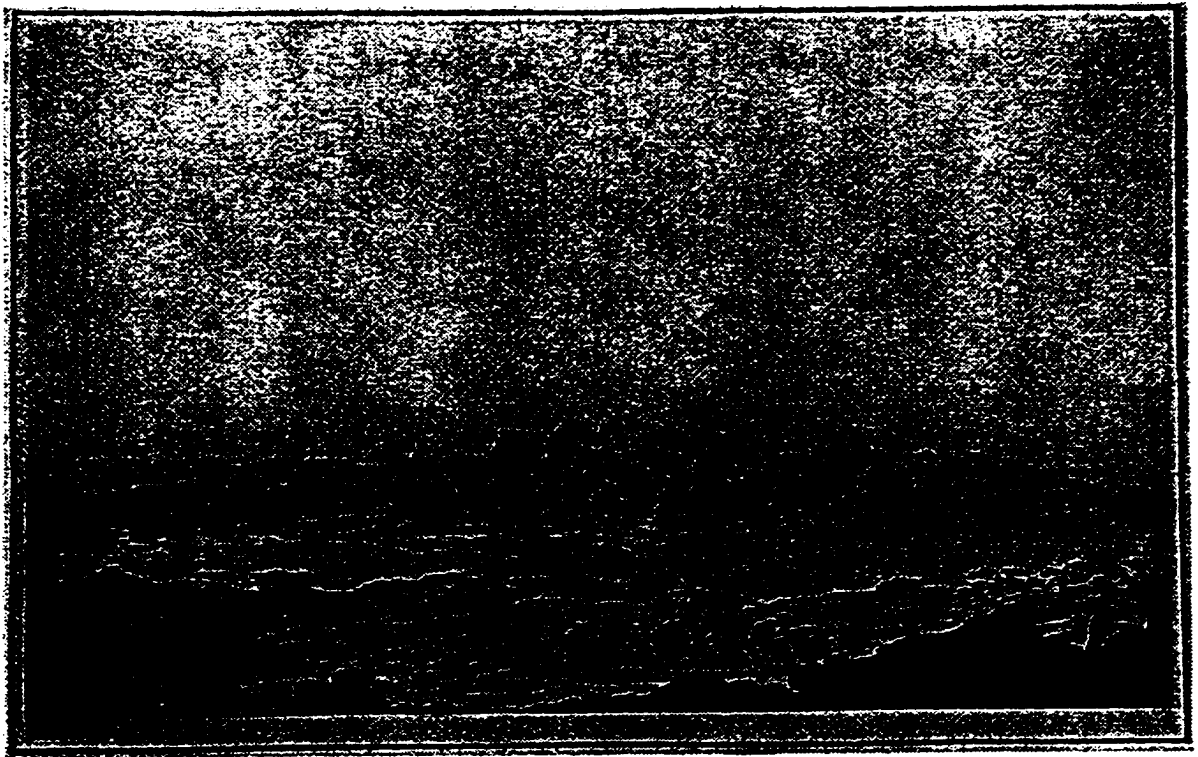
Robert Greenhow's first occupation in Richmond was in the accumulation of property. The city taxed him for \$37,500 worth of property on more than ten lots the year he moved to Richmond. Since he had been taxed for only one lot worth \$1,000 the year before, it is evident that Greenhow immediately reinvested capital from liquidation of his property in Williamsburg.⁴¹

During Greenhow's early years in Richmond he ranked in the 99.8th percentile of taxable wealth. By 1815 he owned sixteen lots valued at \$81,390, and paid .93% of the total taxes assessed in the city. In 1818, he was taxed on \$145,694 value in real estate, but for only \$116,122 on twenty-one lots in 1819, the year of the Panic, and paid 1.35% of the aggregate assessed on land that year. In 1825, his twenty-one lots showed a value of \$74,781, but he also owned \$5,896 worth of property in Henrico County by then. Even though the value of his properties fell, his portion of land taxes for the city

³⁹Dabney, *Virginia*, 87, 180; Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 382.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 335-336.

⁴¹Richmond City Land Taxes, 1809, 1810, LOV; Norfleet, *Saint-Mémin*, 168.



6. "View of Richmond," by Charles Févret de Saint-Mémin, c.1807

still remained high at 1.23% of the aggregate in 1825, and 1.49% in 1835.⁴²

Robert Greenhow seems to have exercised sound business judgment in his property management. Between his other interests and the rents he collected on "pleasantly situated" and "neatly arranged" city buildings, or an "agreeable, healthy, little Farm," just outside of town, he was able to provide well for his family, and accumulate the resources necessary to work for the city as well.⁴³

One of Greenhow's first acts of service for the community was as an overseer of the poor. Urban areas were the first to begin seeing poverty as a problem requiring institutionalization. Richmond decided to build an almshouse in 1804, but not from purely altruistic concerns. In a society where social philosophy demanded that citizens had a duty to become productive, contributing members in order to maintain the liberty for which they had struggled, then almshouses became reforming institutions designed to

⁴²Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 124; Richmond Land Taxes, Henrico Land Taxes, 1809-1840, LOV. Property Greenhow retained the longest consisted of two lots near Rocketts warehouse and landing. Being a merchant, he understood the importance of this property. Richmond had a geographic advantage because it was located at the falls of the James River, supposedly the last site on the river to which ships could reach the interior from the coast. Establishment of a public warehouse there at Shockoe Creek in 1737 had been intended by the colonial General Assembly to facilitate movement of goods and crops, namely tobacco, between the Tidewater and the Backcountry regions. Problems arose because the James becomes narrower and more shallow as it nears the falls, and ocean-going vessels cannot sail closer to the city than five miles, at which point goods had to be transferred to smaller ships before moving farther toward Richmond. Even smaller ships had to stop about one mile below Richmond at Rocketts landing. Efforts to improve navigation on the James to allow ships easier access to the center of town met with little success. A petition signed by over three hundred and fifty business and professional men in 1815 was one such effort. Asking that the General Assembly incorporate a company to facilitate opening the navigation from Rocketts landing to Shockoe Creek, the petitioners argued that the advantages would ultimately filter down to the consumers since it would bring goods closer than Rocketts at a lower price. The Richmond Dock company formed in 1816, but mostly for the purpose of improving the route between Rocketts and the center of town. Thus, for goods coming into the city from either direction, owners of property near Rocketts held a monopoly over trade. Robert Greenhow's name does not appear on this petition, although that does not prove he did not sign it for there are portions of the document missing. His brother George's name does appear. See Richmond City Legislative Petitions, December 9, 1815, LOV; Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 222-226, 261-263.

⁴³*Enquirer*, July 3, 1812, July 28, 1812.

instill a more responsible work ethic into the least productive members of society. Richmond Aldermen identified people in need of such instruction and wrote orders for them to be placed in the almshouse, where they were required to work until they had produced enough to reimburse the city for their stay. It was in his capacity of Alderman that Greenhow fulfilled these duties.⁴⁴

Greenhow's servants found a baby in a basket on his front porch one morning, with a note attached, stating simply, "Alexander B. White." Soon Greenhow learned that the baby was the son of Eliza White, daughter of a poor and dying widow. The daughter and her husband had left the city. Greenhow "sent the babe to the poor house, and directed a proper nurse to be provided for it." Informed by "the worthy matron there" that the child was doing well, Greenhow then used his influence and connections to locate the mother, who he believed had gone to Lynchburg. In an earlier era or another place, he might have taken the child in to his own home; but by the early nineteenth century, there were other procedures in place for managing the situation. What happened to mother and child is uncertain, but clearly Greenhow took on patriarchal responsibilities for Richmond as he did for his family.⁴⁵ Although it is uncertain the extent to which Mary Jane Greenhow witnessed the public work her father performed, it would not be a stretch to imagine that he replicated at home the attitude of responsibility he displayed

⁴⁴Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 416; Linda K. Kerber, "The Revolutionary Generation: Ideology, Politics, and Culture in the Early Republic," in Eric Foner, ed., *The New American History*, Revised and Expanded edition, American Historical Association (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997) 31-60, 41. See also David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971).

⁴⁵Incident related in George Wythe Munford, *The Two Parsons; Cupid's Sports; the Dream, and the Jewels of Virginia* (Richmond: J. D. K. Sleight, 1884) 98-99.

to the wider world.

Research has not uncovered which political party, if any, Robert Greenhow followed. Being a successful merchant in Richmond during the early national period, when the city was a Federalist island in Republican Virginia, suggests that Greenhow might have been persuaded by Federalist goals. Merchants occupied most civic offices in Richmond until 1820, which was a normal trend in the initial years of urban formation since the commercial sector of a city had the most to gain from development into a well-ordered urban society. Wealth was another common trait among the first leaders of Richmond since early officeholders did not receive salaries.⁴⁶ Therefore, the fact that Greenhow advanced to public office in Federalist Richmond does not say as much about his political persuasion as it does about his economic motives and his financial success.

Records of Greenhow's civic duties do not assign him to one party or the other, nor do his associations provide a clue. Upon the deaths of Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe, he served on committees organized to plan public memorials to the former Republican presidents, as did Peter V. Daniel, a strong Republican and later Jacksonian Democrat. Supreme Court Justice John Marshall, the Federalist leader in Richmond, served on those committees as well, suggesting that patriotism, not politics, drove the need to express public mourning.⁴⁷

Greenhow served the city in several capacities soon after moving to Richmond, as councilman, alderman, recorder, and mayor. For none of these offices was he elected by the public at large. When the state legislature incorporated Richmond as a city in

⁴⁶Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 102, 112, 129, 130, 163.

⁴⁷Christian, *Richmond, Her Past*, 107, 117.

1782, the structure of government followed the form established in most English municipalities by the end of the seventeenth century. Freeholders elected a corporate body of twelve officers who then elected the councilmen, aldermen, recorder, and mayor. The combination of these officials constituted the Common Hall, or governing body of Richmond. Prevailing fears of executive abuses following the Revolution circumscribed Greenhow's function as mayor to more judicial and ceremonial than executive powers. He was charged with maintaining the peace of the city and sitting on the Hustings Court⁴⁸

It is during his tour as mayor in 1812-1813, that the best evidence for Robert Greenhow's political leanings emerges. Events leading up to the War of 1812, and emergencies in Richmond during the war itself, provide clues that Greenhow was a Republican. The United States had become the target of both the French and the British in their war with each other and American ships became vulnerable to search and seizure from both sides of the European conflict. When the British *Leopard* attacked the *U. S. S. Chesapeake* off the coast of Norfolk in 1807, it embarrassed and enraged Americans, but President Thomas Jefferson's response to the insult proved ineffective. The Embargo Act, which lasted from December of 1807 to March of 1809, was meant to encourage domestic manufacturing while it attempted to damage England's market for manufactured goods. The embargo hurt England, but crippled United States seaports more, leading to its repeal.⁴⁹ This satisfied folks in Richmond, who were more than annoyed with the "Dambargo" and, as merchant Robert Gamble termed it, "the Cursed Wicked Frenchified

⁴⁸Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 72-73, 79, 80, 124, 140.

⁴⁹Risjord, *Jefferson's America*, 265-269; McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 210.

policy."⁵⁰

America was a nation still defining itself, and being bullied by France and England fostered frustration and embarrassment. Some of those who showed the least inclination to accept foreign insults to American shipping rose to the top politically in the 1810 congressional elections, and numbers of the new congressmen who arrived in Washington the next term were dubbed "war hawks." According to Steven Watts, these men were Liberal Republicans who had, argues Watts, "unbending confidence in the strength of the young republic."⁵¹

Robert Greenhow's views of the situation were similar to the "war hawks'." In May 1812, he served on a committee with William Wirt, Peyton Randolph, Thomas Ritchie, and Peter V. Daniel that issued a resolution stating that not only were they willing to go to war with England again but with France, too, if necessary.⁵² When the United States Congress declared war on Britain on June 3, 1812, Wirt wrote to James Monroe from Richmond that "there is not a man here who is not an inch taller since congress has done its duty."⁵³

In fact, Richmond celebrated the declaration of war as if it had been an armistice. The Society of Friends of the Revolution met at Washington Tavern on June 20 to make plans for a special Fourth of July jubilee that would give the citizens a chance to celebrate

⁵⁰Quoted in Daniel P. Jordan, *Political Leadership in Jefferson's Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983) 27.

⁵¹Risjord, *Jefferson's America*, 272, 273; Watts, *Republic Reborn*, xv, 257, 269.

⁵²Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 165; Christian, *Richmond, Her Past*, 84; John P. Frank, *Justice Daniel Dissenting: A Biography of Peter V. Daniel, 1784-1860* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964) 20, 22, 23.

⁵³Risjord, *Jefferson's America*, 281, 282, McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 235. Quotation in Risjord 282.

both their first independence from England and now their second. Among the plans for the event was an illumination of the city at night and it was on this point that Robert Greenhow's role as mayor came into conflict with the powers of the Common Council. Calling a special meeting on July 3, after seeing in "the public print of th[at] morning that the Mayor of the city ha[d]] recommended a general illumination to commence at the hour of eight to-morrow evening" the Council wanted to discuss the "propriety of such a measure." For one thing, the Council questioned organizing an event celebrating the onset of war, "the last resort of republicans," rather than waiting until they had won at least one battle. They also reminded Greenhow that late-night celebrations could sometimes get out of hand, leading to "acts of indiscretion," noise and merriment that might vex those who were not in the mood for celebrating. Since the mayor's job was to protect the peace, it seemed incongruous for him to be planning events that would disturb it, especially since he needed the Council's approval to expend additional funds for more security. Having said all of that, however, the Council resolved to approve the event from their "feeling of highest personal respect for the Mayor," and ordered the Chamberlain to provide funding to "employ patroll of such strength and activity as may effectually secure the peace."⁵⁴

The celebration went on as planned, with a gun salute at sunrise, Governor Barbour reviewing the troops, Peter V. Daniel's committee on toasts providing more than enough reasons to tip back the glass, readings of the Declaration of Independence and the war resolution, banquets throughout the city, and the final event, the illumination of the

⁵⁴Richmond City Common Hall Records No. 3, 217-221, July 3, 1812, LOV; Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 80; Christian, *Richmond, Her Past*, 84.

city.⁵⁵ Immediately after the celebrating, eleven members of this *connexion* began a fund drive to provide supplies for Virginia soldiers. Samuel Greenhow took on the job as treasurer for the group and by December 1812, reported that they had collected \$2,910 and had promises of \$3,150 more. Out of the money already collected, they had paid out for shoes, socks, flannel under-jackets, books, postage, and a "Waggon to hire." Among the 188 names on the subscribers list for this fund were the Greenhow brothers, Samuel, George, and Robert, all aiding efforts toward winning the war.⁵⁶

As mayor during the war, Greenhow exercised his powers to maintain the peace to a greater degree. Upon reports that the British were inciting a slave insurrection, Greenhow called for more patrols and suggested that the powder magazine be removed to a safer location, moves that were reminiscent of his concerns as a young man during the Revolution.⁵⁷ Although the city had created the position of master of police in 1808, the number of thefts and disturbances increased during the war years. Greenhow announced that although "to keep our city quiet, and prevent...the depredations committed...by the Nightly Robber," the City Council had established a night watch, it had not proved sufficient. He asked that each of the three wards elect "five fit persons" as representatives to meet and "reflect on the subject, and be prepared...to meet in the Legislative Hall in the Capitol and suggest...plans for the Security of property."⁵⁸

⁵⁵Frank, *Daniel Dissenting*, 24-26.

⁵⁶Samuel Greenhow, "Account of Subscribers to Fund Promoting Success of War with Great Britain," December 18, 1812, Preston Family Papers, VHS.

⁵⁷Virginius Dabney, *Richmond: the Story of a City*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990) 59-60.

⁵⁸*Richmond Enquirer*, January 13, 1814, LOV.

Greenhow also used his influence to alleviate economic problems brought on by war. The definition of "necessaries" was changing in the growing national economy, causing the gulf between disinterestedness and self-interest to grow wider.⁵⁹ Conscious of the accelerated pace of economic change during the war, Greenhow appealed to the virtuous side of society to overcome growing self-interest. He argued that the war had become a convenient excuse for engagement in "the Odious and Detestable Practices of the Monopolizer," and that they were merely taking advantage of the restrictions on travel to create an artificial shortage. Articles "which from long use of them, have become, Necessaries of Life," were either unavailable or hoarding had "so-enhanced and increased" the prices of the articles "that the poorer class of people are utterly unable to procure them." Greenhow, the merchant and landlord, asked for everyone to "discountenance, and by every possible means suppress... speculation."⁶⁰

The years of 1811 to Mary Jane Greenhow's birth in 1819 were the most tumultuous in Robert Greenhow's life. Deeply engaged with city business and war, he also experienced some of the highest and lowest points a person can undergo. He buried one wife, married another, buried an infant son a year later, moved into a new residence, then was blessed with the responsibility of raising two more children.⁶¹

⁵⁹During the Embargo, Jefferson had urged citizens to help the nation become more self-sufficient by venturing modestly into manufacturing concerns. According to Drew McCoy, Jeffersonians' encouragement of manufacturing during this period was not a departure from their republican ideology because "they continued to think principally in terms of those very simple small-scale manufactures ('necessaries') that were appropriate to a predominantly agricultural stage of social development." See McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, 210, 219-220.

⁶⁰*Richmond Enquirer*, January 13, 1814, LOV.

⁶¹MJCG/LC, list of births and deaths. Robert Greenhow and his second wife Mary had a son born to them on June 17, 1814. Francis John Seymour Greenhow died before he reached his first birthday, on March 26, 1815, Easter Sunday, and was buried "about 40 steps North of the church on Richmond Hill."

On Wednesday night, the day after Christmas, 1811, the Placide Stock Company offered a benefit performance at the new brick theater on Academy Square. Theatergoers, in a holiday mood and decked out in their finest attire, anticipated an exciting evening. Robert Greenhow attended with his wife and young Robert. When the curtain rose on the second act, Mary Wills Greenhow, "in the full tide of Health," and "looking better than" Robert "had seen her for some months," leaned back from her seat in the first row of their box, the third from the stage, and rested against Robert's knees. He circled her waist with his arms and prepared to enjoy the rest of the play, surrounded by friends and family.⁶²

Instead of the expected artistry, however, the audience heard the announcement that "the house is on fire!" Although new and made of brick, the theater afforded only a few passages of escape. Doors and stairways were so narrow that in the midst of panic and terror, and choking from smoke, passage became virtually impossible.⁶³ Charged with his wife's last words to him, "save my child," Robert Greenhow struggled to get his young son from the building. Leaving his wife in brother James's care he carried the boy to the staircase where he was pushed down to the floor by the crush of people trying to escape. Finally pulling himself up, he made his way past and over victims on the stairway until he reached the street. Although he went back into the building, he could not fight his way against the flow of people pushing out. Mary Wills Greenhow died in

See also letter from Arthur Pierce Middleton, Director of Research, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, to Cora B. Powell, July 8, 1952, CWF.

⁶²Dabney, *Virginia*, 267; Mary Newton Stannard, *Richmond: Its People and Its Story* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1923) 104-105; quotations from letter of Robert Greenhow to John T. Mason, February 7, 1812, printed in Norfleet, *Saint-Mémin*, 168-169.

⁶³Stannard, *Richmond, Its People*, 105; Christian, *Richmond, Her Past*, 80.

the fire along with seventy-one others.⁶⁴

Robert Greenhow confessed his grief to friend John T. Mason in a letter dated February 7, 1812. Sentimental and dramatic, Greenhow portrayed his sense of loss by measuring his grief against the happiness he had experienced with his wife. He wrote Mason that Mary Wills Greenhow had been his "wife for near 26-1/2 years! with whom I had enjoyed as much of connubial Bliss as ever fell to the Lot I dare venture to pronounce of any one pair! Suddenly & in a moment unlooked for & unexpected taken without one Sad last parting Adieu from my very arms!"⁶⁵

Although his grief seemed deep, his mourning was short. Four months later Greenhow married Mary Lorraine Charlton of Yorktown, and in 1814 moved his family into a prestigious home on Capitol and Tenth Streets in Richmond.⁶⁶ Built in 1803 by Edmund Randolph, it was a two-story, brick, octagonal house, fifty-five feet long and twenty-seven feet wide, and sporting three-sided ends, giving the building an oval-shape.⁶⁷ This is the home that comprised the first environment known to Mary Jane Charlton Greenhow Lee. [See illustrations 7 and 8]

⁶⁴Norfleet, *Saint-Mémin*, 168-169; *Revised and Expanded Edition: A Guidebook to Virginia's Historical Markers*, compiled by John S. Salmon (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994) 159. Dr. James Greenhow did not die in the fire but there is no record of the circumstances of his rescue, nor how he came to leave Robert's wife in the building.

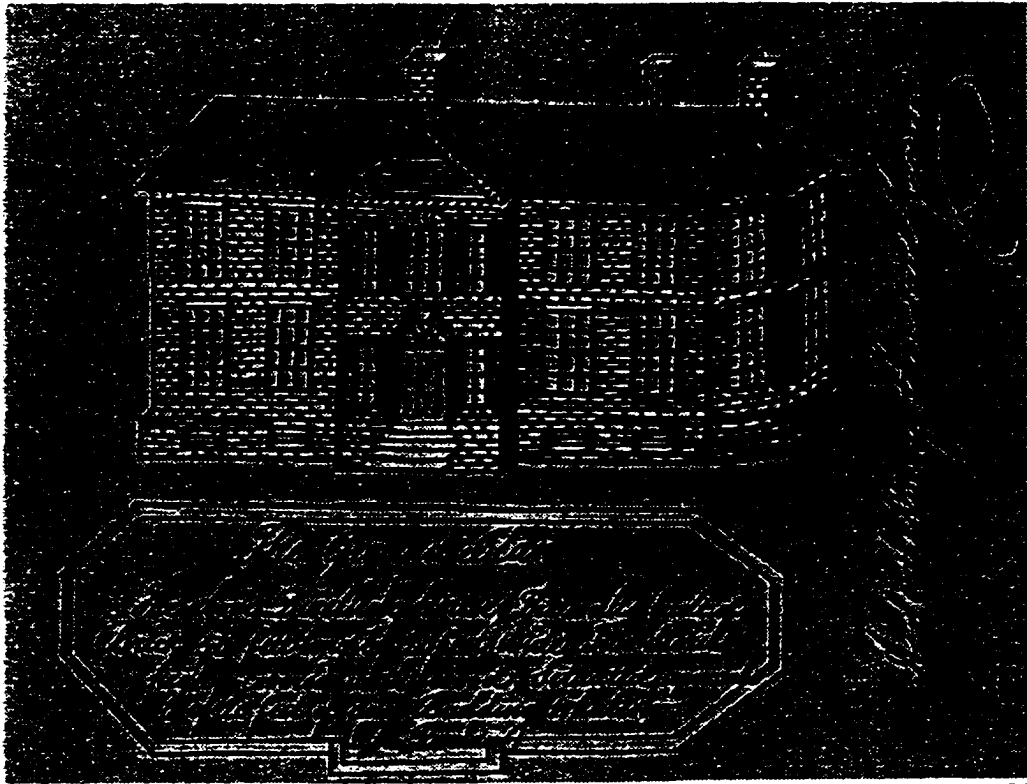
⁶⁵Quoted in Norfleet, *Saint-Mémin*, 168-169.

⁶⁶MJCG/MHS, (September 23, 1837).

⁶⁷Scott, *Houses*, 59-61; Richmond Hustings Book 50, 614-615, LOV; Richmond *Enquirer*, July 3, 1812. After Randolph died in 1813 while visiting his wife's family at Carter's Hall in Clarke County, his daughters liquidated the estate. There must have been several claims upon that property, however, because the full lot came into Greenhow's fee simple ownership in three stages. His brother George, as Commissioner of the Revenue for Richmond, was charged with the responsibility of selling off Randolph's personal property in 1812. By May of 1817, through purchase from Philip Norborne Nicholas, Peter V. Daniel, and Thomas Ritchie, Greenhow finally owned the total property, although the Greenhow family had moved into the home in 1814.



7. Robert Greenhow home on Capitol and Tenth Streets in Richmond



8. Greenhow home. Drawing by Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia, 1803

The closest circle of Mary Jane Greenhow's *connexion* was her immediate family: her mother, father, and two-year-old brother, James Washington Greenhow. Her half-brother, Robert Greenhow, Jr., was nineteen years old by the time Mary Jane was born, had already received a degree from William and Mary College, and was at that point pursuing a medical degree at what became Columbia University in New York City.⁶⁸

Mary Jane Greenhow's identity can also be detected in the gradually widening circle of her first world, beginning with her neighborhood. From the Greenhow home on Capitol Street, she could view the expanse of the capitol lawn, the trees and walkways, and the Governor's mansion. Just one block east of her home, local civic leaders bustled in and out of the new Richmond courthouse, or stood outside discussing the issues of the day. On the other side stood the Virginia Museum, an imposing brick structure ninety-one feet long and fifty feet wide. Also nearby stood the Swan, a two-story frame inn taking up most of the block between Eighth and Ninth Streets, and the Washington Tavern, just down the hill on Ninth and Grace Streets, both of which hosted the movers and shakers of early nineteenth-century Virginia.⁶⁹

The neighborhood in which she grew up included many of the economic and political elite of Richmond. Some of the children from these families became her lifelong friends. Peter V. Daniel, who served as Lieutenant Governor of Virginia for thirteen

⁶⁸MJCG/LC, list of births and deaths; David Rankin Barbee, "Robert Greenhow," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Series 2, Vol. XII, No. 1, January 1933, 182-183; United States Census, Richmond City, 1820, 1830, LOV; MJCG/MHS, 11 (September 22, 1837), 28 (October, 25, 1837), 30 (November 5, 1837), 33 (November 15, 1837), 40 (December 3, 1837), 61 (February 6, 1838), 68 (March 5, 1838). There is evidence that one of Mary Jane's aunts, an "Aunt Jane," or "Aunt Greenhow," also lived in the home with them. Both the 1820 and 1830 United States Census for Richmond City list a female in the same age group as Robert Greenhow, who would have been too old to be Robert's wife.

⁶⁹Stannard, *Richmond: Its People*, 67; Scott, *Neighborhoods*, 97, 104. Robert Greenhow served on the committee selected to commission the new Governor's mansion.

years, lived just a few blocks from the Greenhows. Daniel's children Elizabeth and Peter, Jr., grew up as contemporaries of Mary Jane and it is clear that the families spent a good deal of time together.⁷⁰ John Tyler became Governor of Virginia in 1825 and moved his family into the Governor's Mansion in Richmond. Although the Tylers and Greenhows were related by marriage and Mary Jane could have referred to Tyler's children as "cousin," she later introduced "Lilly" (Letitia) Tyler as her "friend," indicating that the two girls had had the opportunity to form a bond in their youth.⁷¹

Among other nearby neighbors, Colonel John and Catherine Ambler and their family lived two blocks from the Greenhows in an octagon-shaped house built by Lewis Burwell on Twelfth and Clay Streets. Ambler and Greenhow were of the same age, had both served James City County in the Virginia General Assembly, and continued their associations after moving to Richmond, serving in city offices and other associations together.⁷² John Marshall, related by marriage to John Ambler, lived nearby on Ninth Street. From all accounts he was a friendly neighbor, charming and engaging. A strong

⁷⁰Frank, *Daniel Dissenting*, vii, 38, 39, 48; MJCG, 5 (September 13, 1837); Scott, *Neighborhoods*, 150.

⁷¹Paul Brandon Barringer, James Mercer Garnett, and Rosewell Page, eds., *University of Virginia: Its History, Influence, Equipment and Characteristics with Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Founders, Benefactors, Officers and Alumni* (New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1904) 324; Theodore C. DeLaney, "Julia Gardiner Tyler: A Nineteenth-Century Southern Woman," Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1995, 214; MGL 876 (October 8, 1865), 883 (October 21, 1865).

⁷²*Richmond Portraits*, 6-7; Scott, *Neighborhoods*, 94; Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 120. Although Ambler lived in Richmond, he owned over two thousand acres in Henrico County along the James River, on which he worked between twenty-nine and thirty-six slaves through the years. In addition to these holdings, Ambler maintained "Ambler Hill" in Winchester, property he purchased from his wife's first husband's estate. The Greenhows and Amblers socialized a great deal during Mary Jane's early years. Her connection to them continued to the end of her life when she named Ambler's grandson as the executor of her meager estate. Henrico County Personal Property and Land Tax Records, 1811-1835, LOV; Garland R. Quarles, *The Story of One Hundred Old Homes in Winchester, Virginia* (Winchester, Va.: Farmers & Merchants Bank, 1967) 14-16; MGL 242 (October 14, 1863), 395 (June 3, 1863), 506 (November 2, 1863); Administration of Estate, Mary Lee, 1908, MSA.

Federalist in Federalist Richmond, Marshall made enemies among the Jeffersonians in town but they had difficulty hating a man who, although a Federalist, dressed and treated his neighbors in a simple Republican fashion.⁷³ One of the Jeffersonians who lived nearby was Thomas Ritchie, residing on Grace Street. Ritchie's newspaper, the *Enquirer*, was the chief political organ for the Richmond Junto.⁷⁴ [See illustrations 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13]

Although there are no sources which state that Mary Jane had many contacts with these powerful men, they were members of her father's world and frequently in his company. Had she not been affected by the ins and outs of politics discussed over tea or across the family dinner table, she would not have been so politically aware later in life. These powerful Virginians left an impression on the young girl.

One of the most important neighborhood influences in young Mary Jane Greenhow's life was that of her church. She was baptized on Wednesday, October 27, 1819, at Monumental Church in Richmond. Administered by Bishop Richard Channing Moore, the baptism was witnessed by the baby's mother, father, and fifteen-year-old cousin Lucy Greenhow.⁷⁵ Monumental Church was both an Episcopal church and a monument. When the theater caught fire in 1811, the site of the tragedy became a burial ground. Many of the victims were unidentifiable and so consumed by the fire that their relatives determined that the spot should be consecrated and the remains buried there.⁷⁶

⁷³*Richmond Portraits*, 116; Frank, *Daniel Dissenting*, 39.

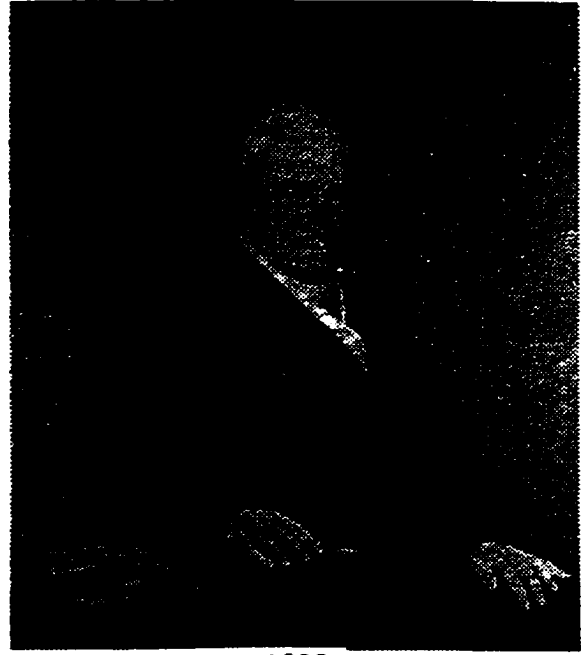
⁷⁴*Richmond Portraits*, 170-171; Scott, *Neighborhoods*, 150.

⁷⁵MJCG/LC, list of births and deaths; MGL 877 (October 8, 1865).

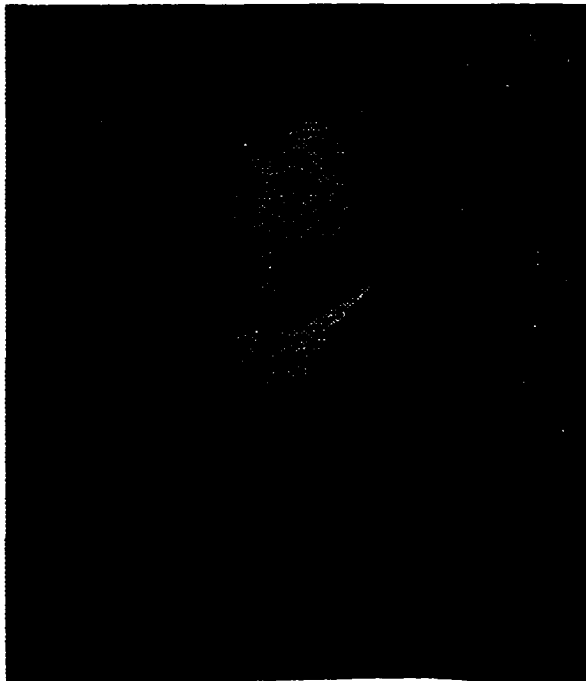
⁷⁶Christian, *Richmond, Her Past*, 80, 81; Stannard, *Richmond: Its People*, 106.



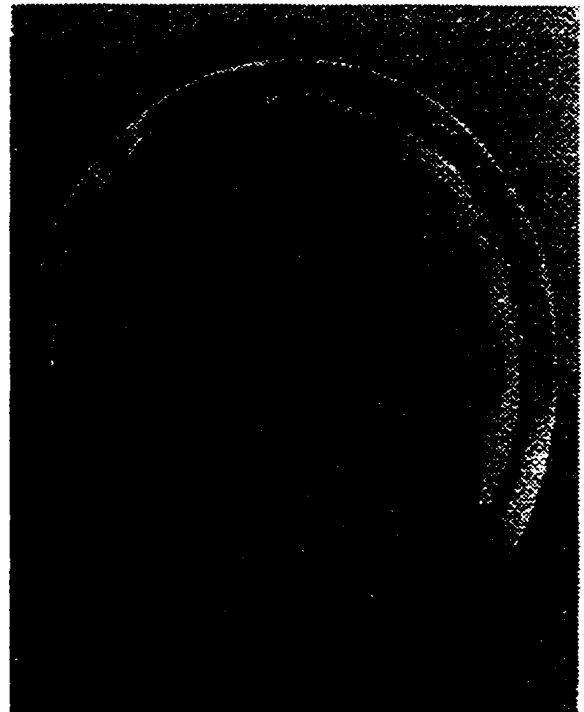
9. Catherine Bush Norton Ambler, c. 1814



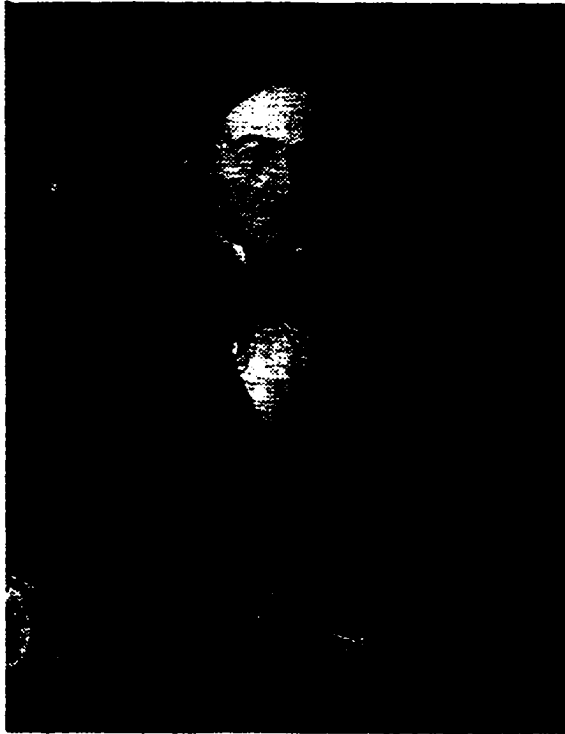
10. John Ambler, 1822



11. Chief Justice John Marshall



12. Mary Willis Ambler Marshall



13. Thomas Ritchie

On Wednesday, May 4, 1814, Monumental Church held its first service. Robert Greenhow was one of the first two wardens; and Mary Lorraine Greenhow directed the Sunday School.⁷⁷ [See illustration 14]

Into this sandstone and stucco, octagon-shaped building, Mary Jane Greenhow entered with her family regularly for worship.⁷⁸ Upon entering, as the family walked down the center aisle, they saw ahead of them the raised pulpit centered between two green, marbled Ionic columns with stairways leading up on both sides. The colors inside the building matched the exterior: pale gray and conservative. The Greenhows left the aisle to the right at the fourth pew from the pulpit and settled as comfortably as they could into the straight-backed seats to await the service.⁷⁹

During services young Mary Jane surely recognized several family friends, among them Colonel John Ambler and his family sitting across the center aisle and one row back. She probably became accustomed to seeing John Marshall unlatch his pew door during the service so that he could make room for his long legs, or studied with interest young Edgar Allan Poe as he joined the John Allan family in their pew.⁸⁰ Her keen appreciation of music might have begun here as she listened intently to the organ located in the rear balcony. If she did not dress warmly enough in winter, she would have

⁷⁷Fisher, *History...of the Monumental Church*, 163.

⁷⁸Stannard, *Richmond: Its People*, 107.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*; *An Adaptive Preservation Study for the Monumental Church*, Glave Newman Anderson and Associates, Inc., Architects, 1974, 9, 10, 11; Richmond Hustings Book 9, 475-477, LOV. On May 13, 1814, Robert Greenhow paid \$350 for the lease of Pew #16 at Monumental Church. Fifteen percent of the money derived from leases went to pay the Rector's salary. *An Adaptive Preservation Study for the Monumental Church*, Glave Newman Anderson and Associates, Inc., Architects, 1974

⁸⁰Stannard, *Richmond: Its People*, 107; Receipt for use of Pew No. 52, \$21.60, Colonel John Ambler, June 1, 1835, Ambler Family Papers, VHS.



14. Monumental Church, Richmond

fidgeted in her seat or cuddled next to another family member because the furnace in the basement was small and forced what little heat it generated through four small openings in the sanctuary. When she first learned to read, the young, ambitious child probably practiced on the words "Give Ear O Lord" above the chancel while half-listening to the message. Whatever else Mary Jane Greenhow did while attending this church, she noted the importance of it in her parents' lives and would one day assign the same weight to it in her own. As a young woman living with her parents, her church attendance was automatic and an occasion more for socializing than spiritual strengthening. Her mother's chastising "Are you going to church today, my dear?" played in Mary's head whenever she was away from home. This would change. In fact, being a faithful Christian would one day be of foremost importance to her, and asking her Lord to "Give Ear" turned into a daily, sometimes an hourly, ritual.⁸¹

The physical setting into which Mary Jane Greenhow was born, and the influence her father had in creating it, gave her beginnings an atmosphere of wealth, power, responsibility, and prestige. The more intimate relations she had with her family molded her character. The development of Mary Jane's Greenhow's personality, the traits that reflected an environment of advantage, is the focus of the next chapter.

⁸¹*Preservation Study*, 11; *Stannard, Richmond: Its People*, 107; *MJCG/MHS* 20 (October 8, 1837), 37 (November 28, 1837), 66 (February 28, 1838), 68 (March 5, 1838).

CHAPTER II

"A MOST ACCURATE REMEMBRANCE OF MY WILD KICKS": THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF A REBEL

Mary Greenhow Lee rarely let circumstances dampen her sense of control. Throughout her life, she willfully resisted circumstances that tired, bored, or intimidated her. That she would defy Union occupiers during the Civil War in Winchester is not surprising since as a young woman she had shown signs of rebellion. Her ability to laugh at both herself and at cumbersome situations helped her diminish feelings of helplessness when needed. She asserted her independence and individuality when it suited her. Traits inherent in her adult character resembled her youthful "wild kicks," the phrase she applied to memories of childhood mischief.¹ Her clear sense of identity fueled her nerve. She gained confidence in who she was from the safe environment of an affectionate and accepting family, the comfort she became accustomed to in the presence of powerful people, and the self-confidence instilled in her from a good education. Mary Jane Greenhow became an accomplished scholar in both academic pursuits and social decorum. Although she pulled at the restraints of societal rules, she appreciated the position she held in the structure.

The Greenhows represent the modern American family taking shape during the early national period. Carl Degler has outlined the emergence of this modern concept of

¹MGL, 876 (10/6/1865).

family between the Revolution and the 1830s, identifying at least four salient characteristics that distinguish the modern family from earlier family structures: the marriage of the parents was based on affection, the wife's primary role was to nurture her children and manage her home, the parents concentrated their resources and time on parenting, and the family unit was smaller.²

Robert Greenhow said of his first wife at her death: "My wife! & friend of my heart & warmest affections." To better understand Mary Jane Greenhow's childhood, it is critical to assess how he felt about her mother, his second wife.³ Thirty years younger than her husband, Mary Lorraine Greenhow had made several adjustments in her own life by the time her daughter was born. Only twenty-one when she married Robert Greenhow, a Richmond businessman and widower with a twelve-year-old son, she had assumed the domestic responsibilities of a wife in the highest social circles of a growing city.⁴ The daughter of Francis and Mary Charlton of Yorktown, Mary Lorraine left a village society and moved into her husband's politically and economically energetic world in Richmond.⁵

Robert Greenhow's relationship with his younger second wife is difficult to

²Carl Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America From the Revolution to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980) 8-9, 14; Jan Lewis, "Motherhood and the Construction of the Male Citizen in the United States, 1750-1850," in George Levine, Ed., *Constructions of the Self* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992) 143-164, 145; Linda K. Kerber, "The Revolutionary Generation," 31-60, 40.

³Robert Greenhow's letter to John T. Mason, February 7, 1812, printed in Norfleet, *Saint-Mémin*, 168-169.

⁴*Ibid.*; Scott, *Houses*, 57-61.

⁵Greenhow Family Papers, Genealogical Collection, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, hereafter CWM.

interpret because sources connecting the two are scarce. The thirty-year difference in their ages could have lessened the chances of Mary Lorraine Charlton becoming the "friend of [his] heart," as he described his first wife. Clearly, he expected her to outlive him and worked to provide resources for her upon his death. Robert Greenhow took full charge of the family finances. According to custom, his wives did not concern themselves with the muddy world of money.⁶

There is some evidence, however, that Mary Jane Greenhow's parents had an affectionate marriage. If the poem Robert wrote in his wife's commonplace book in 1830 is any indication, Greenhow's relationship with his young wife was respectful, romantic, and, possibly, convenient.

Oh, Woman! What bliss, what enchantment we owe,
To the spell of thy heart to thy solace below,
To thy truth so endearing--thy kindness and care
In the morning of joy, in the night of despair!

To thy soul's chosen love thou unchanged will remain,
In health and in sickness, in pleasure and pain;
And, when closed are his eyes in death's mortal eclipse,
Even then, still is his the last kiss of thy lips!

And, over his grave thou wilt mournfully keep
Thy love vigil of sorrow, to pray and to weep;
Yes! to pray--that his errors of heart be forgiven,
And, that thou may'st yet meet him unsullied in Heaven!⁷

Assuming that the pair placed great importance on the words he left for her in a

⁶John F. Kasson, *Rudeness & Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990) 68; Norfleet, *Saint-Mémin*, 168; Linda K. Kerber, "The Revolutionary Generation," 31-60, 38; Last Will of Robert Greenhow, Richmond Hustings Court Book 8, 263, LOV. In none of the Deeds of Trust studied for this project were either of Greenhow's wives examined for their understanding of the vulnerability to their dower rights should the property in question be subject to foreclosure.

⁷Mary Lorraine Greenhow's *Commonplace Book, 1829-1850*, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland, hereafter MLG.

book of memories, then their marriage was based on affection and romance. There is also a hint in the poem of Greenhow's growing sense of mortality. By this time he was sixty years old and undoubtedly imagining his wife in the role of widow. There is a hint, as well, that he had not given his second wife all of the love he had lavished on his first. Asking that his "errors of heart be forgiven" could be interpreted several ways, yet it is doubtful he would have displayed a dark confession in the pages of a book meant to circulate among friends and family. Most probably in this case "errors" of Greenhow's heart lay in a level of reservation.

Whether or not Mary Lorraine Greenhow felt cheated out of her husband's total devotion is difficult to judge. She has not emerged clearly from the evidence. In fact, although most sources correctly name her as Greenhow's second wife and Mary Greenhow Lee's mother, there are a few which give her an incorrect middle name, and at least one which claims that Robert married his brother George's wife, Elizabeth. Clearly, Mary Jane's mother has come down through history as merely a wife and mother, but with no personal identity. The epitaph on her gravestone in Winchester, Virginia, states simply, "I have no will of my own. And when she had said this, she fell asleep."⁸

In remembrance of her mother, Mary Greenhow Lee's selection of these lines for her gravestone are surely in reference to Mary Lorraine's religiosity, if not her character. The passages recorded for her by friends and family in her commonplace book, if meant as a reflection of her personality and not merely as flattery, show that Mary Lorraine

⁸Norfleet, *Saint-Mémin*, 169; George D. Fisher, *History & Reminiscences of the Monumental Church, Richmond, Virginia, from 1814 to 1878* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1880) 191; Mary Lorraine Greenhow gravestone, Mount Hebron Cemetery, Winchester, Virginia.

Greenhow gave the appearance of a gracious woman; religious, intelligent, and vibrant. James Washington Greenhow presented the red album with gold embossing to his mother at the age of twelve, and contributed the first poem, signing it "Your Album." The message of the poem is that "lady fair" should treat the book "gently" because the memories collected on its pages would become a "chain of rosy bows." In fact, she did press leaves and flowers within the pages, revealing a sentimental side to her nature.⁹

Many of the poems address the issue of woman's place in nineteenth-century society, stressing the virtues of benevolence and hospitality, as in one reference to the bible verse relating the liberality bestowed upon Jesus Christ by the woman at Bethany. Another entry, however, indicates that the gracious woman with "no will" of her own had a depth of feeling and possibly mystery. Washington Greenhow selected a poem by Lord Byron, left untitled, that lends insight to this deeper facet of Mary Lorraine Greenhow's nature: "As the bolt-bursts on high/ From the black clouds that bound it/ Flashes the soul of that eye/ From the long lashes around it."¹⁰ Although sentimental, gracious, and fair, Mary Jane Greenhow's mother evidently also had fire, which would have given the daughter a model for both passion and tact.

The second characteristic of the modern family, separate spheres, has been a key focus of women's history since the 1970s. It suggests that women began spending their time in the private sphere of the home and family, while at the same time men increasingly made their living and conducted their affairs outside of the home in the

⁹MLG.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

public sphere.¹¹ The separate spheres model leaves out a large segment of antebellum America because it focuses on only those who had the time and education to worry about such things as the evils of "Luxury" in an industrializing world. This trend has been identified more in the Northeast than in the South, in urban rather than rural areas, and for the middle and upper classes more than the poor, artisan, or yeoman households. The model fits the Greenhows, however; a family of upper-middle class financial standing, living in Virginia's most prominent example of urbanity. Robert Greenhow is found in sources dealing with the economic, legal, and political world, while neither of his wives appear in sources outside of the domestic realm, except as members of church organizations, interpreted as extensions of the home.¹²

It is instructive for this biography to suggest some of the ways young Mary Jane Greenhow may have created her identity within her natal family. At the risk of forming yet another general model, we can think of Mary Jane Greenhow and her brother James Washington Greenhow, just two years apart in age, as being incubated in the same nest. Both felt the warmth of family affection. Both learned the lessons of benevolence and respect for others. And both were instructed, especially at the guidance of their mother, in the manners of polite society.

Although consigned to domestic space, women of this class did have a political role to play. As both Linda Kerber and Jan Lewis have shown, women were charged

¹¹Degler, *At Odds*, 8.

¹²See Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) 89-100; Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," in *American Quarterly*, Vol 18 (1966) 133-155; Fisher, *History...of the Monumental Church*, 163.

with the conservative task of maintaining civic virtue by inculcating it in their children. Lewis maintains that the virtues women instilled in their sons were practiced only in the private sphere and, thus, sons were obliging toward family, but had no reference points for such behavior once they joined their father's world. Guidance toward benevolence for sons had little effect on them after they were grown, but had a stronger impact on daughters who would be the next generation to instill civic virtues into their children. Over time, women's civic virtue manifested itself in the formation of benevolent societies, finding ways to influence public behavior through an extension of domestic concerns.¹³

Most of the *connexion* grew up exposed to the behavior and skillful conversation that would mark them as genteel, and followed the gender roles exhibited by their elders. Books for young children often detailed passive behavior for girls and active behavior for boys. This was intended to produce ladies and gentlemen who fit into their assigned roles easily and would not slip from them for fear of losing prestige. True gentlemen were self-controlled, firm in their resolves, ambitious, honest, industrious, energetic, loyal, and chivalrous. A true lady was pious, a comfortable companion to her husband, agreeable, bright, affectionate, composed, attractive, self-controlled, and modest.¹⁴

Neither Mary Jane Greenhow nor James Washington Greenhow was insulated from the instructions given to the other in expected gendered behavior. Merely by

¹³See Kerber, "Revolutionary Generation," 36-37; Lewis, "Construction of the Male Citizen," 144, 145, 150, 151, 154-156; Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, 89-100; Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980) 284-288.

¹⁴See Kasson, *Rudeness*, 57, 43; Sarah E. Newton, *Learning to Behave: A Guide to American Conduct Books Before 1900* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1994) 29, 50, 52, 53, 85; MGL, 230 (September 13, 1862), 260 (November 19, 1862), 693 (September 26, 1864).

observing first-hand, from the initial moments of awareness, the distinctions in behavior exhibited by their parents, both children would have learned to judge their performance and that of the other by measuring it against the adult models in their midst. If civic virtue meant being the best at a task assigned for the good of community, then their first community--the family--taught both of the Greenhow children the value of virtuous gendered behavior.

Jan Lewis has pointed out that the family of the early Republic "was an inherently political institution, for it inculcated the principles of authority and hierarchy upon which early American society and government depended."¹⁵ As such, we can assume that both Mary Jane and James acquired their political natures within the family polity. The first stage of this process occurred when they learned which parent would be more likely to say "yes" rather than "no" to a request. It is probable that Mary Jane's and James's domestic politicization diverged, however, in the manner of addressing their parents. If either had behaved in a manner prescribed for the opposite gender, they probably lost their case. This type of mistake would have been made only a few times before they learned the personal value of observing rigid gender roles to get their way. Once learned, they were constructed, not only for themselves, but also in their judgments of the actions of others. Furthermore, once each of these children became proficient in their societal roles, they achieved virtue in behavior, giving them confidence, energy, and personal power.¹⁶

¹⁵Lewis, "Construction of the Male Citizen," 145.

¹⁶For a study of the childhood development processes leading to gendered personality traits, see Nancy J. Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989) 45-65.

The third and fourth characteristics of the modern American family were in many respects connected. Parents had been for some time decreasing the size of their family to provide for their children in a changing economy. When charting societal changes through time, the family is the most compact social unit for measurement exploring relationships at the simplest level. The family has historically adapted to change while it has concurrently been the conservatory of tradition.¹⁷

Robert Greenhow did not follow his father's example of producing almost a dozen offspring. He sired only four children with two wives, raising three of them to adulthood. Some sources state that Robert Greenhow and his first wife Mary had a daughter named Polly, who married French emigre and educator, Louis H. Girardin. Polly Girardin and the couple's only son died in the Richmond Theater Fire in December of 1811. In her study of Girardin, Jane C. Slaughter argues that he was not married to Greenhow's daughter but to Polly Cole, daughter of Roscow Cole, Greenhow's business partner in Williamsburg. Although Greenhow and Girardin had several connections, it does not appear that they were related. Support for Slaughter's argument comes in the form of silence. Had Greenhow lost a daughter as well as his wife in the theater fire, at least some of the narratives of the disaster would have mentioned it. They do not.¹⁸

¹⁷Kerber, "The Revolutionary Generation," 39; Degler, *At Odds*, 9; Sean Wilentz, "Society, Politics, and the Market Revolution, 1814-1848," in Eric Foner, ed., *The New American History*, Revised and Expanded edition, American Historical Association (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997) 61-84, 63, 64; Tamara K. Hareven, "Family Time and Historical Time" in Alice S. Rossi, Jerome Kagan, and Tamara K. Hareven, eds., *The Family* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978) 57-70, 57, 58.

¹⁸For more on Girardin, see Jane C. Slaughter, "Louis Hue Girardin, Educator, Historian, and Man-Of-Letters," Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1935; Dabney, *Richmond*, 77; *William & Mary Quarterly*, 2nd Series, Vol. III, 1923, 50-51, and Vol. V, 1925, 105-106; Colonial Lot 159, Illustration 1, CWF; and Edith Philips, *Louis Hue Girardin and Nicholas Gouin Dufief and Their Relations with Thomas Jefferson*, The Johns Hopkins Studies in Romance Literatures and Languages (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press,

It is also apparent that Robert and his wives participated in the fourth and connecting trend in the modern American family structure, the expenditure of more time, money, and energy parenting their children.¹⁹ In an age of industrialization, urbanization, and rapid racial and economic changes, parents increasingly focused attention on preparing their children to meet the challenge of a new age. Additionally, with modernity came a belief in individuality. Parents began discerning their children's strengths and weaknesses and to channel their talents into careers or skills that would be the most profitable. Thus, on the one hand, the family became a comfortable, loving haven from the changing economic world outside. On the other, the family produced children more capable of adapting to the world.²⁰

The most important means of doing so was in education. During the nineteenth century parents in the *connexion* increasingly prepared their sons for professions rather than bequeathing land. They sent their sons to William and Mary College, the University of Virginia, Washington College, and Hampden-Sydney College—even to far-away Harvard. Education was the answer to Thomas Jefferson's question of "whether we are to leave this fair inheritance to barbarians or civilized men."²¹ Schooling in the South was still mostly a private endeavor, however. In fact, although Jefferson believed that

1926).

¹⁹Degler, *At Odds*, 9; Censer, *North Carolina Planters*, 24.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 19, 31; John Demos, *Past, Present, and Personal: The Family and the Life Course in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) 33; Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, translated by Robert Baldick (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962) 132-133, 406-407.

²¹Jefferson quoted in Jordan, *Political Leadership*, 206; Tyler Family Papers, Women of Virginia Project Records, and Robert Greenhow, Jr., Papers, CWM. See also Ryan, *Cradle*, 62, 74, 184; and Censer, *North Carolina Planters*, 48.

the new nation could remain free only with an informed electorate, southern states did not publicly support education until after the Civil War.²² Therefore, education was an indicator of economic advantage and a deep concern for many parents.

Like Jefferson, Robert Greenhow believed in the worth of education. In 1786 he had been a subscriber to the new Academy of Science and Fine Arts in Richmond, and had acted as Agent and Treasurer to the Commissioner of the Lottery for William and Mary College in 1806.²³ He sent his son Robert, Jr., to William and Mary, and then on to Columbia for a medical degree. He saw to the education of younger son James Washington by sending him to the new University of Virginia to acquire the foundations necessary to practice law.²⁴ The sources have been silent about the identity of the person to whom Robert Greenhow entrusted the education of his daughter. It seems clear that she was educated outside of the home because she mentions meeting or hearing from "old school mate[s]," indicating that she probably attended classes at a formal institution.²⁵ Greenhow had several options when the time came to educate Mary Jane. Besides the schools available in Richmond, the Young Ladies' School at Charlottesville was also open for those "desirous of sending their daughters or wards."²⁶ The Young

²²Risjord, *Jefferson's America*, 187-188.

²³Norfleet, *Saint-Mémin*, 168.

²⁴Quarles, *Occupied Winchester*, 14; Tyler Family Papers, Women of Virginia Project Records, CWM; Robert Greenhow, Jr., Papers, CWM; *Students of the University of Virginia: A Semi-Centennial Catalogue, with Brief Biographical Sketches*, compiled by Captain Joseph Van Holt Nash (Baltimore: Charles Harvey & Co., 1878) 70; "A Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the University of Virginia, Tenth Session, 1833-1834," (Charlottesville, Va: Chronicle Steam Book Printing House, 1880) 7. In the 1833-1834 session of the University of Virginia, James Washington Greenhow's courses of study were listed as modern languages, moral philosophy, and natural philosophy.

²⁵MGL, 864 (September 3, 1865), 872-873 (September 24, 1865).

²⁶*Richmond Enquirer*, May 27, 1834.

Ladies' Seminary at Prince Edward Courthouse, Virginia, began in 1832, offering everything from rhetoric to natural theology and mineralogy.²⁷ We know that she learned French and mythology, and that she did not appreciate history books, finding them nothing but "dry detail of facts."²⁸

The Greenhows believed that education further refined their children, marking them with the stamp of gentility. A properly educated child grew up with enhanced earning potential, more confidence in public, more composure in crisis, and more responsibility toward those in need. The practical application of this was controlled and civil behavior. Obligation was attached to membership in the *connexion*, a willingness to aid friends and provide for the welfare of dependents, from children to slaves. Mary Greenhow learned the lessons of self-denial, responsibility, and hospitality at her parents' hearth; all of these held together by a firm conviction that God was choreographing their movements.²⁹

Mary Jane Greenhow's relationship with her parents was both affectionate and

²⁷*Ibid.*, May 20, 1834.

²⁸MGL, 772 (January 26, 1865), 678 (September 6, 1864); MJCG, 2 (September 6, 1837), 30 (October 28, 1837), 51 (January 3, 1838); Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 210-211, 215, 218, 220-221; Scott, *The Southern Lady*, 69-75; Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994) 2, 11, 151-154; Margaret Ripley Wolfe, *Daughters of Canaan: A Saga of Southern Women, New Perspectives on the South Series* (Lexington, Ky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995) 95-98. Gender biases in education were mostly based on an assumption that women were biologically unsuited for comprehending some subjects and less capable of reason than men. Curricula for women had expanded from the eighteenth-century practice of merging basics like rhetoric, grammar, and arithmetic with needlework, drawing, dancing, and music. Now some female academies were adding mythology, universal history, and logic to their courses of study. By 1860 southern women's academies led northern schools in the addition of the classics to their curricula. Though rare, this indicates that some educators in the South believed women capable of understanding classical instruction. Women's application of this course of study was not meant to make them equal to or competitive with men, but to refine them and make them better wives, mothers, and companions.

²⁹Wilbur F. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941) 68, 74-77.

friendly. Although her 1837-1838 diary is the only source on this subject, it is enough to portray a daughter who felt confident in her parents' love and free to relate to them as individuals. There are more entries referring to "Mother" than to "Father" but clearly she kept in touch with both through letters. References to her father were rather teasing, as though the family understood and respected some of his idiosyncracies, yet were allowed to poke fun at them. Mary Jane Greenhow lightly connected some of her own activities to her father's behavior, from drinking scalding hot coffee, to digressing in her entry until, as her father would say, she had to "resume the thread of [her] narrative." Robert Greenhow might have been somewhat indulgent with his daughter. When her friend worried that she would receive a scolding for staying out so late at night, Mary Greenhow wrote in her diary, "*my father* would not scold me if I staid out till 10 o'clock." What and how Mary Jane wrote about her father leaves the impression that they had an easy, comfortable relationship.³⁰

References to her mother were often more impassioned and sentimental. She obviously relied on her mother for comfort, worried about her "health and spirits," knowing that she could become "prey to ennui," and was almost jealous of time spent away from her. She vowed during the Christmas season at her brother Robert's home in Washington that Christmas of 1838 would be different. Her next Christmas would "be with Mother," she wrote, "as I am determined to spend next winter with her." Two or three times that winter, Mary Jane Greenhow wrote of her mother, "I would give anything to see her," and once "wrote a terribly harsh letter" to her mother, "scolding

³⁰MJCG/MHS, 34 (November 19, 1837), 40 (December 3, 1837), 78 (April 10, 1838), 23 (October 16, 1837), *emphasis hers*.

her for not writing." After Mary Lorraine Greenhow asked her to write a remembrance of her in the commonplace book, her daughter's poem of response poured forth almost possessively. "What shall I write, my mother dear," she asked in meter, "Have I forgetfulness to fear?/ Let others here in accents mild, your love and friendship claim/ Tis in your heart, that I aspire to fill a loved one's place." Clearly Mary Jane Greenhow was deeply attached to her mother.³¹

She was also devoted to, and affected by, both of her brothers. Their relationships are visible mainly in the pages of her 1837-1838 diary, kept while visiting brother Robert and his family in Washington. By this time Robert had made a name for himself in medicine and in government. After graduating from William and Mary College and Columbia University, he spent seven years in Europe, studying medicine in Edinburgh, London, and Paris. While in Europe, he developed a friendship with Lord Byron and other literary figures. In 1825 he returned to the United States and began practicing medicine in New York City.³²

During the period Robert Greenhow, Jr., spent in New York, he became involved in Thomas Jefferson's project to establish a medical school at the new University of Virginia. Jefferson remembered that in his discussions with Greenhow at Monticello, he had "mentioned that we could have from Italy the finest anatomical preparations." Greenhow gathered information on the materials needed for the medical school and found

³¹MJCG/MHS, 11 (September 23, 1837), 27 (October 24, 1837), 32 (November 10, 1837), 33-34 (November 15, 1837), 40 (December 3, 1837), 44 (December 13, 1837), 47 (December 24, 1837), 52 (January 3, 1838), 56 (January 9, 1838), 58 (January 23, 1838), 61 (February 3, 1838), 63 (February 6, 1838), 68 (March 5, 1838), 76 (March 25, 1838); MLG, poem by Mary Greenhow Lee, September 25, 1846.

³²Barbee, "Robert Greenhow," 182-183.

models of organs, skeletons, "a series of figures...representing the foetus during various periods of utero gestation, [and]...a decomposable brain." In the end, Greenhow extended to Jefferson his hopes for the new school, "that it may prosper and that you may see the tree which you have planted bring forth fruit."³³

In 1830, Greenhow's interest in the liberal revolution in France prompted him to found a newspaper entitled *The Tricolor* to inform the public about the changes in French rule. Stating that "the weak and misguided monarch," had been "hurled from" the throne and "driven into exile," Greenhow applauded the revolution in France, claiming that the "great nation" once again stood "forth the advocate of resistance and oppression." Fond of neither "the old Monarchical times" nor the "savage ferocity which marked the reign of terror," Greenhow praised France for joining "the march of liberal institutions." Once Louis Philippe took the throne, Greenhow suspended the newspaper.³⁴ For Mary Jane Greenhow's brother, rebellion could be condoned when necessary.

Through his friendship with Robert Livingston, Andrew Jackson's Secretary of State, Greenhow's career shifted gears. Livingston obtained an appointment for Greenhow to the State Department as a translator and librarian. Fluent in French, Spanish, Italian, and German, Greenhow was an asset as interpreter for the diplomats at the State Department. The cultured manners he had acquired in the Greenhow household went a long way toward making him a favorite in Washington society as well.³⁵

³³Letters from Jefferson to Greenhow, March 8, 1825, and Greenhow to Jefferson, March 22, 1825, from the Presidential Series by the Library of Congress, microfilm.

³⁴Robert Greenhow, *The Tricolor: Devoted to the Politics, Literature, &c of Continental Europe*, Nos. I to IV, (New York: Ludwig & Tolefree, 1830) 16, 26; Barbee, "Robert Greenhow," 182.

³⁵*Ibid.*

Robert Greenhow's sons appear to have joined with the Democrats and participated more energetically in politics than their father had. Robert, Jr.'s, political proclivities are evidenced in his appointment under Andrew Jackson, and special duties assigned by President Van Buren. Although he continued his work in the State Department under Zachary Taylor, it is clear that his entrance into the federal bureaucracy stemmed from his association with leading Democrats. James Washington Greenhow's partisanship is less difficult to identify than his brother's. In 1843, the younger Greenhow son worked on the Virginia Democratic committee under Chairman James A. Seddon in preparation for the election of 1844. After Polk's election, Washington Greenhow directly communicated with the president on at least one issue.³⁶

Mary Jane Greenhow arrived in Washington in the fall of 1837, after brother Robert returned from a diplomatic mission to Mexico for President Martin Van Buren. Van Buren had selected Greenhow to deliver a formal note to Mexico's foreign affairs minister detailing grievances against the new government by American citizens living in Mexico. Instability following Mexico's independence had made Americans' property there vulnerable to bands of robbers. That, coupled with Mexican resentment from their loss of Texas, had exacerbated tensions between the United States and its southern neighbor. The letter listed over fifty-seven claims, and Greenhow was instructed to enlighten the minister as to Van Buren's firm requirement that the Mexican government

³⁶Letter from Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter to unidentified addressee, February 20, 1843, Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter Papers; letter from Washington Greenhow to John Y. Mason, November 22, 1846, and November 30, 1846, Mason Family Papers, VHS. For an explanation of the generational shift from Jeffersonian Republicans to Jacksonian Democrats, see Jordan, *Political Leadership*, 31, 205, 209, 214; Wade Lee Shaffer, "The Richmond Junto and Politics in Jacksonian Virginia," Ph.D. diss., College of William & Mary, 1993, 2, 3, 14; and Wilentz, "Market Revolution," 75.

show an earnest desire to settle them. Additionally, Greenhow was charged with the responsibility of delivering a personal letter from Secretary of War Joel Poinsett to Mexican President Anastasio Bustamente.³⁷

Like his sister, Robert was an interested and enthusiastic observer of all facets of the world around him. As he journeyed to Mexico, he noted various flora, such as "the Copal varnish tree," growing in a "yard at Columbia," and palmettos, pomegranates, and a "cabbage palm." He also picked "whortleberries" along the way, reserving some to eat with his supper that night, and ate blackberries he found growing along the side of the road. Through every town he appraised the architecture and layout of the streets. Clearly, he had been looking forward to seeing Florida and the wildlife for which it was known. He finally "saw the first alligator running wild and was brutal enough to kill it." The creature was only "about 3 feet long," but he took some pleasure in getting in touch with his primal instincts.³⁸

Finally arriving in Mexico, Greenhow gauged the first official he met "to be a good natured silly old man," whose "quarters were in a little tavern." Obviously, he held some of the same opinions of Mexican citizens as did others in the United States. Although Mexicans were not fond of Americans either, contempt of the southern neighbor, bred of cultural differences and diplomatic strains, led Greenhow to feel superior to the people he met in Mexico. As he made his way through the country, he

³⁷Diary of Robert Greenhow, Jr., "An account of his journey from Washington, D. C. to Mexico City in 1837," CWM, hereafter RG; John Niven, *Martin Van Buren: The Romantic Age of American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) 443, 444; Paul A. Varg, *United States Foreign Relations, 1820-1860* (Michigan State University Press, 1979) 119.

³⁸RG, 3 (June 1, 1837), 6 (June 3, 1837), 7 (June 5, 1837), 9-10 (June 7, 1837), 11 (June 3, 1837).

noted the terrain of the land, the currents of rivers, but also the crime in the area and the relaxed style of Mexican dress.³⁹

After delivering his official and unofficial messages, he hurried to leave for home, feeling "a large earthquake at Jalepa" just as he was getting ready "to quit the place."⁴⁰ Passing through Richmond again, Greenhow picked up his sister and escorted her to Washington. The trip from Richmond to Washington then became her great adventure. Although not as exciting as Robert's trip south of the border, Mary Greenhow commented on "accidents...innumerable" that included the loss of some of her "banboxes," frightening sights such as "a man whose nose was tied up with a black ribbon," and intrigues that included "a runaway couple...on board" the ship. They arrived safely on September 2, 1837, a week before her eighteenth birthday, and she began her whirlwind stay in the nation's capital.⁴¹

Brother Robert had married Rose Maria O'Neale of Montgomery County, Maryland, a little over two years earlier, and by the time of Mary's visit, their family included a daughter, Florence, and at least three servants, Charles, Mary, and "Aunt Patty."⁴² "Brother" and "Sister," or "Miss Rose" as Mary sometimes referred to her, lived on the north side of K Street between Twelfth and Thirteenth where Mary had her

³⁹*Ibid.*, 40 (June 27, 1837), 46 (June 28, 1837), 52 (June 30, 1837); Varg, *Foreign Relations*, 170.

⁴⁰RG, 62 (August 2, 1837).

⁴¹MJCG/MHS, 1 (9/4/1837).

⁴²*Richmond Enquirer*, June 2, 1835; MJCG/MHS, 22 (October 16, 1837), 29 (November 4, 1837), 34 (November 19, 1837), 38 (November 28, 1837), 44 (December 14, 1837), 46 (December 24, 1837), 75 (March 25, 1838).

own room and a "sky parlour."⁴³ [See illustration 15]

Mary Greenhow's relationship with her brother Robert was comfortable and affectionate. He seemed to share many of her interests, and they fueled each other's passion for knowledge. She respected him for his accomplishments and his "perfect knowledge of Paris," but it is evident that they were on an equal footing with each other despite an age difference of nineteen years. They spent time reading to each other from *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, a journal that focused on history, both ancient and recent, and current events. When he "commenced writing his book on Mexico," he asked Mary Jane to help him keep his papers in order. While in Mexico, Robert had ordered wax Mexican figures to be sent to him in Washington. They arrived broken and he was forced to endure his sister's laughter as he attempted "mend[ing] his babies, putting a leg here, a hand there."⁴⁴

During that winter of 1837-1838, Robert introduced his sister to the inner-workings of the national government. He seemed to both understand her curiosity and to share it. It is possible that Robert enjoyed renewing his enthusiasm for the federal hub by seeing it again through Mary's eyes. For instance, on Thursday, September 21, 1837, he interrupted her while she was putting her "hair in papers" by rushing in to tell her "that the treaty with the Indians was about to be signed." His excitement was infectious. She pulled a bonnet over the papers "and was dressed in two minutes," ready to leave. By "standing on the bench" she "had an excellent view" of "thirty [Cherokee] chieftains

⁴³*The Washington Directory, and Governmental Register, for 1843* (Washington: Anthony Reintze, 1843) LOV, 35; MJCG/MHS, 38 (November 29, 1837).

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 2 (September 6, 1837), 51 (January 3, 1838), 43 (December 10, 1837), 41 (December 6, 1837).



15. Rose O'Neal Greenhow and daughter

in their high day dresses, with their faces painted in the most horrible manner," and watched as they "smoked the calumet." Secretary of War Poinsett addressed the Indians, was interpreted, and then Mary heard "the deep grunt by which they signified their assent to his propositions...to send them the other side of the Mississippi." Even young Mary Greenhow suspected that the "poor wretches," as she called them, would "be cheated out of their lands by *the great father*, for they will receive one-tenth...value of their hunting grounds." Mary Jane Greenhow's strength of character was already developed to such an extent that she was flustered by neither her appearance in curling papers nor that of the Indians, even though the chief wore only "a very short hunting shirt" and "leggings...to his knees," with the space between them "being perfectly bare." More important to Mary Greenhow was the significance of the occasion and its effect on the Indians.⁴⁵

"Brother Robert" also saw to it that his sister watched the legislature in action. Women had been allowed in the galleries of Congress ever since Representative Fisher Ames arranged for a female acquaintance to watch him give a speech. There had been no written rules against it, just an assumption that women would not be interested. Mary Jane Greenhow was interested. She visited the Capitol at least three times during this visit to Washington, once specifically "to hear Mr. [Henry] Clay" speak.⁴⁶ It is apparent that the relationship between Mary and Robert was based on mutual values and interests. Mary's feelings about her other brother bordered on hero worship.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 10 (September 21, 1837), emphasis hers.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 20 (October 8, 1837), 46 (December 24, 1837), 64 (February 20, 1838); William E. Ames, *A History of the National Intelligencer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972) 260-261.

Mary Jane Greenhow and her brother James Washington "Wash" Greenhow, a lawyer in Richmond, were close. Although only two years older than Mary, "Wash" exhibited paternal instincts toward her which she accepted. Gender rather than a difference in age accounted for his attitude. In protecting, advising, and spoiling her, he imitated the behavior he had witnessed among other males in his family, and she seemed to abide his dominant attitude. A letter from "Wash" put Mary "in fine spirits."⁴⁷ Word that a visit from him would be delayed prompted her to label him "provoking," or herself "ready to cry with vexation" and disappointment.⁴⁸ She was in the process of undressing on the evening he finally did arrive for one of his short visits to Washington that winter. She "heard a carriage at the door," and looked to see "Wash" getting out of it, threw her "robe de chambre [sic] on in a second and ran to meet him," then sat up with him until two in the morning, catching up on his news. During another of his arrivals, she "nearly broke [her] neck running downstairs....to see him."⁴⁹

Washington Greenhow spoiled his sister. She knew, for instance, that "he would not dare to come without bringing [her] something pretty," and he did not disappoint her, bringing her "beautiful dresses" and "a diamond ring."⁵⁰ He also escorted her, when she asked, on her walks "on the avenue." She allowed him to exchange a walking dress for her "which he thought too light," because she had "great confidence in his taste."⁵¹ And

⁴⁷MJCG/MHS, 66 (February 28, 1838).

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 48 (December 26, 1837), 58 (January 23, 1838), 59 (January 30, 1838).

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 14-15 (September 29, 1837), 72 (March 18, 1838).

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 57 (January 17, 1838), 14 (September 29, 1837).

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 9 (September 20, 1837).

when he disapproved of an accessory she planned "to wear at the ball," he did not merely suggest, but strongly stated that she would not wear it. She complied.⁵² Regarding "Wash," she stated, "I believe he loves me dearly;" and she loved him in return. The name "Washington Greenhow," she would say years later, "thrills my heart." To her, he was "a statesman" with a strong passion for his "calling."⁵³

Robert was old enough to be Mary's father, yet their relationship seems to have resembled a close friendship. "Wash," on the other hand, though equal to her in age, sometimes acted out the role of a father toward her. Part of the explanation for this could be innate personality differences, or the mellowing of age in Robert's case. It could also parallel the contrast between their father's relationship with his two wives. The models of adult gender interaction had been different for the two men: the first a couple of equal age, openly affectionate and sharing common interests; the second a union of vast age difference and disparate experiences.⁵⁴ Whatever the reasons for their dissimilar attitudes toward their sister, the Greenhow brothers clearly loved her. In return, although a spirited young woman, Mary Jane Greenhow tried to maintain good behavior and an even temper for her brothers, appreciating both their protection and friendship.

In Robert's wife, Rose, Mary found a sister with whom she could be affectionate and a kindred spirit. Just two years apart in age, they could be content to stay home

⁵²*Ibid.*, 73-74 (March 21, 1838).

⁵³*Ibid.*, 15 (September 29, 1837); MGL, 831 (June 2, 1865).

⁵⁴See Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, 49-55.

together and spend the evening sewing, talking, laughing, and eating apples for a treat.⁵⁵ On the other hand, they could become quickly frustrated with each other. Mary called Rose "impudent" for telling a friend that she had "designs" on her husband, and Rose scolded Mary when she exhibited questionable manners with men who were pursuing her. When Mary "merely bid good morning" to a suitor as she breezed past him, "Miss Rose glared" at her.⁵⁶ Although the two women enjoyed an open and friendly relationship, their spirited personalities, attractive to the Greenhow men, could cause mild sparks when face to face in open conflict.

The most serious arguments between them were ignited over the rigid and vigorous visiting schedule that Washington high society demanded of people such as the Greenhows. Nineteenth-century etiquette books laid out the ground rules for *visiting*. Only when two people had been introduced by someone well-known to each did either secure the right to drop by for a *visit*. More often than not, the *visit* meant merely dropping off a calling card and leaving. It was considered a breach of etiquette to do even this, however, if not first introduced to the hostess or host by a third party. The custom depended upon respect people held for each other but, more important, insured that no one within the circle would have their reputation tainted by socializing indiscriminately.⁵⁷ Being *visitable* meant that a person had achieved recognition in society as someone with whom others in this network would be comfortable, who shared

⁵⁵Louis A. Sigaud, "Mrs. Greenhow and the Rebel Spy Ring," in *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. XLI, No. 3 (Sept 1946) 173-198: 175; MJCG/MHS, 34 (November 15, 1837).

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 43 (December 12, 1837), 65 (February 24, 1838).

⁵⁷*Etiquette*, 45-50.

common interests and values.

The special society Washington offered, in which the politically powerful met by day to administer the country's business and then dined and danced by night to underscore their prestige and importance, was, for the most part, something that Mary Jane Greenhow enjoyed.⁵⁸ She merely endured morning visits, however, because she was "compelled to do" them.⁵⁹ Actually, morning visits were between the hours of twelve and three in the afternoon. During these hours the women of the house were required to be dressed and ready to receive their visitors without delay, or send word by their servant that they were "not at home," meaning that they were otherwise occupied.⁶⁰

Mary Jane Greenhow's temper could be tested with the unpredictability of the custom. She complained that if she "dressed to receive visitors, none called." Or if she was not prepared, and told the servants to announce her "not at home," then the visitor would be someone important to her, leaving her frustrated. "I was sorry when I found

⁵⁸*A Full Directory, for Washington City, Georgetown, and Alexandria* (Washington City: E. A. Cohen & Co., 1834) LOV; MJCG/MHS, 24 (October 17, 1837), 32 (November 9, 1837), 45 (December 19, 1837), 52 (January 4, 1838), 53 (January 5, 1838), 54 (January 9, 1838), 60 (February 3, 1838), 62 (February 12, 1838).

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 32 (November 9, 1837), 45 (December 19, 1837), 52 (January 4, 1838), 53 (January 5, 1838), 59 (January 31, 1838), 60 (February 3, 1838), 62 (February 12, 1838).

⁶⁰*Etiquette*, 45. The simple act of leaving calling cards signified myriad social connotations, especially a conspicuously absent return card. When Peggy Eaton, wife of Senator John Eaton of Tennessee, arrived at the home of John C. Calhoun in 1829, Floride Calhoun was "not at home" to her, and the absence of Mrs. Calhoun's card on the tray inside Mrs. Eaton's front door told the tale. The Vice-President's wife, first hostess in Washington after the death of President Andrew Jackson's wife Rachel, officially snubbed Peggy Eaton, letting her know that the daughter of a tavernkeeper was not *visitable*. In fact, Kirsten Wood has argued that this particular incident shows that women's social power permeated the political world, since the "Eaton Affair" contributed to the fall of Jackson's cabinet. See Frank, *Daniel Dissenting*, 95, 96; and Kirsten E. Wood, "'One Woman So Dangerous to Public Morals': Gender and Power in the Eaton Affair," in *Journal of the Early Republic*, Summer 1997, Vol. 17, No. 2: 237-275.

Geo. May's card on the table," she wrote, because he was "so handsome."⁶¹ These rules of etiquette could cause dissention in the household. Mary and Rose "had quite a quarrel" one day about whether Mary "should see persons who called." Mary lost the argument and "dressed [her]self accordingly," but did not change her mind.⁶² Mary declared that it was "the greatest relief in the world to...hear the servant say '*not at home*'."⁶³ She hated being "dressed up in furs & feathers and visiting from morning to night." At times, to ensure against long visits, she met her visitors with her "bonnet on," letting them think she was on her way out. In the end, however, she forced herself into the regimen because, as she stated, "when you are in Turkey, you must do as the Turkeys."⁶⁴

Nothing annoyed Mary Greenhow more in the visiting rounds than a poor conversationalist. "Keeping up the ball of conversation" was an art that Mary had learned well, and did not appreciate people who could "say yes and no as well as any body," but added little else to the discussion.⁶⁵ On the other hand, she grew equally weary of a man who would "not let anyone talk but himself," which was an etiquette infraction.⁶⁶ According to *Etiquette at Washington: Together with the Customs Adopted by Polite Society in the Other Cities of the United States*, men were "fonder of giving

⁶¹MJCG/MHS, 53 (January 6, 1838), 57 (January 22, 1838).

⁶²*Ibid.*, 29 (November 4, 1837).

⁶³*Ibid.*, 11 (September 21, 1837), *emphasis hers*.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 29 (October 28, 1837), 5 (September 18, 1837).

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 12 (September 23, 1837).

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 43 (December 10, 1837).

their own suggestions than of listening to those of others," but were admonished to let "the ladies" select the topics of discussion "in order to prevent the selection of subjects beyond the depth of" women's knowledge.⁶⁷ Although expected to be the most skilled conversationalists, however, some men felt limited for on one occasion Mary and Rose "peeped through the door" before greeting their visitor in the parlor, and caught him "rehearsing" his conversation "before the glass."⁶⁸

Mary Jane Greenhow felt fully confident in her performance before Washington society, even with all of its rules and expectations. During her stay in Washington that winter of 1837-1838, her life was filled with parties, attending nearly forty in six months, two at the White House where she "had the pleasure of shaking hands" with President Martin Van Buren.⁶⁹ The Greenhows were also invited to parties at cabinet members' homes, such as Secretary of State John Forsyth. Mary Greenhow enjoyed spending time with the Forsyths because they were southern and "so free from anything like pride or hautiness; [sic]" but found their parties too crowded since "everyone who chooses to leave a card is invited."⁷⁰ Secretary of War Poinsett and his wife also entertained large parties. Guests at these gatherings savored elaborate displays of treats: molded ice cream and sculpted castles made of sugar-glazed fruits.⁷¹ Intimate sociables, such as those at

⁶⁷*Etiquette*, 103, 99.

⁶⁸MJCG/MHS, 71 (March 12, 1838).

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 51 (January 2, 1838).

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 14 (September 29, 1837), 54 (January 9, 1838). See also Niven, *Martin Van Buren*, 405.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 408. See MJCG/LC, "List of Parties."

Senate Secretary Asbury Dickens's home, were more in keeping with Mary's tastes.⁷² Co-owners of the *National Intelligencer*, Joseph Gales, Jr., and William Winston Seaton, entertained in very different fashions, neither of which earned Mary Greenhow's approbation. While Sarah Seaton, sister to Gales, extended invitations to large numbers for parties at their home on E Street, Sarah Gales preferred small "soirees" on Friday evenings.⁷³

Mary Greenhow felt "perfectly at ease" among the "elite of the elite" at these social functions.⁷⁴ She arrived with her family dressed in "Indian muslin...trimmed with pink rosettes," and her hair curled in "ringlets each side" with a "demi wreath of roses" on her head, looking the part of a romantic belle. Or she would choose black crepe for dramatic effect.⁷⁵ She arrived ready for fun and frolic and, indeed, often found it. One reason she preferred small gatherings is that she wanted plenty of room for dancing, especially favoring the Virginia Reel, "danced with...spirit."⁷⁶ If Mary Greenhow could dance, play cards, and have "real old-fashioned fun," she considered the party a success.⁷⁷ Often, however, she endured "stiff" gatherings of "crowd[s] of stupid

⁷²*Ibid.*; *A Full Directory, for Washington City, 1834*, 7; *The Washington Directory, 1843*, 21.

⁷³Ames, *National Intelligencer*, 87, 107, 108; MJCG/LC, "List of Parties;" MJCG/MHS, 60 (February 3, 1838), 64 (February 20, 1838). See also Clement Eaton, "Winifred and Joseph Gales, Liberals in the Old South," in *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. X No. 4, Nov. 1944, 461-474.

⁷⁴MJCG/MHS, 13 (September 25, 1837).

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 31 (November 9, 1837), 51 (January 2, 1838), 24 (October 18, 1837).

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 54 (January 9, 1838), 62 (February 12, 1838).

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 62 (February 12, 1838).

people," or a set of "old codgers."⁷⁸ As a young woman of marriageable age, Mary Jane Greenhow deemed parties at which "there were not beaux enough" crashing disappointments, even though hostesses typically judged the success of these affairs by the number of women present.⁷⁹

Added to the parties and the self-imposed vigorous visiting schedule were the excursions "on the avenue." Through all of this Mary Greenhow collected "beaux." Flirtations awakened her to the milestone she was approaching. She felt a heightened sense of power mixed with mild concerns for her future. Although she flirted lightly with a married man and one who was engaged, she also fell "half in love" with a few who were eligible. Richard Cutts, Dolly Madison's nephew, briefly caught her attention. Others she found "very handsome and very agreeable," but then mentioned little else about them. John Randolph, a friend from Richmond, claimed her for a dance, during which she "had great difficulty making him behave himself." Martin Van Buren, Jr., presented her with a rose, which she appreciated enough to underline the fact in her diary, but she often referred to him as "little Martin" and was more interested in teasing him than taking him seriously as a suitor.⁸⁰

She especially liked men in uniform and was "crazy for an invitation" to a "party

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 65 (February 21, 1838), 62 (February 16, 1838), 45 (December 19, 1837), 51 (January 2, 1838).

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 45 (December 19, 1837); Ames, *National Intelligencer*, 107.

⁸⁰MJCG/MHS, 24 (October 18, 1837), 38 (November 28, 1837), 48 (December 27, 1837), 49 (December 28, 1837), 50 (December 30, 1837), 51 (January 2, 1838), 55 (January 14, 1838), 56 (January 14, 1838), 60 (February 1-3, 1838), 65 (February 21, 1838), 56 (March 2, 1838), 68 (March 5, 1838), 74 (March 22, 1838), 75 (March 25, 1838).

at the barracks," but did not succeed.⁸¹ Robert Rodgers, son of Commodore John Rodgers and Minerva Denison Rodgers, occupied a great deal of Mary Greenhow's time. She enjoyed his company because he was a "gentlemanly young man," but she also found him "rather stupid." At first blush, she found herself "half in love" with Alexander Macomb, a general's son, and called him her "pet," but, upon longer acquaintance, decided he did not have "quite enough life" for her. The reverse might have also been true since later Mary found Macomb in the back room of a store, flirting "with a pretty little French girl."⁸²

The young men endured this behavior because, during courtship, they suspected it was more drama than substance. Robert Rodgers, the young man Mary Greenhow found "rather stupid," wrote of one of her friends that she was "very much employed in acting the part of an anxious lover," for a suitor who had gone to sea for the Navy, even though she had "so many strings in her bow." He reported to his brother, John, however, that Washington was "gay," that "squeezes" were "in vogue," and that "the young ladies enjoy themselves, which constitutes the gaiety," implying that he endured the parties merely for the sake of "the young ladies."⁸³

Clearly, Mary Greenhow was more interested in flirting and testing her powers of attraction than in taking any of her beaux seriously for very long. She thought Edwin

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 36 (November 21, 1837).

⁸²*Ibid.*, 24 (October 18, 1837), 26 (October 19, 1837), 29 (October 28, 1837), 30 (October 31, 1837), 33 (November 15, 1837), 39 (December 1, 1837), 43 (December 12, 1837), 51 (January 2, 1838), 62 (February 12, 1838), 64 (February 20, 1838), 65 (February 21, 1838), 66 (February 28, 1838); information on John Rodgers and on the Macomb family from the Provenance of the Rodgers Family Papers, LC.

⁸³Letter from Robert Rodgers to John Rodgers, Acting Sailing Master, U. S. Schooner *Dolphin*, Coast of Brazil, January 21, 1837, Rodgers Family Papers, LC.

Dickens was "a handsome little fellow," but then reminded herself that "he was a Dickens." She disconcerted her suitors by "always quizzing them," or laughing when they tried to read poetry to her. Unless a man could keep up with her in conversation, or take "command," she lost interest. She wanted a man who exhibited "the boldness of a man" within the limits of genteel behavior.⁸⁴

Wondering if "Cupid" would ever make her blind enough to commit her life to one man, she watched as two of her friends married that winter, then slept on pieces of their wedding cakes and bid dreams of her future husband to come to her in her sleep. None did. Clearly, she was not ready for marriage, but suffered from what Nancy Cott has identified as "marriage trauma," symptomatic of young marriageable women during this period. In part, the condition arose from the conflict young women sensed between the drive for romance and the practical necessity of an economically secure future. It also developed in young belles who perceived the added responsibilities and the restrictions on their freedoms that marriage would bring. Mary Jane Greenhow marvelled that her friends talked freely about their impending marriages and were "as unembarrassed as if it were an everyday affair." One of the women passed through the ordeal "collected and composed as if she had been married 6 years instead of six days." But the other finally began showing signs of fear and Mary chalked it up to the fact that she had "only a few days grace." Before long, however, even this nervous bride had "settled down into a quiet little married woman," a condition Mary Greenhow judged

⁸⁴MJCG/MHS, 15 (September 29, 1837), 43 (December 12, 1837), 61 (February 6, 1838), 67 (March 2, 1838), 68 (March 5, 1837).

bleak.⁸⁵

While she enjoyed the attention paid to her by the young gentlemen of Washington, Mary Greenhow much preferred spending time with women. She especially missed her best friend, Edmonia "Eddie" Christian, from Henrico County, just outside Richmond. To her diary she confessed, "I would give anything...if Eddie was but here; all the girls here love gentlemen so much that I, who am not *very* fond of them, feel lonesome; I had so much rather talk to Eddie than any of the men I have seen yet."⁸⁶ In fact, she started her Washington diary "for Eddie's amusement during the long winter nights [she] hope[d] to spend with her ere three moons [were] accomplished."⁸⁷ "Eddie" had qualities Mary looked for in a friend: trust, equality, and sincerity, which to Mary was as important as "a looking glass...in which you can see your blemishes."⁸⁸ There were times when Mary wrote of "Eddie" in the homoerotic language Carroll Smith-Rosenburg has identified for women of the Victorian age when women were increasingly set apart from men and were not expected to express themselves openly or intellectually in mixed company.⁸⁹ At the end of her first diary entry, Mary wrote, "Good night Eddie, I should like to know if you think of me as much as I do you."⁹⁰ Or a "beautiful

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 32 (November 12, 1837), 38 (November 28, 1837), 41 (December 6, 1837), 43 (December 12, 1837), 70 (March 10, 1838), 78 (March 28, 1838); Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, 80-83.

⁸⁶MJCG/MHS, 24 (October 17, 1837), emphasis hers.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 1 (September 4, 1837).

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 30 (October 28, 1837), 5 (September 15, 1837), 4 (September 11, 1837).

⁸⁹See Carroll Smith-Rosenburg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America", in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1 (1975):1-30.

⁹⁰MJCG/MHS, 1 (September 4, 1837).

night" would remind her of the night she and "Eddie...kept watch together in the window."⁹¹ She pouted if she did not hear from her friend often, scolding her, and wondering if "Eddie has forgotten me." When a letter did arrive, Mary Jane Greenhow was ecstatic.⁹²

Without "Eddie" in Washington, Mary was forced to form new friendships. The Henly sisters, Henrietta and Frances ["Fanny"] helped fill her time.⁹³ And, when Eliza ["Liz"] O'Neale, a relative of Rose's, stayed at the Greenhows' for a short time, Mary first believed Eliza to be "a sweet girl" who would make her stay "more pleasant." But when she caught "Lizzy and Martin Van Buren [Jr.] fighting over a bottle of wine," she decided that she liked "her very much."⁹⁴ "Liz" O'Neale became Mary Greenhow's partner in rebelling against the stress and boredom of polite society. One evening when Robert and Rose left them home to go visiting, the young women "amused" themselves "burning sugar in the candle, imitating the looks & gestures of some...friends, and finally, by hiding behind the window curtains," spying on Robert and Rose "when they came home."⁹⁵ On another evening alone they "ran romping about the house like two tomboys."⁹⁶

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 4 (September 11, 1837).

⁹²*Ibid.*, 22 (October 16, 1837), 35 (November 19, 1837), 38 (November 28, 1837), 46 (December 24, 1837), 58-59 (January 22, 1838), 73 (March 18, 1838).

⁹³*Ibid.*, 5 (September 15, 1837), 17 (October 4, 1837), 19 (October 7, 1837), 30 (October 28, 1837), 32 (November 10, 1837), 39 (December 1, 1837).

⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 55 (January 14, 1838), 58 (January 28, 1838).

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 71 (March 12, 1838).

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 75 (March 25, 1838).

Henrietta Henly also helped ease her boredom. With bright moonlight to guide them, they "ran on at a wild rate, dancing and singing and...waltz[ing]" from one door to the other "on the pavement," and "amused" themselves "smoking cigars," when left to their own devices.⁹⁷ Even Rose, the one who insisted that Mary follow all of society's rules, had her moments. So much alike in temperament, and both destined to become "outrageous rebels," they found themselves "in a frolicsome humour" one night and "wrapped up in sheets," then went next door to the Wadsworths', and "threw the door open,...much to" their neighbors' "astonishment."⁹⁸ When freed from the visiting schedule, she and her friends walked up Pennsylvania Avenue to shop at Madam Bihler's Fancy Store, at Savage's or Claggett's, then stopped at Kinchey's, one block down, for ice cream.⁹⁹

Mary Greenhow could have quieter moments, however, in which she played with baby Florence, sewed, or read.¹⁰⁰ In fact, while in Washington that winter of 1837-1838, she read more than twenty books, either alone in her room or aloud with the

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 32 (November 10, 1837), 42 (December 8, 1837).

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 47-58 (December 25, 1837 to January 23, 1838). Rose O'Neale Greenhow became the notorious "Rebel Rose," a spy for the Confederacy during the Civil War, and was placed under house arrest on August 23, 1861, in her home in Washington. After her release in June 1862, she sailed to Europe where she wrote about her imprisonment and lobbied for European recognition of the Confederacy. Just as she was returning to the United States in September 1864, she drowned off the coast of North Carolina, weighted down by gold she was carrying around her waist. See Sigaud, "Mrs. Greenhow and the Rebel Spy Ring;" *Harper's Weekly*, September 7, 1861 and January 18, 1862; MGL, 108 (May 21, 1862), 231-234 (September 1862), 276 (December 1862), 289, 298 (January 1863), 555 (February 1864), 705-706 (October 1864), 758 (January 7, 1865).

⁹⁹MJCG/MHS, 9 (September 20, 1837), 29 (October 28, 1837), 71 (March 12, 1838), 72 (March 15, 1838), 73 (March 21, 1838), 75 (March 25, 1838), 76 (March 25, 1838); *A Full Directory for Washington City*, 1834, 31; *The Washington Directory*, 1843, 6, 15, 188, 191.

¹⁰⁰MJCG/MHS, 34 (November 15, 1837), 38 (November 28, 1837), 45-46 (December 19, 1837).

family.¹⁰¹ Some of her favorite times were with family, and, as the winter continued, she became increasingly anxious to get back home to Richmond. Although she had enjoyed her "wild kicks" in Washington, she wrote that "there is a magic in *home* which no pleasure, no occupation can obliterate."¹⁰² When "Wash" came to escort her "home sweet home" in April, she quit her diary with the line, "and here endeth my adventures."¹⁰³

Within two years her life would change dramatically. She returned to Robert's house when her father, realizing that "his age and growing infirmities" would hamper his business management, moved his wife and daughter to his son's home in Washington. There he intended to live out the rest of his life.¹⁰⁴ He died on Tuesday, June 30, 1840, "at the residence of his son, in the city of Washington."¹⁰⁵ With the death of her father began two decades of loss in Mary Greenhow's life. During this time of trouble she would need all of the spirit and fire her character could provide.

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 2 (September 6, 1837), 3 (September 9, 1837), 6 (September 23, 1837), 7 (September 23, 1837), 18 (October 6, 1837), 21 (October 10, 1837), 26 (October 20, 1837), 29 (October 25, 1837), 30 (November 4, 1837), 33 (November 12, 1837), 36 (November 25, 1837), 38 (November 29, 1837), 40 (December 3, 1837), 45 (December 19, 1837), 46 (December 24, 1837), 48 (December 26, 1837), 51 (January 3, 1838), 57 (January 17, 1837), 64 (February 20, 1838), 67 (March 1, 1838), 68-69 (March 6, 1838), 57 (March 25, 1838), 78 (April 10, 1838). Some of the books she read during this period were *Venetia*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Pickwick Club*, *Victims of Society*, *Scourge of the Ocean*, and *Robinson Crusoe*.

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 9 (September 20, 1837), emphasis hers.

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, 75 (March 22, 1838), 79 (April 10, 1838).

¹⁰⁴Richmond Hustings Book 40, 482-483, February 26, 1840, LOV.

¹⁰⁵*Richmond Enquirer*, July 3, 1840.

CHAPTER III

"IN THE PALM DAYS OF OLD WINCHESTER": THE ENVIRONMENT OF MARY GREENHOW LEE'S TRANSFORMATION TO RESPONSIBILITY¹

Mary Greenhow's life underwent dramatic changes in the two decades between her father's death in 1840 and the Civil War. From a young woman whose "wild kicks" were tolerated by her family she became a wife and adopted a new family and town. In Winchester, she threaded together new filaments of her *connexion*, enjoying and participating in her husband's success and the activities of the town. Before the war removed her from Winchester, however, she lost her closest family members, took on the responsibility of mothering her husband's nieces and nephews in 1848, lost a husband in 1856, and assumed the role of widow. In the meantime, her strong love of family and the value she placed on environment enabled her to appreciate the time she spent in "the palm days of old Winchester." Her strength of character and intelligence would see her through when the "palm days" ended and a more difficult era began.

Robert Greenhow's family brought his remains back to Richmond by train on July 1, 1840, and buried him the next day at Shockoe Cemetery. Publicly, his obituary stated that he required no eulogy because he had an "unimpeachable and spotless character."²

¹MGL, 748-749 (December 26-28, 1864).

²*Richmond Enquirer*, July 3, 1840; Bohmer A. Rudd, ed., *Shockoe Hill Cemetery, Richmond, Virginia, Register of Interments, April 10, 1822 - December 31, 1950* (Washington, D. C.: A. Bohmer Rudd, n.d.) 20.

The emotional reaction his family may have had is unknown, but clearly they had practical matters to face. Greenhow's real property in Richmond had been diminishing through time. The values of his properties relative to the aggregate of land assessed in Richmond had ranged as high as 1.57% of the total property in the city in 1829. By 1839, however, his property taxes were down to 1.12% of the total, still a large chunk of the city's property, but much lower than his highest. By 1840, his land taxes had fallen to .74% of the aggregate collected for the city.³

In a will, written nearly a year before his death, Greenhow had appointed son Robert, Jr., his executor and required him to have the estate appraised, then to sell at public auction specific properties and slaves to satisfy outstanding debts. To his wife, Mary Lorraine, he left three slaves, Patty, Caroline, and his "good and trusty servant Robert," as long as she remained unmarried. His widow received the silver plate purchased during their marriage, and any furniture from the household and books from the library that she wanted. Additionally, as long as she remained his widow, she would be allowed use of his pew at Monumental Church. All of his estate taken by his widow, however, would revert to "daughter Mary Jane" at her mother's death or upon her remarriage.⁴

Mary Jane Greenhow received the family's piano and all of his tenements and property located on the north corner of E and Twelfth Streets, with the requirement that she pay \$5,000 out of her real property value to her brother James Washington Greenhow to equalize his portion of the estate. Should the sale of his estate not cover his debts,

³Richmond City Land Taxes, 1819, 1825-1840, LOV.

⁴Will and Codicil of Robert Greenhow, Sr., Hustings Court Book 8, 263, City of Richmond, LOV.

however, this property would be sold, as well. Robert, Jr., received two properties, the silver owned by his father and his mother, Mary Ann Greenhow, the silver inherited from John Greenhow, and silver bequeathed to Greenhow by his "respected friend Robert Saunders" of Williamsburg. James Washington received any books from the library not selected by his mother, his father's watch, and his "mathematical instruments,...globes and maps."⁵

When his estate was finally settled in September of 1840, Robert, Jr.'s, portion of the properties were valued at \$18,130. Mary Jane retained the property located at the corner of E and Twelfth Streets and the adjoining house and lot on E Street, the combined value of both listed at \$17,873. Interestingly, the Greenhow heirs settled the rest of the property differently than their father had specified. Instead of merely paying Washington the \$5,000 from Mary Jane's portion of the properties, she granted to him "in consideration of natural love and affection" the remainder of the properties bequeathed to her, valued at \$8,500. Additionally, both Robert, Jr., and Mary Jane granted to Washington ownership of the slaves George, Racha, Eliza, and Agnes, estimated at a value of \$1550.⁶

⁵*Ibid.* Until and if it was sold, however, rents from the property were to be divided equally between all three of his children. Although the value of each child's portion remained equal, given the fact that Mary Jane was required to give Washington \$5,000 from her portion to make it so, it is significant that Robert Greenhow left his youngest son no real property. The bequest of personal items signifying an interest in the larger world could be evidence that Washington's father saw a restless spirit in him, a spirit that would keep him from planting firm roots. Indeed, when Washington died nine years later, he was far from home in Clarksville, Tennessee. Greenhow Family genealogical notes, Tyler Family Papers, CWM.

⁶Division of the Estate of Robert Greenhow, Senior, Richmond City Hustings Book 41, 438-443, LOV. The difference between Washington's portion and that retained by Mary Jane and Robert, Jr., was accounted for in the stipulation that they would each be responsible for that much more of their father's debts, should it be needed. Until the final settlement of those debts, all of the properties were held in trust by James M. Wickham. The Greenhow children sold their family home on Capitol and Tenth Streets to Mann Valentine and William Breedon in 1846 for \$8,600, who sold to Hugh W. Fry and Sons, Grocers and Commission Merchants, in 1851. Various other owners took possession through the years until, in

Once they gained property from his estate, Robert Greenhow's children continued tangled in a web of debt based on property that their father had participated in, though they were on the debtor end of the web while the senior Greenhow had most often held the position of creditor. Indeed, debt in a myriad of forms was one of the significant things binding his cohort of Virginia elite together. From a dizzying array of deeds of trust at least one thing is clear, those who owned property probably owed money to their friends, their brothers, or their in-laws. George, Robert, Samuel, and John Greenhow held deeds of trust for each other and, in a few instances, foreclosed on each other as well. More often than not, Robert Greenhow ended up with property another brother had encumbered or was holding in trust for someone else. Other men who knitted themselves to Greenhow through debt were Peter V. Daniel, James Rawlings, Alexander Duval, Gordon Bacchus, Reverend Richard Channing Moore, Thomas R. Price, brothers Samuel G. and John Adams, and William, Robert, and Alexander McKim, all of whom were civic or economic leaders in Richmond. It is conceivable that turning to each other for financial support was natural because they moved in the same circles, trusted each other, and had the property and assets to supply the need. On the other hand, each time they signed their names to another deed of trust, it tightened their *connexion*, whether done consciously or not.⁷

1883, the city purchased the lot and tore down the house to make room for a new city hall. See Richmond City Hustings Book 50, 614-615, LOV; Scott, *Houses*, 59-60.

⁷Henrico County Deed Books 4: 673; 5: 719; 26: 4, 75-76; Richmond City Hustings Books 10: 350-354; 18: 255-260, 383-387; 22: 202-204; 26: 75-76; 40: 218; 42: 259-261, LOV; Sheldon, "Richmond, Virginia," 119, 120, 128; Danforth and Claiborne, *Historical Sketch*, 127. According to Daniel P. Jordan, this "network of indebtedness" was not all that unusual for Virginians, and was the result of the economic changes facing these southerners during the years of the early Republic. This intricate web of debt, however, could have a lighter side. In 1824, George Greenhow was indebted to Robert for combined bonds amounting to \$7000, against which Thomas Diddup held in trust "property to wit one brindle cow,

Greenhow's heirs also contracted with their father's generation, and some of their own in the *connexion*, in an ever-expanding web of debt. Mary Jane put her inherited property on the line almost immediately. On January 1, 1841, John D. Munford began holding in trust the four-story brick building on Twelfth Street for Robert Saunders who loaned Mary Jane \$7,200. Rents on the property, collected from Alexander Duval, who held a lease until 1844, continued to Mary Jane, however, presumably as a source of income. That summer, Washington borrowed \$2,300 from James A. Seddon on the Twelfth Street property he had acquired in the settlement between himself and the other heirs. This property included a three-story brick building and a two-story brick house with a barber shop located in the front. He sold part of the property the next year for \$5,200, and also bought three acres of land in Henrico County on the stage road at Bottoms Bridge. Robert, Jr., still residing in "the City of Washington," borrowed \$1500 from Wellington Goddin in 1850, with his father's friend Gustavus A. Myers holding the Deed of Trust on the Main Street property left to him by his father, until three months later when he paid off the debt. Though on a smaller scale, and on the debtor end, the Greenhow children followed their father's example of tying themselves into the *connexion* through debt.⁸

a small sow and two pigs, a bank of corn in said Ro. Greenhow's barn,...one wheel barrow with all poultry which...Thos. Diddep may and shall whensoever required to sell at public auction" to go towards paying this debt. Whether or not the wording of this Deed of Trust was meant to show that Robert Greenhow had little intention of forcing his brother to repay this debt, it does prove that the brothers enjoyed a sense of humor. See Jordan, *Political Leadership*, 28; Henrico County Deed Book 26: 75-76, LOV.

⁸Richmond Hustings Books 42: 515-516, 530-531; 43: 463-465; 57: 98-101, 515-516; Henrico County Land Taxes 1841-1845, LOV. Washington Greenhow paid taxes on his Henrico County property until 1846. In 1850, when Robert Greenhow, Jr., borrowed \$1500 from Wellington Goddin, he also moved his family to San Francisco, California. It could be that he needed the extra funds at this time to pay for the expense of moving. Robert's daughters Florence, then fifteen years old, and Gertrude, thirteen years

Mary Jane Greenhow also reaffirmed her ties to the *connexion* through marriage. The next important phase in her life began on May 18, 1843, the day she married Hugh Holmes Lee, a twenty-nine year old lawyer from Winchester, Virginia, her distant cousin. The Greenhow family and the Lees had been connected by kinship through the years, but also, quite possibly, by the threads of the urban *connexion*.⁹

This urban *connexion* had begun in the colonial period.¹⁰ Besides the Chesapeake link between Virginia's Tidewater and Maryland's planters, the ports in Norfolk and Baltimore linked these areas for other trade as well. Political office was yet another strand of the web, bringing together men from all over Virginia in Richmond. The Episcopal Church, of which the Greenhows were active members, served as another link. Yearly conventions met each May in alternating towns bringing Episcopalians

old, were listed in the 1850 United States Census for Washington, D. C., as living at monastery in Georgetown that year. It is possible that Rose and Robert did not take their two oldest daughters with them to California, but probably did take their youngest, Lelia and Rose.

⁹*Genealogies of Virginia Families From the William & Mary College Quarterly History Magazine*, Vol. IV (Baltimore: General Publishing Co., Inc., 1982) 13, 15-16; *William & Mary Quarterly*, Series I, Vol. 7, 1898-1899, 17; "Genealogical Notes," Tyler Family Paper, CWM. Two of the children of Joseph and Margaret Davenport in Williamsburg were Elizabeth and Judith. Elizabeth married Anthony Hay; their daughter Sarah Elizabeth married Henry Nicholson; their daughter Elizabeth married Daniel Lee; and their son Hugh Holmes Lee married Mary Greenhow. Judith Davenport married John Greenhow; and their son Robert, with wife Mary Lorraine Charlton Greenhow, had Mary Jane Greenhow, who married Hugh Holmes Lee. Therefore, Mary's great-grandparents were Hugh's great-great-grandparents. Another connection between the two is historic. Henry Nicholson, Hugh's grandfather, and Robert Greenhow, Mary's father, both participated in the young men's military unit in Williamsburg that attempted to guard the magazine at the start of the Revolution.

¹⁰"Urban" might seem an exaggeration when referring to towns like Williamsburg or Winchester in the nineteenth century because they fell far short of the populations of cities such as Philadelphia or New York. By 1810, however, Virginia had several former villages that fulfilled the types of services normally associated with urban areas, such as providing transportation links and supplying goods and services for outlying areas. Size is especially not important in reference to western towns like Winchester which, by 1800, was larger than Lexington, Kentucky, or Pittsburgh. See Ann Morgan Smart, "The Urban/Rural Dichotomy of Status Consumption: Tidewater Virginia, 1815," M.A. thesis, College of William & Mary, 1986, 18-20; Robert D. Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977) 198-201.

throughout the diocese to places such as Winchester, Staunton, Wheeling, and Charlottesville, as well as Richmond.¹¹

Certainly, many of these members were already acquainted with each other, even related, as families had dispersed westward in the eighteenth century. Besides young men just starting out and looking for land, established planters extended themselves west as well. Robert Carter of Nomini Hall and Nathaniel Burwell of Carter's Grove grew tobacco in both the Tidewater and in Frederick County simultaneously, influencing the economies in both areas and introducing citizens from these sections to each other in the process.¹²

People who feel more comfortable with each other and share common values and interests are also more likely to make up the pool of possible marriage partners. In this way the *connexion* maintained its exclusivity, for certainly, parents wanted to ensure that potential mates met criteria of eligibility before giving their blessings to a match. On the other hand, for any group, the more instances of contact, the higher the probability of

¹¹Fisher, *History & Reminiscences*, 73, 88, 105, 112, 120, 130, 163, 169, 180, 191, 241, 246, 249, 255, 374; Censer, *North Carolina Planters*, 6, 8. In a similar study, Censer found that although the network of planter families she studied in North Carolina was a tight group that tended to remain localized unless tied by distant kinship, legislative participation widened the circle by introducing people of like interests from various sections of the state. She also found that the "planter elite" of her study were more likely to be Episcopalian than any other religion, and less likely to be evangelistic, although this changed over the century. After Mary Greenhow Lee's banishment from Winchester in February of 1865, she rented a house for a time in Staunton, where several members of her *connexion* lived. Before making it this far in her travels, however, she counted "very few acquaintances between Winchester & Richmond," which suggests that she believed her *connexion* to be an urban one. See MGL, 805 (March 24, 1865).

¹²Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 30, 120, 127-128, 178-179, 181. Mitchell found that by 1740 over 470,000 acres of the lower Shenandoah Valley had been acquired from Lord Fairfax by men from the eastern areas of Virginia. Most of them used these lands merely for speculative ventures, but some settled there while others added to their already large holdings in the east through development and tobacco agriculture. Robert Carter of Nomini Hall began developing his lands in Frederick County around 1770 and, by 1790, he was operating six plantations there with the help of tenants and approximately 124 slaves. By 1800, Nathaniel Burwell had transferred around 250 slaves to his holdings in Frederick County.

interest, affection, love, and marriage arising for couples within that group. So it was natural for young people within the *connexion* to be more likely to marry one another.¹³

Mary Greenhow spent time visiting friends and relatives in both Williamsburg and Winchester between the time of her father's death in 1840 and her marriage to Hugh Holmes Lee in 1843. Hugh's sister, Marie Antoinette ("Nettie"), and Mary visited together at Carter's Grove, the Burwell family plantation outside of Williamsburg in the spring of 1842. At that point Carters Grove was home to another of Hugh's sisters, Susan, now married to Philip Carter Lewis ("P.C.L.") Burwell, heir of the plantation.¹⁴

¹³Censer, *North Carolina Planters*, 65, 84-86; John Thomas Schlotterbeck, "Plantation and Farm: Social and Economic Change in Orange and Greene Counties, Virginia, 1716 to 1850," Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1980, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1980, 243; Cecil-Fronsman, "Common Whites," 3. Cousins married cousins, as happened frequently at a time when distances between kin necessitated visits over an extended period. They also married neighbors, their own or those of their relatives, or married children of their fathers' business associates, or the daughters of their mentors. In the Richmond *connexion*, Claibornes and Duvals married each other, as did Randolphs and Burwells. Children of the Washington branch of the *connexion* married each other as well. Rose Greenhow's sister Elizabeth, for instance, married James Madison Cutts, nephew of Dolly Madison and son of Richard Cutts, an appointed official in Madison's administration and comptroller of the Treasury. Frank, *Daniel Dissenting*, viii; Andrew H. Christian, Jr., *A Brief History of the Christian, Dunscomb, and Duval Families* (Richmond, Va: The Dietz Printing Company, 1909) n.p.; Scott, *Houses*, 57-61, 228; Sigaud, "Mrs. Greenhow and the Rebel Spy Ring," 184-185; Virginius Cornick Hall, Jr., *Portraits in the Collection of the Virginia Historical Society: A Catalogue*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981) 64-65.

¹⁴Philip Carter Lewis Burwell is good example of Virginia's economic decline forcing varying choices on successive generations. Burwell was a descendant of Robert "King" Carter of Corotoman, one of the most economically and politically powerful men of Virginia's colonial period. When his father, Carter Burwell III, died in 1819, Philip was only a small boy, but he inherited Carter's Grove, the Burwell plantation in James City County, and a tangled web of debts. Administrators for the estate were able to retain it for him, however. He lived at Carter's Grove for a few years after his marriage in 1836, finally selling the plantation after his wife's death 1848 when he moved to Frederick County. There he bought and sold various properties, including land owned by his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Lee. In 1853, he purchased 471 acres in Clark, an adjacent county, but continued to live in Winchester. Selling that large parcel two years later, he then purchased one acre near Berryville in 1856. This small piece of ground very probably had an inn on it as it was situated near a turnpike. At the same time, he also owned the Taylor Hotel in Winchester, making a fairly successful business out of it until Union General Nathaniel Banks took it over as a hospital in 1862. While his famous ancestor, the aristocratic "King" Carter, had held almost every position of governance in the colony and owned 300,000 acres and approximately a thousand slaves when he died, Burwell moved west and made his living in the service industry, lodging travelers. See Florence Tyler Carlton, *A Genealogy of the Known Descendants of Robert Carter of Corotoman* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1982) 113, 128-135; George Harrison Burwell, III, "Sketch

The Burwells had been married since 1836 and in 1842 their fourth child was born, which might have occasioned the visit by family members. In any event, Mary and Nettie did not remain at "the Grove" the whole time, but spent March 16th through May 2nd in Williamsburg, enjoying "the gay scenes" of the town and flirting with many of the eligible young men attending the College of William & Mary.¹⁵

Mary Greenhow clearly enjoyed her stay in Williamsburg and the attention of the men. As Carl Degler points out, during the courting phase of a young nineteenth-century woman's life, when she was in the process of connecting her family to another, she had greater autonomy than at any other time. Degler also argues that young Victorian women were not as chaperoned or restricted as once believed.¹⁶ Mary Greenhow's experience seems to support Degler's argument. While in Williamsburg for those two and one-half months, she kept a record of her visitors, which, when tallied, amounted to 329, at least half of them men. She underlined the names of men who made the best impression on her; only a few received that distinction. One was Robert Ould, a law student at William & Mary who hailed from the Georgetown section of Washington. In fact, he was one of her first visitors, and her last. In the diary she kept through her visit, she jotted down for the last Williamsburg entry: "came home with Ould & had a long talk about two or

of Carter Burwell (1715-1756)", 1961, at CWM, 70-72; Mary A. Stephenson, *Carter's Grove Plantation: A History* (Williamsburg, Virginia: Research Department of Colonial Williamsburg, 1964) 85-88; Stuart E. Brown, Jr., *Burwell: Kith and Kin of the Immigrant Lewis Burwell (1621-1653)* (Berryville, Virginia: Virginia Book Company, 1994) 29; T. K. Cartmell, *Shenandoah Valley Pioneers and Their Descendants: A History of Frederick County, Virginia* (Berryville, Virginia: Chesapeake Book Company, 1963) 162; Dabney, *Virginia*, 82-83; Eighth Census of the United States; Frederick County Deed Book 76, 92-94; Land Tax Book, Clark County, Virginia 1845, 1855, 1856, 1860, LOV.

¹⁵MGL, 501 (October 25, 1863); "Minutes of the Cerulean Society," CWM, hereafter MCS; Burwell, III, *Sketch of Carter Burwell*, 70-71.

¹⁶Degler, *At Odds*, 19-20.

three things."¹⁷

Quite possibly a romance had begun between Mary Greenhow and Robert Ould. If so, he was not the only suitor who attracted her interest. She had a lively time on her visit to her father's hometown, and seemed to wield a great deal of power as she met, danced with, and entertained the men in her *connexion*. Evidence of her sense of power also appears in the "mock chevalier society" she formed.¹⁸ Calling it the "Cerulean Society," the constitutional rules she laid out for the group called for meetings every Tuesday evening, and stated that it was a "secret society," but that the secret was that there was "no secret." Membership included the "Cerulean Trio:" Mary Greenhow, "Miss Lee," and "Miss Blair." The word "cerulean," according to the *Oxford Dictionary*, means "the color of the clear sky," or a "deep clear blue," but also has a

¹⁷MCS, May 2, 1842. What those "two or three things" were are not in her record. This particular diary is more like a true diary than either her earlier or later journal, with very brief entries, sometimes with two or three days included on one line. In fact, the brevity of this diary almost caused me to miss it. In her Civil War journal, her entry for October 24, 1863, mentions that she had spent the evening reading through a diary she had written some twenty years earlier while she and "Nettie" had been enjoying "the gay scenes" of Williamsburg. Although I had seen the "Minutes of the Cerulean Society" from Williamsburg at Special Collections in Swem Library, I was not certain that the "Miss Greenhow" mentioned was Mary Jane Greenhow of Richmond, and only gave it a passing reading. However, on closer inspection of her Civil War journal, some two years later, after having checked repositories from New Jersey to North Carolina and not having found her "1842 diary," as I termed it, I realized that the "mock chevalier society" she mentioned bore a close resemblance to the "Minutes" I had looked at earlier. When I read these "Minutes" more closely, I then found a poem, written by Mary Greenhow, and, in the back of the "Minutes," found her two very brief diaries of the trips she took to Williamsburg and Winchester. Additionally, I had become more adept at recognizing Mary Greenhow Lee's handwriting, phraseology, and attitude. If more evidence is needed, then the fact that Robert Ould was one of her "Knights" in the "Minutes," and the fact that she wrote, almost verbatim, his 1842 "Farewell" in her Civil War journal should prove that the Mary Greenhow who wrote the two short diaries in the back of the "Minutes" book and the subject of this biography are one and the same woman. It should also be noted that many of these types of investigative leaps have been necessary throughout the research process. If Mary Greenhow Lee had had children, then there might be a repository somewhere which houses several feet of her papers. She did not; and there is not. Without children to save a person's mementos, the difficulty of finding sources is sometimes enormous. Much of what I have learned of Mary Greenhow Lee has come through epiphanies or, maybe, divine guidance and, sometimes, just plain sleuthing out the sources.

¹⁸MGL, 501 (October 25, 1863).

humorous meaning, referring to literary or learned women, or a bluestocking. Which meaning Mary Greenhow had in mind when she named her society is uncertain but, given her wit and her ability to laugh at herself, it is not beyond possibility that, in naming her "mock chevalier society," she was also mocking her own intellectual strengths.¹⁹ Men numbered about seven by the time the group disbanded near the end of April, Robert Ould among them. Mary Greenhow was elected—or possibly self-appointed since the record does not reveal the procedure—"Presidentress," and evidently the secretary as well since the minutes are written in her hand.²⁰

It is clear from the record that the "Society" was formed in part to facilitate flirtation. The men were termed "Knights," and were required to wear badges. If the "Knights" had to be absent from a meeting, their excuses were to be written "in the form of a poem." At each meeting one "Knight," chosen the week before, read "a thesis on his own topic." Only a few of these offerings are in the record, but covered subjects such as "the Philosophy of the Ball Room" and the industriousness of "Yankees." The only piece offered by Ould is his "Farewell," in which he assures Mary Greenhow that "if ever in future we should meet, a look, a nod of yours, shall exact the deepest homage of one who is proud to be your most faithful & obedient Knight."²¹ Though probably offered lightly, exacting this type of chivalry from her suitors can be interpreted to mean that she perceived that she held a degree of power over them.

¹⁹MCS. It is difficult to identify the "Miss Blair" in the group; but "Miss Lee" was Marie Antoinette Lee, Mary's cousin and future sister-in-law.

²⁰*Ibid.*, April 5, 1842.

²¹*Ibid.*, April 5, 1842, April 16, 1842, April 23, 12. See also MGL, 501 (October 25, 1863).

Mary Greenhow favored the "Knights" with a poem, as well. After chastising them for a disturbance they had engaged in, and telling "them that they'd best avoid all duellings [sic], cards & dice," she bid them "a long & sad adieu." In a spurt of sectional pride, she also reminded them that:

Virginia's sons must bear in mind
That on them rides the fate
Of what we're taught to hold most dear
Our own, our native state
We trust our Knights from southern climes
Will not too soon forget
Society nights in Williamsburg
And those with whom they met.²²

This passage has both regional and gender significance. Mary Greenhow is, on the one hand, revealing her allegiance to Virginia, and her belief in the heritage that the citizens of that state should preserve. She is also, however, exhibiting female influence over male behavior by drawing the men in her circle back to their heritage, reminding them of the role they were raised to assume, in order to guide their conduct.

Besides entertaining visitors and presiding over Cerulean meetings, Mary Greenhow "played whist," and attended lectures, parties, and church. Although the entries in her diary for this period are brief, it appears that she maintained control in her numerous social activities. When "Ned" walked with her to a lecture, she "gave him a slap for...his impudence," but did not record the specifics of his cheeky behavior.²³ The young people seem to have been left unchaperoned quite often, especially if they were merely "walking in the garden," or horseback riding. In this last activity, Mary

²²MCS, 22-23.

²³*Ibid.*, March 23, April 6, 7, 1842.

Greenhow ventured fairly far and exhibited a fearlessness that suggests a good deal of experience. On one occasion a group that did include one married woman, a "Mrs. Saunders," possibly Robert Saunders's wife, rode on horseback and in buggies to the Yorktown battlefield. Mary Greenhow rode horseback on the trip out, but returned in a buggy, leaving one of the men to ride her "horse sideways" for the return trip. During another ride her horse "ran away" with her but she did not record any special concern. She reported that the horse finally "carried [her] into a blacksmith's yard & then behaved very well" for the rest of her ride. The experience could have been frightening but she did not embellish her report of the incident, suggesting that the drama amused rather than alarmed her. The rest of the journey was "a charming ride." Where another young woman might have ended the day at the blacksmith's yard, Mary Greenhow trusted her own skills and fortunes to handle the horse for the rest of the ride. In fact, the incident probably fed her spirit of adventure.²⁴

Horseback riding occupied her time while visiting in Winchester the following fall, as well. Her record for this visit is even more abbreviated than the one for Williamsburg, yet is important because it reveals that when she moved to Winchester as a young wife, she already had a comfortable knowledge of the town and the members of her *connexion* there. If her surroundings and the people she spent time with had been new to her, she would have recorded descriptions and her impressions. For the most part, however, she referred to people merely by their initials, and mentioned intimate

²⁴*Ibid.*, April 2, April 21, May 2, 1842. See Will and Codicil of Robert Greenhow, Sr., Hustings Court Book 8, 263, City of Richmond, LOV. Greenhow left silver to Robert, Jr., that had been given to him by his "respected friend Robert Saunders" of Williamsburg. This may be the Saunders family Mary Greenhow spent time with on her visit in 1842.

place names as though they were familiar to her, suggesting that this was not her first trip to Winchester. It would definitely not be her last.²⁵

During this visit Mary Greenhow began a serious courtship that would lead to her marriage to Hugh Holmes Lee the next spring. Unfortunately, the more personal and profound Mary Greenhow's feelings, in all of the sources available, the less she wrote. The more important an event was to her personally, the less inclined she was to record her deepest impressions. For instance, in her 1837-1838 diary, when she had "heard some news," she became "so distressed" that she did not feel like going out of the house, but "some news" is the only description she gave, refusing to reveal what had touched her so deeply. Later, during the war, the "death of a friend" pained her to a depth that froze her words before they reached the page. She merely admitted that she could not write her feelings because they were "too sacred."²⁶

This characteristic of censoring affairs of the heart from her record translated to affairs of close family members as well. During the courtships of her nieces, Laura and Louisa Burwell, in the Civil War years she maintained the same standard. Captain Alexander Pendleton became engaged to Laura Burwell during the army's stay in Winchester in the fall of 1861, but pressures from his mother in Lexington, Virginia, convinced him to extricate himself from the betrothal. Mary Greenhow Lee's notations

²⁵Having read Mary Greenhow Lee's Civil War journal before reading this earlier one, I found it interesting to note her mention of people who would later become very important in her life. For instance, on October 3, 1842, she wrote that she visited "Cousin Lib," who was Hugh Lee's sister, Elizabeth Cabell, wife of Patrick Henry Cabell. By the Civil War, "Cousin Lib" was a widow, and referred to by Mary Greenhow as "Sister Lib." The young Mary Greenhow also mentioned in the early diary "Col. Mason," "Cat Mackey," the Sherrards, the McGuires, and the Brents. These people would all be her peers and very important members of her *connexion* during the Civil War.

²⁶MJCG/MHS, 66-67 (March, 1838); MGL, 463 (August 22, 1863).

of the problem are brief and mysterious. She wrote merely that "Capt. Pendleton here to-night; affairs getting into a twist," and "Sandy came before church & there was a denouement." Captain Pendleton's version of the "denouement" was more revealing. For him it was more "an explosion" and he gave details of Laura Burwell's outright rejection of him before he could do the same to her. Lee's record of niece Louisa's courtship with Dr. Benjamin Cromwell, the man Louisa eventually married, is more extensive, but no more revealing. The only sign that the young couple was becoming more serious is Mary Greenhow Lee's cryptic mention that she and Cromwell had "a very private & confidential chat" and that she "had a quiet talk with Lute [Louisa]." Besides mentioning the various activities that Cromwell and Louisa engaged in together, she also wrote that "a balcony scene has been going on, which portends a development."²⁷

For this reason, what Mary Greenhow wrote about Hugh Holmes Lee in the diary she kept during their courtship is significant for what she did not say, as well as what she did. They spent a lot of time together, horseback riding, dancing, reading from Dickens, eating oysters, playing whist, sleighing, and "making faces." Through it all, she merely referred to him as "H.L.," but eventually granted him the honor of "H.L." and, finally, "H.L.," signifying in her own shorthand that he was becoming very important to her. For a period of about ten days she did not even write his initials and seemed to be in a bad humor, deeming an "evening at Dr. Maguire's...especially stupid," for instance, and noting her daily activities even more tersely than earlier. During this period, she did cryptically note "Female client," without explaining the significance of her comment; but

²⁷*Ibid.*, 236 (October 1, 1863), 238 (October 4, 1862), 718 (November 9, 1864), 722 (November 18, 1864), 725 (November 23, 1864); W. G. Bean, *Stonewall's Man: Sandie Pendleton* (Wilmington, North Carolina: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1987) 73-76.

it could be that she attributed Hugh's absence from her social activities to legal work he was performing for a woman Mary believed to be a rival.²⁸

In any event, when Hugh again appears in her daily record it is as "H.L.—afternoon—charming walk at night." Her last Winchester entry ends with, "H.L. so kind & agreeable." Her next entry, written on December 17, 1842, finds her back home in Richmond, "end[ing] three of the happiest months of" her life. The only other notation written by Mary Greenhow in this diary is dated January 29, 1843. In that she wrote, "Will the dreams of perfect happiness in which I now indulge ever be realized? I fear not." If she was referring to marriage with Hugh Holmes Lee, she was wrong. Within four months, they were married.²⁹

On the evening of May 18, 1843, a Reverend Norwood joined Mary Jane Charlton Greenhow and Hugh Holmes Lee in marriage at Monumental Church in Richmond. She later remembered that on that day, "peace, love & joy filled" her heart, and friends and family filled the pews of the church. At the time, the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia was holding their annual convention in Richmond, evidently presenting a double incentive for family and friends throughout the *connexion* to travel to the city. One friend, Mary Minnegerode, left her pew and "interrupted the procession" as Mary and Hugh left the altar to start their new life. Mary Greenhow Lee was no longer a young Richmond belle, but a responsible Winchester citizen.³⁰

²⁸MCS, October 14, October 22, November 6, November 15, November 19, November 21, December 1-11, 1842, emphasis hers.

²⁹*Ibid.*, December 11, 16, 17, 1842, January 29, 1843.

³⁰Genealogical Notes, Tyler Family Papers, CWM; MGL, 104 (May 18, 1862), 382 (May 18, 1863), 872 (September 24, 1865).

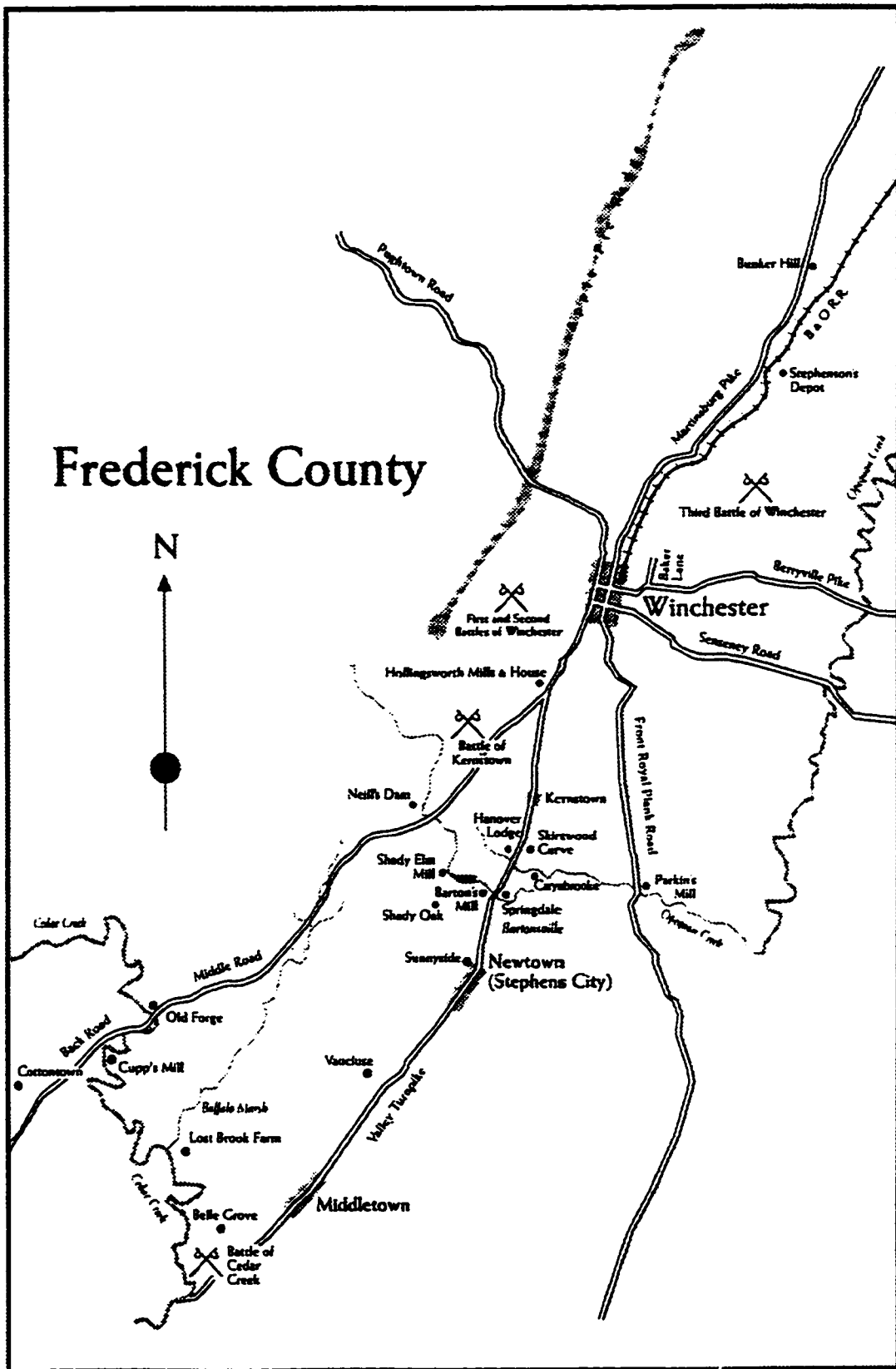
-II-

Present-day Winchester is located approximately twenty-five miles from Maryland, and only ten miles from West Virginia, on land originally belonging to Lord Thomas Fairfax, heir and proprietor of the Northern Neck of Virginia. Its first white inhabitants probably arrived no earlier than 1732, after German immigrant Jost Hite and his Scotch-Irish partner Robert McKay obtained a 100,000 acre grant from Lieutenant Governor William Gooch. With this grant they were to act as agents for the colony to encourage settlement here as a buffer against Ohio Valley Indians.³¹ Colonel James Wood is considered Winchester's founder. Born in Winchester, England, in 1707, young Wood ultimately settled in Virginia and earned surveying credentials at William and Mary College in 1734. After surveying several tracts in the Shenandoah Valley, Wood finally settled down in the area that is now Winchester. The Virginia legislature established the town in 1752 after being presented with a survey by Wood for "twenty-six lots, of half an acre each, with streets for a town, by the name of Winchester," in Frederick County.³² [See illustrations 16 and 17]

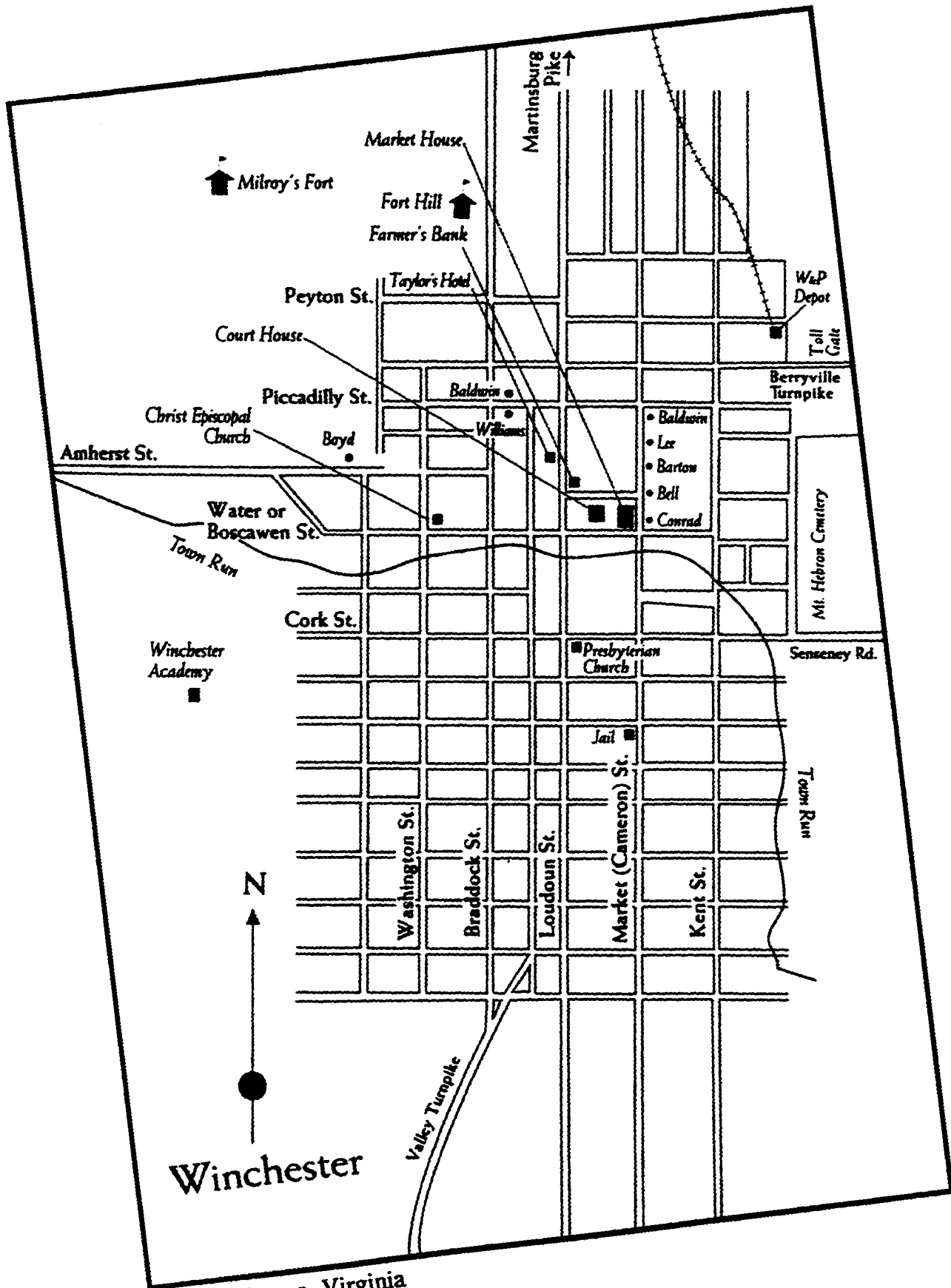
By the first years of the nineteenth century, Winchester had all of the amenities expected of an urban area, if on a smaller scale. For one thing, the town had become a supply center for migrants moving further west. For another, its distance from

³¹Oren Frederic Morton, *The Story of Winchester in Virginia: The Oldest Town in the Shenandoah Valley* (Strasburg, Va.: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1925), 40, 29, 28; Warren R. Hofstra, "Land, Ethnicity, and Community at the Opequon Settlement, Virginia, 1730-1800," in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 98, (1990): 423-448, 424-427; Richard L. Morton, *Colonial Virginia: Vol. II, Westward Expansion and Prelude to Revolution, 1710-1763* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960) 544, 545; Mary Tucker Magill, *Women, or Chronicles of the Late War* (Baltimore: Turnbull Brothers, 1871) 3-4.

³²Samuel Kercheval, *A History of the Valley of Virginia*, 4th ed. (Strasburg, Va.: Shenandoah Publishing House, 1925), 175-176; Oren Frederic Morton, *The Story of Winchester*, 59-60, 47.



16. Frederick County, Virginia



17. Winchester, Virginia

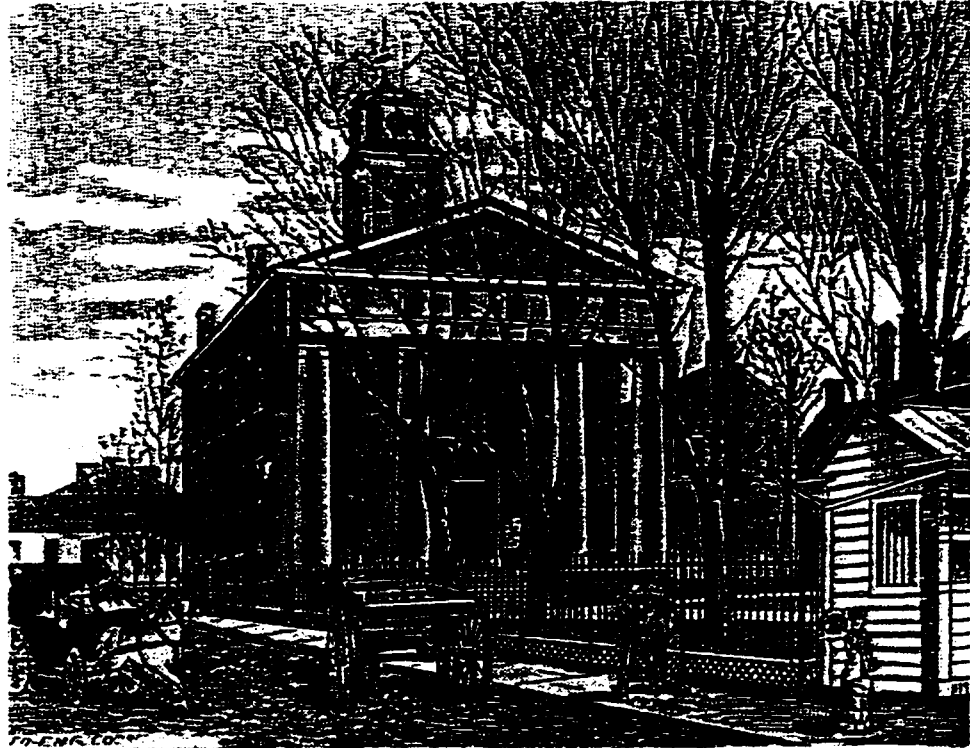
Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Baltimore and Washington made it a good marketing nexus for farmers and customers in the Shenandoah Valley.³³ The courthouse, enclosed in a "square" of rail fences, and standing as a symbol of a well-ordered society, had in its yard a whipping post, dubbed "Black Betty," and two pillories placed on platforms. On the other end of the block stood the economic symbol of the town: Market House. Built of stone, two stories high, and taking up the better portion of the block, Market House sported six stone arches and housed a vegetable market and butchers' stalls in a brick addition on the south end. On the second floor, approached by steps leading up the outside of the building, was the Masonic Lodge room, approximately seventy feet long, with plastered walls and a fireplace on each end. Besides meeting space for the Masons, the room became on occasion a concert hall, a public meeting room, or the setting for performances put on by the town's thespian society. On the north end of the building was another brick addition that housed town government offices. The street outside could be treacherous, with either boulders poking through the surface or hollows made by horses hooves filing up with water in bad weather, and the slope of the street made it necessary to "chock" the wheels of wagons parked there to keep them in place.³⁴ *[See illustrations 18 and 19]*

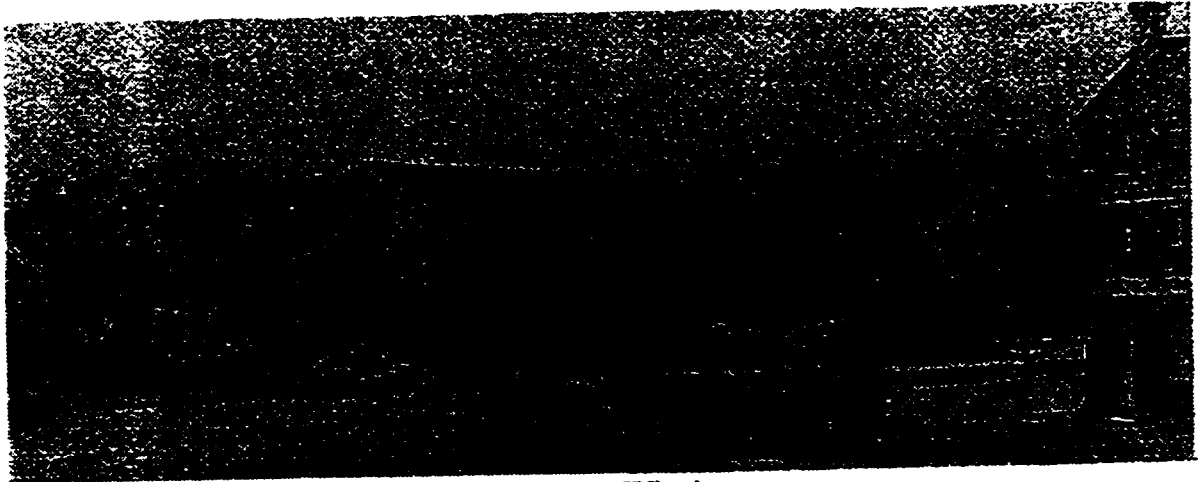
This was the Winchester of Hugh Lee's parents' day. They moved to the town from Shenandoah County sometime between 1803 and 1805. Hugh's father, Daniel Lee, was Clerk of the Chancery Court for Frederick County and President of Farmers Bank.

³³Hofstra, "Opequon Settlement," 444; *Winchester Virginian*, April 22, 1840; David Holmes Conrad, "Early History of Winchester," in *Annual Papers of Winchester Virginia Historical Society*, Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, Vol. I (Winchester, Va: The Society, 1931) 169-232, 174.

³⁴Garland R. Quarles and Lewis N. Barton, eds., *What I Know About Winchester: Recollections of William Greenway Russell, 1800-1891*, Vol. II, Reprinted from *The Winchester News*, Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society (Staunton, Va.: The McClure Publishing Co., 1953) 71, 99, 160.



18. Frederick County Court House, Winchester, Virginia, 1840



19. An 1864 sketch of the Market House in Winchester

One of his copying clerks described Daniel Lee as "a tall, high-featured, black-eyed man of elegant address, and uniform politeness," who "sat as straight as an Indian over his writing," who "took snuff like Bonaparte, and kept his papers as if they were bank notes."³⁵

Daniel and Elizabeth Nicholson Lee raised their family in a large stone house on a two-acre tract on Washington Street. Surrounding the house were gardens and in the back was a stable. Furnishings inside the house signified both good taste and good fortune. The dining table, card tables, and settee were made, at least in part, of mahogany, and twenty chairs were ornamented with gold or silver gilt. A mahogany bookcase held works of such notables as Homer, Jonathan Swift, Adam Smith, Livy, Edmund Burke, John Jacques Rousseau, and the histories of Rome, Greece, and the French Revolution. To help take care of all this, the family owned five slaves.³⁶ In addition to the town property, Lee owned approximately four hundred acres in the county. It was to this property that Lee would invite friends and family to celebrate July

³⁵Winchester, Virginia Personal Property Tax List, 1805, LOV; Daniel Lee gravestone, Hebron Cemetery; David Holmes Conrad, "Early History of Winchester," 223. Shenandoah County Deed Book N, 241, records the sale of almost 400 acres in Shenandoah County by Daniel Lee, and shows him living in Woodstock in April of 1803. The first year he is listed as paying personal property taxes in Winchester is 1805.

³⁶Winchester, Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1815, 1831, LOV; Garland R. Quarles, *The Churches of Winchester, Virginia: A Brief History of Those Established Prior to 1825* (Winchester, Va.: Farmers & Merchants National Bank, 1960) 204; Appraisement of Daniel Lee's Estate, 1833, Frederick County Will Book 18, 383-386, Frederick County Courthouse, Winchester, Virginia. Mary's mother-in-law Elizabeth Lee was the daughter of Henry Nicholson. When her parents died, she was adopted by her mother's brother, George Hay, who lived in Richmond and who was Attorney General of Virginia, a United States District Judge, and son-in-law of James Monroe. Hugh Lee's siblings were Lucy Peachy Powell (wife of William A. Powell of Loudoun County, Virginia), Judge George Hay Lee (Charleston, Virginia), Mrs. Chaplain Hodges (New Orleans, Louisiana), Reverend Henry Lightfoot Lee (New Orleans, Louisiana, then Baltimore, Maryland), Elizabeth Cabell (wife of Patrick Henry Cabell of Winchester, Virginia), Laura Lee, and Marie Antoinette Lee. See *Genealogies of Virginia Families: From the William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine*, Vol. IV (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1982) 12-13.

Fourth with barbecue dinners, Italian bands, formal toasts, and "thimble rigging" (a shell game).³⁷

One of the Lees' friends, and a future friend of Mary Greenhow Lee, James Murray Mason, brought his bride Eliza Margaretta Chew Mason from her home in Philadelphia to Winchester soon after they married in 1822. Two years earlier, soon after he completed the study of law at William & Mary College, Mason had chosen Winchester as his home and the location of his new law practice. On Mason's first trip into Winchester he rode into town on horseback, seated on his saddle-bags, and stopped in front of a tavern to seek lodging. In front of the tavern he noticed a large group of young men seated in chairs arranged in a semi-circle jutting out into the street. Mason's approach stopped their conversation until he introduced himself to the landlord and made arrangements for a room. When the landlord, in turn, introduced him to the group of Winchester citizens, they welcomed him warmly. It was at this point that Mason began his Winchester *connexion*.³⁸

Eliza Mason also experienced a warm reception and settled right in to the small-town society, so different from life in Philadelphia. In a letter to her family she wrote "Winchester is the place for the enjoyment of society without display." She related that wives from "half a dozen families, who are closely connected and who like each other

³⁷Quarles and Barton, *What I Know About Winchester*, 154, 179; Frederick County Land Taxes, 1827, 1832, 1833, LOV.

³⁸Garland R. Quarles, *Some Worthy Lives: Mini-Biographies, Winchester and Frederick County* (Winchester, Virginia: Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, 1988) 172-173; Hall, *Portraits in the... Virginia Historical Society*, 21; Virginia Mason, ed., *The Public Life and Diplomatic Correspondence of James M. Mason, with some Personal History* (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1906) 10, 12, 13, 14, 15. Mason was son of John and Anna Maria Murray Mason of Fairfax County, and grandson of George Mason of Gunston Hall.

vastly" met each afternoon at two o'clock, at one house or another, and visited or did "parlour work" for an hour until their husbands joined them for "most excellent dinners...without any parade or ostentation." Families represented in the group were the Henry St. George Tuckers, Alexander Tidballs, Alfred H. Powells, Daniel Lees, and younger men in the *connexion*, brothers Robert Y. and Holmes Conrad.³⁹

Their early years in Winchester were a struggle for the Masons in terms of both finances and supplies. James was forced, on a number of occasions, to write his family for a loan of money, or simply for "Nachitoches snuff" from his favorite store in Georgetown.⁴⁰ By 1828, however, Mason had become relatively successful, enabling him to purchase the large stone house about a mile west of town, built in 1813 for Judge Dabney Carr. Mason named his new home "Selma."⁴¹ Although not furnished with the contemporary signs of style and fashion, such as mahogany chairs or Brussels carpets, the Masons made their home comfortable and pleasant for visitors. The rooms at Selma were smaller than those in more prominent houses, yet Eliza Mason decorated the rooms in a style that their budget could afford, combined with pieces she had brought with her from home. They did not acquire a sideboard or tea table right away, but card tables covered with green cloth served double-duty when needed. They also displayed a piano and Japanese desk, and the rooms were accented with chess pieces, books, and a

³⁹*Ibid.*, 10, 14, 15.

⁴⁰Letters from James Murray Mason to John Mason, May 20, 1821, April 17, 1823, and September 1, 1823, undated letter to "Eilbach," Mason Correspondence, Manuscripts Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, hereafter UVA.

⁴¹Mason, *The Public Life...of James M. Mason*, 29, Quarles, *Worthy*, 172.

"phrenological skull," of interest to James, if not to his wife.⁴²

Mason's welcome to the community was cemented by 1826 when he began representing Frederick County in the Virginia House of Delegates. After one term in the United States House of Representatives, he was elected to the Senate in 1839, beginning a long run as a Federal Senator that lasted until Virginia seceded from the Union. In the meantime, their family grew with the addition of three daughters and three sons. The Winchester community celebrated each child's arrival, and watched over the children when their parents were out of town, with "Mrs. Lee" and "Mrs. Tidball" stopping by to check on them.⁴³

The Mason family, along with others in the Winchester *connexion*, apparently gave Mary Greenhow Lee a similar welcome when she adopted the hometown of her new husband. Lee had a successful law practice in Winchester, which he had operated from a second-floor office in a yellow building in Courthouse Square since 1840.⁴⁴ By 1848 Lee was serving as Receiver of the Circuit Court of Law and Chancery for Clark, the county adjoining Frederick. In 1853, he advertised that he would be practicing "in the Circuit Court of Clarke [sic], and give his attention to the collection practice generally,

⁴²Mason, *The Public Life...of James M. Mason*, 16.

⁴³Quarles, *Worthy*, 172; 1860 United States Census; letter to Eliza Chew Mason from Kate, Anna, and Benjamin Mason, June 2, 1840, and Commonplace Book of Eliza Chew Mason, Ida Mason Dorsey Brown Papers, VHS. Two of the Mason children, Ida and Virginia, grew especially close to Mary Greenhow Lee when she joined the community. In fact, it was to Virginia ("Jeannie") that Lee directed her Civil War journal when she first began writing it in March of 1862.

⁴⁴*Winchester Virginian*, February 5, 1840.

in Frederick and the surrounding counties."⁴⁵ His collection activities extended further than the local area, however. As with politics, economics, and religious associations, lawyers connected urban areas through legal tangles and Hugh Lee was no exception. In a case involving his client and the client's debtor in Richmond, Lee maintained a correspondence over a period of three years with the Richmond firm of Griswold and Claiborne for purposes of securing the debt. The significance of this thread of the urban *connexion* is that the Richmond firm's office was located on the corner of Eleventh and Capitol Streets, one block from Mary Greenhow Lee's family home. Additionally, the Claiborne and Greenhow families had been connected through debt, friendship, and the church for at least one generation.⁴⁶ Besides gaining a wife of wit, intelligence, and proficiency in the social graces, Hugh Lee gained business connections. [See illustration 20]

Hugh Lee was more than a lawyer to his wife and to his town. According to Mary Greenhow Lee, he had a "natural fondness for military pursuits."⁴⁷ In 1837, when Lee was only twenty-three years old, he had become Captain of Regiment 31 of the Highland Blues Light Infantry Company in Frederick County. Their uniforms were blue and buff colored coats modeled in the colonial fashion, with "yellow buckskin knee

⁴⁵Indenture of James Markham Marshall, November 21, 1848, for \$2,016.97, with property held in trust to cover this debt by J. M. Mason, James Marshall Papers, VHS; *Winchester Virginian*, September 21, 1853, March 15, 1854.

⁴⁶Letters from Hugh Holmes Lee to Griswold & Claiborne, Richmond, October 31, 1848, October 4, 1851, and October 11, 1851, Claiborne Family Papers, VHS; *Ellyson's Business Directory, and Almanac, for the Year 1845* (Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1845) 16, LOV; Richmond Hustings Book 78B: 26-27, LOV. See also Danforth and Claiborne, *Historical Sketch*; and *Genealogies of Virginia Families: From the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. III (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1981) 959-960.

⁴⁷MGL, 313 (February 14, 1863), 831 (June 2, 1865).



20. Herbert Augustine Claiborne, c. 1810-20

breeches."⁴⁸ In 1849, Lee, as Colonel of the militia, ordered the 31st and 51st regiments to a three-day officers training session in Winchester, which would end with a "parade on Market St." at 11:00 o'clock on the morning of May 17.⁴⁹ The significance of this event could not have been lost on his wife since it would mark the eve of their sixth wedding anniversary. To watch her "military hero," as she remembered him, marching his regiment past their house, was probably in part a gift to her from her husband. During the Civil War, she would watch similar events against the backdrop of serious military conflict. On the occasion in 1849, however, Mary Greenhow Lee was still living in the "palm days of old Winchester."⁵⁰

Although no sources survive which clearly reveal the character of Hugh and Mary Lee's life together, from the references she made of him through the filter of grief after his death, they were happily married. She thought of him as "my darling," and wondered, during her most difficult decisions, if he would approve, seeming to miss his guidance in her life. The fact that she maintained the forms of deep mourning, even down to the black-edged stationery she used as late as ten years after his death, suggests that she missed both her husband and her marriage.⁵¹

The historiographical emphasis on "separate spheres" for nineteenth-century women portrays households in which wives, as "True Women," remained subordinate to

⁴⁸Ben Ritter, *Miscellaneous Notes*, Part 6, May 29, 1984, Archives, Handley Library, Winchester, Virginia, hereafter HL; Cornelia A. McDonald, *Diary With Reminiscences of the War*, annotated by Hunter McDonald (Nashville: Cellom & Glertner Co., 1934) 87n; MGL, 530 (December 17, 1863).

⁴⁹*Winchester Virginian*, May 2, 1849.

⁵⁰MGL, 734 (December 8, 1864), 748-749 (December 26-28, 1864).

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 335 (March 22, 1863), 614 (June 4, 1864), 865 (September 5, 1865), 878 (December 10, 1865); letter from Mary Greenhow Lee to Mary Williams, June 7, 1866, Philip Williams Papers, HL.

their men because they were in charge of the private versus the public sphere, and because the public sphere men dominated was assumed to have been the most important and more powerful. While it might be true that power within marriage was unequal and that men maintained the advantage when it came to decisions relative to finances, we might want to consider separating the power definition into public and private spheres of influence. Power is defined as the "ability to influence the behavior of others."⁵² We tend to think of power in terms of the ability to control others, whether in the corporate or the political realm, or in terms of strength over weakness. By the strict definition of power, however, as the ability to influence behavior, then physical strength, economic capacity, or voting rights are simply examples of the tools of influence, not the proof of power. Therefore, although nineteenth-century men had more of the tools of influence, that does not necessarily mean they had most or all of the power. Within the home, women's influence often controlled behavior, and this can be seen as a sign of at least

⁵²Gary K. Bertsch, Robert P. Clark, David M. Wood, *Comparing Political Systems: Power and Policy in Three Worlds*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986) xxii. The history of nineteenth-century women has developed into regional variations, with the "New Englandization" of women's history altered to fit the southern women's story. Instead of the close-knit communities of New England, where industrial capitalization increasingly separated the sexes into separate spheres because men's business address became different than that of their home, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese challenged the profession to remember that the southern economy of large farms and plantations isolated women from each other and blurred the lines of separation. Men in the South who made their living running a plantation were masters of the home, as well, because the plantation house was a part of the working economic whole. With the innovative work of Suzanne Lesock, who studied women in Petersburg, Virginia, however, the two regions tend to blend, with a society still embracing slavery and ownership of labor, yet operating in an urban environment. See Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "Partial Truths: Writing Southern Women's History," in Virginia Bernhard, et. al. (eds.) *Southern Women: Histories and Identities* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 11-29; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); and Suzanne Lesock, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984).

private power for nineteenth-century women.⁵³

Additionally, although the social construction of middle-class women's role seems to have consigned women to domestic space, we should remember that women were also promised that they would have more influence in their families the better they managed that space. As Bonnie G. Smith has argued, we should look at the construction of spheres, not as "evidence for a conspiracy theory of women's history," but as if women themselves aided in the construction. Women were not merely acted upon.⁵⁴ In fact, women did participate in the construction of their roles. They became keepers of tradition within the home based on natural time rather than on the rhythms of the marketplace. Natural time applied to the gender that was in charge of reproduction rather than production, time that included menstruation, childbirth, lactation, and menopause for women individually, and meals, anniversaries, illnesses, and death for the family as a whole. By maintaining the natural rhythms of life, women had a great deal of private power. Whether or not later generations find private power of less value than public power, in an age of transition, when industrial capitalism was dehumanizing labor, then the home was essential for reemphasizing the intrinsic worth of humanity and nurturing those values.⁵⁵

⁵³Although women did not go to the polls in the nineteenth century, they were not without political influence. Elizabeth R. Varon has pointed out that, as partisanship became essential to politics in the 1840s, men began drawing women into the political debate for purposes of moral persuasion and agitation to action, if not for casting the actual votes. See Elizabeth R. Varon, "Tippecanoe and the Ladies, Too: White Women and Party Politics in Antebellum Virginia," in *The Journal of American History*, September 1995, 494-521.

⁵⁴Newton, *Learning to Behave*, 92-93; Bonnie G. Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981) 17.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 14, 47, 49, 65.

In fact, Carl Degler makes the point that although women's place might have shifted to the private sphere in the nineteenth century, it does not necessarily imply "a decline from an earlier position."⁵⁶ When Hugh Lee, at twenty-nine years of age and already established in his law practice, chose Mary Greenhow as his wife, it is obvious that he did not select a weak woman. Her personality does not fit the term "subordinate." Intellectually strong, quick-witted, and opinionated, Mary Greenhow might have entered her marriage knowing that, to the outside world, she would be considered subordinate to her husband. She accepted that. Within their marriage, however, she became a partner, assuming the duties of maintaining their home, while Hugh sustained the administration of their business affairs. Mary Greenhow Lee later asserted that "husbands replace the world," not that husbands took away the world.⁵⁷ She willingly took on the duties of wife as they were described in her era. It would have been uncharacteristic of her to do so if she had not believed she would contribute to that partnership equally. Considering how much Mary Greenhow Lee had appreciated the intellectual challenges provided by men in her immediate family and later by the men in her life as a widow, it is clear that Mary Greenhow Lee's happiness with her husband came in part from his treatment of her as an equal and contributing partner in their life, not as his subordinate.

The Lees resided in a brown, wood-frame house, purchased from David L. Danner in May 1845, on a large lot on Market Street, just a block away from the Market House. A large house, it had two floors, an "attic chamber," cellar, office, storeroom,

⁵⁶Degler, *At Odds*, 26-29, 36-37.

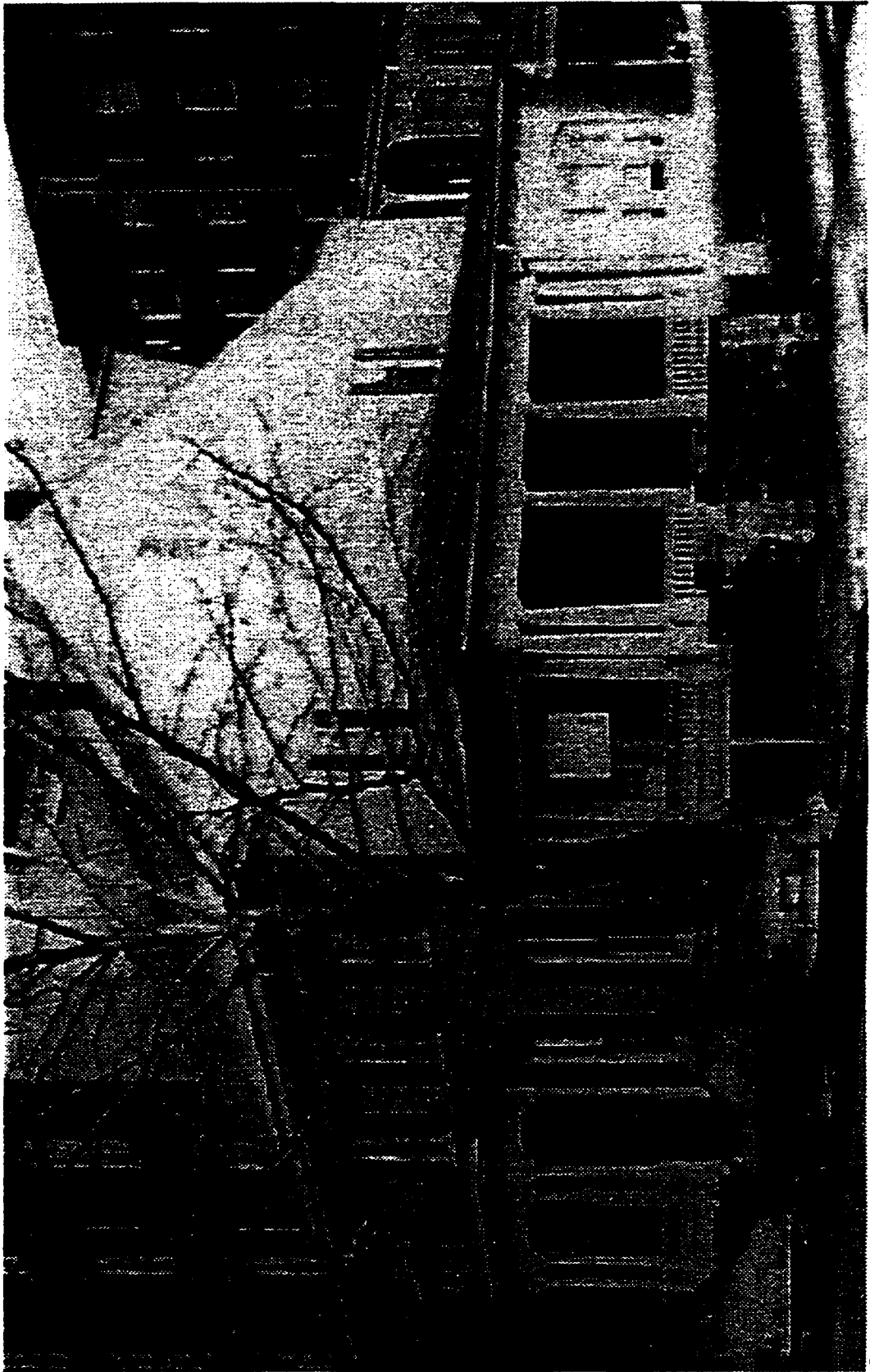
⁵⁷MGL, 865 (September 5, 1865).

and porches facing both streets. The house was so close to the streets that on one porch, "a parapet" touched the sidewalk. On the grounds were stables, vegetable and flower gardens, and raspberry bushes. The Lee's house was necessarily large. Hugh's father had died in 1833, and Hugh had taken over responsibility for his mother and his two unmarried sisters, Laura ("Lal") Lee and Nettie Lee, all of whom lived with them. Depending on the specific year, the Lees owned as many as four slaves, also members of their "household."⁵⁸ [See illustration 21]

Except for personal property tax lists, there are few sources giving evidence to the furnishings inside the house. The year they purchased the house, the Lees paid taxes on a piano which was a contribution Mary made to the home. From her listings of housework in later years, it appears that Mary Greenhow Lee took pride in the home she established with Hugh, which would have given her both a sense of identity as a good homemaker, and also pleasure in displaying evidence of their success. As Bonnie Smith argues, the home did not stand as "the opposite of the market world but as its complement; one, the world of consumption, the other of production." Smith also points out that the way a wife decorated and arranged her home was an articulation of what she wanted the world to think about her--a "linguistic system" of draperies and ruffles and domestic arrangements that said she was "important to an industrial society."⁵⁹

⁵⁸Quarles, *Occupied Winchester*, 15; Quarles, *One Hundred Old Homes*, 99; Winchester City Deed Book 8: 487-488, 9: 148; MGL, 74 (April 21, 1862), 109 (May 22, 1862), 281 (December 25, 1862), 336 (March 24, 1863), 356 (April 13, 1863), 368 (April 27, 1863), 424 (June 26, 1863), 445 (July 27, 1863), 513 (November 14, 1863), 569 (March 17, 1864), 570 (March 18, 1864), 584 (April 26, 1864), 666 (August 17, 1864); Winchester Personal Property Tax Lists, 1843-1855, LOV.

⁵⁹Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class*, 54, 85, 87, 88, 91; MGL, 220 (September 3, 1862), 227 (September 8, 1862), 361 (March 18, 1863), 379 (May 13, 1863), 384 (May 21, 1863), 396 (June 5, 1863), 424 (June 26, 1863), 430 (July 6, 1863).



21. Mary Greenhow Lee's home at 132 North Market Street

Although it might seem like a cliché, one of the most valuable possessions, in Lee's opinion, that she brought into her marriage was the silver inherited from her father. Besides real estate, Robert Greenhow left her his piano and the "new silver," described as the "silver plate" purchased during his marriage to her mother, his second wife. Part of the silver came to her later, after the death of her sister-in-law, Rose O'Neale Greenhow. Approximately two-thirds of Mary Lee's final estate came from her silver, three-fourths of which she termed the "old silver," originally owned by her grandfather, John Greenhow, and left to her brother Robert at the death of their father. She willed this old silver, in turn, to Robert's grandson Captain Tredwell Moore. Personal Property Tax Records for Winchester show that Hugh Holmes and Mary Lee were assessed for a piano which steadily decreased in value from \$300 to \$137 for the years 1845 through 1854. The piano vanished from the tax list in 1855. Her silver, however, and it is assumed that this is the "new silver" worth \$50 in the administration of her final estate, is consistently valued at \$240 in every year for which a value is given from 1852 through 1862.⁶⁰

When Mary Greenhow Lee moved there, Winchester had a population of over 650 adult white males, over 300 slaves, 260 horses, nine attorneys, five doctors, two newspapers, and one dentist. It also boasted of having the Winchester and Potomac Railroad Company, although the corporation was "not in a very prosperous condition."

⁶⁰Richmond Circuit Court Book 1: 166; City of Richmond Hustings Court Book 8: 263, LOV; "Last Will and Testament of Mary G. Lee," Baltimore City Register of Wills, "Register of Wills of Orphans Court, Baltimore City, State of Maryland," 387; Administration of Estate, Mary Lee, 1908, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland, hereafter cited as MSA. For those people in her cohort for which a tax study was done, the median value of silver listed in the personal property taxes of 1860 was \$500. Mary's silver was valued at less than half of that.

The railroad did begin to look more financially sound, but never became a boon to its stockholders, and created a new threat to children, forcing the company's agent to put notices in the newspaper "request[ing]...parents and guardians to prevent their children from running at large at the Depot and on the tracks of the Rail Road."⁶¹ [See illustration 22]

For visitors to the town who arrived by rail, carriage, horse, or stage, there were at least four hotels at which to lodge, the Eagle, the Union, the Taylor, and the American. Each offered stabling for horses of the guests, and a "Table...furnished with all the varieties which the season and market afford, and...Bar supplied with the choicest of liquors." For protection, the town had three fire engines, the "Union," "Sarah Zane," and the "Friendship."⁶² The Winchester Academy, run by Peyton Clark, provided the rudiments of education for young boys in the area, and the first medical college in the state, the Medical School of the Valley of Virginia, was opened in Winchester in 1826, by Dr. Hugh Holmes McGuire.⁶³ [See illustration 23]

Winters were dull in Winchester; summer was the "gay season." For fun, boys played bandy, a game resembling field hockey, that became so dangerous to "heads and shins" that schoolmaster Clark bought the boys a football, but could not interest them in the game.⁶⁴ Winchester firemen began the tradition of honoring themselves with "a

⁶¹Winchester Personal Property Tax Lists, 1843, 1849, LOV; *Winchester Virginian*, September 13, 1954.

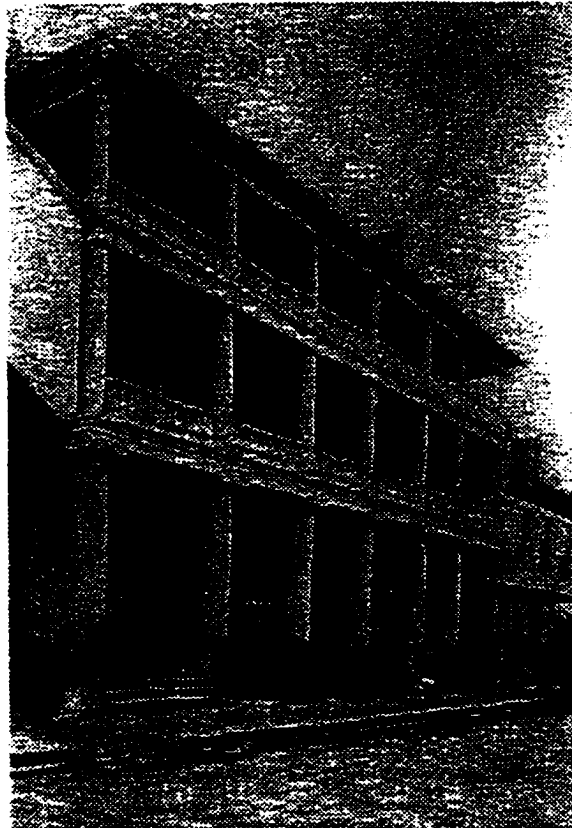
⁶²*Winchester Virginian*, August 5, 1846, July 25, 1849, January 23, 1850, September 13, 1854, and June 4, 1856; Quarles and Barton, *What I Know About Winchester*, 161.

⁶³St. George Tucker Brooke, "Autobiography of St. George Tucker Brooke Written for His Children," 1907, VHS, 13; Quarles, *Worthy*, 158.

⁶⁴Brooke, "Autobiography," 13.



22. Loudoun Street, Winchester, from an 1845 travel book



23. Taylor Hotel, Winchester, Virginia

ball," in order to break the tedium, and outsiders brought excitement to town, as well. "Bear-baiting" filled the streets with "country folk," and a "balloon ascention [sic]" made the young people "crazy to go up in it." For more productive entertainment, the "ladies" of the Lees' church put on fairs and public dinners to contribute financially to physical improvements at Christ Church on the corner of Boscowen and Washington Streets. Built in 1828, the Episcopal church in Winchester became almost as important to Mary Greenhow Lee as did her home, so it is probable that when the "ladies" offered a "supper to build a bell tower," in 1854, she had a hand in the activity. In any event, they were successful. The tower was added to the building the next year.⁶⁵

Religion, imparted to Mary Greenhow Lee from childhood as an essential part of her life, became even more important to her in the decade before the war. In that period of time death claimed her natal family, a sister-in-law, her mother-in-law, and her husband. On July 2, 1848, Hugh's sister, Susan Burwell, died. Philip Carter Lewis Burwell sold his Carters Grove plantation in James City County, and brought his four children back to Winchester to live. Burwell's children, from that point on, considered the Lee home theirs. Louisa, Lewis, Laura, and Robert moved into Mary and Hugh's home on Market Street, already full of family members.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Letters from Robert Y. Conrad to Kate Conrad, November 10, 1852, and to Robert Y. Conrad, Jr., November 1, 1856, Robert Y. Conrad Papers, and to Powell Conrad, February 22, 1854, Conrad Holmes Papers, VHS; *Winchester Virginian*, November 22, 1854; Quarles and Barton, *What I Know About Winchester*, 28. Lee's influence in the church is evident during the Civil War years when she took charge of arranging the rectory for a new visiting Rector, and when men in the church came to her for advice about continuing service during the winter months of the war when fuel was at a premium. See MGL, 581 (April 16, 1864), 721 (November 14, 1864).

⁶⁶Susan Lee Burwell's gravestone, Mount Hebron Cemetery, Winchester, Virginia; Burwell, III, "Sketch of Carter Burwell", 72; Seventh Census of the United States. Louisa Carter Burwell was eleven years old; Philip Lewis Burwell, ten; Laura Lee Burwell, eight; and Robert Saunders Burwell six when their mother died. Added to these four children, the 1850 Census shows that Hugh H. Lee, aged ten, and

In September the next year, Mary's brother, Washington Greenhow, died in Clarksburg, Tennessee. Although her immediate reaction to his death is lost to the record, it must have been difficult for her to accept given their closeness in both age and affections.⁶⁷ The next loss to the family occurred in 1853 when Hugh's mother, Elizabeth Lee, died at seventy years of age. On her gravestone, her family had chiseled in granite that she had been a "woman of glory," who had found "the way of Righteousness."⁶⁸ The following year, Mary Greenhow Lee lost her remaining sibling, Robert. He had retired from the State Department in 1850, and moved his family to San Francisco, California, where he continued work on his history of Mexico and became an agent for the Land Commission for the new state. An accident claimed his life in 1854. He lived just long enough to sign a brief Will leaving all of his "estate both real and personal" to Rose, his "beloved wife." Although he had named a friend in California as

Gertrude Lee, twelve, the children of Hugh's brother George Hay and his wife Virginia of Charleston, were living with Hugh and Mary Lee. In sum, the Lee household, not including slaves, contained eleven people when the census-takers came to the door. At that point, the Burwell children's father, P.C.L., was listed as living at the hotel, with no occupation noted. There is some discrepancy in the census numbers, however, possibly having to do with the timing of when the households were canvassed. At the same point that young Hugh and Gertrude Lee were assigned to their uncle Hugh Lee's home in Winchester, they were named as living in their father's home in Harrison County. The same duplication occurs in the 1860 Census for the Burwell children, indicating that they were living with both Mary Greenhow Lee and P.C.L. Burwell that year, a fact harder to excuse from the distance between the households since both families were living in Winchester at the time.

⁶⁷Genealogical notes, Tyler Family Papers, CWM. In 1865, a former acquaintance of Washington Greenhow encountered Mary as she was visiting in Richmond, and mentioned her brother's name to Mary. She recorded her reaction to this meeting in her journal. "How little those around me realize how that name [Washington Greenhow] thrills my heart," she wrote. "I have lived over during this war what his course & my husband's would have been; the one as a statesman, the other as a military hero, each one carrying out with pure patriotism the natural bent of their strong passion for those two callings." See MGL, 831 (June 2, 1865).

⁶⁸Gravestone of Elizabeth Lee, Mount Hebron Cemetery, Winchester, Virginia.

his executor, Hugh Lee became the administrator of Robert's estate.⁶⁹ Still reeling from Robert's death, Mary lost her mother, Mary Lorraine, the following year. She and Hugh buried her mother near Hugh's parents in the family plot at Mount Hebron Cemetery in Winchester.⁷⁰ Through all of these losses, Mary Greenhow Lee's faith in God and her husband helped her cope with the grief. On October 10, 1856, however, Hugh Lee died as well.⁷¹

Virginia statutes did not require the registration of cause of death until 1912, and no other sources reveal how Hugh Lee died but it was probably brought on by an illness of a chronic nature. Although there were several severe cases of typhoid fever in Winchester at the time, Lee's health could have been failing for some time since Mary Greenhow Lee mentioned later that "sometimes I fancy...his health would have been restored by the change in his mode of life." This statement was in reference to her belief that "had he lived," Hugh Lee would have been militarily active in the southern cause during the war; but it suggests that a long-term, active lifestyle would have had a

⁶⁹Barbee, "Robert Greenhow," 182; Will of Robert Greenhow, Richmond Circuit Court Book 1, 166, Inventory, 184, Settlement, 334, LOV. Although Hugh Lee became the Administrator of Robert Greenhow's estate, Hugh's death in 1856 left the job to Mary. In the final disposition of Robert's estate, "Mary Jane Lee" is named as the Administrator.

⁷⁰Gravestone of Mary Lorraine Greenhow, "Widow of Robert Greenhow," Mount Hebron Cemetery, Winchester, Virginia.

⁷¹*Winchester Virginian*, October 15, 1856. An obituary of Hugh would have been helpful in gaining more information about him for this biography, such as where he had been educated and how he died, which research has not uncovered. In the October 15, issue of the *Winchester Virginian*, along with his death notice, is the promise that his obituary would appear the following week. Unfortunately, no copy of the October 22, 1856, edition of the *Winchester Virginian* exists as far as the indexes of extant newspapers reflect. For this reason, among others, Mary Greenhow Lee's husband remains a rather shadowy figure in her biography.

beneficial effect on his health, evidence that his health problems had been chronic.⁷²

Whatever the cause, Mary Greenhow Lee became a widow on October 10, 1856, a day she remembered later as "the darkest day of [her] existence," a time when "iron...entered her heart," and she "commenced to live alone in this world." The next day, her friend and neighbor, Robert Y. Conrad, wrote to his son Robert, Jr., simply that "Col. H. H. Lee died yesterday morning. He was a worthy and useful man." Mary Greenhow Lee thought Hugh Lee was more than that. She had a monument placed over his grave which claimed: "Mark the perfect man and behold the upright for the end of that man is peace."⁷³ [See illustration 24]

Hugh Lee may have rested in peace, but he left his wife's world in a mess. Although a lawyer with obvious health problems, he did not leave a Will. His family members, "in consideration of the love and affection" for her, eventually deeded the house to Mary in a life estate but she was also left with the care of his nieces and nephews, still living with them, and her two sisters-in-law. Added to that were other legal matters to deal with, among them the final settlement of her brother Robert's estate, which she took over as administrator. Hugh did leave her with income from railroad stock and, evidently, some land upon which she had wheat grown for sale; but some of these sources were part of Daniel Lee's estate, which Hugh had been administering, and which would eventually draw Mary Greenhow Lee into a lawsuit that would not be settled

⁷²Blanton, *Medicine in Virginia*, 269; letter from Robert Y. Conrad to Robert Y. Conrad, Jr., November 1, 1856, Robert Y. Conrad Papers, VHS; MGL, 313 (February 14, 1863).

⁷³*Ibid.*, 173 (July 14, 1862), 240 (October 10, 1862), 491 (October 10, 1863); letter from Robert Y. Conrad to Robert Y. Conrad, Jr., October 11, 1856, Robert Y. Conrad Papers, VHS; monument of Hugh Holmes Lee, Mount Hebron Cemetery, Winchester, Virginia.



24. Hugh Holmes Lee tombstone on left.

until after her death.⁷⁴

In a series of letters she wrote in an effort to collect a debt owed to her husband, however, the iron-strength of the new widow becomes evident. John Y. Mason, at that time the U. S. Minister Plenipotentiary to France, and his son, Lewis E. Mason, of Richmond, owed Hugh Lee \$1540, plus interest. The first letters Mary Greenhow Lee wrote to Lewis Mason in February of 1857 were written in the third person, as if she were merely copying the words written for her by someone else, presumably Philip Williams, her lawyer in Winchester. Although the letters are all written in a respectful tone, the first are almost pleading. They begin with a request, asking if "Mr. Mason will oblige Mrs. Hugh H. Lee very much, by letting her know the exact time" he could "pay her the balance of the money due." She also explained that she would not bother him but that "she may miss the opportunity of making a favourable investment...in time." She wrote her next letter in the first person and was more forceful, stating that "it would put me to the greatest inconvenience to wait longer than the 1st of July."⁷⁵

By July 13, 1858, she still had not received the money and Lewis Mason had decided, "for fear of disappointing" her further, to "make no further promise," but that he would "settle the debt...as soon as possible." Mary Greenhow Lee's response to Mason's assurances, though polite, clearly show that she had begun to lose patience. She wrote, "it would be very painful to me, to resort to any measures which might force a

⁷⁴MGL, 479 (September 19, 1863), 519 (November 23, 1863), 525 (December 5, 1863), 576 (April 5, 1864), 614 (June 4, 1864), 704 (October 11, 1864), 744 (December 22, 1864), 766 (January 18, 1865); Winchester, Virginia Deed Book 13: 275-277, 283-284; Settlement of Robert Greenhow's Estate, Richmond Circuit Court Book 1: 334, LOV.

⁷⁵Letter from Mary Greenhow Lee to Roscoe Heath, February 17, 1857, letters from Mary Greenhow Lee to Lewis E. Mason, March 24, March 30, July 9, Mason Family Papers, VHS; Hall, *Portraits in the... Virginia Historical Society*, 163-164.

payment." Then she ended the letter with both sugar and vinegar, telling Mason that although she regretted the tone of her letter, "necessity compels me to be firm." By August, she had the money, and sent a final letter stating that "nothing but necessity would have made me hurry you in making this final payment." If she had been able to secure the money "from various other sources," she wrote, she "would not have called on" Mason until "it suited" his "convenience."⁷⁶ These letters show that although Mary Greenhow Lee may have assumed the subordinate position of wife in marriage, she was perfectly capable and willing to take care of her own affairs, both public and private, as a widow.

For Mary Greenhow Lee, the "palm days of old Winchester" were now over and a new, more turbulent time just beginning. Her strength of character, however, added to the wit and intelligence fostered by her father, and the respect and trust she had gained from her new community as Hugh Lee's wife, would see her through her most difficult times.

⁷⁶Letters from Mary Greenhow Lee to Lewis E. Mason, July 16, August 3, August 23, 1858, letter from Lewis E. Mason to Mary Greenhow Lee, July 13, 1858, Mason Family Papers, VHS.

CHAPTER IV

132 NORTH MARKET STREET: "SECESH LIVES HERE"

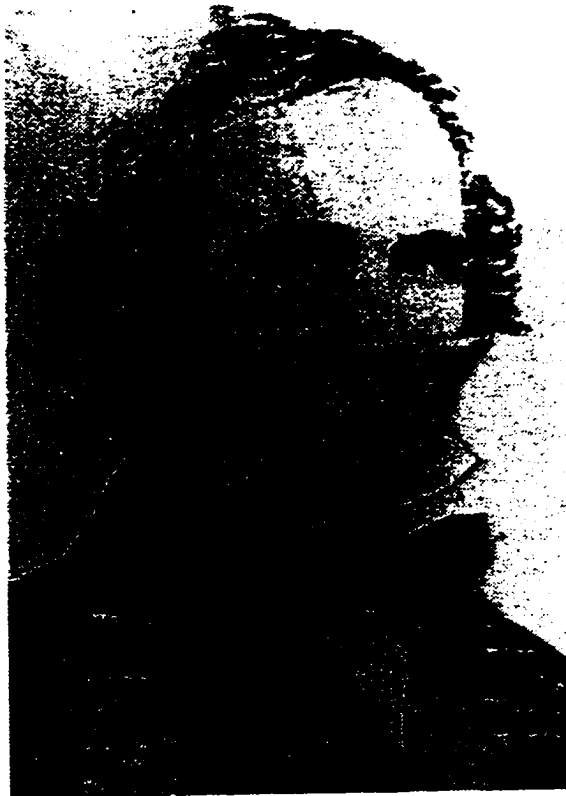
Shortly after Hugh Lee's death, a story appeared in the *Virginia Free Press* in which a letter written by Mary Greenhow Lee's good friend James Murray Mason appeared. Fearing a Republican victory in the upcoming presidential election, Mason stated that if such were to happen, the South would have but one course: "immediate, absolute, and eternal separation."¹ Mason had been involved in sectional debates on behalf of the southern states, Virginia especially, since his election to the Senate in 1839. As author of the Fugitive Slave Act, he had a vested interest in the outcome of the Compromise of 1850.² Then in 1858, he took part in the heated debate over the admission of Kansas to the Union, an extreme arena of sectional conflict.³ It seems safe to assume, given her close ties to Mason and her avid southern patriotism during the war, that Mary Greenhow Lee was not strongly opposed to Virginia's ultimate secession. [See illustration 25]

Winchester's geographic location involved some of its citizens in the efforts to suppress John Brown's October 16, 1859, raid on the Armory at Harpers Ferry. In a

¹*Virginia Free Press*, October 30, 1856.

²Quarles, *Worthy*, 172.

³*Speech of Hon. J. M. Mason, of Virginia, on the Admission of Kansas, Delivered in the Senate of the United States, March 15, 1858* (Washington, D.C.: Geo. S. Gideon, Printer, 1858), VHS.



25. Senator James Murray Mason

scheme to liberate slaves by arming them courtesy of the United States Arsenal, Brown led seventeen men toward Harpers Ferry, cutting telegraph wires along the way. With little difficulty, the men seized the armory after first killing a free black from Winchester, Heyward Shepherd, a baggage master for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad who failed to halt as the raiders made their way into town along the track. Around noon the next day, Lewis Telghman Moore of the 31st Virginia Militia, the man who had replaced Hugh Lee as Colonel of the Morgan Continentals, received word from Colonel Robert W. Baylor of Jefferson County, to gather his forces and meet him at Harpers Ferry immediately. Within an hour, Moore had 150 Frederick County volunteers on the Winchester & Potomac Railroad, on their way to help suppress the raid.⁴

At Halltown, about four miles from their destination, the train was forced to stop and the men marched the remaining distance. As they made their way along the tracks some of the volunteers, students at the Medical School in Winchester, stumbled upon the body of a man they presumed to be a casualty of Brown's raid. After Brown and his surviving insurrectionists gave themselves up to Robert E. Lee and J. E. B. Stuart later that night, the medical students packed the body in a wooden crate and sent it on to the Winchester school to be used as a cadaver. Upon examination of papers found in the dead man's pockets they realized that he was John Brown's son but, with little sympathy for "Massa Possumattamie," as a young local woman called him, school officials removed

⁴David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis: 1848-1861*, Completed and edited by Don E. Fehrenbacher, New American Nation Series (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976) 369-377; Delauter, *Winchester*, 1-2.

the head and preserved the body for study purposes.⁵

A week after his capture, John Brown faced arraignment in a Jefferson County Circuit Court presided over by another of Mary Greenhow Lee's Winchester friends, Judge Richard Parker, who later conducted Brown's trial. Parker's charge to the grand jury emphasized justice. He reminded them that they had sworn to make "diligent inquiry and calm investigation," and to go beyond that, he warned, to "act upon prejudice, or from excitement or passion," would do "wrong to that law" they had agreed to uphold.⁶ In fact, although Brown never evidenced signs of remorse for his actions, he believed his trial had been fair and stated that, "considering the circumstances," the court's treatment of him had "been more generous" than he expected.⁷ Judge Parker sentenced Brown to hang on December 2, 1859.⁸ [See illustration 26]

Southerners, and especially local Virginians, were alarmed to learn that, instead of voicing condemnation of Brown's actions, northerners cried out against his execution. Fearing that misguided minds might plan his escape, Virginia Governor Henry Wise ordered militia units to guard the condemned man until his hanging. On October 31, the

⁵*Ibid.*; Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 370-377; Kate Sperry, "Surrender, Never Surrender!." Typescript, Handley Library, Winchester, Virginia, 198-199. The name "Massa Possumwattamie," given to John Brown by young Kate Sperry of Winchester, refers to the "Pottawatomie Massacre," the killing of five men along Pottawatomie Creek in Kansas led by John Brown and seven other men in 1856 while he was associated with a free-state volunteer company in the territory. See Potter, 211-212. The typescript of Sperry's diary includes a letter from the Librarian of Handley Library in Winchester, written to Lenoir Hunt on June 12, 1941, in which he explains the episode of the medical students taking John Brown's son's body back to the medical college. In another chapter, this will be explained further in context, but the reason for reference to this incident in this diary, as well as others in Winchester, is that during the first Union occupation of the town, soldiers burned down the college in the spirit of revenge for having taken the body for this purpose.

⁶Quoted in Quarles, *Worthy*, 195.

⁷Quoted in Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 377.

⁸Delauter, *Winchester*, 4.



26. Judge Richard Parker

Morgan Continentals once again left home, and spent five weeks in Charlestown (now in West Virginia) on guard duty. Another local man and friend of Mary Greenhow Lee, Turner Ashby, quickly recruited a volunteer cavalry unit and rode to Charlestown for the purpose of protecting the interests of his state.⁹

Suspicion of northern motives grew rapidly after Brown's execution. When Virginians learned that some northern responses to the hanging included traditional rituals of national mourning such as the tolling of bells, they became even more convinced that North and South were already separate countries emotionally. As David Potter has pointed out, while the political debates in Congress and between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas had "caused a considerable part of the American public to think about the philosophical aspects of slavery, John Brown focused attention dramatically upon its emotional aspects."¹⁰ Fear of slave insurrections was something the North did not share with the South and when southerners noted northern refusal to condemn Brown for plotting one, then even some of the staunchest southern Unionists began to reevaluate their sentiments. Editorials in the Richmond newspapers predicted the results even before Lincoln's election, stating that Brown's actions had "advanced the cause of disunion more than any other" and that the Union's "days are numbered."¹¹

After Lincoln's election, South Carolina's secession in late 1860 was the subject of intense scrutiny by the people of Winchester.¹² Secession became the main topic of

⁹*Ibid.*, 4-5; Quarles, *Worthy*, 5.

¹⁰Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 356.

¹¹Quoted in Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 384.

¹²Oren Frederic Morton, *The Story of Winchester*, 146.

conversation in town. As Mary Greenhow Lee's friend Cornelia McDonald remembered, "whenever two people met, that was the subject discussed." Although some believed that secession was inevitable, others argued that once northerners realized their supply of cotton would be gone, they would be more conciliatory to the southern states. Still others, even those who hated slavery, refused to be dictated to by outsiders and preferred secession to northern interference. Cornelia McDonald thought, however, that "everybody seemed...bereft of their sober senses." She even argued with her husband, Angus, when he applauded South Carolina's actions, and reminded him that there might be war. His answer was that "there will be no war" because the South would "have the world on [its] side, for the world will have cotton."¹³

In his study of secession, Steven Elliott Tripp found that the elites of Lynchburg, Virginia, did not favor war, but wanted even less to lose their traditions and heritage. For them, as the decision grew nearer, remaining tied to the North and adjusting to the changes they feared from a Lincoln-led nation would be more radical than Virginian independence. The same could be said for conversations around Winchester dinner tables. Although it would appear to be a conservative stance to remain firm in the Union, conservation of southern tradition and institutions was a key secessionist motive.¹⁴ According to Drew Gilpin Faust, southerners explained their movement toward secession in terms of "a continuation of the struggle of 1776." Their model of a "nationalist movement...paradoxically yet logically...[was] the American War of

¹³McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 11-13.

¹⁴See Steven Elliott Tripp, *Yankee Town, Southern City: Race and Class Relations in Civil War Lynchburg*, American Social Experience Series (New York: New York University Press, 1997) 2, 87.

Independence."¹⁵ They were not departing from their historical beliefs, but ensuring they would not lose them.

Winchester citizens voted on February 4, 1861, for delegates to represent them at Virginia's secession convention to begin the following week. All four of the candidates were members of Mary Greenhow Lee's social circle; two running as secession candidates, Frederick W. M. Holliday and William L. Clark, Sr., and two as Union men, Robert Y. Conrad and James Marshall. The Union candidates won, 3,188 votes to 1,473, with better than a two-to-one margin, which suggests that Winchester had a typically western bias to remain in the Union.¹⁶ Mary Greenhow Lee's sentiments during the controversy are not evident in the record until the war was almost a year old, but it was only then that she reestablished her friendship with neighbor Robert Y. Conrad, suggesting that his position regarding secession had been in direct opposition to hers.¹⁷

Historiography has described Conrad, an active Whig, as the conservative leader

¹⁵Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 14, 21.

¹⁶Delauter, *Winchester*, 6-7; Garland R. Quarles, Lewis N. Barton, C. Vernon Eddy, Mildred Lee Grove, eds., *Diaries, Letters, and Recollections of the War Between the States*, Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society (Winchester, Virginia: The Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, 1955) 14-16.

¹⁷MGL, 12 (March 14, 1862), 15 (March 15, 1862), 47 (April 1, 1862). Robert Y. Conrad was born in Winchester in 1805, educated at the Winchester Academy and West Point, he practiced law in Winchester and was elected to the Virginia Senate as a Whig, serving from 1840 through 1844. Besides practicing law, Conrad also served as an officer of the Winchester & Frederick County Savings Institution. He and his wife, Elizabeth Whiting Powell Conrad, raised their nine children in their home on Market Street, on the other end of the block from the Lee home. Hall, *Portraits in the...Virginia Historical Society*, 53-54; Quarles, *Worthy*, 74-75; Quarles, *One Hundred Old Homes*, 103; Winchester Personal Property Tax Lists, 1843-1850, LOV.



27. Robert Y. Conrad

of the convention due to his firm resolve to keep Virginia in the Union.¹⁸ Nothing would have pleased him more, and newspapers condemned him after secession, stating that he had "voted to the last against the second Declaration of Independence, and for continued subjection to the power of the Federal government."¹⁹ His efforts at the convention went toward helping "Virginia present an undivided front," to maintain equilibrium, and at times, such as after speaking in the "large hall" for one and a half hours and straining his voice "almost to cracking," he felt his work was bearing fruit.²⁰

[See illustration 27]

Later, however, he became less certain, noting that "the agitation throughout" the eastern portion of the state was "gaining apparent strength to the secessionists," even though "their whole position," to Conrad, was "so untenable and...absurd that it must in the end be abandoned." What has not been emphasized, however, is that Conrad began losing his belief in the desirability of Virginia remaining in the Union. Conrad wrote to his wife that the "black-republican party" was deluded if they believed they could "safely maintain a party upon anti-slavery principles," thinking that "Virginia and the middle states will...acquiesce." To the contrary, if the North did not accept the "propositions" put forth by Conrad and the others on his committee, he wrote, "certain it is that we must at once make open war upon Federal authority, and proceed at once...to the effort of

¹⁸Oren Frederic Morton, *The Story of Winchester*, 147; Henry T. Shanks, *The Secession Movement in Virginia, 1847-1861*, (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1937), 160, 183, 189; Beverley B. Munford, *Virginia's Attitude Toward Slavery and Secession*, (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1910), 277.

¹⁹Unidentified newspaper clipping, Scrapbook of Mrs. Holmes Conrad, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia, hereafter cited as ESB.

²⁰Robert Y. Conrad to wife, Elizabeth Whiting Powell Conrad, March 15, 1861, Robert Y. Conrad Papers, VHS.

constructing for ourselves, and all the States that will unite with us, a new confederation." Conrad was a Unionist, but not to the point of losing Virginia's "interests and respectability." Unfortunately, Conrad's secessionist friends and neighbors back home, including Mary Greenhow Lee, remained unaware of his conditional national loyalty. He cautioned his wife: "do not shew [sic] my letters to any but the family."²¹

Another member of Mary Greenhow Lee's *connexion*, Alexander Hugh Holmes Stuart, from Staunton, also "voted to the last against" secession.²² Stuart was a member of the committee charged with hand-delivering a resolution dated April 8, 1861, to President Abraham Lincoln. In this resolution, the Virginia delegates cautioned Lincoln that coercion of the seceded states would only cause further "disturbance of the public peace," and asked him to inform them of his intentions.²³

Lincoln had read a newspaper account of the Virginia delegates' intention to meet with him and had prepared a statement to read to them. Therein, the President reminded them that he had previously outlined his policy on this matter and would not give up United States property no matter where it was located. By this time, Fort Sumter had fallen to the South Carolinians and Stuart suggested to the President that, since forts such

²¹*Ibid.*, April 3, 1861.

²²Robertson, *Stuart*, 184-199; "Scrapbook of Mrs. Holmes Conrad," ESB; MGL, 846 (July 17, 1865), 857 (August 17, 1865). Born in 1807 in Staunton, Virginia, son of Archibald Stuart, Alexander H. H. Stuart was educated at the College of William and Mary and studied law at the University of Virginia, graduating in 1828. His mother was Eleanor Briscoe Stuart, sister to Elizabeth, wife of Judge Hugh Holmes of Winchester. Hugh Holmes and Archibald Stuart were both justices in the General Court of Virginia, and married to sisters from Winchester. This family is an example of the urban *connexion's* ties by kinship and marriage. See Barringer, *et. al.*, *University of Virginia*, 334-335; Quarles, *One Hundred Old Homes*, 56-57.

²³Oren Frederic Morton, *The Story of Winchester*, 147; Shanks, *Secession...in Virginia*, 160, 183, 189; Munford, *Virginia's Attitude*, 277.

as Sumter were used for local protection, they could be abandoned easily once the need for that defense was gone, which was now the case in South Carolina. Lincoln was unconvinced. Stuart left with the delegation, finding Lincoln's answer to them "highly unsatisfactory," but believing that although Lincoln stated that he had the power to recapture public property and discontinue mail service to the seceded states, he did not believe the President indicated any resolve to make use of that power.²⁴

By the time the delegates returned to the Virginia Convention with the President's reply, however, Lincoln had announced his proclamation calling for 75,000 troops. Conrad's letters to his wife continued even more pessimistically. Lincoln's call for armed forces "and the apparent disposition of the Northern people," he wrote, "indicate a civil war." Conrad was uncertain that Lincoln would go that far, however, believing that he was merely trying "to satisfy his party," that "unless a madman," Lincoln was only trying to threaten the South, not start a war. The specter of war was the main reason Conrad and Stuart "voted to the last against" secession. As Conrad described his feelings to his wife, "never before have I felt such a weight upon my brain and my heart." Trying to sustain a moderate position at the convention after Lincoln's call for troops was a losing proposition. He realized that with "the danger...so imminent, and the minds of all on both sides...so much excited, that" they had by that point "only to consider...defense."²⁵

Stuart implored his fellow delegates to think what secession would do to Virginia. With the conflict at that point in "the extreme southern part of our Atlantic coast,"

²⁴Robertson, *Stuart*, 184-199.

²⁵Letters from Robert Y. Conrad to Elizabeth Whiting Powell Conrad, April 16, and April 17, 1861, Robert Y. Conrad Papers, VHS.

secession of Virginia would then "transfer the seat of war to this fertile and salubrious country." Even worse, if the other border states remained in the Union, it would leave Virginia surrounded by enemies, not merely the northernmost defense line of the southern states. Stuart reminded the convention that it was not courageous or chivalrous to rush in unprepared for war, but foolhardy. The state was nearly bankrupt and had very little in the way of ordnance. On April 17, however, the Virginia Convention voted 88 to 55 for Virginia to follow the lower South out of the Union.²⁶

By the end of May, Virginia's secession had been ratified by the people and Jefferson Davis reported to the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States of America, in Montgomery, Alabama, that Virginia, "that honored Commonwealth" had "united her power and her fortunes with ours and become one of us."²⁷ Once the decision was made, Stuart and Conrad threw their support behind Virginia. Stuart was reported in the *New York Times* as having "addressed the people of Augusta [County] on May 27, urging them to make every sacrifice towards defending their rights."²⁸ Conrad's position still remained suspicious to his Winchester neighbors, however. Although he thoroughly supported Virginia's defense "against the unjust and unholy war which Lincoln and his party had declared," until the secession vote had come in from the populace, he decided "to give no advice upon the subject," and "did not even appear at the polls to vote for or against secession." In his caution against lending undue influence,

²⁶Stuart quoted in Robertson, *Stuart*, 195-199; Munford, *Virginia's Attitude*, 278-279; 281.

²⁷Dabney, *Virginia*, 294; James D. Richardson, ed., *The Messages and Papers of Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy, Including Diplomatic Correspondence, 1861-1865*, Vol. I (New York: Chelsea House, Robert Hector Publishers, 1966) 77.

²⁸*New York Times*, June 5, 1861.

however, Conrad appeared to his neighbors to be lukewarm in his patriotism. Criticism forced him to publicly declare his position, stating that the "malignant and insane war" breaking out against Virginia, came from "the miserable pretext that Virginia is in insurrection against Abraham Lincoln," and that the "Northern people" were standing by and allowing a "public servant of a free people" to become "a military despot."²⁹ Whether or not Mary Greenhow Lee read Conrad's statement, for nearly a year thereafter she "rather doubted" his patriotism, and only became "quite pleased with" him again during Winchester's first Union occupation in March of 1862.³⁰

Winchester was both geographically and politically linked to the western counties that eventually formed the Union state of West Virginia. When the citizens of Winchester heard of the events at Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops, however, most, though not all, switched positions, aligning themselves with the South.³¹ Although some of the residents remained staunch Unionists, most of them enthusiastically prepared for war.

Winchester had experienced a long history of conflict. George Washington, as commander of Virginia forces charged with guarding the frontier during the Seven Years War, chose Winchester as his headquarters. In April of 1756, Washington requested of the House of Burgesses that "a strong Fort [be] erected at this place, for a general Receptacle of all the Stores, &c. and a place of Residence for the Commanding Officers." He reasoned that Winchester's location, "lying directly on the Road to Fort Duquisne

²⁹*Richmond Enquirer*, June 7, 1861.

³⁰MGL, 12 (March 14, 1862).

³¹Shanks, *Secession...in Virginia*, 199; Oren Frederic Morton, *The Story of Winchester*, 147.

[sic]" made "this very Town at present the outmost Frontiers...of the utmost importance; as it commands the communication from East to West, as well as from North to South." The House of Burgesses approved Washington's request and, by May 23, 1756, Fort Loudoun was under construction on Main Street, about two hundred yards from the edge of town, with Washington himself supervising the construction and lending the use of his own Mount Vernon blacksmith for some of the work.³² [See illustration 28]

Washington's relations with Winchester residents during the French and Indian War were not easy. He found that they were unwilling to give up their wagons, horses, or supplies to defend the frontier unless served with a warrant; and he complained that "people here in general are very selfish," that the "Tippling Houses" in Winchester were "a great grievance," and that all of his "efforts...to raise the militia" there had "proved ineffectual."³³

In contrast to Washington's experiences with the reluctant citizens of Winchester in the eighteenth century, most of them in April of 1861 joined in the exuberant southern patriotism spreading across the state. In Richmond, the Confederate flag appeared on the state capitol even before secession had been ratified, and Robert Conrad reported to his wife that the city was "filled with the signs and sounds of war," with "every young

³²*Ibid.*, 65; Magill, *Chronicles of the Late War*, 1871) 3-4; W. W. Abbot, ed., *The Papers Of George Washington*, Colonial Series 3, April-November 1756, (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1984) 49-50, 62n.

³³*Ibid.*, 397; Richard L. Morton, *Colonial Virginia: Vol. II*, 646-647. During the War for Independence Winchester was again a military headquarters, this time as a prisoner-of-war camp for as many as 1600 British soldiers. Thus, by 1860, Winchester's population of 4400 citizens had a long history of strategic value. See Frederic Oren Morton, 88-89, 145. Population figures include 655 freedmen and 708 slaves.



28. George Washington's Headquarters, in Winchester, Virginia

man...buckling on his armour."³⁴ A young friend of Mary Greenhow Lee from the Baltimore branch of her *connexion*, Randolph Harrison McKim, was a student at the University of Virginia when war broke out. Excitement began on campus even before Virginia entered the conflict, however, when Ranny joined with six other young conspirators, waiting until the middle of the night to saw their way through the roof of the rotunda to plant a homemade Confederate flag.³⁵ In Winchester, someone removed the "U" and the "N" from the sign above the Union Hotel, rendering the name of the establishment--"ION HOTEL"--less meaningful yet more patriotic.³⁶

With nearby Harpers Ferry deemed Virginia's first line of defense against northern invasion, local militia groups throughout the state began arriving in Winchester to lend

³⁴Dabney, *Virginia*, 294; Robert Y. Conrad to Elizabeth Whiting Powell Conrad, April 19, 1861, Holmes Conrad Papers, VHS. When southerners watched the "Stars and Stripes" lowered for what they believed to be the last time, many were subdued and somber. That flag had signified their history, their traditions, and their national pride. It is not surprising then that in a contest to create the Confederate flag, hundreds of citizens entered designs very similar to "Old Glory." Unfortunately, the design officially chosen, the "Stars and Bars," was not distinctive enough from the Union flag to readily be recognized in battle. A battle flag was quickly designed and is now known as the "Rebel Battle Flag" or "Southern Cross," a red, square field with a blue saltier (cross) containing thirteen stars. Never officially adopted by the Confederacy, it was, however, the flag under which southern troops most widely fought. With the two extra stars, the flag reflected the optimism for, but not reality of, Missouri and Kentucky joining the other rebellious states. Testimony to the success of the "unofficial" battle flag of the Confederacy is given in the fact that it is still used as a regional symbol in the South. See Boleslaw D'Otrange Mastai and Marie-Louise D'Otrange Mastai, *The Stars and the Stripes: The American Flag as Art and as History from the Birth of the Republic to the Present*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 124, 130; Faust, *Creation*, 8; David Eggenberger, *Flags of the U.S.A.*, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1959), 141-2.

³⁵McKim, *Soldier's Recollections*, 1-3, 7-9. McKim's father, John, was adamantly opposed to secession and remained a Baltimore Unionist even after his son followed sympathies conditioned by his mother's southern heritage and family ties in Virginia. He joined the Confederate Army by way of a university company called "The Southern Guard," which was then assigned to Major General Thomas J. (Stonewall) Jackson at Winchester.

³⁶Julia Chase, "War Time Diary of Miss Julia Chase, Winchester, Virginia," typescript, HL, February 9, 1962, hereafter JC. In this passage, Chase is commenting on the sign's letters being replaced, hence the discrepancy in the date.

support before Virginia had officially seceded.³⁷ As Colonel James K. Edmondson of the 27th Regiment reported to his wife on April 21st, Winchester was the town where "all forces are to be quartered for the present. Troops are concentrating very fast."³⁸ The town almost doubled in population overnight. Men arrived with their companies, some of them bringing their own pistols or hunting rifles, but many without weapons of any kind. Frederick County quickly appropriated \$10,000 to equip many of these volunteers with arms and supplies but, in the meantime, citizens opened their doors to the young men, boarding them until the army could organize.³⁹ Leading citizens of Winchester, Robert Conrad and James Marshall among them, wrote to Robert E. Lee to see what was being done to arm the militia and prepare the area for defense. Lee responded that Colonel Thomas Jonathan Jackson of Lexington would leave Richmond on April 28, "with orders to muster into service, at Harper's [sic] Ferry, the companies there ready; and that every effort" would "be made to supply them with batteries."⁴⁰

Mary Greenhow Lee took part in the preparations for war by joining both the County Society and the Harmon Society, organized by the women in town to sew

³⁷Letter from Governor John Letcher to Major General Robert E. Lee, April 27, 1861, Series I, Vol. II, 784, letter from Lee to Jackson, May 1, 1861, Series I, Vol. II, 793-794, Lee to Jackson, May 6, 1861, Series I, Vol. II, 806-807, of *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880) hereafter cited as *OR*; *Richmond Enquirer*, April 30, 1861.

³⁸Charles W. Turner, ed., *My Dear Emma: War Letters of Col. James K. Edmondson, 1861-1865* (Staunton, Virginia: McClure Press, 1978) 3.

³⁹Delauter, *Winchester*, 9; Turner, *My Dear Emma*, 3; Mason, *The Public Life...of James M. Mason*, 192-193.

⁴⁰Letter from Robert E. Lee to Robert Y. Conrad, James Marshall, Edmund Pendleton, Hugh Nelson, and Alfred M. Barbour, April 27, 1861, ESB.

uniforms and put together supplies for the army.⁴¹ Although there is no record that she invited soldiers into her home during the preparation phase of the war, her willingness to do so later suggests that she probably did. It would certainly have suited her personality to have become caught up in the carnival atmosphere of the town at the outset of war.

James Murray Mason visited Jackson at Harpers Ferry, and reported to General Lee that, from his observations, "all were in good hands under [Jackson's] command" there. Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston soon replaced Jackson at Harpers Ferry, however, then abandoned the place for lack of defensibility, at which point Johnston located his Army of the Shenandoah just north of Winchester, and made his headquarters the Taylor Hotel.⁴²

Young women in town were delighted to see the army more permanently attached to Winchester. As young Emma Riely, a friend of Mary Greenhow Lee's nieces recalled, "the girls all had a good time, for brass buttons and gold lace were very attractive."⁴³ Young Mary Magill contrasted the excitement of war preparations with "the arrival of the daily mail," one of the former highlights of life in the sleepy town. Magill remembered the early part of the war as a time when "prancing steeds were seen coming and going in all directions," and the young people thrilled to see men such as Turner Ashby,

⁴¹MGL, 47 (April 1, 1862).

⁴²OR, Series I, Vol. II, Mason to Lee, May 15, 1861, 848-850, from Jackson to Colonel R. S. Garnett, Adjutant-General, May 25, 1861, 877, Reports of General Joseph E. Johnston from May 23 to July 22, 1861, October 14, 1861, 470-478, from Johnston to General S. Cooper, Adjutant and Inspector-General, June 24, 1861, 948-949; *Richmond Enquirer*, June 2, 1861; Delauter, *Winchester*, 10.

⁴³Emma Cassandra Riely Macon and Reuben Conway Macon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War* (Privately printed, 1911) 11.

"mounted on a jet black horse." She noted that his "pallor was rendered more striking from the long black beard which swept to his waist, full moustache and jetty hair,...mingled with the sweeping black ostrich feather which drooped from his military cap." Colonel Jackson impressed the residents, as well, although his appearance was less striking; his own style of riding "certainly not graceful."⁴⁴

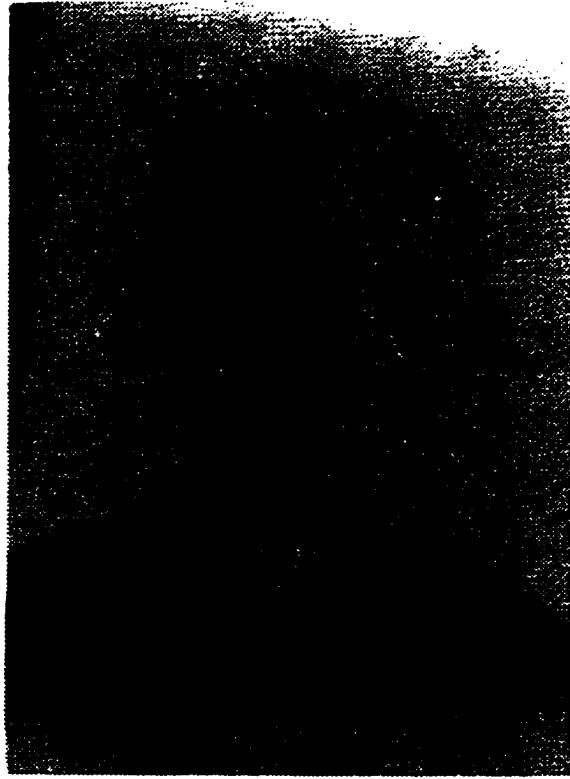
Winchester also filled with colors. Besides the homemade southern banners floating from windows and off of housetops, militia groups from the lower South began to arrive in town, blending in their own local colors to that of the town. The first regiment to arrive was from Alabama, then Georgia sent their military men, along with banners of red and white silk, displaying the Georgia insignia, and bordered with a gold fringe. The Georgia regiment's uniforms of green and gold, when mixed with the gray and gold of the Virginia troops, added to the festive atmosphere.⁴⁵

Not everyone in Winchester participated in the enthusiasm and excitement of the onset of war. Several citizens retained their Unionist sympathies throughout the war, among them Harriet Hollingsworth Griffith, a young Quaker woman. She recorded that her "loved and honored America, this our beautiful country, is now in arms. Brother warring against brother, and what for....My heart is sad, very sad."⁴⁶ Another

⁴⁴Magill, *Chronicles of the Late War*, 15, 25, 26.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 15; Mason, *The Public Life...of James M. Mason*, 192; McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 19; Delauter, *Winchester*, 8.

⁴⁶Harriet Hollingsworth Griffith, *Diary*, HL, hereafter cited as HHG A, B, June 9, 1861. This source is an anonymously edited version of Griffith's wartime diary. Griffith was the daughter of Aaron Hackney Griffith and Mary Parkins Hollingsworth Griffith. Aaron and his brother Joseph, along with two nephews, founded the firm of Griffith, Hoge, and Co., and the Friendly Grove Factory, one mile south of Winchester, where they manufactured textiles. Another factory founded by Aaron and Joseph later became the Brookland Woolen Mills.



29. Cornelia Peake McDonald

Winchester Unionist, Julia Chase, reminded herself on July 4, 1861, that it was the anniversary of when "independence was declared by our forefathers. Into what a sad condition our beloved country has fallen."⁴⁷

Cornelia McDonald, though a secessionist whose husband commanded a Confederate cavalry unit, understood that war would not be entertaining for long. She watched the young soldiers play games and fill their time with fun and "gaiety" between drills, then contrasted the scenes with "the melancholy face of their commander," who looked at them with "a deep sadness...on his countenance."⁴⁸ Clearly, although preparations for war seemed to breathe vibrance into the formerly tranquil Valley village, there were residents who grieved over what was happening and the ugliness that would come. *[See illustration 29]*

Although Mary Greenhow Lee's Civil War journal does not begin until March of 1862, the "horrors" of war touched her earlier.⁴⁹ When she learned that Richard Ashby had been seriously wounded at Kelley Island on June 26, 1861, she wrote to his brother, Turner, to "beg that as soon as your brother can bear the journey, you will bring him to my house & let my sisters & myself endeavor" to take care of him. She had been frustrated by "contradictory accounts" of Ashby's condition, created from a knife cut on his head, shots through his arm and hand, and a bayonet shoved into his stomach, and asked Turner for a direct report on "Dick's" condition. She then ended her letter with: "My sisters join me in...kindest remembrances to Dick, and the hope that he will trust

⁴⁷JC, July 4, 1861.

⁴⁸McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 19.

⁴⁹MGL, 646 (July 21, 1864).

himself to our nursing. We will promise to care for him, as if he were our brother."⁵⁰

Richard Ashby died four days after Mary Greenhow Lee wrote her letter, so it is doubtful that he made the journey to her house for her care.⁵¹ Soon, however, she had other casualties to concern her. The town quieted down on July 19, when the army left for Manassas. Citizens were cheered a few days later to learn that the Confederates had risen victorious in their first major confrontation against Federal forces at Manassas. The army's return, however, brought the realities of war within sight. The men entered the town absent the enthusiasm with which they had marched out. They also brought with them wagons loaded with severely wounded soldiers who were quickly deposited in several makeshift hospitals in town, the first of several such scenes that Mary Greenhow Lee would witness during the war.⁵² This was the pattern she would endure through the next four years: positive news, then devastation and frustration.

Certainly, Mary Greenhow Lee must have been delighted and proud to learn that her good friend James Murray Mason had been selected as the Confederate emissary to England, along with John Slidell to France and Lucius Q. C. Lamar to Russia, to gain recognition from those three nations for Confederate independence.⁵³ On the other hand, when Mason and Slidell were seized from the *Trent*, a British Royal Mail steamer, by the captain of a United States ship of war, the *U.S.S. San Jacinto*, as it left Havana,

⁵⁰Letter from Mary Greenhow Lee to Turner Ashby, June 30, 1861, Turner Ashby Family Papers, VHS; Quarles, *et. al.*, *Diaries, Letters and Recollections*, 16-19; Quarles, *Worthy*, 4-5. Lee's letter refers to time that she and her family had spent at the Ashby home in Fauquier County, suggesting that her offer of help was not based merely on patriotism, but also on their *connexion*.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²Delauter, *Winchester*, 11-12.

⁵³Richardson, *Messages and Papers of Jefferson Davis*, 141-142, 311-312.

Cuba, for England in November, it is likely that Mary Greenhow Lee was as angry as were the British.⁵⁴ Also in November, however, a reorganization of the army created the Valley District within the Department of Northern Virginia, and General Thomas Jonathan Jackson, since Manassas known as "Stonewall," took command of the newly created district, and established his headquarters at the Taylor Hotel. Julia Chase recorded of Jackson's entrance into town wryly, "the citizens of Winchester feel perfectly safe now, I suppose." Mary Greenhow Lee's reaction to Jackson's arrival in town in November is not recorded. Her dread at his leaving, however, prompted her to begin her extensive Civil War journal.⁵⁵ [See illustration 30]

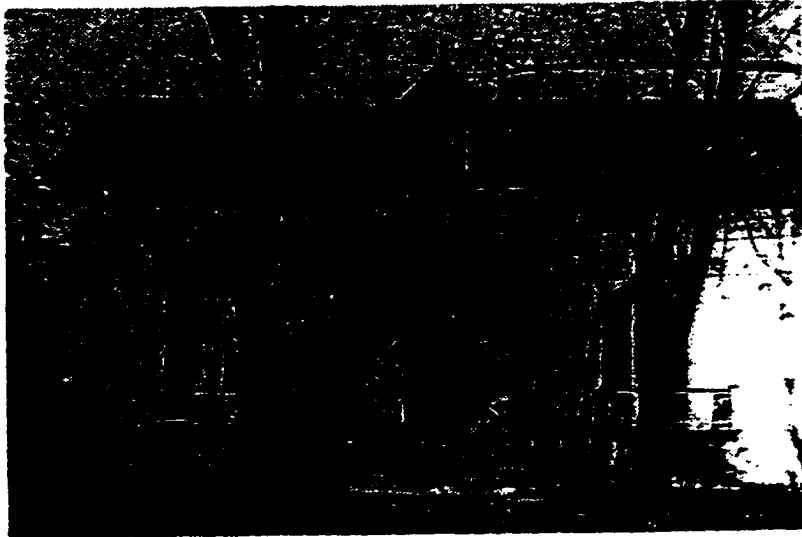
On February 27, 1862, General Nathaniel P. Banks, commander of the Union district that encompassed the Shenandoah Valley, crossed the Potomac at Harper's Ferry via a pontoon bridge and placed his 38,000 troops on the south side of the river, within reach of Winchester. Lincoln wanted the town.⁵⁶

Jackson had 4600 men at his disposal and knew he was no match for Banks in terms of numbers, but his objective was not to attack and destroy. He merely wanted to make himself felt. Union General G. B. McClellan was camped with 200,000 troops near Washington, waiting for spring when he could move on Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston's troops at Centreville. Jackson's mission was to cause enough alarm in

⁵⁴*Ibid.*; Joseph H. Lehmann, *The Model Major-General: A Biography of Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1964) 114-115; Clement Eaton, *A History of the Southern Confederacy* (New York: The Free Press, 1954) 70.

⁵⁵OR, Series I, Vol. V, 909, from Benjamin to Jackson, October 21, 1861, 938, Special Orders No. 206, November 5, 1861; McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 49n; Delauter, *Winchester*, 13; JC, November 9, 1861.

⁵⁶Cartmell, *Shenandoah Valley Pioneers*, 328; Col. G. F. R. Henderson, C. B., *Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War*, (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), 164.



30. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's Headquarters, Winchester, Virginia

Washington to stop McClellan from moving away from the capital. Furthermore, considering his relatively small number of troops, Jackson needed to avoid a general engagement.⁵⁷

To accomplish this, Jackson had to evacuate Winchester and place himself in a more defensive position. Banks's cavalry was just outside of town and the citizens knew it. They had become accustomed to the security of Jackson's army and Jackson's decision to leave while the enemy was just outside of town made them aware of their vulnerability. The majority of Jackson's army consisted of Valley men. When the army left, so did fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons.⁵⁸ Jackson's army marched out of Winchester on March 11, 1862. Banks entered uncontested on March 12; and Mary Greenhow Lee began her Civil War journal.

When General Nathaniel Banks entered Winchester, Mary Greenhow Lee noted with sorrow in the first entry of her journal that "the Yankee flag [was] waving over the Court House & Hotel."⁵⁹ Less than a year before, the "Yankee" flag flying above the Courthouse in Winchester had been the symbol of her nation to Mary Greenhow Lee. Her national identity, however, had changed in the span of months. Now a citizen of the Confederate States of America, the Union flag symbolized foreign invasion and occupation for her. Mary Greenhow Lee's identity as a southern woman had been merged with the identity of a Confederate national, specifically a "Secesh," the name Union soldiers gave to the Secessionists. This extension to her personality was born at

⁵⁷Cartmell, *Shenandoah Valley Pioneers*, 328; Henderson, *Stonewall Jackson*, 164-167.

⁵⁸Cartmell, *Shenandoah Valley Pioneers*, 328.

⁵⁹MGL, 4, 5 (March 12, 1862).

the onset of war, grew during the first Union occupation, and matured as she waged her own style of warfare throughout the war. The core of her identity, her southernness, gave her reference points by which to judge the rightness of her actions. The war exercised that southern spirit. Her journal helped her make sense of the changes in her life.⁶⁰

Confederate nationalism was present at the time of secession; a nationalistic impulse presided in the Lee home on North Market Street in Winchester, Virginia. Mary Greenhow Lee's Confederate identity was not new at war's end, when she was associated with other Secessionists in defeat. It was born at the beginning, when President Abraham Lincoln denied the South's right to secede. More important to this study, her journal also provided Mary Greenhow Lee with a mirror in which she could watch her nationalism mature.

On May 4, 1862, with less than a month of Union occupation behind her, Mary Greenhow Lee wrote in her journal: "I never felt more confident, of the final & speedy success of the cause, than now, though we are passing through our dark days." On April 16, 1865, even after she knew of General Lee's surrender at Appomattox, she recorded: "I do not despair even yet [and] I shall not give up till terms of peace have been accepted by the whole Confederacy." Her identity as a Confederate had not altered, unless possibly strengthened. This is not to say that she had been free of external pressures. In fact, the conditions of her life during the war had made routine the unexpected and change the rule. Before the war ended, military control of Winchester changed officially

⁶⁰See Philip Gleason, "Identifying Identity: A Semantic History," in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Mar 1983), 911, 914, 918; and Erik H. Erikson, "Ego Development and Historical Change," in *Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, Vol. 2 (1946), 393.

thirteen times but the town also suffered minor raids during periods when neither army held the town. Through it all Mary Greenhow Lee remained constant in her belief in southern independence.⁶¹

Mary Greenhow Lee was able to survive the emotional trauma that upheaval can initiate by consistently reaffirming her identity in her journal, yet denying her enemies theirs. Early on she reported gleefully that "regiment after regiment [of the Union forces] pass every day *but not a face do they see*, at our house or our whole square. They gaze at the windows as they pass, while we, unseen, enjoy their mortification." This was during an occupation phase. During one of the many Union retreats, however, she reported, "we went to watch the faces of the Yankees when driven through town. I came back to our own porch and pavement *where I could be seen there*."⁶² Although Mary Greenhow Lee may not have been conscious of it, she knew intuitively that reactions of the "others," her enemy, were important to her analysis of the war that she was waging against them. She also knew that depriving them of *her* reactions would deny her enemies of *their* identity: a conquering army. She refused to participate, especially when she felt that her acknowledgement would benefit the enemy.

By April Mary Greenhow Lee had formulated a structure for her journal. It was to be "one of events, not of feelings." After September 4, 1862, when she sent her first

⁶¹MGL, 89 (April 4, 1862), 815 (April 16, 1865), 544 (January, 1864); Margaretta Barton Colt, *Defend the Valley: A Shenandoah Family in the Civil War* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1994) 9-10. Colt's numbers relative to military occupation of Winchester is probably the best assessment to date. Local historians have set the number of times "Winchester changed hands" during the war as high as seventy but, as Colt wisely points out, many of these "occupations" were merely raids through town which, though not official military take-overs, did cause life in Winchester to remain unsettled for the war's duration.

⁶²MGL, 18 (March, 1862), 652 (July 24, 1864), *emphasis added*.

installment to friend Virginia "Jeannie" Mason, daughter of James Murray Mason, Lee continued to keep her journal, no longer sure she would send it out but writing from "habit."⁶³ By March 1, 1864, after sending off the third installment of the journal, Mary Greenhow Lee had realized the importance of it in her own life. "What I shall write now is merely for myself." By the end of the fourth division of the journal, it had become "a companion."⁶⁴ It had also, quite probably, become a mirror and her way of maintaining the most important part of her identity: a "Secesh" woman of Winchester.⁶⁵ On March 17, 1862, five days into Winchester's first Union occupation, northern peddlers came to Lee's door to sell her "their cheap goods...which I was too patriotic to buy." As they left her door, she heard one of them say, "Secesh lives here."⁶⁶ Mary Greenhow Lee embraced that notion. To be identified as "Secesh" became her goal for the remainder of the war.

Being a Secesh became a thread of continuity for Mary Greenhow Lee. Psychologists often advise those who are undergoing a series of ruptures in their lives to keep a journal. One goal of a journal is to create a narrative that links change to something familiar. The account can then connect the events of chaos to the core of the identity, producing some semblance of order by maintaining the one constant a person can cling to: the Self. Additionally, the more extensive our vocabulary, especially the more skilled we are in variation and grammar usage, the easier it is for us to personify

⁶³*Ibid.*, 73 (April 20, 1862), 224 (September 4, 1862).

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 564 (March 1, 1864).

⁶⁵"Secesh" was the term applied to secessionists by Union soldiers. Mary Greenhow Lee did not seem to mind the label any more than she did "rebel."

⁶⁶MGL, 17 (March 17, 1862).

the Self we want to portray in difficult situations.⁶⁷ Mary Greenhow Lee's education had been extensive. She peppered her journal with French phrases and had definite opinions on everything from politics to society. To pass the time, she and her family read to each other from classics such as *King Lear*, which they read by assuming the various characters, and from current works such as *Les Miserables*, which Lee deemed "a stupid book."⁶⁸ It is not surprising then that Mary Greenhow Lee was equipped to use her journal as a canvas for portraying her "Self" as a Secesh, especially as she perceived "others," her enemies, were viewing her.

While Mary Greenhow Lee cited Confederate leaders and soldiers as "God-fearing," "God-trusting," and "noble," she always referred to Union soldiers as "Yankees." She would at times strip them of manliness, at least in her view, by calling them "dandies." They were "vile wretches" to her, merely "creatures," the "vilest race under the sun." Laura Lee used similar types of metaphor in her descriptions of Union troops. The soldiers had taken over one of the houses in town as both a barracks and a stable. In describing the arrangement she wrote, "the horses... quartered on the first floor, the other brutes above." Mary Greenhow Lee's observations of officers were just as harsh. Major Generals Philip Sheridan and George Custer were both "common looking vulgarians" in Mary Greenhow Lee's opinion.⁶⁹

Lee gives clues to why she thought of these men in such terms. During the first

⁶⁷See Nelson N. Foote, "Identification as the Basis for a Theory of Motivation," in *American Sociological Review* Vol. 16 (Feb 1951) 15-21: 15-16, 18.

⁶⁸MGL, 301 (January, 1863), 587 (May, 1864).

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 564 (March, 1863), 10-11 (March, 1862), 654 (July, 1864), 54 (April, 1862), 747 (December 25, 1864), 754 (January 2, 1865), 765 (January 17, 1865); Laura Lee, "The History of Our Captivity," *Diary*, April 19, 1862, CWM, hereafter LL.

occupation of Winchester she quickly developed an attitude by which she could exist within a society where the rules had suddenly changed. A slaveowner and notable member of Winchester society, Mary Greenhow Lee was not accustomed to feelings of insecurity and oppression. Her world had turned upside down and she felt herself subject to the whims of people who neither recognized her nation nor her own place in it. By labelling the invaders in terms which questioned not only their authority but their very humanity, she was using a defensive mechanism to protect herself from the shifting of social place she sensed around her. "I cannot get up a feeling of fear for the Yankees; I have such a thorough contempt for them that I do not realize they are human beings & I feel able to protect myself from them."⁷⁰ On the other hand, epithets coming at her from the other side merely reinforced her goal to create and maintain an identity of opposition. She referred to herself as a "Confederate," "rebel," "Secessionist," and "true Southerner." She also informed her opposition openly that she "was their enemy."⁷¹

Lee was always conscious of how she appeared to her enemies, jotting down their reactions to her. It was a way of checking her role, the expectations she had of her "Self," and her impact on the "Other." The more convinced a person is of the role that he or she should play in an unfamiliar scene, the more confidence they will feel.⁷² Of course, it took both Confederates and Federals in her environment to help Lee create her Confederate "Self." Writing in her journal provided her with briefing and debriefing periods to plan her behavior, assess its results, and measure her status in the group by the

⁷⁰MGL, 30 (March 25, 1862).

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 290 (January 4, 1863), 62 (April, 1862).

⁷²Foote, "Identification...Motivation," 15-16, 18.

reactions of the opposition. Then her perceived success rate gave her confidence for the next series of encounters.⁷³

In Mary Greenhow Lee's view, there must have been something lacking in northern citizens that would cause them to disregard a state's right to form a new government. Only the unenlightened and uncivilized would pursue the horrors of war in an attempt to prohibit a just separation. The South had history on its side for this argument, a history that the North should have remembered. In January of 1861 an article appeared in *DeBow's Review*, an agrarian and sectional journal of the South, which argued that the United States had been from the beginning two distinct sections, artificially yoked by a constitution that deprived the South of two-thirds of her representation, her pride, and her spirit. "Loss of independence," according to the article, and "extinction of nationality" would be far worse than civil war.⁷⁴

Eric Hobsbawm, scholar of nineteenth-century nationalism, argues that an *a priori* approach to nationalism is more productive than listing what "a nation" is, insisting that the ideal of "a nation" can precede classic commonalities normally ascribed to them (ie., geography, language, history, race, or a combination). According to Hobsbawm, the "nation" is a "historically novel construct," based on the assumption that loyalty to one "nation" replaces all other loyalties.⁷⁵ Hobsbawm notes that the transformation into a nation "appeal[s] to a variety of means of asserting or symbolising group membership and

⁷³*Ibid.*, 17-19, 20.

⁷⁴*DeBow's Review*, "National Characteristics: The Issue of the Day," XXX (January 1861) 42-53: 45, 43, 46, 52.

⁷⁵Eric Hobsbawm, "Some Reflections on Nationalism," in *Imagination and Precision in the Social Sciences: Essays in Memory of Peter Nettl*, ed. T. J. Nossiter, A. H. Hanson, and Stein Rokkan, 384-397, (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1972), 386, 388.

solidarity in the most emotionally charged personal sense." Nations are not invented but evolve naturally "out of pre-existing historical materials." In order to fix a central loyalty, however, a new nation must eliminate other centers and fill the void with "symbols of patriotism;" give the new citizen a sense of obligation, such as military service; and "emphasise those things which distinguish their citizens from other states." Such a symbol for the South was the Confederate flag.⁷⁶

Mary Greenhow Lee spent quite a bit of space in her diary describing the adventures of her flag. She hid it on March 11, 1862, before the town was taken by Federals. When Union soldiers came to her door on the 13th, demanding her "secession flag," she told them she had sent it to a "place of safety." They wanted to search her house. Standing her ground, she informed them it would require higher rank than theirs to force her to allow them into her home. Lee was asked again the next day, and again she denied having a flag. She admitted to her journal, however, that "our bonny red flag shall yet wave over us." Even as late as February 1864 the flag was a source of intrigue. When her house was searched at that time, the flag was still not found. One of Lee's nieces was "wearing" it under her clothes.⁷⁷

When Cornelia McDonald's house was taken over as a Federal headquarters, she somehow managed to withstand the strain of caring for her family amidst the enemy. There was one intrusion, however, galling enough to prompt her to complain. She informed the officer in charge that as long as the Union flag flew over her front door, she would be forced to use the back one. "In the afternoon I noticed the flag had been

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 389, 392, 393.

⁷⁷MGL, 1, 6, 7, 9, 11 (March, 1862), 554 (February 9, 1864).

removed and floated some distance from the house," she remembered.⁷⁸ Kate Sperry, a younger Winchester Secesh, reported that she and her friends angered the occupying troops by refusing to walk under the Union flag. They would, instead, purposefully leave the sidewalk and proceed through the mud; or, when a large Union flag had been suspended across the street, they circled to the back of the building.⁷⁹ The Confederate flag had become a signal to these women of patriotism; the Union flag now represented the enemy.

Allegiance to a flag, however, is an outward, patriotic observance. It does not explain deeper foundations of nationalism. The debate among southern historians over the existence of Confederate nationalism has varied from those who propose the South lost the war because it had little or no nationalistic base, to others who assert that the ideology which forced the split is still present today.

On one side of the debate are those who believe southern cohesion stemmed from emotionalism rather than nationalism. They argue that mistrust of the North and fear of slave insurrections made southern whites feel not only isolated but defensive and that southern political unity came from a sense that congressional power was shifting away from them. Hysteria after Lincoln's election rather than firm ideological convictions impelled the South into war. Still others argue that although the main difference between the North and South was its peculiar institution, slavery had become so charged it

⁷⁸McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 45.

⁷⁹Sperry, "Surrender!," 146-148. Kate Sperry was seventeen years old when the war began. She lived with her grandfather, Peter Graves Sperry, and her Aunt Mary W. Sperry and eventually married Dr. E. N. Hunt of the 2nd Mississippi Regiment and moved to a "plantation home" at Cedar Hill, near Ripley, Mississippi. She died in 1886. See the introduction to her typescript by her daughter, Lenoir Hunt.

appeared as a distinct ideology.⁸⁰

On the other side of the debate are historians who assert that southern culture was distinctive even at the time of the Constitutional Convention. James Madison noted at the time that complications surfaced which were as much a product of dissimilarities between northern and southern states as from large and small.⁸¹ Southern distinctiveness was acknowledged also by Thomas Jefferson in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*. To the question of what "particular customs and manners...may happen to be received in [your] state," Jefferson chose slavery as a custom unique to his "nation." He recognized that slavery necessarily created a different character in the inhabitants exposed to it. Jefferson believed that when children witness their parents treating other humans in a despotic way, there can be a certain detrimental effect on their manners. He also suggested, however, that southerners would view these manners as normal after several generations.⁸²

It might be argued that if slavery was the only unifying force in the South, the institution was, at least, a uniquely southern problem that northerners did not share. Whether united in defense of it or fear of its repercussions, slavery was a southern characteristic. Jefferson's hint at behavioral distinctions within a slave society adds

⁸⁰C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*, rev. ed., (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 62; Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, 471-72, 461, 469; Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Imperiled Union: Essays on the Background of the Civil War*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 252, 255, 258; and John McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism, 1830-1860*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1979), 3.

⁸¹Carl N. Degler, *Place Over Time: The Continuity of Southern Distinctiveness*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 9-10.

⁸²Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1982) 162-163.

weight to the argument. In fact, Carl Degler has argued that "there is little evidence of hostility of nonslaveholders toward slaveholders" in the Old South, and that nonslaveholders hoped "to achieve the same status one day." If, as Hobsbawm suggests, nations are aware of homogeneity in their numbers, then generations of slave owners and those wishing to become slave owners might have evolved into a distinctive people.⁸³

On March 22, 1862, the Lees' slave Evans ran off, as did several others in town. Laura Lee was in "shock" from disappointment and had to lie down. She had been sure he would be "faithful." Mary Greenhow Lee, however, was not surprised. She wrote, "I have never had the least confidence in any negro." She considered him "ungrateful." On April 5, Mary Greenhow Lee noted that she "miss[ed] Evans...every hour," and that she had heard he was having problems with his leg. "If so, I know he has often wished he was at home, where he was as carefully nursed as any other member of the family."⁸⁴

Neither of these women could realize that if Evans had felt like "any other member of the family," he would not have left. Their lives had always included people they both shackled and sheltered. That Mary Greenhow Lee used the word "ungrateful" means she thought of herself as Evans's protector as well as his owner. And Laura Lee's use of the word "faithful" also suggests a connection based on more than ownership, possibly even friendship. This complicated relationship between the races was very much a uniquely southern characteristic but not necessarily a Confederate one. In Winchester, at least, slavery and fear of slave revolts do not explain Confederate nationalism.

⁸³Degler, *Place Over Time*, 73, 81.

⁸⁴LL, Mar 22, 1862; MGL, 26 (March 22, 1862), 53 (April 5, 1862).

Granted, Mary Greenhow Lee was scornful of emancipation, dreaded manual labor when the "servants" were gone, and "was near fainting and more unnerved than by any sight I have seen since the war" when she encountered a Union "company of negro Infantry" in April 1864.⁸⁵ These were not, however, uniquely Confederate fears.

Unionist Julia Chase and Mary Greenhow Lee had been on opposite sides of the secession issue and were not on friendly terms during the war. These two women did have one thing in common, however. Julia Chase was fond of neither abolitionists nor of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Even when the Union army had finally taken charge of Winchester, she could not be content because, along with the army, came abolitionists. Chase believed that the town's first Union commander, Nathaniel P. Banks, "ought to be strung up," because he had made it his business to liberate slaves in the area. At the time Chase wished that all of the abolitionists, even Banks, were "tied up in a bag and made way with."⁸⁶ Further, Chase was as apprehensive about the appearance of the black regiment as was Lee. When she learned they were in Winchester to "conscript all the able-bodied negro men in the County," she wrote, "I don't know how we are to get along. [We] shall have no one to do anything for us." Julia Chase was not alone. Mary Greenhow Lee reported that "this emancipation bill in Congress is furthering our party in all the border states, where the Union men own slaves."⁸⁷

Of course, there are historians who have measured the differences between the

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 21 (March 19, 1862), 262 (November 24, 1862), 575 (April 3, 1864).

⁸⁶JC, May 26, 1862.

⁸⁷Julia Chase's entries for October 19, 1862 and April 3, 1863 quoted in Quarles, *Occupied Winchester*, 41, 43; MGL, 57-58 (April 8, 1862).

North and South with an economic yardstick, one that invariably takes slavery into account. Although Eugene Genovese has agreed that the South's connection to world trade through export crops requires at least a nod toward capitalistic tendencies, he has maintained that the South's economic distinction comes from its precapitalist reliance on slavery. Slavery, in turn, not only supported a different economic base, but created distinctions in class and power structures as well. Paternalism, for Genovese, made the South culturally distinct, economically backward, and vulnerable to the increasing capitalism of the North.⁸⁸

Recent scholarship, however, shows that the South was actually experiencing economic growth during the antebellum period, and was not becoming more dependent upon the industrializing North. Far from a burden, slavery was still a viable economic tool for the South. Still other scholars have suggested that the worldwide demand for cotton was the reason for the South's economic prosperity and that slavery could have survived for some time as a rational way to maximize profits in an area where the labor supply was slim.⁸⁹ Whatever the economic argument, however, historians who have studied the South's economy separate from its culture have found the task difficult. Even those who have discovered that profits from manufacturing were proportionately high in

⁸⁸Drew Gilpin Faust, "The Peculiar South Revisited: White Society, Culture, and Politics in the Antebellum Period, 1800-1860," in *Interpreting Southern History: Historiographical Essays in Honor of Sanford W. Higginbotham*, ed. by John B. Boles and Evelyn Thomas Nolen (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987) 78-119: 79-81.

⁸⁹Jeremy Atack and Peter Passell, *A New Economic View of American History from Colonial Times to 1940*, Second Edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), Chapter 11, "Slavery and Southern Development;" Edward Pessen, "How Different from Each Other Were the Antebellum North and South?" in *American Historical Review*, LXXXV (December, 1980), 1119-1149; and Gavin Wright, "The Efficiency of Slavery: Another Interpretation," in *American Economic Review*, LXIX (March 1979), 219-226.

the South, supporting the argument that the region was not economically backward, have had trouble explaining why few of the southern economic elite were willing to take part in it. They have been forced to conclude that cultural and regional values were the reasons more southerners refused to take entrepreneurial risks. Fred Bateman and Thomas Weiss found a climate of economic conservatism and caution in the South, finally conceding that "southerners indeed were different from their Yankee brethren."⁹⁰

There are two problems with trying to identify distinctions in another culture. Members of a culture are too familiar with their own customs to name them; and those who are studying the culture often lack sufficient understanding to take the distinction seriously. For instance, when Thomas Jefferson was asked by the secretary of the French legation at Philadelphia, Francois Marbois, what were "the particular customs and manners" of Virginia, Jefferson named slavery as a distinction. He prefaced his answer, however, by stating that "it is difficult to determine on the standard by which the manners of a nation may be tried," adding that it "is more difficult for a native to bring to that standard the manners of his own nation, familiarized to him by habit."⁹¹ In other words, cultural distinctions are normally not apparent to the culture being asked.

On the other hand, those studying a culture could be blinded from seeing the distinctions by a lack of empathy toward that culture's history. Hobsbawm suggests that criticism is "tempting and easy."

What nationalists said and say about nations and nationalism, especially their own, is generally so unconvincing to anyone who does not

⁹⁰Faust, "Peculiar," 86; Fred Bateman and Thomas Weiss, *A Deplorable Scarcity: The Failure of Industrialization in the Slave Economy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 163.

⁹¹Jefferson, *Notes*, 162.

share their emotional commitments, and may be so inconsistent with rational enquiry, as inevitably to provoke extended expressions of scepticism, muffled only by politeness, diplomacy or caution.⁹²

After General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox, while Mary Greenhow Lee was accepting defeat in the pages of her journal, she stated: "All the energy & enthusiasm of my nature...was warmed into full development for my country, my beloved southern Confederacy."⁹³ Whether or not historians believe the South was distinct from the North might depend upon whom they ask. If they ask Mary Greenhow Lee, she would give them little room for doubt. Much of Mary Greenhow Lee's nationalistic spirit, however, was grounded in her belief in Virginia's right to secede more than with climate, history, traditions, or pro-slavery arguments.

Historian David Potter made the intriguing observation that "the United States is the only nation in history which for seven decades acted politically and culturally as a nation...before decisively answering the question of whether it was a nation at all." Since the issue of state sovereignty had been so divisive at the 1787 Convention, it had been tabled indefinitely. "We the people" became sovereign, leaving the question open as to who the "people" were. Potter reminds us that the "citizens of the Old South" had "never transferred the sovereignty itself" from the states to the nation. In fact, according to Potter, "Virginia's ratification, June 27, 1788, specified that 'the powers granted under the Constitution being derived from the people of the United States may be resumed by them whensoever the same shall be perverted to their injury or oppression.'"⁹⁴

⁹²Hobsbawm, "Some Reflections on Nationalism," 385.

⁹³MGL, 814 (April 15, 1865).

⁹⁴Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 479, 482n.

Mary Greenhow Lee probably understood the conditions Virginia set forth when joining the Union. Her friend James Murray Mason had notified Congress in 1860 that the right of secession was "not an open question in Virginia," because his state had "maintained that our Federal system was a confederation of sovereign powers, not a consolidation of states into one people." Mason argued that if Virginia ever believed their "compact broken," then the state itself could decide "both the mode and measure of redress."⁹⁵ It would be unusual if Lee and Mason had not discussed this issue but, even so, the culture in which she grew up and the independence at the core of her identity made her a believer in Virginia's right to leave the Union. On April 17, 1862 she noted that it was the anniversary of "dear old Virginia['s] secession." The war was brought on, in her opinion, by the Union's failure to recognize Virginia's right to leave. "The fault" for all the bloodshed "is theirs, not ours." Furthermore, she was not willing for France or England to lend a hand in the war until the Confederacy had won spectacular victories on its own so that the new nation could be recognized by those foreign nations "as an equal, & not as a dependent inferior."⁹⁶

Being thought of as inferior was new to Mary Greenhow Lee. Being restricted within tighter bounds than the genteel customs of her *connexion* was also alien to her. At certain times under occupation she was ordered not to wear a sunbonnet, not to sidestep around the Union flag, and not to go to the hospital to care for the Confederate wounded. She disobeyed all of these orders. She was also advised that she would have to give up some of her rooms as office space for Union commanders. She argued the

⁹⁵Mason quoted in Potter, *Impending Crisis*, 483.

⁹⁶MGL, 68, 67, 77 (April 1862).

officer out of the parlor he wanted and into a room in an addition of the house, the "wing," thus being able to truthfully state that "Yankees" had never been permitted to stay under her roof.⁹⁷ If she had given in to these demands, or had acknowledged at all the power the occupation government had over her, she would have felt that she was admitting the Union's right to prevent Virginia's secession.

Mary Greenhow Lee was a Confederate national. Historians have argued that the South's only distinct history is one of defeat. Certainly, for many southern historians, distinctions arose at the end of the war, when the South lost, not at the beginning, but Mary Greenhow Lee's conception of the Confederacy began at secession.⁹⁸ A Union surgeon asked her once what she felt to be the difference between the North and the South. She replied, "it was the difference between the oppressor and the oppressed."⁹⁹ Drew Gilpin Faust has contended that when southerners began moving toward secession, they carried out their debate in print, and continued the written discussion after the war began. Explaining "themselves to themselves," Faust suggests, has provided some explanations for us.¹⁰⁰ Even as Mary Greenhow Lee explained herself to her "Self," she was a Secessionist. Both overtly and covertly she defiantly waged war by maintaining her personal independence from any foreign authority.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 102 (May, 1862), 314 (February 15, 1863), 448 (July 31, 1863).

⁹⁸C. Vann Woodward, "The Search for Southern Identity," in *Virginia Quarterly Review* Vol. 3 (Summer 1958), 333-335; Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (March 1990) 1200-1228: 1228.

⁹⁹MGL, 50 (April, 1862).

¹⁰⁰Faust, *Creation*, 7, 84.

CHAPTER V

WINCHESTER, VIRGINIA: "VILLAGE ON THE FRONTIER"

The Civil War brought changes to each woman's life in the South. For Mary Greenhow Lee, and for her town, the only thing constant during the war years was change. Winchester was in, but not necessarily of, the Confederacy. Both Secessionists and Unionists resided there, provoking Lee to pepper her journal with complaints about former friends she now deemed traitors. By 1862, Winchester was no longer a community of like-minded citizens, but a war zone. What did not change for Mary Greenhow Lee was her strong character and a determination to advance the cause of the Confederacy. In fact, sustained turmoil of the war revived Lee into the lively, rebellious woman she had always been.

Winchester is located approximately twenty-five miles from Maryland, and was both geographically and politically linked with the western counties that eventually formed the Union state of West Virginia. In Mary Greenhow Lee's words, the town became a "village on the frontier" during the war because of its location, political sympathies, and practical advantages. Winchester changed hands--and flags--thirteen times during the war.¹ One advantage of the town was its accessibility, including nine

¹Colt, *Defend the Valley*, 9-10; MGL, 544 (January 23, 1864).

macadamized roads running to, or near, the town.² An added bonus to military possession of the town was that the surrounding countryside supplied the armies with war provisions. Thus, this southern town became the site of border warfare.³

Coveted by both sides yet difficult for either to defend, Winchester sustained heavy casualties during the war. Within four years, five battles raged in or near the town.⁴ Besides human losses, many homes and businesses were destroyed. The 1865 land tax assessment for Winchester lists \$80,827 in devaluation of property, with ninety-eight buildings damaged and twenty-nine completely razed. Through it all, Mary Greenhow Lee watched and listened to the destruction, sometimes viewing the battles from the tops of her neighbors' houses. By the end of the war, the countryside had been laid a "barren waste," thanks to Union Commander Ulysses S. Grant's order to General Philip Sheridan to "do all the damage" to the Shenandoah Valley that he could. According to Sheridan, by the spring of 1865 his army had "destroyed the enemy's means of subsistence in quantities beyond computation," causing Mary Greenhow Lee to write

²The roads leading to or near Winchester were the Valley Turnpike, running north and south, now Route 11, with the Cedar Creek Grade, now Route 622, and Middle Road, now Route 628, both connecting to the Valley Turnpike south of Winchester. On the east ran the Millwood Pike, now Route 50, running to Alexandria. Joining the Millwood Pike was the Front Royal Pike, now Route 522, leading to the Luray Valley. From the northeast was the Berryville Pike, now Route 7, which also terminated at Alexandria. On the west ran the Northwestern Turnpike, now Route 50, which stretched to the Ohio River, and the Pughtown Pike, also Route 50, running to Hancock, Maryland. See Delauter, *Winchester*, 2.

³Oren Frederic Morton, *The Story of Winchester*, 30, 147, 148.

⁴The major battles that occurred in and around Winchester were the First Battle of Kernstown (March 23, 1862), First Battle of Winchester (May 25, 1862), Second Battle of Winchester (June 14, 1863), Second Battle of Kernstown (July 24, 1864), Third Battle of Winchester or Opequon Creek (Sept 19, 1864), and Battle of Cedar Creek (October 19, 1864).

in awe, "Sheridan--Sheridan, what demon of destruction has possessed you?"⁵

Winchester's experiences during the war are unique in that, once captured, the town did not long remain in Union hands. In cities such as Norfolk, Virginia, and New Orleans, southern citizens became accustomed to occupation. To be sure there were cities such as Galveston, Texas, that were eventually retaken by Confederates during the war, and areas such as eastern Tennessee where military occupation fluctuated, but not with the frequency of Winchester.⁶ Southern citizens under permanent Union control, though restive and restricted, could fall into a rhythm of occupation. Winchester citizens could not. When Union General Nathaniel P. Banks arrived in New Orleans in January of 1863, taking over for Benjamin Butler, he reported to his wife that "the people are not hostile." Banks believed that peace was maintained in New Orleans in part from the conditioning an extended period of occupation afforded.⁷ Even though this is what he had expected in Winchester in March of 1862, based on a report from Brigadier General W. A. Gorman that "the citizens of Winchester seem well disposed &...all pursuing their

⁵1865 Land Taxes, Winchester, Virginia, LOV; James I. Robertson, Jr., *Civil War Virginia: Battleground for a Nation* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991) 159; Philip Henry Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan, General United States Army*, Vol. II (New York: Charles L. Webster & Company, 1888) 123; MGL, 408 (June 14, 1863), 790 (February 26, 1865).

⁶See Eaton, *History of the Southern Confederacy*, 151-179; Noel C. Fisher, *War at Every Door: Partisan Politics and Guerrilla Violence in East Tennessee, 1860-1869*, Civil War America Series (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

⁷Letter from Nathaniel P. Banks to wife, January 15, 1863, typescript, Nathaniel P. Banks Papers, LC. See also Eaton, *History of the Southern Confederacy*, 175-178; Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 207-213. Banks had expectations for New Orleans similar to those he initially held for Winchester, but would learn that the women of New Orleans were no more willing to accommodate Union occupation than were the women of Winchester.

usual avocations," the atmosphere Banks found in reality was to the contrary.⁸

Winchester was a border town not only because of geography, but also sentiment. While opposing armies stayed busy reclaiming the town, the residents themselves remained divided over the secession issue. Mary Greenhow Lee's enemies were also her neighbors: Unionists such as the Charles Chase family, the Goldenbergs, Hoovers, Hennons, Bill Anders, and George and Kitty Miller. In naming these people, it was important to her to note which ones had "hung out Union flags," and those who had been "very attentive to the Yankees."⁹

She also watched for alterations of sentiments in former friends who had worked hard against secession and had thus alienated themselves from her affections. She was able to finally witness Robert Y. Conrad's shift in sympathies, reporting with pleasure that Conrad had been seen walking on the street one day when he encountered a noted Unionist, Boyd Pendleton, who "offered to shake hands." Conrad "put his hands in his pockets," however, "and walked on." Ultimately, Conrad and Lee renewed their friendship, sharing news of the war, even watching battles together from his housetop. Another former friend who had to work his way back into Lee's good graces was Judge Richard Parker. After visiting him one day, she reported: "How he has changed; at the

⁸Letter from W. A. Gorman to Nathaniel P. Banks, March 12, 1862, Nathaniel P. Banks Papers, LC. The turmoil in Winchester during the period leading to secession was much the same as in Lynchburg, Virginia, at the same time. Lynchburg did not suffer the same alternate occupation history, however, and the Unionists there never retained their strength in numbers or any overt manifestation of their sentiments because they did not have the recurrent support of Union armies walking their streets. See Tripp, *Yankee Town, Southern City*, 89.

⁹MGL, 5, 6, 8 (March, 1862); John Peyton Clark Journal, typescript, HL, hereafter cited as JPC, March 12, 1862.

commencement of the war we barely spoke;...now he is a good southerner."¹⁰

Julia Chase's impressions of the Secessionists in Winchester is illustrative of the tensions in this border town. "The Secesh do not entertain very kind feelings to the Unionists," she wrote, "let them disguise the facts as they may." Chase called the Secessionists "demons" who were "terribly enraged against the Yankees," and she stated that they were "taunting in their remarks to the Unionists." She was correct. Mary Greenhow Lee did not think highly of the Unionists. She termed them "fiend[s]" who were "worse than the Yankees."¹¹

According to Chase, "the Secesh d[id] not always confine themselves to the truth," while Lee believed that the Unionists fabricated "the most outrageous stories."¹² One day a friend brought Lee a letter found in the street. Written by a "Yankee woman," the letter stated that Lee was the "most prominent" secessionist in Winchester and that Lee's servants reported that she had spoken out against Union officers to their faces, ranting that she hated them and wished that she "could kill them with [her] own hands." Lee called this "an outrageous falsehood." Another letter revealed that Lee "had carried on a regular correspondence with the enemy,...was an outrageous rebel," and deserved to be sent to Fort McHenry.¹³ To Lee, these types of tales were contrived as part of the process of war being waged against her personally. She did not deny that she was a

¹⁰MGL, 12 (March 14, 1862), 15 (March 16, 1862), 544 (January 23, 1864), 733 (December 7, 1864), 747 (December 25, 1864), 621 (June 16, 1864).

¹¹JC, July 25, 1862, May 25, 1862, May 27, 1862, September 3, 1862, May 8, 1863; MGL, 18 (March 17, 1862), 21 (March 20, 1862), 77 (April 24, 1862), 82 (April 28, 1862), 87 (May 2, 1862), 669 (August 20, 1864).

¹²JC, June 16, 1863; MGL, 780 (February 10, 1865).

¹³*Ibid.*, 597 (April 11, 1864), 724 (November 23, 1864).

rebel, but simply preferred not to hear of her enemies broadcasting the fact.

It is interesting to note that Chase's diary is almost a mirror image of Lee's journal. "Our troops" have to be defined as "Union" when coming from Chase; and her "Glorious News!" was reported as "too terrible" by Lee.¹⁴ Of course, God got different sets of instructions from each. More telling perhaps is that the "Yankee flag" which upset Lee was, to Chase, a relief. "The glorious old flag is waving over our town," Chase reported on the day of Winchester's first occupation by Federal troops.¹⁵

Winchester was "our town" to both Lee and Chase, but war had changed the meaning of "our" from community to contention. Chase asked in agony, "Great God! Shall this thing always be?" And Lee made a similar plea: "Where will this all end?"¹⁶ Both of these remarks were made in the context of discord between neighbors, not the provocations coming from opposing armies. The character of this border town took on all the tensions and conflict of the whole war, among both citizens and soldiers, though on a smaller scale.

On January 23, 1864, Lee referred to Winchester as "a village on the frontier," a valid description.¹⁷ Winchester's position and importance to the two armies kept it in turmoil throughout the war and placed it in a position much like the "frontiers" of Europe, the border between two nations. Citizens never knew which force would have

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 3 (March 11, 1862); Julia Chase's entry for March 12, 1862, quoted in Quarles, *Occupied*, 40.

¹⁵MGL, 5 (March 12, 1862); Julia Chase's entry for March 11, 1862, quoted in Quarles, *Occupied*, 40.

¹⁶JC, May 8, 1863; MGL, 545 (January 25, 1864).

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 544.

power over them. For instance, on December 2, 1862, Confederates evacuated Winchester. Mayor J. B. T. Reed received a message by flag of truce on December 4 from Union Major General John Geary, stating that he intended to move his forces in. "Unwilling to shed blood or destroy property unnecessarily," he wrote, "I demand an unconditional surrender of the city." Mayor Reed responded that "no resistance will be made." The Federals entered. Lee heard of the proceedings and recorded "that as the citizens could not defend the place," Winchester "was surrendered;" but she labelled the whole incident a "farce." After dinner that evening she learned that the "Yankees" had left for Harpers Ferry and within a few hours she had the "pleasure of meeting squads of" her own army returning to town.¹⁸ This frequency of change became commonplace for the town. *[See illustration 31]*

In fact, it was sometimes difficult to know which army at what hour might be represented in the streets of Winchester. In the month of September, 1863, for instance, Winchester endured no official occupation; but on nine days of the month Federals appeared in town either on raids, brief stays, or to chase Confederate cavalry through town. On February 5, 1864, Confederate cavalry entered in the morning, then left, and Federals rode through later. Confederates raced in on April 8, 1864, followed by a Federal unit trying to catch them. Then shortly after, the reverse transpired, with the southern unit chasing the northern one back through the town the other way.¹⁹

Lee became quite cynical about the changing military character of her town.

¹⁸OR, Series I, Vol. XXI, 33, December 4, 1862; MGL, December 4, 1862; Delauter, *Winchester*, 111. The Confederate units stayed until December 13, then evacuated once again, leaving the town in the hands of civilians for ten days until the Federals returned once more, this time for an official occupation.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 112-114.



31. Mayor J. B. T. Reed

"Who will we belong to to-morrow," she would ask absentmindedly, merely "curious to see which party" would "take possession" the next day. One morning she awoke to the "clanking of sabres & dash of Cavalry," but had become so inured to the unpredictability of war that she "did not get up to see whether" Confederate or Federal soldiers were making the noise. Instead, she went back to sleep. She had reached the point where she felt little curiosity to see which army had possession because she knew it would be only temporary. As Mary Magill recalled Winchester "constituted the shuttlecock in the great game...between the Federal and Confederate armies."²⁰

Residents became adept at recognizing the difference between mere raids into town and signs of impending occupation. Both began in a similar fashion. Schoolmaster Peyton Clark described the process of reoccupation. A small body of cavalry would pass through, then another would enter from a different direction, possibly leaving and setting up camp just outside of town. Later, a larger force, as large as a thousand men, would enter, a sign to the citizens that the military was descending upon them for an extended stay. After the increase in military personnel, other physical signs appeared, such as telegraph posts and proclamations pasted on poles and doors to inform citizens of their position within this military post. Mary Magill noted that the arrival of "sutlers fill[ing] the stores with tempting goods," let residents know that they were under both military control and economic restrictions. The final indication was, as Lee complained, when the "captives" had to endure the "perpetual irritation" of a "cavalry soldier with drawn

²⁰MGL, 232 (September 19, 1862), 430 (July 26, 1863), 454 (August 8, 1863), 472 (September 8, 1863); Magill, *Chronicles of the Late War*, 201.

sabre" at every street corner.²¹ [See illustration 32]

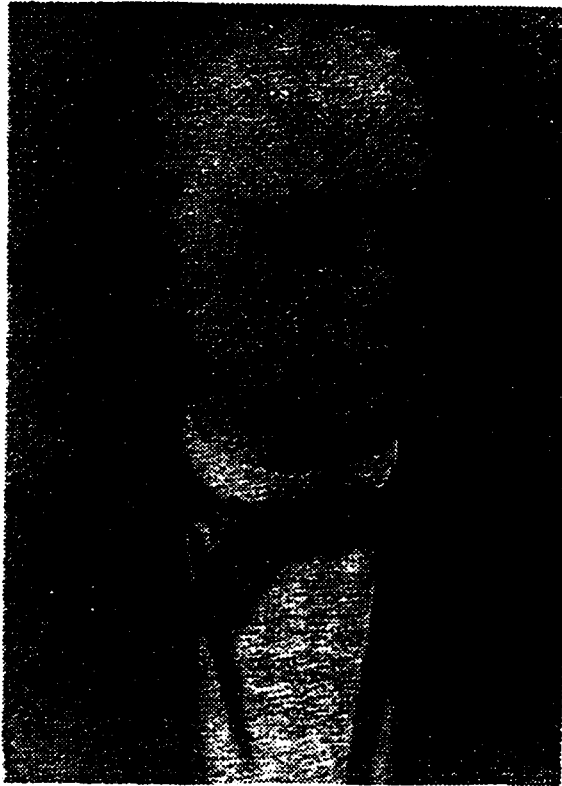
For Unionist Julia Chase, transference of military control was similarly frustrating. Her word-choices describing the passages from one occupation to another implies growing impatience. She noted that when "our troops" evacuated the town, "the southern cavalry were ready to *hop in*," or would state, "we pass from the U[nited] States into Dixie again" to mark their altered condition. When the town's status changed the other direction, her mood similarly reflected wry humor: "Since 4 o'clock this morning we have passed from Dixie into the U. States."²² Although Chase would have felt more comfortable in the latter case than the former, her wording reflects neither anxiety nor excitement but rather ennui. Much like Lee, Chase knew that the situation was only temporary.

With the town's population stretched to overflowing each time an army occupied it, housing shortages added another layer to the turmoil. Most of the soldiers set up housekeeping in tents or makeshift shelters in the encampments outside of town; but Union officers appropriated living and working space on demand. Although vexing enough for Secessionists to see the enemy walking the streets, it was even more so to pass them on the way to the kitchen.

In the nineteenth century, visitors followed protocol when approaching someone's home. Entrances to homes were designed to subtly prepare visitors for the fact that they were entering private space as they ventured down walkways, past hedges, onto porches,

²¹JPC, June 9, 1962; MGL, 72 (April 19, 1862), 721 (November 14, 1864), 770 (January 25, 1865); Magill, *Chronicles of the Late War*, 117.

²²JC, September 3, 1862, July 27, 1863, August 17, 1863, July 21, 1864.



32. John Peyton Clark

and then sometimes into a vestibule. Most visitors were then greeted in the social zone of the home, the parlor specifically, or dining room, if invited for a meal. Not even close personal friends would presume to enter the most intimate spaces of the house without being invited.²³ War and over-crowding, however, greatly diminished respect for privacy in Winchester.

Cornelia McDonald remembered that "every day would" bring "tales of the arrest of citizens, and occupation of houses belonging to them, while their families were obliged to seek quarters elsewhere." McDonald's first displacement came when New York cavalry officers quartered in her house. She and her family remained in the home, but had to endure over-crowding and watch soldiers help themselves to milk from her cows, trample her flowers, and use "every conceivable utensil" in her kitchen.²⁴

Forced into taking Union officers to board, Anne Tucker Magill fed Union General James Shields at her dinner table while listening to his boasts that the South could never win the war. General Banks and his staff quartered at the Seever residence, and a Doctor Smith gave up his house for Federal offices. A General Hatch stayed with his men at Lloyd Logan's house, leaving only two rooms for the Logan family. Eventually, the Logans were completely removed from their home by Union General Robert Milroy. Mary Greenhow Lee believed that Milroy fabricated a reason to send the Logans south simply because "Mrs. Milroy [had] set her affections on" the Logan home,

²³Kasson, *Rudeness & Civility*, 170-173. See also Isaac, *Transformation*, 302-305, for his study of the evolution of the trend of "privatization" of domestic space at the end of the eighteenth century.

²⁴McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 43, 45-46, 63; MGL, 76 (April 23, 1862).

one of the most ostentatious dwellings in town.²⁵

According to Lee, the "Yankees" were "behav[ing] outrageously" at the Sherrards' and Tidballs', "getting drunk & purposely annoying the family." Sitting and dining rooms, once used for receiving guests, became the site of court martials. Some buildings and dwellings were transformed into stables. Dr. Fred Holliday, for example, had to endure horses stabled on his first floor while he and his family lived upstairs. Mary Magill recalled that from windows and doors could "be seen peering the heads of mules and horses," with "people and animals living side by side...upon a social equality." The German Reformed Church became, at various times, officer headquarters and a stable.²⁶

The tone of Julia Chase's diary entries suggests that she accommodated both Union and Confederate troops without giving either an indication of her displeasure. Mary Greenhow Lee, on the other hand, did everything in her power to prevent "Yankees" from entering in her home, requiring all of the strength she could muster. When almost two hundred Union cavalrymen arrived in town, several reined in their horses at her house and niece Louisa Burwell ran to shut the door but their "impertinent" looks frightened her until she backed away. Lee took charge. She "shut the door & bolted it." There were nights when she was awakened to "a thundering rap" on her cellar

²⁵*Ibid.*, 11 (March 1, 1862), 140 (June 11, 1862), 347-350 (April, 1863); JPC, March 14, 1862. Young Mary Magill found herself dislocated as a consequence of the Logan incident. She retold the story of Milroy's treatment of the Logans in a letter which fell into Milroy's hands. Although Magill attempted to disguise the tale by using the bible story in 1 Kings 21 of Jezebel's scheme to dispossess Naboth of his land, Milroy recognized the similarities and banished Magill from town. Ordered into a buggy, Magill was driven five miles outside of town, then left along the road with her luggage to wait for a traveler to offer a ride. See Magill, *Chronicles of the Late War*, 214-220, 247; McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 154.

²⁶MGL, 72 (April 19, 1862), 334 (March 19-20, 1863) 337 (March 24, 1863), 663 (August 13, 1864); Magill, *Chronicles of the Late War*, 201.

door, and had to get up and inform the soldiers outside that her house was not a hotel, not a restaurant, and not a tavern.²⁷

Lee used all of her ingenuity to keep the enemy from quartering at her home. During one attempt, they got no further than her porches, where they spent the night. On another occasion when she feared that the dark windows of her office might lead military officers to assume that rooms were available, she "sat at the office door, constituting [her]self an army of occupation" for the evening to make it look as though the rooms were in use. To one officer demanding her office, she reported that "the roof leaked." When that did not dampen his interest, she confided that the office door adjoined their sitting room and she was certain that since "every word would be heard from one room to the other," it "would be mutually annoying" to everyone concerned. He then departed, "apologizing for having intruded."²⁸

In the end, Lee was not saved from quartering "Yankees." A Colonel Stanton demanded the wing of her house and neighbors sent their slaves to help her reorganize her family's sleeping arrangements. She only had to give up her "dear old room" to the enemy for a few nights, however. Stanton was soon ordered to Baltimore, and returned Lee's key to her with "thanks for the use of her room," for which she tagged him an "impertinent little dog."²⁹

For her own army, on the other hand, Lee was more obliging. Most of her boarders were officers, some sick or wounded. She also had "applications for board"

²⁷MGL, 497 (October 20, 1863), 549 (February 1, 1864).

²⁸*Ibid.*, 305 (February 3, 1863), 398 (June 7, 1863), 754 (January 2, 1865).

²⁹*Ibid.*, 329-333 (March, 1863), 336 (March 24, 1863).

from military surgeons and foreign correspondents.³⁰ Dislocation then occurred, even within her own home, as she struggled to make room for everyone. The office, back parlor, and dining room became bedrooms, and a room in the attic became a "chamber" as well. A "Capt. Gibson from Georgia" applied for boarding and found himself "duly installed in the back room up stairs, with typhoid fever for his companion."³¹ Taking in boarders during the war became a necessity for Lee and for the officers who stayed with her, since there were few options open to the men, and she needed the extra income. It created a disruption in her life but the fact that they were southern officers made the situation tolerable. The experience proved useful later when she opened her first boarding house in Baltimore to make a living after the war.

The intrusion of enemy soldiers was galling enough to citizens, but stranger still were foreign military units and northerners who came to support the military or take advantage of chaos. Cornelia McDonald "hated the sight of the old town," encountering strangers "at every step, their eyes looking...[with] only curiosity or insolence." Dorothea Dix, Henry Ward Beecher, and Secretary of State William H. Seward, all high-profile individuals, intruded on Winchester's streets to remind the residents that life as they knew it would change, by force, if necessary.³²

One segment of the invading army that caused particular comment from the diarists was the foreign soldiers who comprised between 20% to 25% of the Union

³⁰*Ibid.*, 233 (September 20, 1862), 235 (September 26, 1862), 236-237 (October, 1862), 241 (October 11, 1862), 413 (June 16, 1863), 442 (July 23, 1863).

³¹*Ibid.*, 252 (November 1, 1862), 431 (July 7, 1863), 433 (July 10, 1863), 261 (November 21, 1862).

³²McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 42, JPC, March 16, 1862, March 29, 1862, April 1, 1862.

forces, the largest portion recent German and Irish immigrants.³³ Unable to make the distinction, citizens referred to some of the Germans as "Dutch" but the difference mattered little to a town under siege. The effect was the same; it merely underscored their awareness of a foreign invasion. According to Peyton Clark, who emphasized the force with a repetition of "8000 Dutch!" in his journal, the air was filled with "the smell of tobacco smoke and saur kraut [sic], a considerable cargo of the latter article" received recently by the "Yankee stores."³⁴ Lee deemed "the Germans...a horrid looking set" who "filled...the air with their jargon & curses."³⁵ Cornelia McDonald did not mind the noise and smells from the foreigners so much as their theft of her raspberries and potatoes. When she wrote to their colonel to complain about the invasion of her garden, however, her lack of sensitivity to their true nationality prompted an immediate and heated response. Colonel Frederick G. D'Utassy of the Garibaldi Guard, 39th New York Volunteer Infantry, arrived at her door brandishing her note in his hand and spouting in broken English, "you call my men Dutchmen." His manner made her laugh, which merely exacerbated his ire. She finally calmed him when she luckily guessed their true identity and said, "I should have taken you for a Hungarian." With that, the colonel settled down and assured her that he would keep his men from her garden. He did not, however, keep them from stealing her plums, even the green ones.³⁶

Besides the sight of strangers and the smell of sauerkraut, the war brought new

³³See Phillip Shaw Paludan, *"A People's Contest: The Union and Civil War, 1861-1865"* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988) 281.

³⁴JPC, April 14, 18, 24, 1862.

³⁵MGL, 75, 78 (April, 1862), 153-154 (June 23-24, 1862).

³⁶McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 74-75.

and sometimes disturbing sounds to town. When encampments covered the landscape surrounding Winchester, military drills sent "cannon shot...over the town" for days at a time. Neighbor warned neighbor of enemy searches and seizures by ringing bells of alarm. Noise became so commonplace that at those times when the town was free of occupation the silence could be almost more disturbing. Peyton Clark likened it to "the stillness of death."³⁷

During occupation phases military bands added to the sounds of the town. Lee complained of being "roused every morning at 6 o'clock by their reveille." Union bands harassed Secessionists with pieces such as "The Star Spangled Banner," and "Hail Columbia."³⁸ Young Kate Sperry interrupted her journal writing for the day when the Federal band intruded on her reflections with their music. "Oh, deliver us," she wrote at the end, "they've turned off to 'Yankee Doodle'." A northern band playing "Dixie," however, could be equally grating to the southerners.³⁹ Of course, Union soldiers became just as annoyed when the residents sang their "infernal Secesh songs." Mary Greenhow Lee reported that when she and her family were enjoying that very thing at the Sherrards one evening, Federals retaliated immediately by climbing onto the Sherrards' roof and nailing a Union flag there.⁴⁰

At times military officials directed their bands to play in front of houses specifically identified as the homes of loyal citizens. Unionist Harriet Griffith enjoyed

³⁷JPC, June 2, 1862, September 1, 1862, JC, January 18, 1864.

³⁸MGL, 24 (March 21, 1862); McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 56.

³⁹Sperry, "Surrender!," 158; McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 56.

⁴⁰MGL, 325 (March 8, 1863).

the special attention her family received with this distinction, even though she could not remember who had directed it. "Major Somebody, Captain Somebody, and Doctor Somebody," she wrote, "brought the band and played for us."⁴¹ Mary Greenhow Lee relished good music too much not to give the "Yankees" their due. When northern musicians serenaded the Unionists, Lee caught the strains as they flowed through town. "We have had the treat of most exquisite music," she admitted to her journal, and even complimented the "horrid Germans" for their "fine band[s] of music." She appreciated more, however, the serenades her house received from a "southern band." She judged their performances "mediocre," but thought that southern music played by southern men "delightful to hear."⁴²

The senses were bombarded when battles raged nearby with sounds that evoked even more emotion. Mary Greenhow Lee reported during the Battle of Cedar Creek on October 19, 1864, that "the Yankee bands have been playing all day; loudest when the cannonading was heaviest." The contrast of music over the sounds of battle was abrasive, even when the band played "delightfully," because it meant that while she enjoyed the music, men were dying.⁴³ One sound that both incited emotion and signified the rigors of battle was the "Rebel Yell," music to the ears of Winchester Secessionists; the anthem of dread to Unionists. The first time the Rebel Yell was heard in the Valley was during the First Battle of Winchester in May of 1862, but it would become a trademark of the Confederate soldiers everywhere. Derived from southern

⁴¹HHG, 97.

⁴²MGL, 83 (April 28, 1862), 91 (May 7, 1862), 657 (August 2, 1864), 777 (February 5, 1865).

⁴³*Ibid.*, 708-709 (October 19-20, 1864).

hunting rituals, the "Rebel Yell" was a piercing "Ah-e-e-e, ah-e-e-e."⁴⁴ Confederate General Jubal A. Early characterized the sound as a "cheering peculiar to the Confederate soldier," and "never mistaken for the studied hurrahs of the Yankees."⁴⁵ A psychological tool so penetrating it could be heard "above the storm of battle," the yell, gave Confederate soldiers the confidence of group solidarity and Federal troops an eerie disquiet. For Unionists in Winchester, this peculiar southern cry, according to Julia Chase, filled them with "horror." For Secessionists such as young Emma Riely, however, a "volley of musketry in the street" heard simultaneously with the "famous 'Rebel yell,'" signaled hope.⁴⁶

Sounds of gunfire in the streets occurred when cavalry units chased each other through town, but also when full-blown battles on the outskirts spilled over into Winchester. Soldiers fell within sight of private homes. A "Lt. Col. Dorsey" of the 1st Maryland Regiment, a member of the Baltimore branch of Lee's *connexion*, was wounded near her house during the First Battle of Winchester. Standing on her porch, she watched "leaves falling from the maple tree" in front of her house, cut down by random shots, heard another musket shot, and then saw Dorsey "riding slowly" to her house. She ran for Dr. Baldwin next door and together they managed to get Dorsey situated inside and dressed his wounds.⁴⁷

Battles in and around the Lee home became familiar to the Lee family. The "rush

⁴⁴Described in Stannard, *Richmond: Its People*, 170.

⁴⁵OR, Series I, Vol. XXI, 663-667, report of Brigadier General Jubal A. Early, December 27, 1862.

⁴⁶McKim, *Soldier's Recollections*, 101; JC, May 25, 1862; Macon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 21.

⁴⁷JPC, May 26, 1862; MGL, 114 (March 27, 1862).

of a cannon ball striking very near," for instance, roused Lee from sleep early one morning but not enough for her to "get up to see." Of course, warfare in the streets could be dangerous. During the Second Battle of Kernstown Lee watched men and ambulances passing, but also experienced "balls whizzing by," one of them "striking the pavement" in front of her. When nephew Lewis Burwell came to check on her during the Third Battle of Winchester, the nearness of the fighting prompted him to beg the family to seek shelter in the cellar. By this time, however, the Lee women had become so accustomed to warfare that they "laughed at the idea" of running for safety.⁴⁸

Lee never fled Winchester, but she did prepare for emergencies. Feeling at times as though she were sitting "on the edge of a burning volcano," she assessed news that Union armies were venturing close and determined whether or not to secret away her valuables. Several times she sent her nieces to hiding places she had secured around town with the silver, "pistol, money, flag & other valuables."⁴⁹ Before Confederates retook the town in May of 1862, Julia Chase made similar preparations, hiding their "most valuable possessions, silver, money," and "keep[ing] the door and gate fastened all the time."⁵⁰ During the first year of the war while the town had been under the control of the southern army, Chase had not been fearful even though her sympathies marked her as a Unionist. Between the first Confederate evacuation in March of 1862 to their return in May, however, Chase came to realize that war was not simply cool,

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 26 (March 22, 1862), 206 (August 19, 1862), 211 (August 23, 1862), 410 (June 14, 1863), 481 (September 20, 1863), 579 (April 12, 1864), 642 (July 19, 1864), 625 (June 24, 1864), 685 (September 19, 1864).

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 2 (March 11, 1862), 151 (June 21, 1862), 267 (December 2, 1862), 278 (December 23, 1862), 305 (February 3, 1863), 329 (March 16, 1863), 349 (April 9, 1863), 662 (August 12, 1864).

⁵⁰JC, May 25, 1862.

calculated maneuvers by opposing armies. To the contrary, it was a hotly contested rivalry in which both combatants and civilians fueled the bitterness that drove both sides. Much of the destruction in this old backcountry town was the result of emotional, not tactical, acts, recorded with equal dismay by "Secesh" and Unionist alike.

By the end of May 1863, Mary Greenhow Lee doubted that "even a ghost" would have "the courage to visit such a dismal place as" Winchester.⁵¹ Confederate General Richard Ewell advised his future wife, Lizinka, in Tennessee that she should not remain in the countryside where there is "less restraint," but should return to Nashville because "in a city the enemy always are in organized bodies commanded by officers of rank who wish to conciliate" the residents.⁵² Winchester proved Dick Ewell wrong. By the end of the war, with over \$80,000 in recorded property damages, Mary Greenhow Lee's "poor old town" had not felt the kind hand of conciliation but rather the red-hot torch of retaliation.

When Banks first occupied Winchester in March of 1862, he sent out a proclamation that "all private property is to be respected."⁵³ In reality, there was little he could do, or wanted to do, to save the property of "disloyal" citizens. When his cavalry unit needed horses, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton wrote to Banks to "levy upon the territory occupied...a military contribution of not less than fifteen hundred horses," but directed that the burden of supplying horses was to "fall as far as possible upon those who have been...disloyal." Banks was under orders then to respect property

⁵¹MGL, 393 (May 31, 1863).

⁵²Letter from Richard Ewell to Lizinka Brown, March 5, 1862, ESB.

⁵³MGL, 18 (March 17, 1862).

of Unionists more than secessionists. Therefore, when he received a bill of \$305.50 to repair a fence "destroyed by Federal Soldiers on the property of Col. Fauntleroy," a Confederate officer, Banks replied that he could have stopped the destruction had he been notified of it while it was taking place but that "its restoration is a matter of more difficulty."⁵⁴ When Mary Greenhow Lee's fence, and that of Dr. Baldwin's next door, were being torn down to feed fires of soldiers camped on their lots, she sent a complaint to the Union commander immediately and a Major McGhee returned and "reprimanded the men strongly." As far as protection of private property went, it made no difference when citizens reported it. The soldiers' fires continued to burn, compliments of the Lee and Baldwin fences.⁵⁵

Fences were not the only items lost to the citizens. Soldiers stole spoons, tobacco, penknives, wine, whiskey, and money in great quantity. For officers' headquarters, they appropriated, by force, citizens' furniture. From Lee's cellar they "took milk, cream, butter, pickles, [and] tomatoes." Union soldiers did not merely steal from "disloyal" citizens. Lee reported that they "took \$200" from "a strong Union man," being equally "odious to their friends as well as their foes." Several townspeople were awakened in the night by loud rapping on their doors and forced to give up blankets and pillows or face having the items taken from them personally by armed soldiers.⁵⁶ Julia Chase complained about Confederate behavior as well. They were cutting down fences

⁵⁴Letter from Edwin M. Stanton to Major General Nathaniel P. Banks, April 9, 1862; and from General Nathaniel P. Banks to Mrs. M. S. Barnes, March 22, 1862, Nathaniel P. Banks Papers, L.C.

⁵⁵MGL, 308 (February 6, 1863).

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 7 (March, 1862), 130 (June 4, 1862), 137 (June, 7, 1862) 498 (October 22, 1862), 516 (November 19, 1863), 69 (April 17, 1862); JPC, March 25, 1862.

and spreading "destruction wherever they" went, breaking into the Giffiths' house and threatening to "blow his daughter's brains out," and stealing money, horses and blankets. In Chase's estimation, this was "a dreadful way of living."⁵⁷ Some of the thefts were obviously driven by hunger or cold but the effect of the whole made it seem to the residents that, rather than living under military rule, they were living in anarchy.

Certainly, the explosions that woke them in the night added to the fear that, as Cornelia McDonald expressed it, "the world was really in its last convulsion." The Conner family was roused rudely one night by a 32-pound ball crashing through the northwest corner of their house, flying through a closet, across the hallway into the room on the other side of the house, ripping through the sheets on the bed, then out the south wall of the house, hitting the building across the street and landing finally in the gutter. No one was hurt but at the very least the effect was jarred nerves.⁵⁸

Whenever the Federal army made plans to leave Winchester, citizens looked for them to destroy the town on their way out as an act of vengeance or simply to keep the Confederates from having use of it. Soldiers, possibly rankled by "Secesh" attitudes against them, spread the word that they planned "to burn the town before they left."⁵⁹ Even Julia Chase knew that her own army had set fire to the town in several places and destroyed warehouses. Anticipating an evacuation, Lee predicted "our houses & everything we possess, may be blown up in a day or two," but then later reported, "still

⁵⁷JC, November 18, 1861, January 18, 1864.

⁵⁸McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 87; JPC, August 18, 1862.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, May 17, 1862; MGL, 103 (May 17, 1862), 113 (May 27, 1863). See also Sperry, "Surrender!," 195.

here, neither burnt up, nor blown up."⁶⁰ Relief was only temporary, however. Cornelia McDonald lay in bed one night when suddenly she felt the house shake and glass from the windows shattered and fell around her on the bed. Her servant ran in screaming, "the town is on fire!" Lee, standing at the street corner near her house, also heard and felt the explosion, which "proved to be the powder magazine at the fortifications" on the outskirts of town. The Union army, upon orders to evacuate, had decided it more expedient to destroy the ammunition than move it. The result was a fire that destroyed the depot and several warehouses in town. Aside from the official destruction, soldiers also set fire to Peyton Clark's granary, woodhouse, and stables as they left. This act, Clark believed, was one of revenge, not military expediency.⁶¹

War-time fires took the town's post office, "Baker & Bros. Store," Coontz's Foundry, warehouses, "Mr. Miller's Store in the centre of Main Street...where the houses are thickly built," and barns and crops outside of town. Some of these incidents were the effect of natural occurrences or accidents and Mary Greenhow Lee gave Union officers credit on occasion for "making the Yankees work the engine till the fire was out."⁶² On the other hand, other citizens were convinced that much of the destruction originated at the hands of "Yankees," either in retaliation, or out of military expediency, neither of which sat well with the residents who were left to protect their own property from blowing sparks, or to assess their losses through smoke and ash.

⁶⁰JC, May 25, 1862, July 16, 1862; MGL, 170-171, 173 (July 11-13, 1862).

⁶¹McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 87; MGL, 220 (September 3, 1862); JC, September 3, 1862; JPC, September 8, 1862.

⁶²MGL, 113 (May 27, 1862), 141 (June 12, 1862), 669 (August 20, 1864), 691 (September 24, 1864); Sperry, "Surrender!," 195.

One such incendiary act left the medical college "burnt to the ground." Residents later learned that Federal soldiers set fire to the building, according to Peyton Clark, "in revenge for the fact that the body of old John Brown's son" had been "carried there as a subject for dissection." In reality, Mary Greenhow Lee knew that Oliver Brown's "bones" had been removed by Hunter McGuire, one of the teachers who at that point was serving under "Stonewall" Jackson as a surgeon. Although the medical school was lost, Lee found some satisfaction in the fact that the absence of Brown's remains had foiled Federals' "malicious design."⁶³

Military commanders caught the retaliation frenzy as well. "Stonewall" Jackson "sent a flag of truce" to General Banks during the first Union occupation saying that "if any more incendiary acts were committed" in Winchester, "he would retaliate on the prisoners he held." Banks replied "that death shall be the penalty of any such act." As the war ground on, the feelings of resentment built until the officers were sending threats to the citizens themselves. Union General Robert Milroy let the people know by an "oft repeated threat" that if Confederate "infantry enter town," he would "shell it." Confederate soldiers responded that "if a shell is fired into Winchester, Milroy & his infernal rascals shall be hung." In effect, Winchester inhabitants were being drawn into the resentments growing out of the prolonged war. Only by a democratic process was the town saved from total destruction. Union officers met to discuss the question of whether or not to burn the town. According to Mary Greenhow Lee, "71 were in favor of burning, 100 against it and they decided they would only burn a few. Whether we are

⁶³JPC, May 17, 1862; MGL, 103 (May 17, 1862), 113 (May 27, 1863). See also Sperry, "Surrender!," 195.

of the honored number, I know not."⁶⁴

Adding to the bitterness was a rash of civilian arrests. In the fall of 1861, immediately after Jackson set up his headquarters in Winchester, he ordered the arrest of Samuel A. Pancoast, on charges of keeping carrier pigeons. Mary Greenhow Lee's friend Joseph H. Sherrard had informed Jackson about the pigeons, suspected, according to Julia Chase, of being used to send "messages to the injury of the southern Confederacy." George Pancoast, Samuel's son, wrote to Confederate officials on his father's behalf that Sherrard had made the charge "from personal enmity alone" and that his father had merely bought the pigeons "to mate some he had at home," not for purposes of covert operations. Nonetheless, Jackson had Pancoast sent first to the guard house, and then to Richmond.⁶⁵

As time went on, arrests of civilians seemed to be made on even less foundation. Before Jackson evacuated the town on March 11, 1862, he ordered the arrests of several Union sympathizers. Harriet Griffith, a young Quaker woman, recorded that "they say they intend to take all the Union men—Oh, I don't want Father to go. I do fear." Julia Chase feared, as well. After listing those already taken to the guard house, she wrote, "we are expecting nothing else but [that] Father will be arrested, as we learn the secessionists have 150 names down of Union people." The next day, as Jackson prepared to evacuate, Charles Chase was arrested, leaving Julia Chase feeling "indignant...towards the whole town." Chase's resentment began at this point, and grew throughout the war.

⁶⁴MGL, 144-145 (June, 1862), 408-409 (June 14, 1863), 663 (August 13, 1864).

⁶⁵JC, November 15, 1861, November 25, 1861; OR, Series II, Vol. 2, 1534, letter from George L. Pancoast to Hon. Charles J. Faulkner, December 19, 1861.

"To take an old man lying sick on the sofa," she wrote, "is outrageous."⁶⁶ The arrests, whatever their purpose, fueled the growing bitterness between the town's factions.

Military leaders, though supposedly dispassionate commanders abiding by the rules of warfare, fed and participated in the growing rancor. A group of secessionist citizens circulated a petition to ask Jackson for the release of the Union men, although Julia Chase doubted their sincerity. Lee reported that two of her friends, Dr. Robert Baldwin and Leonard Swartzwelder, had "been arrested" by orders of General Banks, "for refusing to sign the petition," but were released when her friend and lawyer Philip Williams "interceded." On April 10, Banks sent the completed petition to Jackson along with a warning that "if this act be evidence of a determination on your part to carry on the controversy...in a manner so utterly repugnant to the usages of war,...the responsibility for the initiation of such a policy will rest upon you."⁶⁷ Although Julia Chase recorded on April 24 the "glorious news" that her father had been released, this was just the beginning of military abrasion of local irritations.

Arrests of civilians continued throughout the war. After the First Battle of Winchester in late May 1862, when Jackson's army again briefly held the town, more Union men were arrested, including Joe Meredith, on evidence presented by two young women, according to Julia Chase, that Meredith "was a Union man, strong abolitionist & black Republican."⁶⁸ Charges of being a "Union man" seemed to be enough to send

⁶⁶HHG, March, 1862, 73; JC, March 10, 1862.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, March 17, 1862; MGL, 46 (April 1, 1862); OR, Series II, Vol. 3, 438-439, from Banks to Jackson, April 10, 1862.

⁶⁸JC, May 27, 1862.

these people to prison, suggesting that loyalty to one side was dangerous for the other, whether or not there was proof that the loyalists' actions were detrimental to the opposition forces. Arrests on flimsy evidence indicate that the occupying commanders were either caught up in the civilian resentments, or attempting to eliminate the annoyance.

"The Dooley affair" removed some of the most prominent secessionists from town. On January 14, 1864, while attending evening services at Market Street Methodist Church, William Dooley was arrested by four Confederate soldiers on spy charges. The peaceful sanctuary erupted with women screaming and men shouting, as Dooley reached for his pistol. The soldiers, aided by one male worshipper, subdued him and took him away.⁶⁹

Julia Chase suspected that "some of the Secesh women" had caused Dooley's arrest, which could have been true. Mary Greenhow Lee believed Dooley to be "one of the most malignant Union men of Winchester," a "detective, spy & informer." Robert Y. Conrad, according to Lee, deemed him an "infamous scoundrel & low creature." Ultimately, it was proven that Dooley had been working as a "detective...on secret service" for the Federals. In the meantime, however, Julia Chase reported that "our cavalry" arrived in Winchester from Martinsburg to hold Mayor J. B. T. Reed and "50 secessionists...as hostages" until Dooley was released by the Confederates. Two days later they arrested Conrad, but Julia Chase reported sourly that Conrad was immediately released "through the interference of some of the Union men" who were "so fearful of being carried off...that they seem obliged to do all in their power to prevent the arrests

⁶⁹MGL, 557 (February 16, 1864), 576-578 (April, 1864); Delauter, *Winchester*, 63-64.

of secessionists."⁷⁰ Fear of retaliation rather than community spirit kept these people watching over each other.

In April, however, Philip Williams, Conrad, and Reverend Andrew H. H. Boyd were arrested and sent to Martinsburg, then on to prison at Wheeling. Lee recorded that these prominent "elderly men" were being held captive "in an immense room with 180 prisoners of every variety from felons to military prisoners, many of them dragging a ball & chain." The Winchester men were keeping themselves separate from the other inmates by a "chalk line...drawn across the floor" and the threat of "death for those who dare[d] to cross the line."⁷¹ Mary Williams wrote to her son, a Confederate soldier, asking if he could use his influence "to have this matter of civil arrests investigated." She went on to argue that "our men do little good" arresting "Union people of no standing" when it causes "the men on the Border who are battling slowly...for the sake of the South" to be taken as hostages. Robert E. Lee agreed. He sent "general instructions" to his officers "not to molest private citizens who do not take an active part against us" because it would "lead to retaliation on the part of the enemy."⁷² Conrad found himself in prison again, however, at Fort McHenry, in November of 1864. The reason for his arrest was kept from him but he was convinced that "some malicious person may have

⁷⁰JC, January 15, 1864, January 16, 1864, January 18, 1864, January 22, 1864; MGL, 541, 543, 548 (January, 1864).

⁷¹JC, April 22, 1864; MGL, 576-577, 584-585 (April, 1864).

⁷²Letter from Mary Williams to Clayton or John J. Williams, April 18, 1864, Philip Williams Papers, HL; reprint of letter from Lee to Jefferson Davis, April 22, 1864, in Delauter, *Winchester*, 67-68.

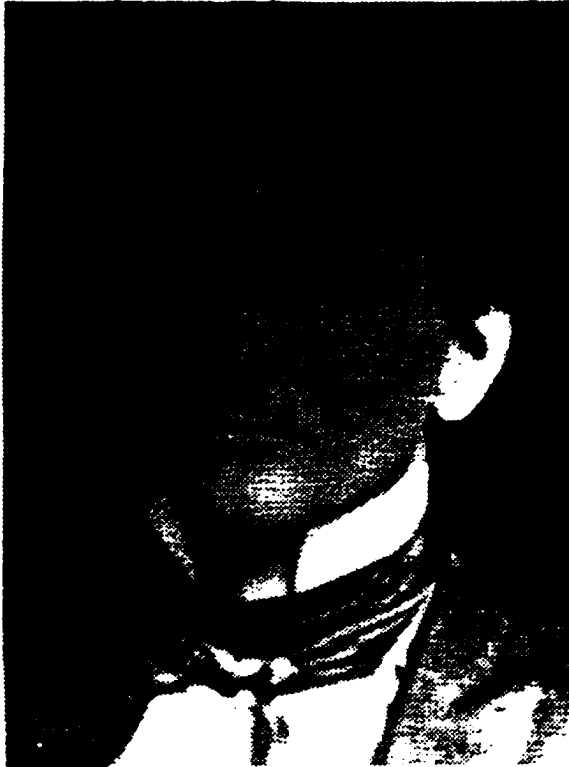
made a misrepresentation as to [his] conduct or character."⁷³

The incidents of arrests do not illustrate clear lines of sentiment in Winchester. Philip Williams was moderately a secessionist by March of 1862, and became more convinced of his stand as the war went on. Although he effected the release of Swartzwelder and Baldwin, two vehement secessionists, his wife, Mary, attempted to secure the release of a Unionist.⁷⁴ [*See illustration 33*]

Yet another arrest gives evidence of conflict within Mary Greenhow Lee that reflects the confusion surrounding her. A young Union orderly by the name of Dutton was arrested for desertion. Lee had become acquainted with the man through one of her boarders, a Dr. Love, and through her visits to the patients at "the York," a hotel-turned-hospital. Federals found the man wandering "five miles beyond their pickets," and brought him in. Without waiting for a court martial, the soldiers were ready to hang Dutton when Dr. Love made a quick appeal to Sheridan to postpone the execution until he could try the man. Lee did not believe Dutton had intended to desert. As she saw it, "the poor creature" was "almost childish," and "had not the moral courage to form such a plan." Not willing to leave Dutton's fate in the hands of the court, she pleaded with Philip Williams to draft a petition on Dutton's behalf. When she read Williams's petition, however, she found it "so flat & puerile" that she "ignored it altogether & wrote

⁷³Letter from Robert Y. Conrad to Elizabeth Whiting Powell Conrad, November 18, 1864, and November 20, 1864, Holmes Conrad Papers, VHS; MGL, 584-587 (April 25-May 1, 1864), 735 (December 10, 1864); JC, April 28, 1864.

⁷⁴From Mary Williams to General Thomas J. Jackson, March 11, 1862, Papers of Stonewall Jackson, ESB. A Mr. Sydnor who, before Virginia seceded, had been on the side of the majority in Winchester. Mary Williams, while working with Sydnor when he had been "employed by the Ladies Clothing Society to cut out clothing for the Quarter Master" in her capacity of Society President, had "conversed freely," and became "fully satisfied with his loyalty." Because of Sydnor's earlier stand, however, he was still under suspicion almost a year later.



33. Philip Williams

another, much more urgent & politic," then walked through snow and slush to get it signed by her friends and neighbors, and sent it to Sheridan on the first day of January.⁷⁵

Whether or not her petition influenced the court, Dutton did not hang, but was sentenced to "imprisonment during the war."⁷⁶ Lee's efforts to save a Union orderly from capital punishment adds one more layer to the complicated tensions she and the other citizens of Winchester suffered while living in a border town during the war. Suspicion and resentment among citizens points to the complications that arose in the divided town, sitting on the border between nations, home to both "Secesh" and Unionist and to those who continued to feel the pull from both sides.

Another dynamic of the turmoil in Winchester came from the changing relations between whites and blacks. When General Banks first occupied the town, he and his soldiers spread the word among the slaves that Federal forces would defend their departure if they attempted to flee. A few at a time, and then in large numbers, slaves left the homes of their masters and were carried off in railroad cars or remained in town and congregated in hotels set up as temporary housing by the occupying officials.⁷⁷

⁷⁵MGL, 749-752 (December 28-31, 1864).

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 752 (December 31, 1864), 761 (January 11, 1865).

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 7 (March 13, 1862), 20, 22, 23, 25 (March, 1826), 75 (April 22, 1862), 89 (May 4, 1862), 111 (May 25, 1862); JC, May 25, 1862; LL, May 24, 1862; McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 79; JPC, 3 (March 15, 1862), 6 (March 20, 1862); letter from Mrs. Philip Williams to Mrs. Averitt, March 24, 1862, Philip Williams Papers, HL; letter from Robert Y. Conrad to Union General Williams, March 20, 1862, Holmes Conrad Papers, VHS. Early in the war, Benjamin Butler had issued an order that if slaves were property as southerners had argued, then they would be considered "contraband" when within his lines, and would be confiscated. The United States Congress backed up Butler's proclamation by law in August, passing the First Confiscation Act. A growing resentment among Union soldiers was that they had left their farms to fight the war in the South, leaving their livelihood in the hands of their wives, families, and maybe a hired hand, while southern troops, at least in northern minds, had left slaves to keep their farms and plantations running as usual. This resentment, along with those soldiers and officers who

Relations between the Lee women and their household slaves deteriorated as a result of this interference. They also contended with fears the slaves had from the violence surrounding them. News that the Union army was returning could send the slaves into a panic. Lee recorded that Emily, "who was terrified," and wanted to run to the countryside, "had to be reasoned with & to be assured that they were in far more danger out of town than in it." Betty also decided to go "into the country for safety," and packed her clothes to leave but Laura Lee "relieved her" of the clothes, "and locked them up,...determined not to lose" both the clothes and the slave.⁷⁸

As Drew Gilpin Faust has pointed out, women left in control of property, including slaves, were placed "in charge of an institution quite different from the one" the men had handled because of immediate Federal influence on the slaves to rebel. No longer docile and obedient, slaves began to increasingly entertain notions of freedom. Although many had few options but to remain, they still pushed at their restraint and made management of slavery a much more difficult struggle for the women left with the responsibility. Mary Greenhow Lee is a good example of this since she had been the head of her household for several years when the war began. Her experiences with the slaves did not arise from a sudden change in command, but from war-time alterations of the institution.⁷⁹

Laura Lee complained that "the sauciness of the servants" was becoming "hard to

were convinced they were fighting the war to free slaves, led to an easy assumption that they had the duty to liberate slaves in Union occupied areas. See Paludan, *A People's Contest*, 65, 79.

⁷⁸MGL, 406-407 (June, 1863); LL, June 13, 1863.

⁷⁹See Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 54-58.

bear" and that "even Betty" had become "infected with uppishness." Although Mary Greenhow Lee stated that she "despise[d] altercations with servants," she found it necessary to "reprove" Emily for disobeying her, "but not harshly." Even so, with the disruption of war, and the recent examples of slaves liberating themselves, Emily "became infuriated, seized her bonnet...& went off saying she was going to ask the Yankees to take her away," but later returned. Fully aware that Emily had "the power to go," if she chose to, Lee wrote that she "would not raise [a] finger to prevent it."⁸⁰ It is evident that Lee would have preferred not owning slaves at this point, nor having the additional responsibility of providing for them, but she did not know how to get along without them.⁸¹

Winchester's children also had to adjust to the war's confusion. When Jackson evacuated the town in March of 1862, Cornelia McDonald's children felt disgraced. They had heard others interpreting Jackson's decision as a flight or retreat, neither of which seemed heroic to children who had experienced almost a full year of Confederate drills, parades, and prancing horses with banners flying. According to McDonald, her son Kenneth "looked very wretched," and young "Nelly's face was bent in deepest

⁸⁰MGL, 439 (July 22, 1863), 459-460 (August 1863); LL, April 14, 1862, August 27, 1862, August 13, 1863.

⁸¹Adding to the confusion already in the household because of the war, Emily delivered two babies within two and a half years, one of them, according to Laura Lee, "in the most unexpected and unnecessary manner." The Lee women took the new additions to the household in stride, however, sewing baby outfits for them and giving Emily time to recover before asking her to return to her household duties. The Lees' household slaves also presented another problem. They became an attraction for the black male servants employed by Union officers in town until the Lee kitchen became crowded with extra people and less productive. Mary Greenhow Lee complained that "Sheridan's staff, messing next door," was "a serious annoyance on that account," but she handled the problem by assigning tasks to her slaves' visitors. See MGL, 23 (March 21, 1862), 354 (April 12, 1863, 716, 718 (November 3, 9, 1863), 758 (January 7, 1865); LL March 22, 1862, November 5, 1864.

humiliation." McDonald described son "Roy's black eyes" as "blazing, as if he scented a fight but did not...know where to find it," and two-year-old Donald, unable to comprehend the reasons, but sensitive to his family's distress, "turned his back to weep silently." The scene reminded McDonald that protecting her children from war was suddenly added to her list of motherly responsibilities.⁸²

Indeed, McDonald learned during the Battle of Kernstown on March 23, 1862, that "the old life was over" for her children. When the battle first began, her sons Harry and Allan asked if they could "go to the top of the hill...to see what was going on." She let them go, but "repented" her decision later as the sounds of battle grew louder and the boys had not returned. She "sat all that fearful afternoon in terror," waiting. Civil War battles were confusing and frightening to the grown men engaged in them; it must have been much worse for young Harry and Allan as they watched. In the words of David Bard, an Ohio Volunteer, he hoped to never "behold such a scene" as Kernstown again. Bard found himself in "a hot place" where "a continual shower of balls whistled by with that fearful buzz that must be heard to know the disagreeableness of it." Even though he was not hit, a "ball struck the ground" beside him and threw dirt up in his face; and dead and wounded men lay beside him. This was the scene Harry and Allan watched from the top of a fence for a time until "a man's head rolled close to where they were, and they prudently retreated to a more secure position." They arrived home about nine o'clock that night, seeming to be different boys, "so sad and unnatural was their

⁸²*Ibid.*, 1-3 (March 11, 1862); McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 41.

expression."⁸³ Winchester children would become accustomed to the violence before the war ended. Young Harry McDonald was stopped by a "Yankee" on the street and asked if he were a "Secesh boy." When he replied that he was, according to Mary Greenhow Lee, the soldier "beat him with a stick & kick[ed] him," until Harry's mother happened to see it and put a stop to it.⁸⁴ Besides targets for frustration, soldiers also used children as unwitting sources of information. Children did not have the discerning capacity to suspect a gray uniform to be worn by anyone but a Confederate, so were forthcoming on the whereabouts of other Confederates when anyone in gray asked. "Jesse scouts" frequently used this ploy of wearing the opposition's uniform in order to gain information, especially from young children.⁸⁵

Some children in the area recorded their war-time experiences. John Magill Steele was eight years old when the war began; his sister, Sarah Eliza Steele, was ten. Living on the Valley Turnpike at Stephens City, on the edge of Winchester, they watched the war as the players migrated from one area to another. At times, however, the combatants lingered near. Wounded Federals sometimes boarded with the Steeles. The children did not label them "our men," but "Yanks," and reported that "about twenty Yanks" knocked at their door, asking for water and "Rebs." They also noted personal losses at the hands of "Yanks," echoing the opinion of their parents. "About daylight...some infantry passed

⁸³*Ibid.*, 52; letter from David Bard to Alice Underwood, March 23, 1862, attached to untitled paper presented May 17, 1974, at the Brimfield Kelso House by James Brenner, HL.

⁸⁴MGL, 75 (April 22, 1862).

⁸⁵"Diary of John Magill Steele and Sara Eliza Steele," in Quarles, *et. al.*, *Diaries, Letters, and Recollections*, 61-94, January 6, 1864, hereafter cited as Steele. This diary was written by two children with the help of their mother, Eliza Steele. The entries do not indicate which child wrote each one. Sara was born in 1851; John in 1853.

through and stole our onions," they wrote, then added in quotation marks, "'Ugly Yanks!'" The Steele children were interested enough to take note of war news of far-reaching interest, such as "Stonewall" Jackson's death, "Old General Milroy['s]" evacuation of Winchester, the losses at Gettysburg, and a Confederate captain being "shot...through the heart" and dying in the street.⁸⁶

The evidence suggests, however, that children became acclimated to the violence, danger, and confusion of war just as adults did. Diary entries made by the Steele children reveal a growing complacency with the vicissitudes of life in a war zone, such as one in which three sentences containing nine words report two events over which they had no control bracketing one over which they did: "Cold. Set three hens to-day. Some Yankees came to-day." Local teachers took advantage of opportunities for additional learning and ran their students through "battle class" in school.⁸⁷

Children endured the same inner conflict that Mary Greenhow Lee experienced, resenting "Yankees" as a group, but learning to like them as individuals. Three-year-old Donald McDonald boldly warned the first Union soldier to approach him and tap his head to "take your hand off my head, you are a Yankee," causing the man to scowl and walk away. But he later had time to grow fond of a "Capt. Pratt" who stayed with the McDonalds while recovering from a wound. As Pratt rested on the sofa one evening, Cornelia, with Donald leaning against her lap, examined and admired the captain's pistol, "very finely mounted with gold." Donald tapped her hand, however, and said, "take

⁸⁶Steele, February 26, 1863, May 22, 1863, May 14, 1863, June 15, 1863, July 8, 1863, January 6, 1864.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, April 14, 1863, April 3, 1863.

care, Mama, you will shoot Captain Pratt." When she asked him "ought I not to shoot him" since "he is a Yankee," the young boy thought a moment, then looked sadly at the man and said with a sigh, "well, shoot him then." This signifies the extent to which war in Winchester had taught even the very young the seriousness of national loyalty. The extended crisis also made them almost immune to the violence. In amazement, McDonald watched her children "playing in the yard in the bright summer sunshine" while "maneuvering troops scud[ded] over the hills," and artillery, infantry, and ambulances passed the house. "Poor little things," she wrote, "they have long been used to scenes of strife and confusion, and I suppose it now seems to them the natural course of things."⁸⁸

Mary Greenhow Lee did not believe that strife was natural. Since it had been forced on her, however, she wanted to be fully informed on its progress. Her identity as a strong southerner heightened when she could impart military news to her neighbors. She labeled her house "Head Quarters" when friends came to her to learn the latest news. She sorted through all that she heard, qualified unsupported data, but advanced with assurance the news she believed. Neighbors who received their news late, then tried gifting Lee with the tidbit, forced her to "go into second hand ecstasies" for the sake of "politeness." Peyton Clark, under house arrest for "overlooking the fortifications, with a spy-glass, & giving information to" the army, relied on "Mrs. Lee and Miss Laura Lee" for information. Unable to go out of the house to "understand the meaning" of the "bustle in the street," he felt frustrated until the Lee women came to him after dark to

⁸⁸McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 41, 63, 174.

let him know that the enemy was evacuating Winchester.⁸⁹

If Lee could not obtain southern papers, she read northern ones. She also sifted through the "flying rumours" constantly coming her way to ascertain the true military positions of both armies. She counted a day lost if there was "no army news." When she could not read newspapers, Lee analyzed the events surrounding her, using her intuition and recent experiences to inform her. If northern papers were available, she only half believed them. When they were suppressed, she found hope. Keeping track of how long it had been since she had read a northern paper, Lee suspected "there was something in them they did not wish us, or their army, to know."⁹⁰

Lee also studied the faces of incoming Union soldiers for any signs of "exultation." If they "looked puzzled & harassed," she counted it good news for her own army. One day she noticed that her "street was thronged with wagons, with the horse's heads to the Depot, & those wagons were heavily laden...as if they were meditating a retreat." And just before the Union's first stay in Winchester ended, Lee noted that "the Hospitals were cleared to-day, of all who could be moved. They are preparing for a battle, or an evacuation. I believe the latter." She was right.⁹¹

"Stonewall" Jackson's Valley campaign in the spring of 1862 tested Lee's ability to keep track of her army. Jackson forced his men to march over six hundred miles that spring as he provoked Union commanders into chasing him up and down the Shenandoah

⁸⁹MGL, 81 (April 27, 1862), 754 (January 2, 1865), 212 (August 24, 1862; JPC, September 8, 1862).

⁹⁰MGL, 146 (June 15, 1862), 534 (December 26, 1863), 19 (March 18, 1862), 71 (April 19, 1862).

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 32 (March 25, 1862), 57 (April 8, 1862), 109 (May 23, 1862).

Valley.⁹² Newspapers, Union dispatches, and private journals expressed concern and puzzlement over Jackson's whereabouts. Speculation on where Jackson was and when he might strike became dinner conversation for citizens, the subject of numerous Union communications, and fodder for the presses. Peyton Clark reported that "the question 'Where is Jackson?' was upon the mouth of...every man."⁹³ Even Unionists acknowledged Jackson's effectiveness in puzzling his opponents. Julia Chase admitted that, "tho' there are so many [Union] Genls. in the valley,...we have our fears in regard to Gen. Jackson, and think he may again give them the slip." Jackson's ability to confuse the enemy also perplexed his admirers in the Valley; but Lee appreciated this facet of his style. She reported: "We cannot find out about Jackson, who is ubiquitous; here, there, and everywhere." Later, after learning how Jackson's subterfuge worked against the enemy, she happily stated that he was "in his hole again, & they cannot find him."⁹⁴

Unionist Julia Chase interpreted the news from a perspective opposite Lee's. For instance, when they learned that Confederate Cavalry General Turner Ashby was only six miles from Winchester, Lee reported, "our deliverance is drawing near," while Chase moaned, "God have mercy on us." When the Secessionists exhibited "great glee," that

⁹²"The Marches in the Valley Campaign, March 22 - June 25, 1862," taken from John Selby, *The Stonewall Brigade* (New York: Hippocrene Books, Inc., 1974) 37; *New York Times*, April 1, 1862, 4; *OR*, Series I, Vol. XII, Part I, 336, 347-348, 540, 626; Part III, 51, 52, 77, 78, 94, 95, 134-137, 140-144, 150, 152, 154, 162-163, 315, 323-325, 330, 332, 337, 841; Vol. 51, 59-60, 62-63, 560; Vol. XI, Part I, 36; Vol. XII, Part III, 173-174.

⁹³JPC, 24 (May 26, 1862); *OR*, Series I, Vol. XII, Part III, 330, June 3, 1862; *Charleston Mercury*, May 24, 1862, Accessible Archives, Inc., Malvern, Pennsylvania, "The Civil War: A Newspaper Perspective, *The Charleston Mercury*, *The New York Herald*, and *The Richmond Enquirer*," on CD-ROM, CWM [hereafter, any citation from the *Charleston Mercury* will be indicated as *CM/CD-ROM*].

⁹⁴JC, June 4, 1862; MGL, 147 (June 17, 1862), 150 (June 20, 1862), 152 (June 22, 1862).

meant bad news for Chase's army.⁹⁵ If she learned good news about the Federal army from the Secessionists, then she could believe it. Hearing that the Federals had gained a "victory in Maryland," was "almost too good to be true," for Chase, "but the news came from secession sources, therefore," she said, "we can't doubt it." This last bit of news was a relief for Chase because she and the other Unionists in town had "been very much cast down for months" since it had "seemed as if the Federal army had fallen asleep, or were extinct." By the following summer, however, Chase was again in bad humor. Almost as if she were shouting at the Union army, she wrote, "God forbid that the nation has become a nation of cowards...every man...nerve himself for the struggle & not allow our country to be trodden down & destroyed by these southern people."⁹⁶

Both Unionists and Secessionists, depending on the army holding the town, looked for signs of liberation. Lee could become frustrated with faulty or flimsy information. "The Secesh of Winchester are punished," she pouted, "by having the accounts withheld." At one point she grumbled that she had "heard for the 7000th time that A[mbrose] P. Hill was in the Valley," and that if he did not appear soon, she would "be in the Valley of Despair." Then she had to endure "the croakers," those who believed all of the bad news they heard and "only half" of the good.⁹⁷

Neither Lee nor Chase required newspapers to learn about the Third Battle of Winchester on September 19, 1864, when Confederate General Jubal A. Early lost to Phil Sheridan's forces on the northeastern edge of the town near Opequon Creek. They could

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 107 (May 21, 1862); JC, May 23, 1862, April 14, 1862.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, September 16, 1862, July 1, 1863.

⁹⁷MGL, 303 (January 31, 1863), 628 (June 30, 1864), 671 (August 25, 1864).

hear the battle as it transpired. In fact, Lee found herself in the middle of it when Confederate cavalrymen ran from the fight, their flight path leading past her front door. She stood on the front porch and "shamed" the men for leaving the battle and "by dint of reproaches and encouragements succeeded in turning some back." Chase was jubilant, recording in her journal two days later, "our troops are driving the rebels at a rapid rate and do not give Early scarcely a chance to take a stand." She assessed the history of the war to date, and acknowledged that "for the first time I have seen a glorious victory in the Valley of the Shenandoah on the part of our troops."⁹⁸

It is important to note that the war years in Winchester were not all grim. Sadness and joy mixed together as they would during normal times; but they were felt more acutely--the highs and lows of life emphasized by uncertainty. Winchester Secesh erupted into celebration on occasion when the Confederate army returned; and sometimes even while battles spilled over into the streets. During the First Battle of Winchester, as Confederates chased Union soldiers out of town, Ranny McKim remembered that citizens rushed into the streets and greeted the soldiers "with the most enthusiastic demonstrations of joy...regardless of the death-shots flying around them."⁹⁹

Cornelia McDonald recalled "the beaming countenances and the congratulations passed between citizens,....some weeping or wringing their hands over the bodies of those who had fallen before their eyes...and others shouting for joy at the entrance of the victorious Stonewall Brigade." Upon their release "from bondage," residents began "embracing the precious privilege of saying what they chose, singing or shouting what

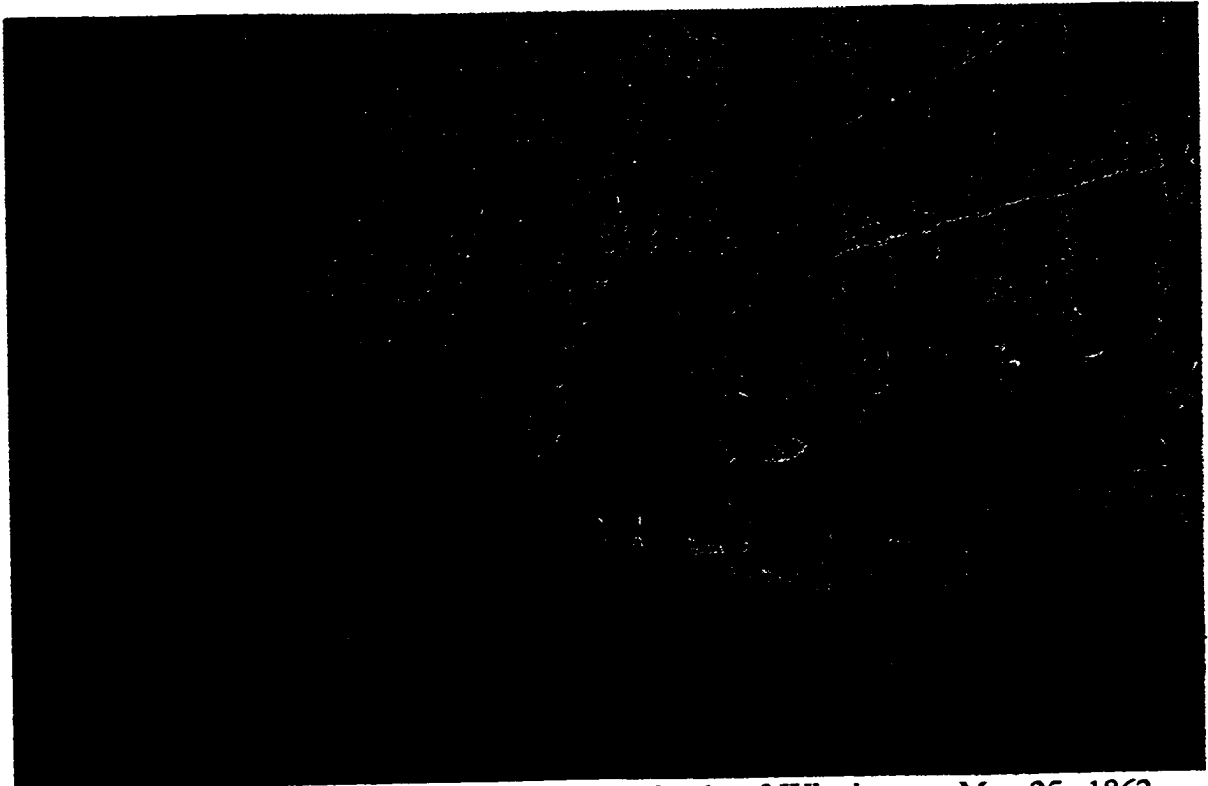
⁹⁸*Ibid.*, 685 (September 19, 1864); JC, September 21, 1864.

⁹⁹McKim, *Soldier's Recollections*, 101-103.

they chose;" and "people in different spheres of life...were shaking hands and weeping together." Colonel James K. Edmondson wrote to his wife on May 26, 1862, that they had "routed the Yankees completely" and that when they "entered Winchester" they were treated to "such a demonstration...by the citizens, the ladies especially, as we passed through,...waving handkerchiefs and flags." Ranny McKim reported that the celebrations continued inside the homes as residents took soldiers in to feed them. He enjoyed "a joyous breakfast table that Sunday morning at Mrs. Lee's" until someone came in to report that his cousin Robert had been killed in the battle.¹⁰⁰ Joy and sadness collided continually during the war, with the height of one simply deepening the depth of the other. *[See illustration 34]*

Having a houseful of soldiers and surgeons strained Mary Greenhow Lee at times, but it also provided diversions from war for the family. They spent "cozy evening[s]" playing chess, backgammon, "consequences," reading to each other, "telling ghost stories," or making "a frolic of shelling...corn." They also planned, hosted, and attended parties when possible. When the house was vacated, not only by soldiers but also by the rest of the family on various excursions, Lee enjoyed "a good quiet time on the porch" with her thoughts. One of her favorite pastimes was an "interesting ramble" in the countryside. During good weather, walks were a frequent occurrence, with several women in the neighborhood joining the family in their "brigade," as they called their "walking party." On occasion, their "brigade stormed the fortifications," as Lee termed

¹⁰⁰McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 64-68; Turner, *My Dear Emma*, 95; McKim, *Soldier's Recollections*, 103.



34. "Jackson Entering Winchester," the First Battle of Winchester, May 25, 1862

the jaunts to former military strongholds outside of town.¹⁰¹

Walks in the country also led them to battlefields. The women made their way to the site of the Kernstown Battle one evening and, while there, created a monument of stones in honor of the Louisiana Tigers led by General Richard Taylor who had, according to Laura Lee, "charged down the hill upon the Yankees." In the week following, the younger women "added to the pile until it ha[d] become quite a respectable monument." When the "brigade" ventured to the monument again, they realized that "several groups of" Union soldiers were watching them so the women made a show of "running about collecting the stones with great apparent eagerness and then waving...sun bonnets and parasols when [they] added to the pile." They then "found an old fruit can" and placed it "on the top pointing towards the Yankees." Before leaving, "Mary wrote on a leaf of her pocket book, 'Attention Yankees! This is a masked battery and highly dangerous, we charge you not to take it. Rebels,'" then left the can and its message for the soldiers to find.¹⁰² Thus, the Lee women amused themselves, when they could, at the expense of the occupation army.

When possible, and when there were no other amusements, they made sport of the soldiers from within their home as well. Lee enjoyed "listening to the repeated 'talkings' of the sentinels...on the pavement & sometimes" sitting on her porch. Or, when the streets were particularly treacherous with snow and ice, the whole family watched as

¹⁰¹MGL, 185 (July 26, 1862), 244-245 (October 18-19, 1862), 248 (October 25, 1862), 252 (November 1, 1862), 459 (August 16, 1863) 483 (September 22, 1863), 523 (November 28, 1863), 573 (March 24, 1864), 574 (March 30, 1864, 583 (April 20, 1864), 716 (November 3, 1864), 759-750 (December 28-29, 1864).

¹⁰²LL, July 25, 1862.

Sheridan's staff passed her porch to go to dinner. Lee recorded that "they knew we were laughing at them & the more they tried to walk steadily, the more they slipped." She appreciated the diversion because she "had not had a good laugh" that day and "could find no other amusement."¹⁰³ The effect of this ridicule on the officers can only be imagined.

One characteristic deeply ingrained in Mary Greenhow Lee was her ability to find humor in bad circumstances. While she mocked Union officers, she was also quick to ridicule herself. When she wrote in her journal that she had "slipped on the ice," she added in parentheses, "I heard I did it very gracefully." A severe cold settled in her jaw one rainy season, swelling her face until it appeared as if she "had an immense plug of tobacco in it," and she admitted: "I am an absurd looking person." Within a short period of time she fell down the stairs twice, once while rushing to help chase "Yankees" from her door. She termed the incident "comic." Always one to look for a positive side to every situation, she also stated that, even though she was bruised, at least the noise of her fall "drove the men off."¹⁰⁴

Most studies of women living through the Civil War dwell mainly on the dangers, responsibility, and depression affecting their lives.¹⁰⁵ It is true that war depressed, frustrated, and drained Mary Greenhow Lee but an intensive study of her experiences contributes a three-dimensional illustration. Lee's intelligence helped her find solutions to the challenges of war. Her faith gave her added strength to stand up under the

¹⁰³MGL, 391 (May 28, 1863), 760-761 (January 9-10, 1865).

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 774 (January 31, 1865), 511 (November 10, 1863), 104, 106-107 (May, 1862).

¹⁰⁵Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 18.

pressure. But her sense of humor kept her sane.

Lee's goal was "to try to be light hearted;" she was "grateful to everyone who made [her] laugh." Consistently throughout her life certain things drained her more than others: "middle aged evenings," "inaction," and pretending to be someone she was not. She much preferred "young company," and stimulants such as coffee or a good cause to work for. The war deprived her of good coffee most of the time but also gave her something for which to fight. "All the old enthusiasm of my nature has revived in full force since the war," she wrote, and "it is an effort to keep within proper bounds, suitable to my age & grey hairs." There were times when the mature widow seemed very similar to the young Mary Greenhow playing pranks on her friends in Washington. For instance, one evening while visiting Washington Byrd, the Lee women were treated to "delicious pure Java coffee" with "white sugar" and "rich cream." It "exhilarated" them to such a degree that on the way home they "came down the street in a great gale." On an "expedition to Swartz Mill" one day the women encountered Swartz himself driving his wagon back to the mill. Mary Greenhow Lee, now in her forties with hair turning gray, "sans ceremonie,...jumped into the wagon" with the other women, "made him drive" them to the mill, and "had a merry time." When friends played an April Fool's joke on her by "sending in empty plates & dishes, nicely covered up," she appreciated the foolery because it proved "there was life in the old land yet."¹⁰⁶

The humor Lee sprinkled throughout a journal filled with otherwise dreary details of destruction and human suffering was a device that helped her cling to the center of her

¹⁰⁶MGL, 732 (December 5, 1864), 773 (January 29, 1865), 487 (September 30, 1863), 526 (December 6, 1863), 582 (April 18, 1864), 530 (December 17, 1863), 760 (January 9, 1865), 509 (November 7, 1863), 343 (April 1, 1863).

identity and remain balanced. It could also be seen as a slightly irreverent opinion of the political and military leaders who had propelled the country into the insanity of war and then could not seem to win it or end it. Reporting on a couple of Yankee skirmishes, she related that "some of their cavalry came dashing into town, thinking" that Confederates "were after them," when it proved to be, in fact, a cow who Lee presumed must "have had secession proclivities." She reported another "brilliant charge" the "Yankees" performed "through Main" Street, resulting in the "wounding [of] one woman & two dogs." Enjoying the "squabbings about the [1864] Presidential election" in the northern papers, she listed the six possible candidates and suggested that "Grant is their best man; I hope he gets the nomination," which would, of course, keep him busy elsewhere. Upon hearing a rumor that two Confederate generals, Fitzhugh Lee and Richard Ewell, were "in the Valley" and another rumor "that Lincoln is dead," she decided that both rumors were "too good to be true."¹⁰⁷

Lee became so frustrated during one Union occupation, waiting for deliverance by her own army, that she saved herself from truly going "crazy" by creating a scene of dementia on the pages of her journal. If not freed soon, she wrote, "I intend to turn Yankee—wear my nice clothes—eat the remains of a fruit cake I have been keeping for our men, &, in short, be utterly desperate."¹⁰⁸ This is not to say that Lee never gave in to sadness. One of the most depressing problems she faced was an inability to alleviate the suffering she encountered at the hospitals each day. Sights of destruction

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 509 (November 9, 1863), 343 (April 1, 1863), 107 (May 20, 1862) 177 (July 17, 1862), 468 (September 1, 1863) 562 (4, 28, 1864), 757 (January 6, 1865).

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 153 (June 23, 1862), 476 (September 13, 1863).

tormented her as well. "This poor old town," she wrote, "is sorely afflicted." The strain of responsibility she felt for her household at times made her feel "utterly lonely," and she would be overcome with a "finished feeling," having "nothing to live on or for." During one of her periods of depression, "weary & worn out," she informed her journal that her low energy level came from having the opposition gone. "When the Yankees were here," she wrote, "their outrages roused such a feeling of resistance that I was nerved for anything." In between occupations, however, uncertainty drained her.¹⁰⁹

The "old enthusiasm" of Lee's nature revived when the presence of Union troops reminded her daily that she was being controlled by forces with whom she had not contracted a relationship. Lee was more than a Secessionist. True to her character, she was also a rebel, straining against the rules imposed upon her. When "several Yankees" stepped onto her porch one night and "shouted 'Lights out'," although the rest of the family blew out their candles, she "re-lit" hers almost immediately. When Lee heard that orders had been issued by the Provost Marshal "that no citizen was to be seen on the streets," she "immediately determined to go out, though" she had "had no such intention before."¹¹⁰

During a particularly bad spell in the weather, Sheridan "issued his royal release that all pavements were to be cleaned off in a given time." When the guard came around

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*, 691 (September 24, 1864), 476 (September 13, 1863), 529 (December 16, 1863), 533 (December 24, 1863), 472-473 (September 8, 1863), 444 (July 26, 1863), 454 (August 8, 1863), 206 (August 19, 1862).

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 131 (June 5, 1862), 592 (May 5, 1864). She was stopped on the street by a Provost Guard, who escorted her back home. When she asked him what he would have done if she had told him she "was going to, instead of from, home," he answered that he would have followed her "to ascertain the truth & when he found out he was deceived," he would have forced her to "follow him up and down the streets for two hours."

to ask her why she had not cleaned hers, she said, that the "Yankees had stolen" her "negro men" and she could not do the job herself. As time went on, she gratefully reported that "the walking was very good" since everyone had been cleaning their pavements. She, however, had not, because she "did not choose to obey" Sheridan's orders.¹¹¹ Orders from occupation generals meant little to Lee, who had been raised to discern between those responsibilities she was obliged to meet, and those she was not.

War for Mary Greenhow Lee was abominable. She felt grief for the destruction of her "poor old town," anxiety for her friends and family in harm's way, and mourned the men who died in battle. Yet the turmoil war visited upon Winchester also enlivened her to fight back in ways suited to her character. Toward the men in her life for whom she had respect and with whom she accepted a subordinate position, Lee gladly behaved in a socially-accepted manner. For those men who demanded her allegiance, however, or with whom she had not freely entered into a relationship, she turned those same standards into weapons to use against them, which is the subject of the next two chapters.

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 752 (December 31, 1864), 754 (January 2, 1865), 775 (February 1, 1865), 776 (February 3, 1865), 777 (February 5, 1865).

CHAPTER VI

"DECENCY COMPELS ME TO EMPLOY MY FINGERS": THE HOUSEKEEPING WARFARE OF MARY GREENHOW LEE

On a summer day in 1863 Mary Greenhow Lee and her family were busy gardening behind her home on Market Street. They "dug the manure & wheeled it down to the [garden] bed" as Union soldiers watched from a distance and Lee felt certain that it "very much amused" the soldiers "to see the Secesh, the F. F. V.s, working like day labourers."¹ A reduced household staff, the scarcity of free labor for hire, and the irksome, constant reminder for Lee that she was under the oppressive scrutiny of an unfriendly army were the elements that set this scene. War or no war, however, management of her household still required her attention.

It is evidence of Lee's strong character that she continued her housekeeping tasks at the same time that she added the responsibilities of taking care of southern soldiers to her schedule. The work Mary Greenhow Lee did for her family and for the Confederacy gave her a sense of fulfillment. Socially defined roles for women kept Lee out of uniform and safe from battle, but she found ways to be useful that, although they sometimes stretched her energy, also made a vital difference for the Confederate soldiers within her reach.

¹MGL, 399 (June 8, 1863).

Mary Greenhow Lee found nothing rational about war, and even mourned the deaths of her enemies. Although she put her heart and soul into waging her form of warfare, she could find no grounds for war when observing the losses. War surrounded her, however, and she took an active part in it.² According to Drew Gilpin Faust, since men have declared and fought wars, then war has been "an occasion for both reassertion and reconsideration of gender assumptions."³ Warfare gains legitimacy through national rhetoric, compelling citizens to take part. Young men grow up hearing war stories and understanding that there is a certain virtue in being willing to die for a cause. Women are told war stories as well. As Faust suggests, women have been summoned to help on the home-front and have been "for centuries instructed and inspired... to accept and even champion the martial adventures of their men."⁴ The American Civil War is considered to be the first modern war because it involved entire populations, including a large degree of assistance from women.

Mary Greenhow Lee's narrative clearly shows that she considered herself a Confederate national who believed in the ideals of her society's gender roles. For most women whose husbands were away soldiering, war magnified the societal expectations of women to be selfless and competent. Widows such as Lee were faced with the same injunction, but without the occasional letter of comfort and advice from her husband.

When General "Stonewall" Jackson evacuated Winchester on March 11, 1862, and

²*Ibid.*, 185 (July 26, 1862).

³Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 1200.

⁴Drew Gilpin Faust, "Introduction: Macaria, a War Story for Confederate Women" in *Macaria: or, Altars of Sacrifice*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), xiii-xxvi: xiii.

General Nathaniel Banks led his Union troops in to the town's first occupation the next day, Mary Greenhow Lee recorded in her journal, "all is over and we are prisoners in our own houses."⁵ Although historians have come close to portraying nineteenth century women of Mary Greenhow Lee's status as at least assigned to, if not prisoners in, their own houses, Mary Greenhow Lee did not remain confined to her home, but went out frequently "on the street to attend to...business."⁶ Instead of merely running a household, Lee's daily life became dramatically complicated with the intrusion of wartime activities. Added to her schedule were the extra chores left to be done when her male slaves ran away; operating an underground mail service; obtaining, storing, and distributing contraband goods for the army; and supplying the hospitals and tending to wounded and sick soldiers.

The Cult of True Womanhood has been identified as the standard for women in nineteenth-century American society. Prescriptive literature described the ideal upper- and middle-class white woman living within the confines of the domestic sphere, leading a pious life, working primarily for others, and giving of herself, charged mainly with maintenance of the domestic realm.⁷ Creating a safe and cheerful atmosphere at home, she should also focus on the emotional well-being of family members, tempering her anger, and comforting the sick. As Barbara Welter writes, "the sickroom called for the exercise of her higher qualities of patience, mercy and gentleness as well as her

⁵MGL, 4, 5 (March 12, 1862).

⁶*Ibid.*, 60 (April, 11, 1862). See Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds: The Rhetoric of Women's History," in *The Journal of American History*, June 1988, 9.

⁷Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1989) 137. See also Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*; and Welter, "Cult of True Womanhood," 133-155.

housewifely arts," fulfilling her "dual feminine function--beauty and usefulness."⁸ Mary Greenhow Lee knew what it meant to be a good woman and she transformed those womanly skills into becoming a good Confederate.⁹

Many American women today have an emotional stumbling block psychologists Claudia Bepko and Jo-Ann Krestan refer to as "female shame," a term they give to the "collective legacy of womanhood" which subliminally suggests that being a woman means being "not fully valid as a human."¹⁰ This female shame has been a "societal leverage" that kept women in their place for centuries; and a tacit "Code of Goodness" has evolved as a prescription for that shame, to compensate for being less important to the community, to focus on others rather than on self, taking pride in what they *do* as women rather than who they *are* as humans.¹¹ In wartime, surrounded by armies and hearing the sounds and seeing the devastating effects of battle, female shame would necessarily be heightened. Men fought. Women did not. Men risked their lives. Women merely risked their men. Mary Greenhow Lee wrote, "if I were only a man," but "being only

⁸Welter, "Cult of True Womanhood," 135, 141, 143, 145; Claudia Bepko and Jo-Ann Krestan, *Too Good for Her Own Good* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991) 32; Cott, Chapter 2. See also Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*.

⁹For the southern view of the ideal woman see Scott, *The Southern Lady*, Chapters 2 and 3.

¹⁰Bepko and Krestan, *Too Good*, 43. Bepko and Krestan do not distinguish whether or not their theory applies to women at certain levels of American society but the women they describe are both married and unmarried, fall into young- through middle-aged groups, are full-time homemakers and mothers or professionals. None of the women they describe would be classified as poor or laboring class. Certainly, however, women of Mary Greenhow Lee's social status would fit the profile of the women Bepko and Krestan studied.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 49, 53. Bepko and Krestan have classified five major injunctions within this Goodness Code that "good" American women try to achieve even when they are unaware of the motivation for their behavior. These injunctions are to: "Be Attractive, Be a Lady, Be Unselfish and of Service, Make Relationships Work, and Be Competent Without Complaint," not unlike the nineteenth-century Cult of True Womanhood.

a woman & of no account, I have to fold my hands & try to keep quiet & calm." At another point she considered disguising herself so that she could enter "the ranks & get shot," forcing "the Yankee government...to waste the lead that might be used to kill a better person."¹² For the most part, however, she created a way to become an asset to the war effort that helped her feel she compensated for being "only a woman" in a war zone.

Mary Greenhow Lee found war to be a "barbarous mode of settling national disputes," but southern literature had persuaded her that she had a role to fill in the war.¹³ The rhetoric of the South that fueled Lee's patriotism compelled her to offer up her men to the dangers of battle in direct contrast to the nurturing role she had grown up to fill. Winchester Unionist Julia Chase fumed when she learned that "3000 wounded soldiers" from the Battle of Sharpsburg had been brought into town. Since "the secession ladies" had "urged and in many instances driven their friends into the army," Chase believed they "must sicken when they see the distress brought upon these very men."¹⁴ Mary Greenhow Lee did not like sending men to war. She wrote that it was "sad to see these men...preparing to go out to hunt the enemy," but felt it her duty to "cheer & encourage them & repress" her "own feelings."¹⁵ To sustain that sacrifice, Lee needed to cling to her patriotic impulse. In so doing, she searched for ways, compatible with her role in society, to fight the men of the opposition while at the same time continuing

¹²MGL, 565 (March, 1863), 449 (August 1, 1863).

¹³*Ibid.*, 185 (July, 1862).

¹⁴JC, September 20, 1862.

¹⁵MGL, 646 (July 21, 1864).

to nurture and comfort the men with whom she sided.

Confederate prescriptive literature enjoined southern women to write cheerful letters to their men in the army, putting women in charge of morale. But how were they to mail letters through enemy lines? The first words in Lee's journal state her problem: "I know not how a letter can be sent, or to whom to address it, as our Post Office is removed to Harrisonburgh."¹⁶ Initially she relied on friends or acquaintances heading south, but this became a problem. One such acquaintance, an Englishman named Buxton, offered to take letters for her, and ultimately caused Lee a great deal of apprehension when she heard a rumor that he was a spy. The rumors flew back and forth for several days, intimating first that he was a Yankee spy, then a double agent, first a reporter for the *Herald Tribune*, then a "correspondent of the *London Chronicle*." But she grew weary of sorting out rumors and finally decided, "whether he is a Spy or not, if he carries my letters, I will make use of him." Ultimately, although she termed him a "will-o-the-wisp," she decided he could be trusted.¹⁷

Lee needed to trust her carriers because she put herself at risk without donning a soldier's uniform. "I have written to Turner Ashby," she wrote, "telling him of traitors in his camp, & I have sent my letters & lists of killed & wounded to Genl. Jackson." She also informed Ashby that "one of his men, had deserted" and was scheming "with the Yankees...to lead a Cavalry force to his camp, for the avowed purpose of capturing

¹⁶Bepko and Krestan, *Too Good*, 95; Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 1211; MGL, 1 (March 11, 1862).

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 39-40 (March 28, 1862), 52 (April 4, 1862), 60 (April 11, 1862), 61 (April 12, 1862), 87 (May 2, 1862), 57 (April 8, 1862).

him." Mary Greenhow Lee, in effect, took on the role of spy herself.¹⁸

A woman named Julia Kurtz was Lee's first "mail bag" for her "underground train" and word soon got out that the Lee house could be counted on as a "Confederate Post Office" that possessed a "secret means of communication with Dixie." Mary Greenhow Lee became creative in sending out her packets of mail, secreting some of them away in pin cushions. Within one month of Winchester's first Union occupation, she had sent over fifty letters from her house via one route or another. Eventually federal detectives began investigating subversive activities in town, making Lee certain she would be caught, even to the point of packing a trunk in case she was forced to leave in a hurry. But Mary Greenhow Lee refused to avoid the risks.¹⁹

Early on, her motivation was simply patriotic enthusiasm. It was new, exhilarating, almost fun. "Outwitting the Yankees is my only amusement," she stated in January 1863. But it became a pattern in her life and by the end of the war she had become adept at the subterfuge. She still considered it "a pleasure to outwit" men like General Sheridan, the last Union commander in Winchester, and declared herself "not afraid of anything," but she also became more prudent in her movements and more protective of her cohorts. When a young black came to her door to ask her to send a letter for him, she suspected a trap and denied him the favor. She also discontinued

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 52 (4/4/62), 65 (4/14/62).

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 86 (May 2, 1862), 66 (June 14, 1862), 192 (August 2, 1862), 66 (June 15, 1862), 219 (August 30, 1862), 341 (March 29, 1863), 88 (May 3, 1862), 40 (March 28, 1862), 304 (February 2, 1863), 210 (August 22, 1862).

naming her carriers for their own safety.²⁰

Lee's war work took on a nurturing character, feeding her soldiers when they were in town and nursing the wounded, not unlike the extension of women's work observed in antebellum associations. Although historians have believed that the plantation economy of the South hindered the growth of benevolent organizations there, more recent research has refuted this earlier assumption. In Virginia women began forming organizations, not so much to correct the corruption brought on by capitalism, but to take up where communities and churches had left off around the turn of the century. According to Suzanne Lebsock in her survey of Virginia women, "local governments in the nineteenth century became tightfisted," and the poor "could not rely on any form of governmental assistance." Economic depressions during the first part of the century increased the need for someone to help. Women filled that need. "For innovation, dedication, and persistence in the field of social welfare," argues Lebsock, "women were definitely in the vanguard."²¹

In her study of Petersburg, Virginia, Lebsock concluded that women, although almost excluded from the economic sphere "created a public world of their own," writing constitutions for their benevolent organizations, electing officers, and raising money. "By

²⁰*Ibid.*, 68 (June 16, 1862), 300 (January 20, 1863), 772 (January 26, 1865), 729 (December 1, 1864), 785 (February 18, 1865), 778 (February 7, 1865), 783 (February 14, 1865). On February 2, 1865, Mary Lee spent part of her day "distributing Southern letters--passed by Sheridan's Hd. Qrs. with my pockets full notwithstanding his stringent orders against such treason." Two days later she was at it again "on a contraband errand, to carry two flannel shirts and a hat to be sent to the boys & letters to both Genls. Early's and Gordon's Hd. Qrs. full of treason." By the end of that month, Sheridan had had enough of Mrs. Lee's "constant annoyance," and banished her from Winchester. See MGL, 776 (February 4, 1865), 789 (2/1865); C. A. Porter Hopkins (Ed.), "An Extract from the Journal of Mrs. Hugh H. Lee of Winchester, Va., May 23-31, 1862," in *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. LIII, 1958, 380-393: 380.

²¹Faust, "Peculiar," 92; Suzanne Lebsock, *Virginia Women, 1600-1945: "A Share of Honour,"* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1987), 61, 70.

mid-century they were expanding the boundaries of their public world," not as a "rejection of women's sphere," but as "an attempt to give institutional form and public importance to its most positive features," a nurturing and selfless concern for others. It is not certain that Mary Greenhow Lee was involved in reform organizations before the war, but she was active in several such associations at the beginning of the conflict. She named two in her journal--the County Society and the Harmon Society--formed by Winchester women to provide uniforms for the soldiers.²²

War did not lessen Lee's duties as the head of her household. She still had housework to oversee, food to supply, wood to procure for heat, and clothing to find for her family and slaves. War simply made the process more difficult. In addition, she sacrificed all of the money and labor she could spare to build up a store of supplies for the soldiers and the patients in the hospitals. When the soldiers were close by, or when she could send supplies through the lines, she wanted to have available the items they needed.²³

Drew Gilpin Faust, in *Mothers of Invention*, has argued that at the opening of the conflict, women who owned slaves were not immediately faced with an increased demand on their own labor, although they did take on the burden of handling household finances and securing their property. Later, however, women in households throughout the South took on chores they had not attempted before and Faust estimated that many of them

²²Lebsock, *Free Women of Petersburg*, 211; MGL, 47 (April 1, 1862); Hopkins, "Journal of Mrs. Hugh H. Lee," 380.

²³MGL, 419 (June 6, 1863), 452 (August 4, 1863), 641 (July 18, 1864), 344 (June 4, 1863), 522 (November 27, 1863), 537 (January 3, 1864), 654 (July 28, 1863), 39 (March 27, 1863), 346 (April 6, 1863), 365 (April 24, 1863).

resented or feared the changes to which they had to adapt because they had not been reared to feel competent in the new skills required of them.²⁴ Mary Greenhow Lee did complain at times about the new labor she had to perform but she rarely mentioned feeling unequal to, or fearful of, the tasks only weary from the demands on her time.

The work that tired Lee the most, however, was that which had been hers to oversee all along, housekeeping. It depressed her; she could not "tolerate" it.²⁵ Besides the accumulation of the normal dust and disarrangement that comes from everyday living, the addition of military men as boarders in her home created even more work to keep her house in top order. "White-washing," cleaning windows, "putting down matting," "dismantl[ing] the parlours," "taking up carpets," and putting up curtains all required the same amount of labor and organization during war that they had in peacetime. During the war, however, "all of these extra jobs had to be done regardless of the cannon pointing" at the town. Spring cleaning took on new meaning, as well, since they were not only shaking out the "dust of ages," but also preparing for another season of battles. Most of the armies went into winter quarters during the colder months, so the hottest campaigns and the highest casualty lists occurred from spring through fall. Spring cleaning for Lee meant making her home ready to receive patients and boarders, and insuring free time later for her attendance at the hospitals.²⁶

Gardening and sewing were additional tasks on her list of responsibilities that

²⁴Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 22, 49, 52.

²⁵MGL, 297 (January 15, 1863), 555 (April 10, 1864).

²⁶*Ibid.*, 109 (May 22, 1862), 172 (July 13, 1862), 176 (July, 1862), 340 (March 28, 1862), 396 (June 5, 1863), 399 (June 9, 1863), 458 (August 14, 1863), 485-486 (September, 1863), 584 (March 1, 1864), 597-598 (May, 1864), 604 (May, 1864), 682 (September 15, 1864).

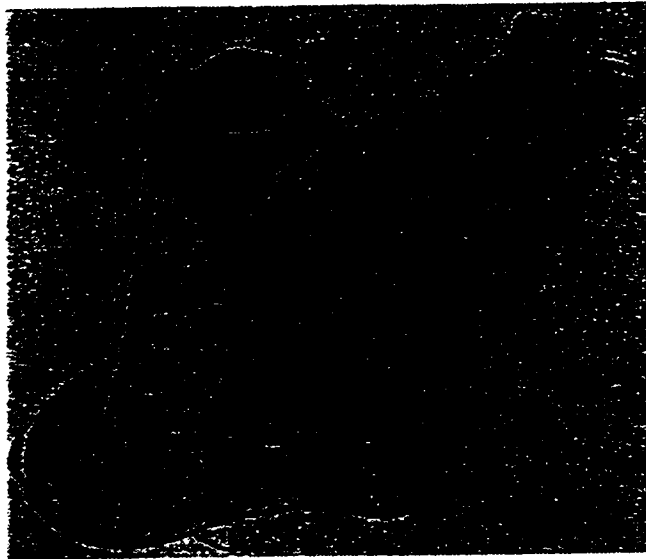
continued as before, but with more frustration. The garden itself was a source of food for the family and, therefore, a necessity, except that when she thought about "horses wallow[ing] over the beds" and the fact that the family might "be turned out & sent South in a day," she believed it to be a "hopeless task." So "that no one" would "reproach" her "for having neglected it," Lee kept up the gardening even while admitting that it was her "pet aversion."²⁷ Another job women were expected to perform graciously was sewing, a task Lee hated. During the war, most of her sewing was "fixing up old clothes" and sewing dresses for her slaves. Scarcity of material forced Lee to remodel outdated dresses into new ones. In fact, she "cut out a new linen garibaldi" from a garment twenty-one years old.²⁸ The only sewing occupation Lee seemed to enjoy was a patriotic one. "When I am not jobbing about, & decency compels me to employ my fingers," she wrote, "I knit for the soldiers." She procured yarn from wherever she could to provide socks to her army; and even had to resort to unraveled tenting material to knit socks at one point.²⁹ [See illustration 35]

Young Emma Riely, only fourteen-years-old when the war began, tried to do her part for the army by knitting, but lacked experience. Watching "the ladies...bus[y]

²⁷*Ibid.*, 74 (April 21, 1862), 109 (May 22, 1862), 359, 368 (April, 1863), 569-570 (March 17, 1864), 581, 584, 586 (April, 1864), 596-598, 606, 608 (May, 1864), 687 (September 20, 1864).

²⁸*Ibid.*, 310 (February 9, 1863), 321 (February 26, 1863), 487 (September, 1863), 613, 615 (June, 1864). A garibaldi, named for the Italian military hero Guiseppe Garibaldi and the shirts he and his troops war, was a shirt and waist outfit, usually with full sleeves sometimes pleated or gathered where they met at the bodice. What made the ensemble a garibaldi was the shirt, so it is uncertain if Lee made a full shirtwaist, or merely the shirt in this reference. Since a garibaldi requires a good deal of material, it is probable that she could only produce the shirt from old cloth. See Joan L. Severa, *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1995) 197, 227, 403, 496.

²⁹MGL, 522 (November 27, 1863), 548 (January 30, 1864), 577 (June, 1864).



35. Socks knitted by Mary Greenhow Lee

themselves... knitting socks for the soldiers," she attempted to emulate them, but only "succeeded in finishing one sock in the four years" of war and decided that "the man would have...to be deformed to wear it." One day when no one was looking, she "smuggled it into a box of clothing...to be sent to camp," and hoped that a soldier who had lost a foot would find it useful. Significantly, she felt guilty for having failed. The older women's production of socks and clothing were examples to Riely of a way she should be performing her patriotic duty, but was not.³⁰

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese noticed that slaveowning women often described work done in the household as their own when in fact the labor had come from their slaves, the mistresses merely overseeing or directing the tasks. In other words, white women seemed to view their slaves as extensions of their own hands.³¹ Mary Greenhow Lee also used the pronouns "I" or "we" when describing work actually performed by her slaves. There were instances in her journal, however, when she stopped herself from taking full credit. For example, after writing "I have been gardening...energetically," she added, "that is to say *having it done*," which suggests that she refrained from taking credit for work that others performed.³² She also hired help at times for the housework, and "attended to having the garden ploughed."³³

Free labor was a scarcity during the war and Lee learned on more than one occasion that even though a person might promise to work for her, that was no guarantee

³⁰Macon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 10-11.

³¹Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 109-130.

³²MGL, 570 (March 18, 1864), emphasis added.

³³*Ibid.*, 384 (May 21, 1863).

they would show up for duty. In writing about the matter, however, she often made the description almost poetic in its presentation, giving the reader an idea that she took the problem in stride. The following is an example: "I went in various directions this evening to see about a gardener; the man who was to plough the potato ground, said he had no horse; I got him a horse & then he discovered he had no plough." This incident could have made her angry but her depiction of it makes it seem that she was simply amused over her own bad luck.³⁴ In each of these instances the labor she used was free labor, not that of her slaves.

Conscious of the social demands on nineteenth-century women of Lee's class, prescriptive literature advised them to make the most efficient use of time for housework so they could also take part in aspects of life that enriched them, making them both interested and interesting in regard to others. Whether using slaves or hired help, women were expected to "do" housework by organizing it and overseeing it, but not in performing most of the labor.³⁵ War, however, necessitated the need to summon all possible hands to labor; thus Lee performed some household chores herself. She mentioned "helping Emily" on a number of occasions and she did her own ironing, "45 pieces" in one day.³⁶ Trimming the raspberry bushes left her "hands and arms...so scratched & full of splinters" that she had trouble holding the pen to write in her journal.³⁷

³⁴*Ibid.*, 356 (April 14, 1863).

³⁵Alan Grubb, "House and Home," 174.

³⁶MGL, 381 (May 17, 1863), 383 (May 19, 1863), 386 (May 23, 1863), 394 (June 2, 1863), 396 (June 5, 1863), 725 (November 24, 1864), 728 (November 30, 1864).

³⁷*Ibid.*, 513 (November 14, 1863).

Although she "dread[ed] having to do...servant's work" because she "despise[d] it more & more each day," she did not complain about the work as though it was beneath her, but for the same reasons that most people hate it. Housework is messy, boring, and tiring. Describing a day of "thoroughly cleaning" several upstairs rooms, she admitted: "I took off my hoops, tied up my head & was a figure of fun." For the most part, however, she did not like doing housework because it hindered her "soldier work," a phrase implying that the extension of her normal homemaking duties into caring for soldiers was work she did *for* soldiers and, on another level, work she did *as* a soldier.³⁸

One of the young officers who became Mary Greenhow Lee's friend was South Carolinian David Gregg McIntosh, who kept up a correspondence with Lee after he left Winchester. An excerpt from one of his letters shows how well he understood Lee and the basis of her war effort. After expressing a wish that she could get more rest, McIntosh added, "though I sometimes think that without some wounded and sick Confederates to look after, or Yankees to circumvent, you [would] be at a loss as to how to exercise your patriotic energies." This is key to understanding the force Lee put into her work for the Confederates. She needed a place to put her patriotism that is normally not available in war for women.³⁹ When battles raged near enough for men to stop in town afterwards, taking advantage of the hospitality of Winchester's female patriots, Mary Greenhow Lee's "soldier work" included "the feeding process," which she continued as long as she "had a mouthful of food" left to offer. Her dining room table

³⁸*Ibid.*, 176 (July 16, 1862), 396 (May, 1863), 573 (March 25, 1864).

³⁹Letter from David Gregg McIntosh to Mary Greenhow Lee, October 21, 1863, McIntosh Papers, VHS.

would be surrounded by exhausted, hungry soldiers, and then she would clear the table and fix it again "for stragglers." Even after she thought she was done with the "feeding," she would hear "the bell ring and two or three more" would "come in." She also fed Confederate prisoners before they were marched out of town, sending them "bread, soup, coffee," and "bacon and greens." The strain sometimes made her think she could feel her "hair turning gray," but she usually passed the test to her organizational skills and stamina without a problem.⁴⁰ Energy for the ordeal came from her patriotism. Food for the table, however, provided another dilemma. *[See illustration 36]*

Mary Greenhow Lee's efforts to provide for both her family and her army were often stymied by both finances and supply. Although she had various financial resources, interruptions in mail delivery kept some of that money from coming in until there were times when she was past hoping for it. After assessing her situation one evening she figured she would "have but twenty-seven cents" for two months' expenses.⁴¹ Money dribbled in from members of the *connexion* who owed her money, such as her brother-in-law, William Powell in Loudoun County, and she occasionally rented out her stable to people who followed the army into town.⁴² Most of her income came from her "Wheeling dividends," from which she became forced to draw principle since it was not

⁴⁰MGL, 116-117 (May 29, 1862), 412 (June 15, 1863), 678 (September 6, 1864), 688 (September 21, 1864).

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 519 (November 23, 1863), 520 (November 24, 1863), 523 (November 28, 1863), 614 (June 4, 1864), 620 (June 15, 1864), 735 (December 10, 1864), 500 (October 24, 1863).

⁴²*Ibid.*, 520 (November 24, 1863), 523 (November 28, 1863), 725 (November 25, 1864).



36. Confederate prisoners, Third Battle of Winchester, Courthouse yard

earning interest enough to live on.⁴³ Giving up her investment was her positive option to "starvation" but she realized she had little choice, and finally admitted: "I shall have to work hard the rest of my life."⁴⁴

For her army, however, Lee was not too proud to take donations. Men who boarded with her and saw the work she was doing at times left money behind for her "sick family at the hospitals."⁴⁵ She also "sent off...begging letters for Northern money for the soldiers, to Baltimore & New York," and once received ten dollars, "mysteriously placed in [her] hands."⁴⁶ Her sister-in-law, Rose Greenhow, sent "\$20.00 in Greenbacks" that arrived from Rose by going first to "a Mrs. Boyd," and then to Ned Brent in Baltimore, who sent it on to Lee in the care of a resident on his way to Winchester.⁴⁷ For the considerable funds she accumulated for use in supplying the soldiers, Lee kept track of it all in an "account book of money received for Confederates & disbursements."⁴⁸

Throughout the war, Baltimore members of the *connexion* continually funneled money or supplies Lee's way by whatever clandestine means they could find. One of these benefactors was Henrietta Henley Smith, one of Lee's friends in Washington during

⁴³*Ibid.*, 479 (October 20, 1863), 531 (December 19, 1863), 567 (March 11, 1864), 614 (June 4, 1864), 620 (June 15, 1864), 650 (July 23, 1864), 735 (December 10, 1846), 744 (December 22, 1864) 766 (January 19, 1865).

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 744 (December 22, 1864).

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 246 (October 22, 1862).

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 304 (February 2, 1863), 470 (September 4, 1863).

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 467 (August 30, 1863).

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 346-347 (April 6, 1863).

the winter of 1837-1838, and wife of Bayard Smith. The other was Doctor Philip C. Williams, son of a *connexion* member in Winchester. Lee's network extended even to Philadelphia and New York, where she gained additional economic support. The dispersion of these members to other urban areas, especially those outside of the Confederacy, proved to be a boon to Lee in her "soldier work."⁴⁹

Although money eventually dribbled in, Lee had another problem. "It is tantalizing," she wrote, "to have plenty of money & nothing to buy with it."⁵⁰ War interrupts commerce in no small way. In Winchester, the occupying government did have supplies on hand; but citizens had to apply to the Provost Marshal for a permit to purchase goods from the sutlers who followed the army by first taking the oath of allegiance to the United States, an act that Mary Greenhow Lee would never do.⁵¹ There were several reasons why the Union commanders insisted upon these criteria: to assure that enough supplies were first available to their army, to deter hoarding, and to guard against hostile citizens supplying the enemy. To an extraordinary degree, Mary Greenhow Lee was able to get around the prerequisites to purchasing goods. After a year in the military environment, she wrote, "it is strange how those people [sutlers] all sell to me; I have bought six or seven hundred dollars worth from them, without permits." She had other means of supply as well. If friends obtained a pass or planned to run a blockade, they asked her for a shopping list they might fill. At one point she had "eight

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 314 (February 15, 1863), 467 (August 30, 1863), 507 (November 4, 1863), 527 (December 10, 1864).

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 263 (November 26, 1862).

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 302 (January 1863), 304 (February 4, 1863), 320 (February 25, 1863), 325 (March 8, 1863), 344 (April 4, 1863), 370 (April 29, 1863).

different lists out, some, months old."⁵²

One effect of the Industrial Revolution was that women of the middle class moved increasingly from the role of producer to consumer, using their skills to make the best of family finances. However, the role of "shopper" for Mary Greenhow Lee during the war entailed much more than a list, a basket, and a walk to the Market House. Most of her purchases came "by dint of looking out for & embracing every opportunity," or by making "purchases on the sly" or "sub rosa," receiving goods "smuggled through" by those willing to "run the blockade," or by "fortunate inspiration," or "a lucky hit."⁵³ Instead of going shopping, Lee "went out on a chase," ventured "on a foraging expedition," "laid the train," and "tramp[ed] through the mud."⁵⁴ In one instance, she decided that if Union General Joseph "Hooker ha[d] the same difficulty in crossing the sacred soil at the Rappahannock," that she encountered seeking out some ordnance to send to the Masons, then General Robert E. Lee would "not be gobbled up for some time." On route, "mud pulled the shoes" off of her feet and she "was very much afraid the Yankees would laugh at the F.F.V. stuck in the mud." When she finally arrived at the house in question, she noticed that it was immediately in front of a Union cavalry camp, forcing her to whisper her request to the resident, a futile endeavor since the woman selling the cloth was deaf. Ultimately, she decided she was "between Scylla &

⁵²*Ibid.*, 207 (August 20, 1862), 218 (August 30, 1862), 292 (January 7, 1863), 370 (April 29, 1863), 320 (February 25, 1863), 560 (February, 1864), 625 (June 23, 1864), 766 (January 18, 1865).

⁵³*Ibid.*, 207 (August 20, 1862), 318 (February 21, 1863), 343 (April 1, 1863), 404 (June 11, 1863), 464 (August 25, 1863), 623 (June 20, 1864).

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 338, (March 26, 1863), 437 (July, 1863), 500 (October 24, 1863), 527 (December, 1863), 591 (May 5, 1864), 635 (July 9, 1864), 724 (November, 1864).

Charybdis," and left with only the promise that she could come back and try again later.⁵⁵

At least some of her supplies came to Lee courtesy of the United States government. In May 1862 President Abraham Lincoln received word that General Nathaniel P. Banks intended to move his command from Winchester to Strasburg. Lincoln insisted that Banks report "Stonewall" Jackson's position before making the move. Lincoln's fear was that Banks would be exposing his "stores and trains at Winchester" if he moved out too quickly.⁵⁶ The next day, Jackson attacked Banks and the safety of Union "stores and trains" was a moot point. As James W. Beeler of Cutshaw's Battery described it, besides prisoners, the road from Winchester "was full of captured wagons."⁵⁷ Julia Chase reported sourly, "what a glorious capture Jackson has had. He had "taken some 1100 prisoners," and "captured [a] great many valuable stores." Some days later, Chase complained that "the citizens in town have been stealing at a great rate, sugar, cheese, crackers & many other things the sutlers & Commissary Master left behind." She noted that the "stealing" was being carried out by the women more than the men in town.⁵⁸

When Federals evacuated in September of that year, they also left behind their stores; and Confederate Commissary Colonel M. G. Harman wrote to the Inspector

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 338 (March 26, 1863). In Greek mythology, Scylla was a nymph who could change into a monster and terrorize sailors in the Strait of Messina; Charybdis was a whirlpool off the coast of Sicily which symbolized a female monster. To be between the two means choosing between two equally hazardous alternatives.

⁵⁶OR Series 1, Vol. 15, 527, Edwin M. Stanton to Banks, May 24, 1862.

⁵⁷Diary of James W. Beeler, May 25, 1862, typescript, HL.

⁵⁸JC, May 25, 1862, June 4, 1862.

General to learn what he should "do in regard to the stock of goods" left behind.⁵⁹ Harman need not have bothered the Inspector General. Chase again reported that "the people here are perfectly happy with joy, and have been going in crowds to the fort" and returning "with carts and wagons loaded." One woman in particular earned special notice from Chase. "Mrs. Robt. Conrad, it is said, had her wagon filled with different things. So much for our F. F. V.'s." Eliza Conrad was not the only woman in the wagon, however. Mary Greenhow Lee rode with her, reporting: "Mrs. Conrad & I went out in a common cart, much to the amusement of the passers by." She did not report that they had gathered supplies, but that they had gone to view the fort.⁶⁰ Even if she had scavenged for goods, however, with women in charge of supplying the needs of their families, then this was a convenient way to do it.

The Second Battle of Winchester in June of 1863 afforded the same opportunity. As Cornelia McDonald recounted, "Milroy evacuated the fort during the night" and the Confederates "captured all their baggage, even their officers' trunks and mess chests."⁶¹ Mary Greenhow Lee revelled in their good fortune, stating that they had "captured more from the Yankees now than ever," and went on to claim: "if Banks was our Quarter Master, Milroy is our Commissary."⁶² In fact, a page and a half of her journal is written in red ink which, Lee explained, was from their "Yankee stores."⁶³ This

⁵⁹OR, Series I, Vol. XIX, Part II, 594, from Harman to Cooper, September 5, 1862.

⁶⁰JC, September 3, 1862; MGL, 222 (September 3, 1862).

⁶¹McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 175 (June 15, 1863).

⁶²MGL, 414 (June 16, 1863).

⁶³*Ibid.*, 408 (June 14, 1863).

opportunism evidently had taken place earlier in the war since Mary's sister-in-law, Laura Lee, used for her journal a ledger marked "U.S. Ordnance" on the cover.

Whatever the source, Lee succeeded in amassing a great store of supplies for her own household and for her "*large family*."⁶⁴ Laura Lee reported, "Mary goes on buying everything," from sugar to coffee to molasses, "oil, [and] dried fruit."⁶⁵ Mary reported both her successes and her failures in accumulating goods. She "succeeded in getting two immense hogs," yarn, honey, "hdkfs," mackerel, mustard, hair brushes, and "the best sirop [sic]" she "ever tasted."⁶⁶ On the other hand, when she ventured "to look at an old house...to buy for fire wood," she found "nothing left but the brick chimneys" by the time she arrived.⁶⁷ Keeping her *large family* warm and fed seemed to be two of her greatest trials. But what seemed most important for her to accumulate was sugar and shoes. Amassing as much as 170 pounds of sugar at one point, she hoarded it, leaving the family to drink their "tea & coffee without sugar, & without murmur" so there would be plenty on hand "for the army when it comes."⁶⁸

Shoes and boots for the soldiers also held prime position on her shopping lists. Besides sewing "soldier's shirts" made from calico, and handing out underwear and

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 346-347 (April 6, 1863), emphasis in the original.

⁶⁵LL, 3/16/1863.

⁶⁶MGL, 416 (June 17, 1863), 469 (September, 1863), 522 (November 27, 1863), 527 (December, 1863), 622 (June 19, 1864), 641 (July, 1864); LL March 16, 1863.

⁶⁷MGL, 461 (August, 1863).

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 469 (September, 1863), 496 (October 19, 1863), 484 (August 23, 1863), 641 (July 17, 1864).

uniforms, Lee gathered as many forms of footwear for the soldiers as possible.⁶⁹ Keeping shoes on soldiers' feet was a vexing problem for Confederate officers as well. Robert E. Lee reported to Jefferson Davis in September of 1862 that, although they had obtained "a thousand pairs of shoes" in "Fredericktown, 250 pairs in Williamsport," and "about 400 pairs in" Hagerstown, during their Maryland Campaign, the amount would "not be sufficient to cover the bare feet of the army."⁷⁰ By November, with winter closing in, General James Longstreet estimated that "the number of men in his corps without shoes... [was] 6,648."⁷¹ When Mary Greenhow Lee realized the extent of this problem, she did her part to correct it, giving away at one time "10 prs. shoes & 20 prs socks, to the infinite delight of our poor bare-footed soldiers."⁷²

Even when Mary Greenhow Lee had the finances and could find the necessary items, her competency level was tested. For one thing, the values of the various currencies she held fluctuated to such an extent that there were some merchants who eventually accepted only gold. At first, it seemed disloyal to use U. S. currency, until it became apparent that "Greenbacks" were the least likely to lose their value. But which money she used depended upon whom Mary Greenhow Lee was purchasing from and what she bought. "Went out this evening," she informed her journal, and "amused myself playing the broker; I bought Va. money with Yankee, & Confederate money with

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 441 (July 23, 1863), 538 (January 7, 1864), 216 (August, 28, 1862), 171 (July 12, 1862), 412-414 (June, 1863); LL, March 16, 1863.

⁷⁰OR, Series I, Vol. XIX, Part II, 604-605, 9/12/1862.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, 718, Lee to Secretary of War George W. Randolph, November 14, 1862.

⁷²MGL, 431-432 (July, 1863).

Va.," and finally "invested \$25.00 Va. money in candles."⁷³

She then had to find ways to transport her larger purchases. Begging, borrowing, and demanding netted her everything from an ambulance, to a spring wagon, to a rail truck in order to move her supplies. At one point, the genteel Mary Greenhow Lee even found herself in "the bar room at Stottlemeyer" where she finally secured a buggy.⁷⁴

Lee was fairly forthcoming in her journal about where she kept all of the contraband she gathered. Some of it was in a "black hole" in the house next door, without the residents' knowledge. Some of her friends stored supplies for her; some were under planks in her floors, under her beds, and, at times, "worn under our hoops." But she also kept them in plain sight, "mixed together in most natural disorder" among her own household supplies.⁷⁵ To camouflage her stores of "U.S. blankets" and sheets, she made them into a mattress, or had them "bundled up," and "carried to a place of safety."⁷⁶ They hid some of the food and "treasonable supplies" in slaves' bedrooms or "in concealment in the garret."⁷⁷ All of the footwear created another problem, since there was only one man in her household, a slave named William, and having that many pairs of men's shoes on hand would have been suspicious enough to have her "sent to

⁷³*Ibid.*, 452 (August 4, 1863), 614 (June 4, 1864), 620 (June 15, 1864), 476 (August 30, 1863), 519 (November 23, 1863), 559 (February 19, 1864); McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 63. See also Douglas B. Ball, *Financial Failure and Confederate Defeat* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991) 5-17.

⁷⁴MGL, 654 (July 28, 1864), 262 (November 25, 1862), 522 (November 27, 1863), 537 (January 3, 1864).

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 339 (March 27, 1863), 365 (April 24, 1863), 554 (February 8, 1864), 592 (May 5, 1864), 346 (April 6, 1863); LL, February 28, 1863.

⁷⁶MGL, 509 (November, 1863), 539 (January 8, 1864), 551 (February 5, 1864).

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 184 (July 24, 1862), 320 (February 25, 1863).

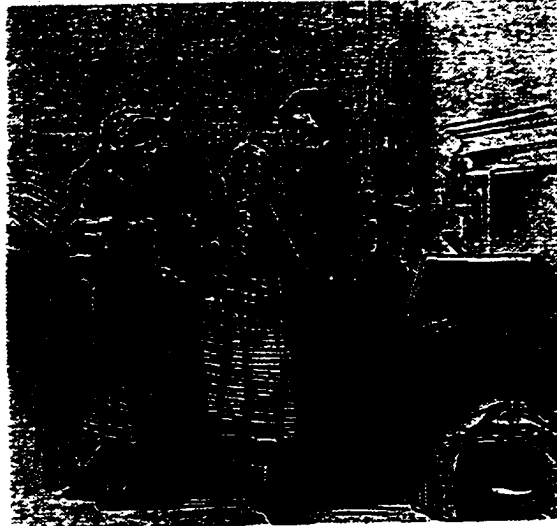
Fort Delaware."⁷⁸ In the first place, in order to purchase the shoes from sutlers, she had to have a need for them and usually explained that they were for her "servants." Lee admitted to her journal, however, that "if William were to wear all the shoes I have bought for him, he would be shod for life."⁷⁹ Then she had to store them. For that, her scheme required the aid of several men in town. She "sent for" Peyton Clark and told him that she "was very fond of him & wanted to make a present of some boots & shoes," which she did, then "sent him down the street to please himself," knowing that he would return them when the army came to town. She also "made...a present" of shoes and boots to brother-in-law P. C. L. Burwell, a "Mr. Taylor," and to "Mr. Brown, Mr. Dosh, & Mr. Baker," and had additional pairs "carried...over to Mrs. Tuley's" next door for safekeeping.⁸⁰

All of these activities created a concern for Lee. Union officials searched her house on a number of occasions but she strained to keep her cache a secret, aware that if the Provost knew of her "occupation, [she] would be sent to Fort Delaware." Awareness of the risks, however, never seemed to hamper Lee's ability to compensate for not being a male in a war zone. She merely played her role as female and assumed that the Union military commanders would follow the same rules of genteel society that

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 320 (February 25, 1863). Mary Greenhow Lee claimed only two slaves in the 1860 personal property assessment, although during the war she lost two male slaves while three females remained. On occasion she used the possessive "our" or "my" when speaking of slaves belonging to other family members who lived in her home. The slave named William belonged to James Murray Mason who left him in the Lees' care when the Masons fled Winchester. Personal Property Records for Winchester, Virginia, 1860, LOV; MGL, April 12, 1862.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 320 (April 25, 1863).

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 319-321 (February 1863), 365 (April 24, 1863), 744 (December 22, 1864).



37. "Crinoline and Quinine," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, November 22, 1862

she did.⁸¹

She had reason to believe this was true. Because she graciously invited the Provost to search her house, for instance, he did so carelessly, and even provided her with a certificate against further searches, proclaiming her house free of contraband, and signing the certificate on the same desk that held her journal, with "only a blotting sheet between the paper, on which he was writing" and her "account book." Another ploy she used during that same search also depended upon the gender code and women's modesty. Both Nettie and Laura Lee were wearing men's shirts under their dresses and "Lute & Lal were walking about under the weight of grey cloth." Lee felt certain that the contraband was safe hidden on these women's bodies because she believed in the gender code and expected the inspecting officer to abide by it as well.⁸² [See illustration 37]

Mary Greenhow Lee also fought the war by taking care of the sick and wounded. As early as January of 1862, Julia Chase reported that "our town has become a complete hospital," and Winchester sustained that image through most of the war.⁸³ All buildings that could be commandeered into service took on the task of housing the sick and wounded; hotels, churches, and private homes. The Union Hotel became a hospital under General Banks and remained so until December of 1864 when "the poor old" hotel "fell down & seven Yankees were crushed in the ruins."⁸⁴ During Phil Sheridan's command, he ordered the installation of a "tent hospital, at Shawnee Springs," on the

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 320 (February 25, 1863), 338 (March 25, 1863).

⁸²*Ibid.*, 346 (April 6, 1863).

⁸³JC, January 12, 1862.

⁸⁴MGL, 741 (December 16, 1864).

edge of town.⁸⁵ At one point there were twenty buildings in town designated as "hospitals," needed most after some of the worst battles. It is doubtful that the numbers of casualties actually coming to Winchester ever reached this high but word through town after major battles gave women pause to wonder how they would be able to handle the casualties. Nearly 3,000 wounded were expected in Winchester after the Battle of Sharpsburg and they believed that 5,000 wounded were headed their way after Gettysburg. Occasionally, generals sent word to town that their wounded were on the way, such as the "dispatch...from Jackson, to the ladies to prepare for his sick & wounded."⁸⁶ Lee watched sadly as ambulances arrived, then got to work, along with other women in town, to take care of the needs of the wounded.⁸⁷ [See illustration 38]

When Mary Greenhow Lee's "soldier work," extended to "hospital work," one of her most important details was to provide food. Scarcity affected her own family until they "adopt[ed] the prevailing style of two meals a day instead of three," and began accepting "good things" from their friends.⁸⁸ But she tried to make sure that the patients in the hospitals had appropriate things to eat, depending upon their needs. Besides the "tea, coffee, bread, flaxseed tea & lemonade," the "hot biscuits & (rusks)," "cimblins," or "sago" and "blanc mange and marmalade" she took to the hospitals, she also begged

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 695-697 (September 28-30, 1864), 715 (November 2, 1864).

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 690 (September 23, 1864), MGL, 125 (June 1, 1862), 228 (September 10, 1862), 430 (July 6, 1863); JC, September 20, 1862.

⁸⁷MGL, 228 (September 10, 1862), 631 (July 4, 1864), 672 (August 27, 1864).

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 717 (November, 1864), 761 (January 11, 1865).



38. Shawnee Springs, location of the Sheridan Field Hospital in 1864

others for "some lemons for [her] wounded men" and treats "of apples and--onions."⁸⁹

Keeping track of which patients had the capability of taking solid foods, she "sent chicken soup and rice to one room...blanc mange to one--baked apples to another set," and "currant jelly to one poor Lt.,...wounded in the mouth," who could "only take liquids."⁹⁰ A patient named Ivey asked her for "egg-pie," and listed what he imagined to be the recipe. When she presented it to him, "he pronounced [it] excellent."⁹¹ Upon finding that men in the "Louisiana ward" at the Union "had not been well fed," Lee took the "ward master home" with her and had him carry "soup and milk" back to the hospital.⁹²

Although the nursing care women gave their families was supposed to have come naturally, modesty dictated that they not be intensively involved in nursing men in the hospitals.⁹³ For the most part, male nurses filled that function. Lee did not comment much on actual nursing work she may have done. She did note how "murderous" the "horrible minie balls" were to the men, checked for a "bright hectic flush" on patients' cheeks, and commented on the "shocking wounds" of one group of men coming in who had "so many" wounds "in the face,....shot through the jaws & tongue." She also helped dress wounds, as did sister-in-law Rose O'Neale Greenhow when she visited Lee in

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 33 (March 25, 1862), 36 (March 26, 1862), 138 (June 9, 1862), 416 (June 17, 1863), 502 (October 26, 1863), 435 (July 15, 1863), 699 (October, 2, 1864), 742 (December 17, 1864), 746 (December 23, 1864).

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 674 (August 30, 1864).

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 486 (September 28, 1863).

⁹²*Ibid.*, 693 (September 26, 1864).

⁹³Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 102, 109, 110, 111, 112.

Winchester.⁹⁴

Lee discovered other ways to be useful as a nurturing, selfless female. She set her nieces to rolling bandages, and found furniture and sheets for the hospitals. By the end of the war, Mary Greenhow Lee had become somewhat of a hospital administrator. "I staid some hours distributing supplies & running about to collect more....By to-morrow," she wrote, "I hope things will be more in order & some stores collected."⁹⁵ In addition to seeing to food and supplies necessary for medical care, Lee also saw to patients' personal needs. She located crutches, pipes, tobacco, "some gospels," fans, shirts, tin cups, and "tracts" to give them, as requested.⁹⁶ "The men always have so much to tell me," she wrote, "or ask me to do for them," but she asserted that it was her "chief pleasure to contribute to the comfort of" the soldiers.⁹⁷

Visits from women in town must have given the patients a lift. Owen J. Edwards of the 114th New York Volunteers woke up on September 20, 1864, after the Third Battle of Winchester, "in the old mill with an amputated arm." The surgeons moved him "to Winchester to the old church hospital" a couple days later. Mary Greenhow Lee did not serve at any of the church hospitals, restricting her time to the Union and the York hotels, but Edwards's experiences must have been similar to the patients she attended. Besides his "old stub of arm painning [him] some," Edwards's main complaint was boredom. "I have nothing to do here," he wrote, "but lay in bed," a grievance probably

⁹⁴MGL, 48 (April 2, 1862), 278 (December 23, 1862), 233 (September, 1862).

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 63 (July 4, 1864), 724 (November 21, 1864).

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 634 (July 8, 1864), 635 (July 9, 1864), 700 (October 4, 1864), 712 (October 26, 1864).

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 466 (August 28, 1863), 468 (August 30, 1863).

similar to many of the patients once they began to heal. Any visit from the women of Winchester, therefore, must have been a welcome diversion.⁹⁸

There were days when Lee not only fed patients, but also spent the time, "preaching to some, scolding some, cheering others, writing letters, reconciling differences," and "getting whatever clothing" they might need.⁹⁹ During one visit Lee noticed a man she termed "the poor red headed Catholic" in a "dying condition" and, when he expressed interest "in the plan of salvation" she had "told him of," she wrote "down a simple prayer for him that he might read it all day." He was dead by the time she returned to visit him again.¹⁰⁰

Writing was a large part of her hospital work. Since many of the men could not write home, or were too wounded to do so, she wrote "notes and letters...to their friends" and families.¹⁰¹ She also notified those families for which she had complete names and locations when soldiers died. For patients in which she had taken a keen interest, she also made arrangements for their burial. When a man named Pringle died, she acquired "a lot in the cemetery for him,...placed flowers over him,...then followed him to his very grave."¹⁰² For another, she "found enough white flowers" in November "for a wreath," and placed it on his breast before they closed the coffin.¹⁰³

⁹⁸Diary of Owen J. Edwards, Company D, 114th New York Volunteers, typescript, HL.

⁹⁹MGL, 708 (October 19, 1864).

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 695 (September 28, 1864), 699 (October, 1864).

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 688 (September 21, 1864).

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 234 (September 23, 1862).

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, 715 (November 2, 1864).

Drew Gilpin Faust argues that nursing during the Civil War did not become the gateway to equality that has been supposed. Work that southern women did, according to Faust, is better designated "hospital work," rather than "nursing," because their activities had more to do with seeing to men's needs other than their infirmities. For the most part this argument agrees with Mary Greenhow Lee's activities in the hospitals. Faust's assertion that "most elite women served intermittently or not at all" in the hospitals does not. Lee's hospital visits and errands through town making sure that supplies were available to keep the hospitals running at times wore her down, saddened and depressed her, and took her away from her family responsibilities. On the other hand, the activity gave her one of the most immediate ways to aid in the war effort.¹⁰⁴

Clearly, Mary Greenhow Lee's nurturing character had plenty of opportunities to manifest during the war. She aided the war effort by building up a contraband store for her army, running an underground mail service, and working in the hospitals, "willing to endure any privation to become a beggar" for the Cause, and feeling no shame in it.¹⁰⁵

Some months after the war, as she struggled to organize details for the next phase of her life in Baltimore, Lee met with, and was entertained by, several people who had heard of her strenuous activities during the war. One such hostess greeted her warmly

¹⁰⁴Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 102, 109, 110, 111, 112. For references to Lee's work in the hospitals, see MGL, 33-36, 40, 128, 131, 135, 137-140, 145, 147-148, 154, 163, 166, 177-178, 183-184, 187, 196, 199, 202, 204, 208, 211, 215, 223-224, 226, 228-237, 239, 241, 246-248, 252-256, 258-260, 263-264, 266, 268, 270-272, 275, 277-281, 420-421, 423, 425, 247, 430-440, 443, 446-447, 449-451, 453, 455-461, 463-466, 468-470, 474-475, 477, 479, 485-491, 493, 498-499, 501, 505-507, 633-642, 644-645, 647-648, 650-651, 657-660, 662-665, 671-674, 676, 679, 681, 684, 686-690, 692-695, 698-703, 705, 708-714, 716-722, 725-728, 731-732, 734, 736, 738-739, 744-745, 749-751, 755, 759, 764, 770-771, 786.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 814 (April 16, 1865).

and offered her services whenever Lee might need them. The woman's warm reception made Mary Greenhow Lee feel as if she "were a Confederate soldier" and she admitted that she "appreciated the feeling" of being included in that group.¹⁰⁶ Lee contributed to the war effort to the extent that her abilities and resources allowed. Through it all she won the right to claim the identity of not only a Confederate, but also a soldier, while working under the duress of having the enemy within close range. The style with which Lee and other Winchester women managed against the invasion forces is the subject of the next chapter.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 888-889 (November 8, 1865).

CHAPTER VII

"THIS IS SURELY THE DAY OF WOMAN'S POWER": MARY GREENHOW LEE'S GENDER WARFARE¹

Mary Greenhow Lee recorded in her journal that upon returning to Washington after a tour of the Kernstown battlefield, Secretary of State William H. Seward was asked how he found Union feeling in Winchester. His reply: "The men are all in the army, & the women are the devils."² Lee was one of those women. She had no part in the decision to go to war, nor in the decisions made in waging war, but found herself and her family squarely in the middle of war for almost four years. How does a woman wage war when she is expected to be passively patriotic, to sacrifice male family members and friends, to sew flags and uniforms, and to remind God constantly whose side He should be on? She wages war by taking advantage of her status in society and by pressing contemporary gender ideology to its limits. Mary Greenhow Lee recognized that, as a woman, she faced some limitations, but being a woman also afforded her a way to wage war against male northern invaders that her male Confederates did not have.

Lee knew well the rules of the patriarchal society into which she was born. Those rules restricted her rights, but also afforded her protection and a certain deference from

¹MGL, 47 (April 1, 1862).

²*Ibid.*, 58 (April 8, 1862); LL, April 7, 1862.

gentlemen. She waged her warfare based on those assumptions. At the same time Lee's social standing relied upon how well she adhered to her prescribed gender role. Her class identification cannot be separated from her gender. Therefore, Lee used a dynamic mix of her class and her gender against the enemy. War, however, forced her to alter the guidelines she adhered to for each. Lee's personal sense of social place remained unchanged but the sustained crisis of war forced her to reexamine qualities she judged essential in those with whom she spent her time until invasion by northern troops raised patriotism above all others in Lee's criteria for being included within her circle.

War, in fact, drove both men and women to make use of a gender/class combination when dealing with members of the opposite sex. Union General Benjamin Butler's solution to the problem of dealing with women's disrespect and scorn in New Orleans was his General Order No. 28. Not knowing how long his soldiers' "flesh and blood" could withstand the epithets and "insulting gesture[s]" directed at them "by these bejeweled, becrinolined and laced creatures calling themselves ladies," he ordered his men to treat women who behaved in this fashion as "common women plying their vocation." According to Butler, it worked. "These she-adders of New Orleans," he wrote, "were at once shamed into propriety of conduct by the order."³ In this case he used class as a weapon against women since he had few options open to him.

Butler explained later that he had feared his soldiers would relax the gender rules requiring them to be gentlemen in the presence of a lady, and granted his men the assumption that unladylike behavior voided the title of "lady." Seemingly, this theory meant that as "common women" a female's insults would have no effect because her

³*Charleston Mercury*, July 21, 1862. Order given May 15, 1862.

opinions were not valued as a "lady's" would be. Drew Gilpin Faust has noted that Butler fought women's insults toward his soldiers by making women accountable for their actions in the public sphere, the location where "ladies" had been presumably immune from responsibility.⁴

Butler is the best known and most publicized commander for taking this stand. Others, however, followed the same strategy, including commanders in Winchester. Colonel William D. Lewis, Jr. posted his proclamation there on April 17, 1862, giving both men and women equal warning against "circulating flying rumours and creating false excitements."⁵ The next month the Provost Marshal ordered that Winchester "ladies shall not...insult the soldiers." And, in a similar move to Butler's General Order 76, which stated that women as well as men must take an oath of allegiance, Winchester women were being ordered to take an oath as early as August of 1862.⁶ Eventually, General Philip H. Sheridan arrested all Winchester men of conscription age. Sheridan explained his actions by stating that, although he had "no especial charges against" the men, "he chose to show this community that he had the power to compel respect to his soldiers." Sheridan knew that men were not the only ones disrespecting his soldiers. Disrespect toward Union soldiers also came from the women. As long as he remained within the usual social parameter, he had few weapons to use against the women and, as Mary Greenhow Lee reported, "he could not resist the women because that would be

⁴Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 207-214.

⁵Proclamation reprinted in JPC, 15-16.

⁶Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 207-211; MGL, 66 (April 15, 1862), 102 (May 15, 1862), 200 (August 12, 1862).

called brutal." Since he could not arrest the women, he simply deprived them of their husbands.⁷

Butler and other commanders were forced to use imaginative ways to defend against patriotic southern women because they were constrained by gender construction from fending them off as they would men. The same frustration could be applied to the women. Winchester "ladies" could not defend against the invasion of northern forces in the manner of men, by pointing a rifle at them. They could, however, use their social status and gender as weapons: Mary Greenhow Lee's tactic. She incorporated into her circle members of a lower social class while at the same time denying that right to Union officers of her own standing in society. In addition, she adopted a mode of warfare against the occupiers that consisted of a refusal to play the role of helpless female, thus denying them the role of protective male, the designation she reserved for patriotic southern men.⁸ Lee worked out a system of warfare within the confines established by society.

That Mary Greenhow Lee felt herself to be waging warfare is obvious from her choice of metaphors and imagery. She "*armed*" herself with a basket of food when she knew her presence at the hospital would be challenged. During another conflict at the

⁷*Ibid.*, 728 (November 29, 1864).

⁸See Jane E. Schultz, "Mute Fury: Southern Women's Diaries of Sherman's March to the Sea, 1864-1865," in Helen M. Cooper, Adrienne Suslander Munich, and Susan Merrill Squier, eds., *Arms and the Woman: War, Gender, and Literary Representation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989) 59-79, 59-62. Schultz's work is a good comparison to this study. Women in areas such as Atlanta were free from enemy occupation for most of the war and were forced to deal with the realization that not all men could be counted on to protect them during Sherman's march to the sea, near the end. Women in Winchester, however, faced that fact early on, and were obliged to make distinctions between filling their role as women in relation to men constrained by gender to act as protectors versus women involuntarily forced into a relationship with men who joined their community, not as social actors, but as military combatants.

hospital she "took the position of the Cavalry & brought up the rear, protecting the retreat" of her allies. At still another time, when denied the right to take pudding to her wounded men, she debated the issue until she finally "came off conqueror & was left in undisputed possession of the field." At times even nature seemed to be her enemy. When she got stuck in a snow drift, she described her reaction to the contretemps in military terms: "I almost cried from fatigue, cold & the dread of either *advancing or retreating*," and finally "had to fall back very much demoralized."⁹

Lee waged her warfare not only against invaders from the North, but also against northern men who, in her estimation, had neither an understanding of southern women, nor a right to demand that she respect them as men. Gender ideology in the South developed differently than it did in the North. Bertram Wyatt-Brown has identified the "Code of Southern Honor," as both a solution to woman's physical weakness and a reason to keep her restricted politically and economically. As Drew Gilpin Faust has argued, "protecting white women from threats posed by the slave system upon which white male power rested was an inextricable part of planters' paternalistic responsibility."¹⁰

⁹MGL, 448 (July 31, 1863), 38 (March 27, 1862), 167 (July 8, 1862), 779 (February 9, 1865), emphases added.

¹⁰Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) 227; Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 1213. Almost from the beginning of stable settlement in the South men vented their competitive spirit in games of chance such as horse racing and cock fighting. Competition in the economy became tempered through organized, representative competition in sport. Slavery stood as an economic tool for the most competitive planters and racism became a buffer that lessened the friction between whites of different economic classes. As southern culture matured, and as tensions grew between sections from the increases in northern industrial capitalism and northern criticism of slavery, the Code of Honor became more entrenched. See T. H. Breen, "Horses and Gentlemen: The Cultural Significance of Gambling Among the Gentry of Virginia," in *William and Mary Quarterly* 34 (1977) 239-257: 239-241.

This was the male side of gender ideology in the nineteenth-century South. If women had a distinctive set of gender roles by which to exist in society, that assumes that there was an opposite set for men. As Nancy J. Chodorow argues, gender difference must be understood in terms of a relationship, an "other" against which one gender operates. If women's place was the domestic realm, men's place was in the political and the economic. Women handled the private sphere; men the public. The assumed vulnerability of women necessitated a protective capacity in men.¹¹ Historians debate whether or not southern women were unhappy and frustrated with the institution of slavery because it was immoral or because it was annoying, but almost all agree that slavery had become a burden to many southern women. Criticisms from the North, however, drove both men and women to defend the institution. Suzy Clarkson Holstein has suggested that "to inspire the southern man and to obviate any potential threat to his tenuous power," southern women chose to express "their dissatisfaction only in private," and to "embrace the mythical identity" of the Southern Lady, upholding the "chivalric codes the South needed for its identity."¹²

Warfare waged by the women of Winchester, according to Lee, escalated correspondingly with the length of the war. Having the enemy in their midst merely made the women more determined to annoy them. "The feeling against the women is increasing every day," Lee wrote, and "they say 'the revolution can never be quelled, till

¹¹Chodorow, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, 99-113; Bepko and Krestan, *Too Good*, 166-167. According to Bepko and Krestan, these rules "that develop between men and women are patterns in a dance choreographed by the society" in which they live. Today's term for the male steps in this dance is "Man's Code of Strength," which include "Be a Warrior/Protector," "Be the Master," and "Be the Provider."

¹²Suzy Clarkson Holstein, "'Offering Up Her Life': Confederate women on the Altars of Sacrifice," in *Southern Studies*, 1991 2(2) 113-130: 121.

the Secession women are subdued'." Warfare for Mary Greenhow Lee and her neighbors consisted not of weapons but of words and an attitude of disrespect. They fought as women fight, not as soldiers fight. They took up the habit of wearing thick veils and sunbonnets and carrying parasols to keep their faces from revealing any signs of acknowledgement. Lee took note of women she saw "passing unveiled" as if they were out of uniform. If forced into contact with the enemy, women's facial expressions registered disinterest or disrespect. In effect, patriotic southern women in Winchester withheld their countenances from Union soldiers to show that they did not consent to the presence of northern forces in their town.¹³

Julia Chase commented critically that the Secessionist women had "all adopted sun bonnets,...some with long curtains, called Jeff Davis bonnets. They put on many airs and frowns and sneers, and....are certainly bold and impudent."¹⁴ She looked forward to the arrival of Union forces, and could not understand why Secessionist women thought of the "Yankees" as "monsters in human form."¹⁵ Chase did not seem to adopt the same tactics for use against her enemies when Confederates held Winchester, nor did she understand the reasons for these efforts on the part of secession women. Although Unionists were outnumbered in town, the best interpretation of this discrepancy might be that she did not feel invaded by either Union or Confederate forces since she welcomed the former and the latter, although rebels, were southerners at home on their own ground.

¹³MGL, 8, (March 13, 1862), 15 (March 16, 1862), 37 (March 27, 1862), 95 (May 11, 1862), 102 (May 16, 1862).

¹⁴Julia Chase's entry for May 16, 1862, quoted in Quarles, *Occupied*, 40.

¹⁵JC, March 9, 1862.

In any event, Chase seemed to resent secession women more than Confederate military men, making hers less a gender conflict than a growing feud with members of her own sex.

Lee and her friends, however, were trying to combat the presence of men who assumed the right to dominate them without having the women's consent to do so. Writing about the effect of the "Secesh" women of Winchester on the Union soldiers, Mary Greenhow Lee wrote, "I am delighted to hear that they...say they were never treated with such scorn as by the Winchester ladies," and that soldiers were boasting that they would "make the Secession women hold their tongues." Later, when reporting that 15,000 northern troops were massed at Harpers Ferry and 40,000 at Middletown, Lee wryly suggested that these combined forces might be enough to "subdue the women of Winchester." Although Lee's position in society demanded that she remain a "lady," she wanted northern soldiers to fear her as "a great Virago."¹⁶ The "Secesh" women of Winchester gained a reputation among the Union soldiers for their defiant rebel spirit. This reputation grew, at least in the minds of the women. Mary Magill recalled later that Union soldiers "almost invariably...held exaggerated ideas of the power, influence, and knowledge possessed by the Southern women."¹⁷

Although none of the Winchester diarists reported that women fired weapons on Union soldiers, Colonel George H. Gordon of the Second Massachusetts Regiment believed that they did. In his report on the First Battle of Winchester, Gordon claimed that "males and females vied with each other in increasing the number of their victims,

¹⁶MGL, 12 (March 14, 1862), 94 (May 10, 1862), 162 (July 2, 1862), 281 (December 25, 1862).

¹⁷Magill, *Chronicles of the Late War*, 202.

by firing from the houses," and he declared that "this record of infamy is preserved for the females of Winchester." Whether or not this actually happened, the perception of this colonel that it did might explain some of the enmity Union soldiers felt for the women of Winchester.¹⁸

If antebellum women thought of themselves as restrained within gendered boundaries, war—at least in Winchester—broke those bounds. As Mary Greenhow Lee noted early in the war, it surprised her to find "timid, retiring women...who have kept off the Yankees, defended their property, & when depredations were committed have gone alone (for there are no men to go about with the women now) to" the Union commanders in town "for redress. They get none," she wrote, "but still it is not because they do not boldly maintain & claim their rights."¹⁹

During the war Lee grew to appreciate women outside of her circle who showed that they were able to handle the stress of military rule under an occupation army and not buckle under the strain. Lizzie Doods, for instance, earned Mary Greenhow Lee's respect by being "the embodiment of wit & sarcasm, in her talks with Yankees." She learned that Doods had been arrested for expressing "some strong Southern sentiment," but had "indignantly refused to take the oath," before being released and had "ordered the guard to fall back and not to dare walk by her side." Lee was "amused at her pluck," convinced that "this spirit of patriotism" was a gift from God "in His elevating & refining influences," a gift that "enlarges & expands minds, that before, had been of the lowest

¹⁸OR, Series I, Vol. XII, Part I, 616-618.

¹⁹MGL, 54 (April 6, 1862).

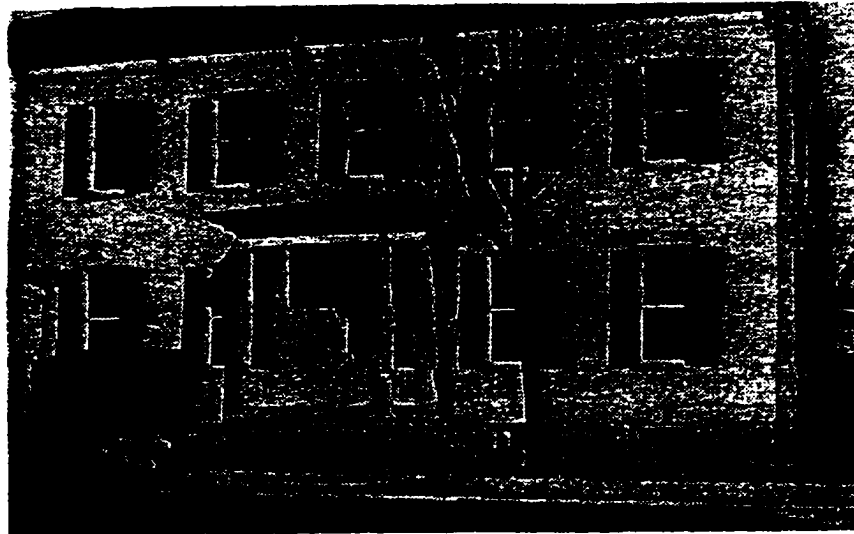
calibre."²⁰

Households living on both sides of Mary Greenhow Lee "changed hands" from one class to another during the war. In October, 1863, Lee's long-time neighbor and friend Dr. Robert T. Baldwin died. She grieved over his death, but also dreaded the prospect of the requisite social civility toward the local family who had purchased the Baldwin house, whom she described only as "people of that class." Lee's new neighbors, Charles F. Eichelberger and his family, had moved from property worth \$500 into the house next door to Lee, valued at over ten times that amount. Improvement in Eichelberger's economic status did not, in Lee's opinion, move him into her social circle merely because it enabled him to move into her neighborhood. He and his family lacked other qualities she believed essential in making them "visitable," the contemporary rubric she applied to values such as education, good manners, family heritage, and civic responsibility. By the end of the war, however, Lee had relaxed the standards by which she measured "people of that class" next door.²¹

As the war ground on, Lee began to see the Eichelbergers in a new light. Whatever their class, Lee appreciated the Eichelbergers as patriotic secessionists who were willing to help her as she struggled against an invading army. A brief visit by her nephew Robert Burwell, a Confederate soldier, could have had severe consequences, for

²⁰*Ibid.*, 66 (April 15, 1862), 200 (August 12, 1862). Research has not revealed who Elizabeth (Lizzie) Doods was and how she fit into the Winchester social scheme. Personal Property Tax and Land Tax Lists for Winchester for 1860 show that Doods was listed as the head-of-household, and that she paid taxes on two lots in Winchester, valued at \$1600, and on one slave, a clock worth \$5, gold/silver plat valued at \$20, furniture worth \$150, and capital invested in manufacturing or mining not requiring license at \$50. Lee's reference to Doods as "the lowest calibre" seems to suggest that the two women had not moved in the same circles before the war.

²¹MGL, 498 (October 22, 1863), 619 (June 13, 1864); MJCG/MHS, 11 (September 23, 1837); *Etiquette*, 45-50; Land Taxes, Winchester, Virginia, 1859, 1860, 1865, LOV.



39. David Barton house, Market Street, Winchester



40. Springdale, rural property of David Barton

example, if not for her new neighbors. Upon hearing of a Union scouting party nearby, Robert's sister, Louisa, "piloted Bob over to Eichelberger's & concealed him in a vault" until the scouting party left. By the end of the war, Mary Greenhow Lee was "pay[ing]...semi-annual visit[s]" on the "people of that class" next door because they had proven by their patriotism to be visitable.²²

Lawyer David Barton, owner of the house opposite the Baldwins from Lee, died in July of 1863. His widow eventually moved her family to their rural property outside of town and leased the Winchester house to the Tuley family. Mrs. Tuley, a widow, was a woman of "that class," so designated by Lee for various reasons, not the least of which was Tuley's limited education. Although Lee ultimately became fond of Tuley, and appreciated especially her patriotic thoughts, she often cringed at how Tuley presented them, stating that she was as "promiscuous as usual in her grammar & pronunciation." Tuley's patriotism made her visitable during the war but her speech pattern signified to Lee that her education had not prepared her for a genteel life.²³ [See illustrations 39 and 40]

Tuley received an unexpected visit from Mary Greenhow Lee one Sunday. The visit seemed to surprise Lee as well. "I did not think, a week ago," Lee wrote, "I would ever pay Mrs. T. a Sunday visit, but we all feel equally helpless."²⁴ Enemy occupation of Winchester denied the *connexion* the power and influence they had relied upon, thus bringing the classes closer together, at times, in their common vulnerability. As war

²²MGL, 630 (July 2, 1864), 761 (January 11, 1865), 866 (September 7, 1865).

²³*Ibid.*, 431 (July 7, 1863), 325 (December 5, 1863).

²⁴*Ibid.*, 16 (March 17, 1862).

continued, money had even less to do with societal position for Mary Greenhow Lee than it had before. She even admitted to having stolen "some delicious little ginger cakes" while visiting Tuley to take home as a treat for her nieces, hardly an action of an F.F.V. Lady. The old measurements of class fell away and a new one took over. Now national sentiment and patriotism drove her away from old friends and propelled her toward new ones.²⁵ As the war continued, she began spending her time with some of the people she would have jealously guarded herself against before the war.²⁶

Lee found one woman in particular, Mrs. Sperry, to be "very smart...& very entertaining." She identified Sperry as plain and uneducated, a woman who had "always associated with common persons." When Lee heard, however, that this "plain person" had written a "poetic sketch of the war," she invited her over to read it to the family, and "was perfectly astonished" at her talent, commenting that, in spite of her background, Sperry had a "decided genius." War gave Lee an opportunity to see past social barriers to the assets in new acquaintances. Eventually, she concluded that she "prefer[red] people of that class next door," to those she had felt "obliged to be more sociable" with before the war. Because war had forced Lee to reevaluate the values necessary for inclusion in her company, placing patriotism above all others, she began associating with "common persons" herself.²⁷

Julia Kurtz was another woman whose relationship to Mary Greenhow Lee

²⁵*Ibid.*, 814 (April 16, 1865), 559 (February 19, 1864), 100 (May 15, 1862), 783 (February 14, 1865).

²⁶*Ibid.*, 16 (March 17, 1862).

²⁷*Ibid.*, 594 (May 8, 1864), 614 (June 4, 1864).

changed because of the war. A woman in her fifties, single, making her living as a seamstress in Winchester, Kurtz owned real property valued at just \$500 less than Lee's, yet she owned no slaves. With little difference in the economic status of these two women, their social valuation stemmed from the other attributes associated with position, placing Kurtz outside of Mary Greenhow Lee's circle. By the end of the war, however, they had become co-conspirators against the Union. The most important activity that the seamstress and the genteel widow took part in together was the underground post office that Lee ran, with Kurtz helping her get the mail through by various means such as sewing up the letters in the hems of dresses. The two women came from greatly different backgrounds, but the war provided them with enough common interests in the present to overcome the disparity. Kurtz became visitable for Lee, at least for the purposes of patriotism.²⁸

As war modified class lines, it strengthened the barrier between the "Secesh" women and male occupiers and Lee worried about the consequences to manners, suspecting that she could lose her gentility while maintaining her patriotism. In dealing with the enemy, women had little recourse but to ignore them or address them severely when forced into an encounter. "Scorn & contempt are such habitual expressions," Lee wrote, "that I fear they will not readily give place to more lady-like ones."²⁹ Although proud that "the women of Winchester [were] so utterly fearless," she pronounced some

²⁸Winchester City Land Taxes, 1850, 1854, 1859, 1860, 1865; Winchester Personal Property Tax Lists, 1855, 1859, LOV; Eighth and Ninth United States Census; MGL, 48 (April 2, 1862), 71 (April 19, 1862), 99 (May 15, 1862), 261 (November 21, 1862), 558 (February 19, 1864), 590 (May 4, 1864), 684 (September 18, 1864), 783 (February 14, 1865), 815 (April 16, 1865).

²⁹*Ibid.*, 78, 76 (April 23-24, 1862).

of their behavior "perfectly ludicrous" and, when she heard them using "strong language," she became concerned that "the Billingsgate style [would] become habitual." She was referring to the name given to coarse language, often heard in the London fish market of the same name, adopted by some of the Winchester women, language that ran counter to gentility.³⁰

Such behavior drew comment from both friend and foe of the Winchester women. Peyton Clark reported that when one "handsomely dressed 'lady'" caught sight of a Union burial detail ushering a Confederate prisoner of war at gunpoint down the street one day, she asked the officer in charge if "that son of a b—h (pointing to one of the Yankees) [was] going to make one of our men dig a grave for a d—d Yankee?" Clark's explanation that this outburst simply "illustrate[d] the intense indignation felt towards" the Union occupiers "by all classes of society" suggests that he did not condemn the "lady" in question because he understood her frustration.³¹ Julia Chase, however, did not. She noted that the Secession women became "bolder & bolder every day, and talk[ed] as saucy as you please," warning that "all pretensions to ladylike actions" were "forever gone, & the F.F.V.'s will long be remembered for their disgraceful conduct and ridiculous behavior."³²

The women's attitudes provoked notice from as far away as Baltimore and Philadelphia, as well. The *Baltimore American* reported that the behavior of women in

³⁰*Ibid.*, 13 (March 15, 1862), 16-19 (March 17-18, 1862), 724 (November 23, 1864), 76, 78 (April 23-24, 1862).

³¹JPC 35, (July 7, 1862).

³²JC, (April 23, 1862), (April 8, 1864).

Winchester had forced "the commanding officer...to issue an order advising the citizens to be more discreet;" and the *Philadelphia Ledger*, reporting "acts of rudeness and insult...perpetrated" against the soldiers by the "inhabitants calling themselves 'ladies'," suggested that, although "Virginia has always boasted of the high tone of its society and the elegance of its manners,....with their patriotism, all this refinement and courtesy seem to have fled."³³ In fact, General Robert Milroy finally issued a proclamation that "if his men [were] insulted by word or manner, by male or female," they risked imprisonment.³⁴

The members of Mary Greenhow Lee's *connexion* guarded against a "habitual indulgence of passion." Disciplined emotions signaled gentility. Anger, however, indicated a loss of self-control, dignity, and composure; but the degree of risk depended upon gender. Men who lost their temper were in danger of questionable decorum. Women, on the other hand, lost their femininity if they exhibited anger.³⁵

Lee's neighbor, Fanny Barton, became notorious for venting her spleen on the Union soldiers in town. When angered by enemies camping on her grounds, she would tell them that they were welcome to "six feet of Southern land," but nothing else. In relating an outburst Barton visited on General Milroy, Lee declared that "Dickens himself could not have pictured a richer scene." During the shouting match, Barton asserted that "John Brown was the cause of the war," which Milroy termed a "lie." Barton then "drew

³³Both papers copied into John Peyton Clark's diary, 16-17, (April 18, 1862).

³⁴MGL, 389 (May 26, 1863).

³⁵Kasson, *Rudeness & Civility*, 147, 148, 157, 161, 165-168. One reason more homes had mirrors by mid-century was the need to practice mild expressions at home where, even though families could be more relaxed, they were expected to treat each other and their servants as they would behave with them in public.

up close to him & looked, as only Mrs. B. can look & said in a vicious tone, 'Don't you say I lie,'" at which point, Milroy "got into such a rage, that he danced about the room & ordered her out in the most insolent manner." Barton withdrew, but slowly, "keeping her eye on him" as she left.³⁶

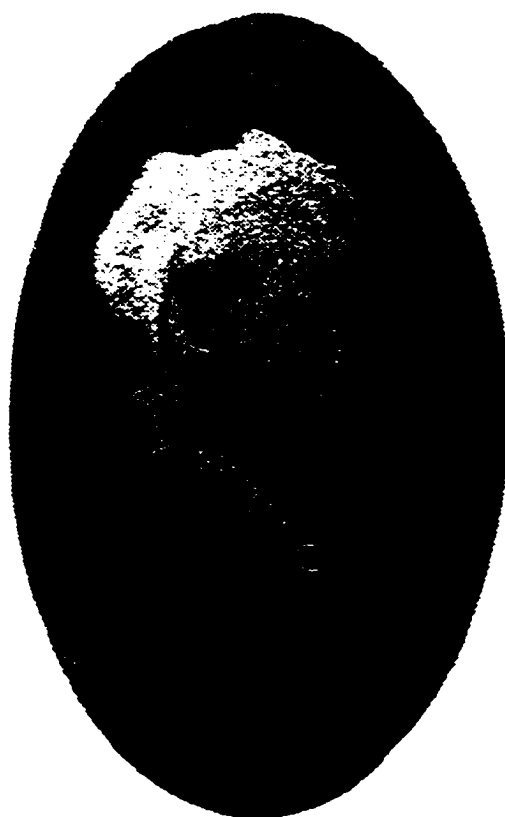
Anger frustrated these women but conversations about their feelings seemed to offer relief, and Lee's record of the incidents reflect that she looked for humor in the ways that women expressed their struggle. Fanny Barton's unbridled rancor lent itself well to the release of tension because she could turn it into comic scenes. For instance, early on she told Lee that to withstand the presence of the enemy, she desired "to be put in a paper box, half filled with pink wadding & then to be covered over with it & kept quiet, till the Yankees" left, "except that some friend" should come in "to turn her over occasionally." This image amused Lee, but it also shows the conflict tearing at the women. Barton believe that she risked losing her true identity—a caring and serene woman—and she wanted to preserve it in the folds of pink softness until the war ended.³⁷

[See illustration 41]

Having an invading army in her town, even camped in her garden for several weeks at a stretch, severely tested Mary Greenhow Lee's temper. It became a struggle for her to retain her "composure & self command" at times and she had to keep a constant check on her anger, placing a strain on the gentility she had been conditioned to observe all of her life, a task not always easy. She could become "so mad" that she would find herself "trembling with passion," surprising family members who "had not

³⁶McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 73 (June 1862); MGL, 312 (February 13, 1863).

³⁷*Ibid.*, 59 (April 10, 1862).



41. Fannie L. Barton

imagined" that she "could be in such a rage." Lee openly lost her temper at times, as in the instance when "two Yankee negroes" refused to move horses from her path and called her "a God damn rebel woman." She became "so indignant that" she "flew up the street at rail road speed, scorning the Yankees by" her "looks so completely that they gave way right and left before" her. Although Lee refused to "beg... favors from the Yankees," one of them who parked his wagon in her garden told her servants that, even if she were to ask a favor of him, he would refuse because she did not speak to him "as a lady ought to speak." Her power and position clearly demanded gendered behavior or she risked losing both.³⁸

In Lee's opinion, however, war had changed the rules of etiquette. Her parents would have been amazed, for example, to know that she and her family observed their custom of afternoon tea while listening to the staccato rhythm of "Confederate sharpshooters" chasing Union soldiers past her door; but the women continued sipping tea without giving the sounds more than brief notice. Mary Greenhow Lee claimed that war diminished propriety, and made everyone "so French," which she equated with "unreserved." During one of the Confederate occupations, a young soldier approached Lee after church and excitedly told her that a telegram had come in which "all that could be deciphered was, 'Good news; Vicksburgh; 22,000,'" then had the "impertinence...to venture to walk" with her down the street, although he had never been introduced to her formally. As she replayed this scene on the pages of her journal, she wrote in

³⁸*Ibid.*, 448 (July 31, 1863), 715 (November 2, 1864), 734 (December 12, 1864), 9 (March 14, 1862), 491 (October 10, 1863), 777 (February 5, 1865); Bepko and Krestan, *Too Good*, 19.

resignation: "etiquette is laid on the shelf now."³⁹

Gender ideology for nineteenth-century women also enjoined them to be attractive and to be a lady.⁴⁰ Lee's sense of decorum and propriety seemed almost innate. She knew, for instance, that woman's half of the gender relationship called for both good manners and a pleasant appearance. Her efforts meant that she respected and appreciated the man or men in her company and should receive the same in return. Whenever forced into dealings with the enemy commanders in town, Lee admitted that she grudgingly dressed herself "more carefully, because they are far more respectful to one well dressed, than in dishabille."⁴¹ Cornelia McDonald made use of the same rule when visiting the Provost Marshal's office to ask a favor. She arrived "stylishly dressed," she wrote, and believed that the officer "was perhaps influenced by the better clothes" she wore, and more inclined to treat her with the respect due a lady."⁴²

On the other hand, when Mary Greenhow Lee needed nothing from the enemy and wanted to emphasize her disdain, she sometimes took pains not to look her best. On one occasion she wrote that she "went down to the parlor windows entirely in dishabille to enjoy my favorite sight--the retreat of the enemy." Although she made sure all the

³⁹MGL, 434 (July 13, 1863), 456 (August 11, 1863), 459 (August 17, 1864). The perception that the French were ill-mannered seems to have been a common assumption among the women in Winchester. Cornelia McDonald made a similar comparison in her diary. She reported that a Union officer by the name of Cluseret had resigned from the army over an injustice done to the citizens of Winchester. His behavior toward her and others in town must have impressed her as civil. "He was, it is said, a French barber," she wrote, but added, "he may have been, but he has very good manners." This suggests that she felt compelled to qualify his origins by reporting that he did not fit the characteristics commonly associated with them. McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 126 (January, 1863).

⁴⁰Anne F. Scott, *Southern Lady*, 70.

⁴¹MGL, 697 (September 30, 1864).

⁴²McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 49.

women in the household donned "skirts and shawls" to look pretty and show their respect when Confederate troops came to parade in front of her door, for the enemy she did the opposite. In fact, that drove their custom of wearing sunbonnets and aprons in public. It became their uniform. "The Provost says," Lee reported, that "the ladies shall not wear sunbonnets & aprons on the street, because they only do it to insult the soldiers."⁴³ Mary Greenhow Lee and her friends used gender ideology in their battles with the enemy and Union officers admitted their effectiveness.

Lee made her position clear to enemy commanders when she told them that even though she and her family were "rebels," she "expected as citizens to be treated according to the usages of civilized warfare," and, as women, "the courtesy that every lady has the right to expect from every gentleman." When the commanders bowed, seeming to agree with her, she "assumed a very lofty tone" and thought she had "inspired them with some respect for" her as a "determined & openly avowed rebel."⁴⁴ She never acknowledged, however, that her success at being a "good" Confederate hinged a great deal on the opposition being "good" gentlemen. The fact that soldiers rarely violated Lee's home implies that Union commanders in Winchester attempted to follow the rules of genteel society, even though Mary Greenhow Lee must have severely tested their faithfulness to the rules at times. According to Lee, her reputation among the Union officers was awesome. "I know I can cow them" she stated, and "make them afraid of me whenever we come in collision." Paradoxically, although Lee expected Union commanders to be

⁴³MGL, 666, 668 (August, 1864), 102 (May, 1862).

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 484 (August 23, 1863), 290 (January 4, 1863).

gentlemen, she also wanted them to fear her as a Confederate.⁴⁵

Union commanders began to believe, Lee reported, that "the women of Virginia [were] all insane."⁴⁶ Indeed, area women kept them busy, if not from dodging minie balls, at least from answering their demands for protection. General James A. Shields complained that "these miscreants [Rebels] fly before us and leave their wives and children in our power," understanding that fighting a war among civilians fettered him with the added responsibility of taking over the duties of protecting families of Confederate soldiers. Mrs. W. Strother Jones wrote to General Nathaniel Banks relative to wagonloads of corn and hay taken from her farm by his Quarter Master, asking for payment, and ending her request with the hope that he would be "willing to attend to the rights of all helpless women." To another such reminder, the commander wrote, "you are mistaken in supposing we come into Virginia for your protection." In case the woman expected northern men to behave as her husband would, the officer disabused her of the notion, stating, "we make no pretensions to that Chivalry which vilifies the major part of the American People...and then abandons its own women and children to seek the protection of those they...despise." Cornelia McDonald's answer to a similar retort from General Milroy: "it is only from the army you command that we want protection." Mary Greenhow Lee also demanded protection, like Cornelia McDonald, on the grounds that their presence occasioned the need for it. In other words, Union occupiers had created

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 188 (July 29, 1862), 312 (February 13, 1863).

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 14 (March 16, 1862).

the situation they complained against.⁴⁷

When Colonel Stanton demanded rooms in her home, Lee drew on her most practiced role as a woman of high social status to create a perception of control. "I kept my eye fixed on his face," she wrote, and "with a very bland manner assured him I had not gone to him to argue the question, nor to ask a favour, but simply to demand the protection that every woman had a right to demand from every man." Stanton finally gave in, stating, "I must confess myself out-Generaled." He agreed to take only the rooms she insisted were available, those in the wing of the house. When Lee won her point, she "could scarcely restrain [her] exultation," but instead said "something civil about its only being by a woman." Lee's deference to Stanton on this point caught him in a net of responsibility based on her acceptance of their relationship, and on her terms, not from his demands. Whether or not Stanton knew it, by calling attention to her subordinate position, Lee was actually reminding him of her right to expect his protection. In a sense this is the first instance of Mary Greenhow Lee submitting to a relationship with an occupying commander. Granted, Stanton forced her into it but, once there, Lee claimed the power of the subordinate. To maintain her strength, she emphasized her weak position in the relationship, forcing Stanton to assume a place of obligation.⁴⁸

Rarely did Lee willingly enter into even a working alliance with a Union man.

⁴⁷Letter to Nathaniel Banks from James A. Shields, Brigadier General, from Winchester, March 22, 1862; letter from Mrs. W. Strother Jones to General Banks, April 2, 1862; letter to an unnamed person, April 9, 1862, Nathaniel Prentiss Banks Papers, LC; McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 127, 128, (January 10, 1863).

⁴⁸MGL, 329-39 (March 16, 1863).

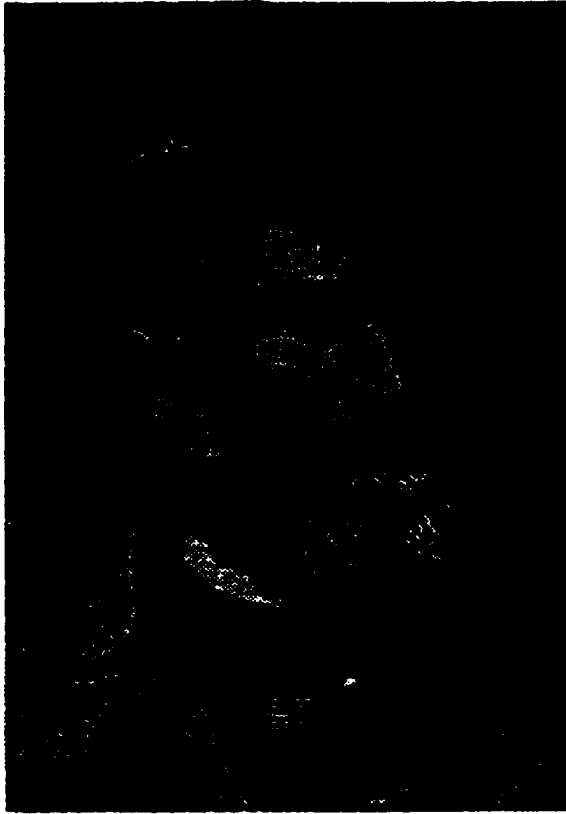
When she did, they were usually men she believed to be in a less-advantaged social position and whom she required to aid in her activities, such as laborers, or "Yankee nurses," and orderlies like Dutton, the man whose aid she came to during his arrest for desertion. Southern men who were patriots found it easier to make Lee's acquaintance, although even a gray uniform did not blind her to possible character flaws.

Mary Greenhow Lee was not uncritical of her own soldiers. In particular, she was not fond of General Jubal A. Early. On July 2, 1864, Lee played hostess to several Confederate officers, including Early, whom she reported was, "very stupid, as he always is." Perhaps he did not fit her definition of "gentleman" because he was, in the words of historian Clement Eaton, "somewhat of an eccentric, an old bachelor of biting and sarcastic tongue who acquired the reputation of outcursing any man in the Confederate army."⁴⁹ [See illustration 42]

Men who were not southerners, but who favored the southern cause did not easily gain Lee's trust, either. British correspondents came to America to follow events of the war. One of these men was Colonel Garnett Wolseley of the British army, who travelled through the South on a mission to educate himself in American warfare.⁵⁰ Travelling with Wolseley were two newspaper men: Frances Charles Lawley, a "special correspondent" for the *London Times*; and an artist who worked for the *Illustrated London News*, Frank Vizetelly, "a big, florid, red-bearded Bohemian" with a flare for

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 630 (July 1, 1864); Eaton, *Southern Confederacy*, 285.

⁵⁰Lehmann, *Biography of Field-Marshal Lord Wolseley*, 118-119; Adrian Preston, ed., *The South African Diaries of Sir Garnet Wolseley, 1875*, (Cape Town, South Africa, A. A. Balkema, 1971), 26.



42. Jubal A. Early

the dramatic, who tended to spend his leisure time imbibing, according to his biographer.⁵¹

"About dusk there was a knock at the door," Lee wrote, and "it proved to be Mr. Vizitelley [sic], the Honble., Frank Lawley & Col. Wolseley (three grand Englishmen) who had come from the army in Genl. Lee's carriage & implored me to take them in; I demurred but they insisted & I consented."⁵² When Laura Lee reported their arrival, she wrote, "They are Mr. Lawley, (who knows Mr. Mason very well) Mr. Vizetelly, and Col. Woolseley [sic]. The first is a dignified, polished gentleman, the two last are not."⁵³ Mary Lee agreed, stating that Lawley was "evidently a gentleman & Mr. Mason's endorsement settles that point," but that "Col. Wolseley...is flash, neither he nor V. compare with our Virginia gentlemen."⁵⁴

The Lee women accepted Lawley immediately because he brought with him a letter of introduction from James Murray Mason, allowing him to borrow on the trust these women had for Mason to quickly establish a willing relationship with them. Vizetelly and Wolseley, on the other hand, had to work their way into the women's acceptance. At first Lee deemed Vizetelly a "mendacious snob," and had no little difficulty with his propensity for drinking. He would come in at one in the morning after a drinking "frolic with Wade Hampton, Col. Alexander," and others, kicking the glass

⁵¹See William Stanley Hoole, *Lawley Covers the Confederacy* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: Confederate Publishing Company, Inc., 1964) 12, 13, 15, 52; and William Stanley Hoole, *Vizetelly Covers the Confederacy* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: Confederate Publishing Company, Inc., 1957) 55.

⁵²MGL, 241 (October 12, 1862).

⁵³LL, October 14, 1862.

⁵⁴MGL, 241 (October 12, 1862).

out of her lantern as they staggered in, and then try to work his way back into her good graces the next day. After another spree, he stood before her "very penitent," making "humble apologies," and "protest[ing] that he was going to church three times on Sunday to do penance."⁵⁵

Repentant or not, Vizetelly continued this behavior. In September of 1864, both General John B. Gordon and Vizetelly stayed with Lee. When the artist again arrived home very drunk, Lee tried shaming him, but noted out of the corner of her eye that Gordon and her nieces were having a difficult time restraining their convulsions of laughter at the scene. Finally, Gordon "went out and finding a courier at the door, sent him in to tell Vizetelly that Anderson's corp [sic] was moving and he staggered off." Unfortunately, "he came back later, bringing two more intoxicated men with him."⁵⁶ Even with all of the trouble he gave her, however, and even with the obvious evidence that he lacked the restraint and temperance demanded of genteel society, when he left to follow the army, she wrote, "I miss him very much."⁵⁷ Vizetelly could tell a good tale, and proved bright and well-travelled, all of which appealed to Mary Greenhow Lee, but his obvious support of the Confederacy is what probably won her over. *[See illustration 43]*

Lee did not mention many of Wolseley's characteristics that drew her into a comfortable relationship with him except for what she learned about his extensive military

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 244-247 (October 17-24, 1862), 251 (October 31, 1862).

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 679 (September 8, 1864).

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 255 (September 7, 1862). A colorful character all of his life, Vizetelly's death is cloaked in mystery. He disappeared while covering the Sudanese Civil War in 1883 and, although his friend, General Wolseley, "turned heaven and earth in search of" him, Vizetelly was never found, either alive or dead. Hoole, *Vizetelly*, 157-161.



43. Sketch by Frank Vizitelly, the Confederate encampment near Winchester, 1862

service. When he left, she "would not take board, but received him as a guest."⁵⁸ Whatever qualities he exhibited, their friendship lasted throughout the rest of Lee's life. Eventually knighted, Sir Garnet Wolseley remained in contact with several of the Confederate commanders he encountered during the Civil War and with Mary Greenhow Lee. Wolseley wrote one significant article about the Civil War, published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* in the first half of 1863, after an extensive rewrite by his sister. In the article, although not mentioning Lee by name which would have breached gender etiquette by placing her in the public eye, he did write that when he and his companions arrived in Winchester, they "drove up to the inn, where as usual no accommodation was to be had; but a hospitable lady kindly took us in, and entertained us during our stay in that place." The "hospitable lady" was Mary Greenhow Lee. She wrote in December of 1863: "I never expected to figure in Blackwoods, but I have found myself in many unexpected places, during this war."⁵⁹

Mary Greenhow Lee's relationships with men who supported the Confederacy were based first on their patriotism, then on their personal qualities she judged captivating. She appreciated men who were "attractive," "elegant looking," and "well shaped."⁶⁰ "Charming" men won her favor, as well as those "with refined & cultivated sensibilities; very handsome & exceedingly graceful."⁶¹ Confederate officers who stayed with her earned her approbation and her friendship if they were "bright & spirited,"

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 242 (October 14, 1862).

⁵⁹Colonel Wolseley, "A Month's Visit to the Confederate Headquarters," in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, January-June, 1863, Vol. XCIII, 1-29, 22; MGL, 524 (December 1, 1863).

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 140 (June 11, 1862), 229 (September 11, 1862), 230 (September 13, 1862).

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 235 (September 26, 1862).

"congenial," "pious," and "clever." ⁶² Some of the same skills Lee had employed as a flirtatious young woman she used in the relationships she formed during the war: wit, intelligence, and what one of the young officers called her "faculty for managing men."⁶³ Lee's ability to manage men sharpened during the war but she also began questioning her relationship with them, whether they were southern or northern.

Drew Faust argues that "women...began to regard their difficulties as a test of the moral as well as the bureaucratic and military effectiveness of the new nation." Faust sees women's loss of patriotism as the result of the contradiction between "sacrifice as a means of overcoming uselessness" in the propaganda offered to them at the beginning of the war, and the reality that their efforts were failing. When women demanded that their men come home and when they rioted for food, Faust argues that this suggests that women lost interest in maintaining and sustaining the Confederacy because it was not giving enough of a pay-off relative to the effort involved and the cost to their families.⁶⁴

Although this is part of the explanation, the conflict was not experienced collectively and was felt more deeply than were national ones. These conflicts were individual and at a much deeper level than prescriptive literature could reach or overcome. Lee read *Macaria*, a novel by Augusta Evans, published in 1864, that points to the ambiguous nature of women's lives while it prescribes the sacrifices women should make for the war. Faust points out that the novel "acknowledg[ed women's] fears of uselessness," useless because they might remain single or become widows, suggesting

⁶²*Ibid.*, 248-249 (October 24-25, 1862), 271 (December 9, 1862), 694 (September 27, 1864).

⁶³*Ibid.*, 739 (December 15, 1864).

⁶⁴Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 1223, 1228.

they could be fulfilled as women only if they were partnered with men. But, as Holstein argues, the novel also admits that "women were attracted to a new language of self-determination." Although Lee considered "the last part [of the book], about the war," admirable, she deemed the rest to be a "mass of pedantic nonsense."⁶⁵ By the time she read *Macaria*, she had been in a war zone for over two years. If women were fulfilled only when they could define themselves in relationship to men, then Mary Greenhow Lee had a problem.

For instance, when rain had filled the gutters in the streets and a Union commander ordered one of his men to "get a plank to put across for" Lee's benefit, she "cross[ed] the street to another crossing without appearing to acknowledge or see his intentions," refusing to receive even "the slightest civility" from men of the opposition. When General Philip Sheridan met her on the street one day, he "had the assurance to bow," a bow which was "not returned."⁶⁶ Warfare for Lee meant expecting, but not always accepting, the rules set by society for gender relations when dealing with male enemies. If Union soldiers or officers approached her on the porch, her custom was to turn her back to them as if they did not exist. She did this while visiting with a neighbor one day and "three Yankees" came "galloping" up to her house but she learned later that it might not always be the best policy. One of the men shouted to her back, asking "where that cavalry had gone." Curiosity overcame her and she asked, "what cavalry?" In frustration, the rider shouted, "Yankee, or rebel, or any god damn cavalry." To that, she walked into the house without a reply, but learned from her neighbor later that "the

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 1219; Holstein, "'Offering Up Her Life'," 123; MGL, 616, 620 (June, 1864).

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 740 (December 16, 1864), 777 (February 6, 1865).

Yankee had his carbine pointed" at her back the whole time.⁶⁷

On the other hand, she would have been happy to accept masculine aid from her Confederate gentlemen, if they had been available to render it. One day, as the war neared an end, visiting gentlemen did drive away a "Yankee" who had come into her yard. She discovered it "a new & singular sensation to have anyone" take her "part or act as protector against the enemy."⁶⁸ Mary Greenhow Lee had learned that the men who were supposed to protect her could not, and, as she worked out her "military" successes in her journal, harbored little respect for the enemy as men, felt she could outwit them, and sensed that the roles she played contradicted each other. According to Confederate generals, the women of Winchester were "women worth fighting for." According to the Union commanders, these women were the "devils."⁶⁹

For instance, how could the Lady "Self" sustain her nurturing capacity without sacrificing her Confederate "Self" when wagons loaded with wounded enemies were brought into town? Winchester men were not torn by the dilemma. Peyton Clark "visited all the hospitals" the morning after the Battle of Kernstown, but only "for the purpose of finding any *friends* who may have been wounded to minister to their relief." Clark also reported that "Dr. Baldwin refuse[d] to attend the federal wounded on the grounds that" he would be "raising up men to fight against the country and his friends."⁷⁰ Neither of these men seemed to feel the weight of compassion when it came

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 513 (November 14, 1863).

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 704 (October 11, 1864).

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 120 (May 29, 1862), 201 (March 12, 1862), 411 (June 15, 1863), 12 (March 14, 1862).

⁷⁰JPC, (March 24, 1862), (March 25, 1862), *emphasis added*.

to the enemy. Women in Winchester, however, did.

Mary Greenhow Lee had vowed never to have anything to do with "Yankees," but when wounded Confederate soldiers were hospitalized with the Union wounded, she discovered herself "down on the floor, by the Yankees, feeding them." It became a crisis for Lee, tearing her between her Lady and her Confederate selves. "I am trying to do good even to our enemies," she wrote, "but it is a wearisome life."⁷¹ We might suspect that northern military leaders used gender ideology to manipulate the women, placing their wounded in sight of the southern women intentionally, understanding on some level that the nurturing role would overpower the patriotic one.

In fact, Cornelia McDonald knew that Union commanders manipulated women's emotions to win their points. When she complained that one of the soldiers kept milking her cow, the colonel in command "punish[ed] the offender" by having the man seated "on a barrel with his hands tied behind him" where McDonald would be sure to see him. She wrote that he looked "so miserable," and had "such a human look, so dejected and wretched" that her "heart was melted." When she asked the colonel how long the man had to stay on the barrel, his reply was "until justice is satisfied, Madam," and then she saw "his eyes twinkle as if he enjoyed the fun of seeing [her] take it to heart." Even so, she pleaded the culprit's cause, he was released, and she "did not annoy the Col. any more with complaints." In the end she grumbled: "it was malicious in him to punish the man where I could see it. He knew I would not suffer it."⁷²

In any event, Lee and other "Secesh" women of Winchester took care of enemy

⁷¹MGL, 34 (March 25, 1862), 37 (March 27, 1862).

⁷²McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 45.

patients. The woman who imagined she would have nothing to do with "Yankee" hospitals and who upheld the standards of propriety, not only cared for enemies in pain, but even carried a northern man's amputated leg out of the hospital. Additionally, men who were upholding the old gender standards while she had been forced to modify hers, amused her. One of her patients became embarrassed while she tended to his wounds because he had "to be considerably disrobed," which did not disconcert her. "I have seen so much in the last year," she wrote, "that I am nerved for everything."⁷³ Lee's gender crisis was evolutionary, not revolutionary, but by the end of the war her journal makes it clear that she had incorporated contradictory roles into her identity that she would never have imagined before the war.

It can be argued that women have always stepped into roles that fulfilled the requirements of a crisis, no matter what the dictates of society at the moment. But when that crisis is sustained, as in war, it can also be argued that women have more time to question society's rules. A "good" woman in the Civil War, for instance, was expected to pray for the Cause. The men who had remained in Winchester were afraid to challenge the Federal order not to hold prayer meetings as requested by Jefferson Davis, who proclaimed that "a people...faithfully relying on their Father in Heaven may be cast down, but cannot be dismayed." Mary Greenhow Lee challenged not only the enemy but also her male leaders, however, and conducted her own prayer services in accordance with Davis's proclamation. She also began to question just which gender had the most strength and the larger capacity for protection in the patriarchal order. Lee believed the

⁷³Sperry, "Surrender!," 153, 154; McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 54; MGL, 412 (June 16, 1863), 654 (July 26, 1864), 55 (April 6, 1862), 258 (November 12, 1862), 120 (May 29, 1862).

"dear old men of this town...too cautious" and declared that "this is surely the day of woman's power" because "the men are afraid to do, or say, anything, & leave all to us."⁷⁴

On several occasions during the war, Nathaniel Meade met with her to discuss "affairs of church & state." In fact, when a question arose as to whether they could afford to keep their church heated and open during the winter months, she suggested to Meade that he approach the Lutheran minister to see if that congregation would like to join theirs at Christ Church. They could share the costs of heating and the ministers could alternate Sundays in the pulpit. The Lutherans had lost their church to a "Yankee" hospital, after all, so the idea made sense. The men of both churches followed her advice and Lutherans and Episcopalians worshipped together that winter.⁷⁵

Early on, at one of those times when the Confederate army had just left, and before the Union troops reoccupied the town, Mary Greenhow Lee noted that her army had left twelve wagons of powder in the magazine. She suggested to the men of the town that they blow up the magazine to keep the Union from getting their hands on it, promising to take responsibility for the action with General "Stonewall" Jackson if the need arose. "But no one would do anything," she grumbled, and "now, the Yankees are here & have put a guard round it immediately." She estimated that "there is enough powder there to blow up the whole town. I wish I was a man, or that our men had some

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 102 (May 16, 1862), 314 (February 13, 1863), 7 (March 13, 1862), 47 (April 1, 1862), 6 (March 31, 1862), 206 (August 19, 1862), 571 (March 19, 1864); Richardson, *Messages and Papers of Jefferson Davis*, 227-228.

⁷⁵MGL, 591 (May 5, 1864), 721 (November 14, 1864).

manliness."⁷⁶

The reality of the situation, of course, was that Union commanders perceived that the townsmen were necessarily more dangerous than were the townswomen. Winchester men understood this part of the Code as well, and were thus more circumspect in their behavior. During the first Union occupation, male residents were "not allowed to go to the hospitals," nor given a pass out of town "unless ladies [were] with them."⁷⁷ Men in Mary Greenhow Lee's circle knew that they could not behave as they had in the past toward the invaders. Peyton Clark grumbled that the occupiers "shake their fists in our very faces whilst we are powerless to resent it."⁷⁸ As Dr. Robert Baldwin left Cornelia McDonald's house one evening after visiting her sick children, he nodded toward the Union officers who had taken over her home and "said he was sorry to leave" her with them. McDonald seemed to understand Baldwin's feelings of impotence. She wrote, "he looked very sorrowful, poor old gentleman, and mortified that he could do nothing to save me from their presence."⁷⁹ Later, when Union General Philip Sheridan took command of Winchester, General Ulysses S. Grant directed him to hold "all male citizens under fifty...prisoners of war," reasoning that if they were "not already soldiers, they [would] be made so the moment the rebel army [got] hold of them."⁸⁰ Lee watched the men being taken away, "Dr. Holliday & other grey haired men amongst them," and

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 129 (June 4, 1862).

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 45, (March 31, 1862), 50 (April 4, 1862).

⁷⁸JPC, 5 (March 18, 1862).

⁷⁹McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 46.

⁸⁰Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs*, Vol. II, 486.

believed this to be "the fulfillment of the threat they made when they first came, that they were going to send off all the men that the women might be still more unprotected."⁸¹

Mary Greenhow Lee proved capable of protecting herself. Ultimately, her social position became the most powerful weapon she used against her enemies. Although the war had moved her into relationships with patriotic citizens of less-connected circles, she refused to extend her sociable self to those of a similar station in the enemy camp. Many of the Union officers occupying Winchester met Lee's pre-war requirements for acceptance into her company. As an invasion force, however, they now lacked one obvious value: southern patriotism. Because of her background and the visitable assets she had always prized so highly, Mary Greenhow Lee understood that she had something the Union army could never take from her. Union officers had threatened to take over her house. At one point a "6" was chalked onto her gate, telling her what position her house held in the schedule to be burned. The occupying army had also taken down her fences and outbuildings for firewood. But what they could not forcibly requisition from Mary Greenhow Lee was an invitation into her parlor, even those officers who "under other circumstances" she would have entertained in all "civility" before. She tenaciously refused formal recognition of northern officers into "the society of Southern women," something she was convinced they wanted.⁸²

According to Lee, northern officers were "men of the highest social position--the very elite of Northern society," but inviting them into her home would have been the

⁸¹MGL, 711 (October 25, 1864), 713 (October 28, 1864).

⁸²*Ibid.*, 16 (March 17, 1862), 35 (March 26, 1862), 99 (May 14, 1862), 107 (May 21, 1862), 152 (June 22, 1862), 164 (July 5, 1862), 170 (July 11, 1862), 259 (November 17, 1862), 329 (March 16, 1863), 714 (November 1, 1864), 745 (December 23, 1864), 811 (April 7, 1865).

same to her as welcoming the "murderers of our friends & the enemies of our liberty." She watched the officers make "desperate efforts to get into society,...& desir[ing] to be introduced to the Southerners."⁸³ While some Winchester "Secesh" succumbed to the temptation of entertaining northern officers, Mary Greenhow Lee resisted. Union officials had the power to demand entrance into any home they pleased. In fact, many citizens gave up rooms in their houses to board officers or as "headquarters." Lee did not count such instances as social conquests, however. Winchester was, after all, under military rule. Though Union officers had "by force, gained the entrance of so many homes," she reminded herself in her journal, "socially they have not gained an inch." For Lee, none of the values encompassed in the term "visitable" could be ascribed to Union military men who refused to acknowledge the South's right to secede. Cornelia McDonald held the same opinion. When a young Union soldier approached her with a letter of introduction, stating that he had family and acquaintances in the town and wondering if he might feel free to call on them, she answered, "they would not see you, coming with this army, and with that uniform on."⁸⁴

Lee's opinion of "Yankees" as a class fluctuated depending upon gender. She was more antagonistic toward the wives of northern officers than to the officers themselves. According to Mary Greenhow Lee, "the [Union] officer's wives" were the ones who explained "the social status" of the people in town who had invited northern officers into their homes, suggesting both that women would be more socially discerning than men and

⁸³*Ibid.*, 730 (December 3, 1864), 742 (December 18, 1864).

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 594 (May 8, 1864), 730 (December 3, 1864), 742 (December 18, 1864), 751 (December 30, 1864), 776 (February 14, 1865); McDonald, *Reminiscences of the War*, 57.

that citizens who would deem the invaders "visitable" must not be members of the "better class." One general's wife could not even overcome her northerness by being an acquaintance of Lee's sister-in-law, Rose O'Neale Greenhow. Lee deemed her "a coarse, common woman," with "the original Yankee shining out." Union General Robert H. Milroy's wife could also never hope to be included in Lee's circle. Hearing that Mrs. Milroy had exhibited the "primitive custom" of blowing her nose through her fingers in public merely confirmed in Lee's mind that "Yankees," and especially "Yankee women," were not visitable.⁸⁵

In June of 1862 Lee penned in her journal at a singular moment when both armies were absent from Winchester that "we shall declare ourselves a separate & independent sovereignty, & elect a Queen to reign over us, the women hav[ing] proved themselves more valiant than the men."⁸⁶ In less than three months of living in a war zone Mary Greenhow Lee had already begun questioning the system that placed men in charge. At the end of the war, Lee was even more convinced that women had done more than their part for the Cause. She stated, "I hear the women of Richmond are maintaining the honor of the Confederacy--but not the men."⁸⁷

Earlier, as she emphasized her patriotism on the pages of her journal, Mary Greenhow Lee decided she would protect her family and her town, normally the responsibility of gentlemen, by being a good woman. But the contradictions that troubled

⁸⁵MGL, 524 (December 23-24, 1863), 768 (January 21, 1865), 729 (February 9, 1865); LL, April 4, 1863; Kasson, *Rudeness & Civility*, 124-125.

⁸⁶MGL, 127 (June 3, 1862).

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 818 (April 28, 1865).

Lee the most were the ones which forced her to play at one gender's role in order to achieve the goals expected of the other. It might be true that a majority of southern women lost faith in the idea of the Confederacy, unable to withstand the sacrifices they were being asked to make. As one southern woman put it, "the mother and helpless woman triumph[ed] over the patriot."⁸⁸ But this sentiment cannot be found in the pages of Mary Greenhow Lee's journal. In fact, she tested and used both her gender and her class to wage war against Union occupiers to the very end.

Lee's success might have been her undoing. She gloated that the Union officers were disappointed "at not getting into Southern society," serving "a bitter mortification to them & a great triumph to" her. Disappointment for Union officers and their wives, however, probably translated into the final grievance against Mary Greenhow Lee. Just prior to Sheridan's order that she would be escorted out of town in two days, Lee stated that as she saw to various errands through town she heard "nothing but the pique of those Yankees at not being received" in her home. She learned after her banishment from Winchester that Sheridan had been "very unwilling to send" her "out but...was persecuted into it by his staff because" the Lee women had held themselves "aloof & treated them with scorn & contempt." In Lee's opinion, her banishment from Winchester had been a direct result of the social and gendered warfare she waged against the northern enemy in her midst.⁸⁹

Mary Greenhow Lee had fought the war using the only weapons available to her.

⁸⁸Quoted in Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 1220.

⁸⁹MGL, 751 (December 30, 1864), 775 (February 2, 1865), 787 (February 23, 1865), 813 (April 14, 1865).

She did not risk her life in the process but she did risk life as she had known it, sacrificing most of her assets and the comforts of her home. The end of the war left Lee wandering in exile, wondering where and how to start the next phase of her life, but never questioning the Cause for which she had fought.

CHAPTER VIII

"I FEEL QUITE INDEPENDENT NOW"¹

Mary Greenhow Lee described the details of her banishment calmly, as though it were happening to someone else. Throughout the war she had strained to keep Union officers from viewing her in distress, not wanting to give them the satisfaction that they were having an effect on her. Her journal entries relative to her banishment have the same detachment, possibly a way to portray the scenes on paper the way she hoped she had played them in front of the "Yankees." Another possibility is that she felt some level of relief, like finally hearing the second shoe drop. She had expected banishment almost from the beginning of the first Union occupation. In any event, Lee remained aloof and disengaged when she wrote of being sent into exile.

On Thursday, February 23, 1865, Lee received an order from Sheridan, stating, "Mrs. Lee & her family must be prepared to go through the lines the first fair day." She "took it very coolly & sent [her] card to Sheridan asking him to call" on her, "as the weather was too bad." Ironically, although through the war she had refrained from inviting Union officers into her home, the order of banishment, in league with the weather, prompted her to send word to Sheridan that now, at least to help her learn the charges against her, he was welcome. He did not come, but sent a member of his staff

¹MGL, 822 (May 13, 1865).

to find out what Lee wanted. She answered that she "had some little curiosity to know what were the accusations against" her.²

Later, when Sheridan did not answer her request, she and Mrs. Tuley went to Sheridan's office to find out. Sheridan "shook hands with Mrs. T. & had the impertinence to offer his hand to" Lee, who merely "extended the tips of two fingers & then asked him what accusations he had to bring." Sheridan replied "very rudely [that] there were plenty of charges," without stating any, and promised her "ample time for preparation." When she finally received the written order from Sheridan, she learned that she had until Saturday morning to pack for her trip. The only charges recorded on the order were that the Lee women had caused the Union military personnel "constant annoyance," an open-ended indictment leaving room for several versions, each of which came to Lee's ears later.³

Among the reasons Lee heard given for her banishment was that one of them "had spit in a Yankee's face." She also read in the *New York Herald* that they had been sent out on "the charge of disloyalty" for conspiring to have Sheridan abducted by "Mosby's guerrillas" and taken to Richmond. Another version printed in the *Herald* was that she had attempted "to poison Sheridan & his staff." The reason making the most sense to Lee, however, was the one already mentioned, that she had been unsociable to the officers, reaffirmed through Lee's cousin Mary Charlton in Petersburg, who reported that the grounds "assigned by some Yankee officers for" their banishment was that the Lee "house was closed to them." The *Confederate Veteran*, in 1895, reported that Mary

²*Ibid.*, 787-788 (February 23, 1865).

³*Ibid.*

Greenhow Lee had been banished for "her services and loyalty to the South," which equals all of the versions melted down. Loyalty to the South was the first basis of anything she might have done against the North, real or imagined.⁴

Mary Elizabeth Massey argues that, although there were usually a variety of reasons for southerners to be forced from their homes, those commanders who expelled them usually did so to "rid an occupied area of subversive elements," to make an example of individuals to gain control over the rest of the population, and to use disruption and dislocation as further weapons against the Confederacy.⁵ Although the female imbalance of refugees and exiles stems in part from a large percentage of men being in the army, it is interesting to note that the seven people Sheridan chose to remove from Winchester at this time were single women who did not have husbands to protect them, war or no war.⁶

Whatever the charges against them, Mary Greenhow Lee, Laura Lee, Laura

⁴*Ibid.*, 799 (March 12, 1865), 804 (March 21, 1865), 812 (April 11, 1865), 813 (April 13, 1865), 824 (May 15, 1865), 831 (May 31, 1865), 880 (October 14, 1865); letter from James Murray Mason to Eliza Mason, March, 1865, printed in Mason, *The Public Life...of James M. Mason*, 569; *Confederate Veteran*, November 1895, 331.

⁵Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Refugee Life in the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964) 18.

⁶Rable, *Civil Wars*, 180; Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 40-44. Using Lee as her prime supporting example, Faust argues that the terms *refugee* and *exile* were not synonymous. *Refugee* applied to those who left an area willingly to avoid the strain of war moving uncomfortably close, thus forcing others to aid them in their resettlement, or becoming a burden on the new community. *Exile*, on the other hand, referred to those such as Lee who had no choice. Before *exile* became fact for Lee, however, she sometimes confused the two terms. She gave "a friendly glance of sympathy" to "an ambulance filled with ladies, children & gentlemen" she knew to be "Baltimore exiles," because she had "kind feeling for all Southern sympathizers." A short time later, she mentioned that there were "some *refugees* from Baltimore at Mrs. O'Bannon's." Since neither group could have been fleeing Baltimore because of battles raging nearby, they were probably forced to leave by Union commanders because of their southern sympathies. Distinctions between the terms probably evolved as war caused further disruption in the South. See MGL, 351-352 (April 10, 1863), 364 (April 23, 1863), emphasis added.

Burwell, and Louisa Burwell, along with three of Joseph H. Sherrard's daughters, Ann, Lizzie, and Mary, had two days to prepare to leave.⁷ Although she did not want to abandon her home, and did not know what form of shelter she would find, Lee wrote: "If God permits it, it is all right," placing her faith above her fear.⁸

The Lee household worked hard on Thursday night to "do all the packing" possible, taking some possessions to the Tuley's for safekeeping, and Lee and "the two Lals...waded through the water" with the family silver to deposit it in the bank. The next day, even though from the time Lee dressed in the morning "to late at night" her hours were "filled with visitors," coming to see if the news was true, or offering assistance, she attended to "the thousand things necessary to be done in breaking up a home in a day."⁹ Nat Meade came by to give her "\$500 in Bank money," offering it "without interest for 20 years," and others offered "kindnesses" as well.¹⁰

On Saturday morning friends gathered in front of the house to see them off. "Many tears were shed," she wrote, "but not by us." Those who cried were "strong

⁷*Ibid.*, 225 (September 5, 1862), 729 (December 2, 1864), 435 (July 15, 1863), 472 (September 8, 1863), 60 (April 11, 1862). Joseph Sherrard held the position of Cashier at Farmers Bank of Virginia at the time the war started. He and his family lived above the bank. Mary Greenhow Lee appreciated the southern patriotism of this family, calling Joseph Sherrard "a man so ardent & truly Southern," and his wife, "truly patriotic." She did worry, however, about some of the schemes their daughters got into, and stated that Lizzie Sherrard was "daring & dashing to an extreme that is perfectly ludicrous." Although research has not uncovered the charges against the Sherrard women, it is possible that their "perfectly ludicrous" behavior was equal to Lee's "giving constant annoyance."

⁸*Ibid.*, 788 (February 25, 1865). Antoinette Lee escaped banishment. She had decided earlier to visit her brother George's family at Clarksburg, in Harrison County (now West Virginia), "where she" would "have all the comforts and luxuries so necessary for her delicate health." At the point in time when Antoinette left Winchester, it was, according to Mary Greenhow Lee, "the first time a pass or permit of any kind ha[d] been asked by any member of the family since the war." See MGL, 762 (January 13, 1865), 764 (January 16, 1865).

⁹*Ibid.*, 787-788 (February, 23, 1865, February 25, 1865).

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 788-789 (February 25, 1865).

men," friends, and "servants," not only theirs, but "old attaches of the family were weeping bitterly." The Lee women, however, "laughed & talked all sorts of Rebel talk & the Yankees gazed in astonishment at seeing people turned out of their homes & not depressed by it." The assemblage followed their wagon down to the Sherrards', where Lizzie, Ann, and Mary Sherrard loaded their belongings and joined the Lees. Mary Greenhow Lee reported that, since their departure scene was played in front of the Provost's office, she was certain that the Provost "had a full view of [their] movements," as though she were observing her banishment through the eyes of her enemies. As Lee and her family left Winchester in "two ambulances & an army wagon piled up with baggage," and "an escort of over twenty men," she stated that they "felt very independent & said loudly what [they] pleased," feeling that there was nothing more the "Yankee" occupiers could do to them.¹¹

The Union escort traveled with the party as far as Newtown, where the exiles were forced to find their own transportation. The United States government did not intend to provide the conveyances they would need for their journey. From Strother Jones in Newtown, they "procured a road wagon for the baggage & a spring wagon for the" women.¹² Their next stop was Woodstock, "thirty miles on [their] journey south." The horse pulling the spring wagon was "a miserable old one" but Louisa and Mary drove it until the horse "gave out so entirely" that they had to "lighten the load," and the women "got out & mounted on top the baggage wagon."¹³

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*, 789-790 (February 25-26, 1865).

¹³*Ibid.*, 790 (February 26, 1865).

Their progress was delayed at Mt. Jackson from February 27 until March 12 while they waited for the waters of north fork of the Shenandoah River to recede enough for them to cross. They could have left a day earlier but their wagon drivers refused to start out due to the "alarm that the Yankees were only five miles off." Even though Lee had been sent within her lines, to her it seemed as though her enemies were following her. Early the next day, however, they set off, walking the mile to the river since "there was a dreadful gully" in the road, then crossing the river while "the girls sang 'On the Other Side of Jordan'" for courage as the Shenandoah swept around the wagon.¹⁴ That night they stayed in Harrisonburg, then left on March 13 for Staunton, all the while fearing they would meet Sheridan somewhere along the way. She had planned to go on to Richmond immediately from Staunton but the "croakers" there told her "it would be impossible" to reach Richmond for some time. She made plans, then, to settle in for a while, although "the idea of staying at Staunton with the prospect of the immense bill at the hotel was rather startling."¹⁵

Leaving her comfortable home in Winchester behind had been a major concern for Mary Greenhow Lee. It was her responsibility to provide shelter for her family. Unlike the problems in some over-crowded regions such as Richmond and cities in the lower South where they faced a massive influx of refugees, the stops on Lee's journey up the Valley afforded available accommodations. Between Winchester and Richmond, Mary Greenhow Lee's *connexion* offered help with quarters, which, added to public

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 791-800 (February 28-March 13, 1865).

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 801-803 (March 14-19, 1865).

lodging available, provided fairly comfortable situations for the seven "exiles."¹⁶ In Woodstock, for instance, Lee wrote that the party had "scattered;" some staying with the Hollingsworth family, while others were at the Magruders. She was even "comfortably fixed" enough to have a small tea party. As a bonus, "Mrs. Hollingsworth...would not receive any pay," so lodging in Woodstock did not stretch Lee's slim resources as much as it could have.¹⁷

Their extended stay in Mt. Jackson because of high water necessitated a more permanent arrangement, so some of the group "took rooms at the hotel" and went into "room-keeping." The Lee party felt snug for a time, although she described their "style of living" as "very amusing," with the room she and Laura Lee stayed in the "mess room," where they had a "table set out with plates, cups & saucers," some they had brought along, and "some borrowed." It was also expensive, costing "\$90 per day for...two rooms & fire."¹⁸ Within a day or two, local residents began inviting other members to wait out the river in private homes until Mary and Laura were the only two still at the hotel.¹⁹ The group engaged three rooms at the hotel in Harrisonburg, and were allowed use of the parlor to receive visitors, of which there were many for the one

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 820 (May 3, 1865). See Massey, *Refugee Life*, 22-23, 75, 76, 103; Rable, *Civil Wars*, 181-201. Rable calculates that more than a quarter million southerners found themselves homeless, but their experiences varied, depending upon resources, destinations, and friends along the way. He also found that the accommodations many people settled for were much less comfortable than those Mary Greenhow Lee found. Some were forced to find shelter in churches, stables, tents, caves, and even "abandoned boxcars."

¹⁷MGL, 791 (February 28, 1865).

¹⁸Eighth Census of the United States; Shenandoah County Personal Property Tax List, 1861; MGL, 791-792 (February 28-March 1, 1865). Whiten and Virginia Farra kept the hotel and were evidently successful in the venture, having had four slaves in 1861, to help run the hotel, a horse and carriage, and a piano for entertainment.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 793 (March 2, 1865).

night they were in town.²⁰

Lee's worries about the expense of an extended stay in Staunton proved groundless. She secured rooms at the American Hotel, then "sent to ask Col. Nadinbousch [sic], the proprietor, his terms." Because of the reputation she had gained for her war effort, however, Nadenbousch, a veteran, responded that they could "stay as long as [they] wished--call for anything" and "be his guests," refusing to "receive a cent from ladies who had acted so nobly...in risking so much for [the] cause."²¹

The warmth of Nadenbousch's regard speaks to a thread that connected Lee's journey in exile. A sign that she did not take her "soldier work" lightly, or merely "lov[e] notoriety," as Sheridan charged against her, was her continuance of it in exile.²² While packing trunks and deciding what to take and leave, she had the presence of mind to pack not only her journal, but also items of interest to soldiers and their families, minor details that would normally be forgotten in the haste of preparing for a major life change on short notice. In Woodstock, for instance, a man approached her and asked if she "knew Lt. Snarr who had been wounded;....his sister thought he was dead." Snarr had been one of her patients and she looked through her portfolio and found "a letter

²⁰*Ibid.*, 800 (March 13, 1865).

²¹*Ibid.*, 801 (March 14, 1865). Colonel J. Q. A. Nadenbousch had left the army in August of 1863, and settled in Staunton instead of going back home to Martinsburg, a Unionist town in enemy lines, to reunite with his wife and four children. Ultimately, he rented the American Hotel, located near the railroad, that had been used for a hospital, for \$3600 a month, and expected to make \$100,000 a year on the property. The hotel opened in January with a "fine run of travelling custom.," the "house full every night," and gathering "receipts [of] \$1000.00 per day." By February, the hotel was "crowded every night," and Nadenbousch was charging \$20 a day for room and board and had a staff of eighteen to help with the work. The next month, the hotel receipts were reaching \$1000 to \$2500 per day, making the venture a success for Nadenbousch. See letters from Nadenbousch to wife, August 26, 1863, September 2, 1863, September 22, 1863, December 30, 1863, January 27, 1864, February 13, 1864, March 9, 1864, January 24, 1865, Colonel J. Q. A. Nadenbousch Letters, ESB.

²²MGL, 799 (March 12-13, 1865).

from him" she had received "a few weeks since," and gave it to Snarr's sister, letting her know he was still alive.²³ In Mt. Jackson a woman whose husband had been one of Lee's "special favorite[s] as long as he lived" asked Lee about her husband's last days. Lee relieved the woman by relating "his cheerful & brave spirit" to the end.²⁴ In Staunton, Lee called on a Mrs. Fall "to tell her of her son who died at the Hospital in Winchester."²⁵ She also sent a ring and a lock of a dead soldier's hair to his widow in Georgia and gave "\$5.00...of the little horde" she had "kept for the soldiers" to a wounded Confederate in Staunton. All of this points to the minute details Lee saw to during her hurried packing in Winchester.²⁶

Banishment did not curtail Mary Greenhow Lee's other "soldier work," either, that of supplying information about the enemy. In fact, once in the countryside, she had more freedom to note troop movements along the Valley as she passed, assess numbers, and sight "pontoon bridges, &c.," then telegraph the information to her generals. A woman "from Woodstock" told Lee that "the Yankees said they were amazed at the correctness of [her] information & they were very anxious to overtake" the exiles to stop her.²⁷ Jubal Early ignored her warnings, however, with the capture of 1200 Confederates near Staunton the result. "I have done fighting Early's battles," wrote Mary Greenhow Lee. He "received my dispatch sooner than any other & it was his fault that

²³*Ibid.*, 790 (February 26, 1865).

²⁴*Ibid.*, 796 (March 6, 1865).

²⁵*Ibid.*, 802 (March 15, 1865).

²⁶*Ibid.*, 830 (May 28, 1865).

²⁷*Ibid.*, 791 (February 28, 1865), 792 (March 1, 1865), 799 (March 12, 1865).

he was not prepared."²⁸

Exile did not stop Lee's "feeding process." In Mt. Jackson, a Confederate regiment stopped by the hotel and "begged for bread." She gave them "a large basket of hard-tack" and watched it disappear "in a moment." After inviting a colonel to dine with them in their room one evening, Lee wrote, "wherever we are,...I expect we will be entertaining Confederates."²⁹ Between leaving Winchester and finally settling in Baltimore, Lee received visits from several of her soldiers. The Bartons and Baldwins stopped in to see the family and ate at their table in Staunton several times. She also entertain "Henry Douglass [sic],....as handsome & agreeable as ever." Randolph McKim spent time with her in Staunton before moving back to Baltimore. Hunter McGuire visited with her, as did her "special favourite," David Gregg McIntosh, and "Genl. Fitz Lee." When "Col. Holliday" stopped in, Lee sadly noted his empty sleeve, and made a similar observation on another occasion, mentioning that "Genl. Lilly with one arm & Mr. Ryan with one leg & Col. Skinner with one eye were all here together."³⁰

Despite Nadenbousch's generous invitation, Mary Greenhow Lee and her party again scattered. Laura Lee and Louisa Burwell accepted the hospitality of one family, Lizzie and Mary Sherrard another, and Laura Burwell and Ann Sherrard yet another,

²⁸*Ibid.*, 792 (March 1865), 796-799 (March 6-11, 1865).

²⁹*Ibid.*, 793 (March 3, 1865), 797 (March 8, 1865).

³⁰*Ibid.*, 802, 807, 817, 818 (March and April, 1865), 834 (June 9, 1865), 843 (July 5, 1865), 855 (August 15, 1865), 859 (August 22, 1865), 871 (September 21, 1865), 886 (October 29, 1865), 889 (November 10, 1865). "Col. Holliday" was F. W. M. Holliday of Winchester, whom Virginius Dabney calls "the one-armed hero of the Shenandoah Valley," who became Governor of Virginia in 1877. See Dabney, *Virginia*, 381.

while Mary moved in to Dr. Francis Stribling's home.³¹ Her room at Frank and Henrietta Stribling's was "a beautiful chamber," but Lee thought that the "quiet household" was "rather stiff after the life of abandon" she "had been leading lately."³² The length of her stay in Staunton stretching into another month, and not wanting to "trespass on the hospitality" of their various hosts, Lee decided in April to rent a house suddenly available. Fearful, she stated that it required "strong faith to go to housekeeping at this crisis, in a strange place, with very little money," but she could not be sure when she could get to Richmond. With furnishings the former renters left behind, and the donations of friends in the area, the scattered family moved back together, a "great comfort" to her.³³ [See illustration 44]

Finally, in August 1865, after war had ended and life in Richmond had become more stable, Mary Greenhow Lee found her way clear to venture there.³⁴ The rest of the family had gone back to Winchester in July, so Lee travelled alone by train, stopping for a short while in Charlottesville to visit with friends, Dr. George G. and Caroline Christian Minor.³⁵ From Charlottesville, she travelled again by rail to Richmond, this time encountering "several Yankee officers" in the car with her. Still determined to

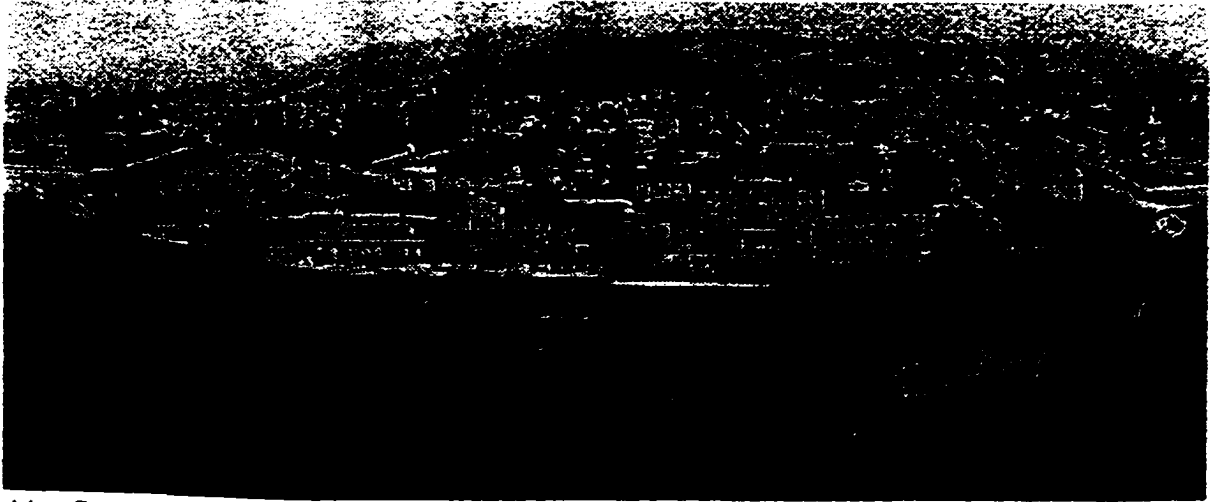
³¹MGL, 801-802 (March, 1865). "Frank" Stribling, Superintendent of Western State Hospital at Staunton, established for the mentally ill, was married to Henrietta Frances Cuthbert of Norfolk, and together they had three daughters and one son. Two years after the war, Stribling's oldest daughter, Ella Matilda, married a nephew of Hugh Holmes Lee, Hugh Lee Powell of Leesburg, thus creating another filament in the *connexion*. See McIlhany, *Some Virginia Families*, 41-42.

³²MGL, 802 (March, 1865).

³³*Ibid.*, 813-816 (April 12-17, 1865).

³⁴*Ibid.*, 868 (August 25, 1865).

³⁵*Ibid.*, 845 (July 14, 1865), 856 (August 17, 1865), 858 (August 18, 1865).



44. Staunton, Virginia, mid-1850s.

withhold recognition of them, she "stretched" herself "out on the seat with [her] back to the aisle," pulled her "hat & veil over [her] face" and pretended to sleep.³⁶

Samuel C. Greenhow, George's son, met Lee at the train station and took her home with him where he and his wife Mary settled her in "a delightful room on the first floor, with [a] window opening on a balcony, overlooking a pretty yard" at his house on the corner of Tenth and Clay Streets.³⁷ Lee spent her stay in Richmond, her "dear old home," with friends and relatives.³⁸ She also ventured off for two short trips out of town, to Petersburg to visit cousins, and in September she traveled to the countryside to renew her friendship with Mona Warren at Runnymede, the Warrens' plantation sixteen miles southeast of Richmond.³⁹ During her visit, John Warren took Lee for a drive "over historic ground," showing her the landscape on which the Seven Days Battle had occurred in the summer of 1862, explaining "the position of the two armies" as they rode along. The scarred battlefields troubled Lee. "The horrors of war impress me more

³⁶*Ibid.*, 860 (August 25, 1865).

³⁷*Ibid.*, 861 (August 25, 1865); Scott, *Neighborhoods*, 92. Mary Greenhow Lee's cousin "Sam" was at that time serving as Treasurer of Richmond, while his father, George, had served as Commissioner of the Revenue. Lee also stayed with Sam's sister, Martha, wife of Robert Henry Maury, in their home at 1105 East Clay Street. See Hall, *Portraits in the... Virginia Historical Society*, 166-167; MGL, 873-874 (September 29-30, 1865).

³⁸*Ibid.*, 862 (August 27, 1865), 865 (September 3-5, 1865), 877-878 (October 9, 1865).

³⁹*Ibid.*, 865-869 (September 5-14, 1865). There is evidence that Mona Warren is "Eddie" Christian who had been Lee's intimate friend during her youth. Research turned up a Major Edmund Christian with daughters Edmonia and Caroline. Edmonia ("Mona") married John D. Warren, and Caroline ("Carrie") married Dr. George Gilmer Minor. It seems certain that "Eddie" and "Mona" were the same woman, since both nicknames could be derived from the name "Edmonia." Possibly the adult "Eddie" was now known as "Mona." In any event, research has not uncovered correspondence by either "Eddie Christian" or "Mona Warren." Like Mary Greenhow Lee, Edmonia Warren had no children, who are usually the source of archival collections. See MJCG, 9 (September, 1837); James Balfour Tubbs, *Rennie Family Connections*, Vol I (James Balfour Tubbs, 1993) 161; MGL, 545 (January 23, 1864), 559 (February 19, 1864), 564 (May, 1864), 863 (August 29, 1865), 866 (September 7, 1865).

now," she wrote, "than when they were actually being enacted."⁴⁰

By the time of Mary Greenhow Lee's Richmond interlude, she had finally come to terms with the South's loss of the war but her first reactions to the news had not been surprising, given the full energy she had applied to the war effort. At first, she had been doubtful. In April, upon hearing that Richmond had been evacuated, she wrote, "can the terrible news I have just heard be true?" That day she decided to rent the house in Staunton and stay for a while. Confirmation by telegram that "the Yankees entered Richmond at 1/2 past nine yesterday morning" convinced her, however. The next blow came when she heard that "Genl. Lee & all his army had surrendered," which she first met with her "usual skepticism." Then, when "Genl. Lee's farewell address to the army he surrendered" made its way through town, she wrote: "it would be looked on as foolhardy were I still to express a doubt."⁴¹

She had been devastated. The phrase "after the war" had kept her going for four years but now there were "no triumphs," "no rejoicings," and she felt "utterly bewildered." Considering the work she had put into the war effort, she lamented: "all the energy & enthusiasm of my nature, which was buried in the graves of my loved ones...was warmed into full development for my country, my beloved Southern Confederacy....but now...all has been in vain." When she watched Ranny and Bob Barton having breakfast at her table in Staunton, she wrote, "I love to see the boys; still it makes me so sad to think their hands are tied & they cannot do anything to save our

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 866 (September 1865).

⁴¹*Ibid.*, 809 (April 4, 1865), 808 (April 3, 1865), 812 (April 11, 1865), 813 (April 13, 1865).

tottering cause."⁴²

Lee had become additionally distressed when she heard "an official report that *our* President has been captured &....that it is said he was making his escape in his wife's clothes."⁴³ LeeAnn Whites draws a powerful parallel between this picture of Davis attempting to flee in his wife's overcoat and shawl and the emasculating result of southern men's failure to protect their political independence. She states that "these men had staked their sense of themselves as free men upon their successful founding of an independent nation; the defeat of the Confederacy now presented them with an overwhelming threat to the very deepest level of their masculine identity."⁴⁴ Mary Greenhow Lee placed a similar significance upon the scene but it did not force her to accept defeat at all levels.

Throughout the war, Lee's conditions for association shifted until patriotism ranked second on her list, just below family. When the South lost the war, it compelled her to reassess her views on the subject yet again. No longer sure of what to do with her feelings of patriotism, she transformed that allegiance into conservation of the Old South's traditions. Her struggles and losses, both human and material, had turned Mary Greenhow Lee against northerners and "the treatment" of Jefferson Davis "by the Yankees" merely intensified her "hatred of them as a people."⁴⁵

⁴²*Ibid.*, 814, 185 (April, 14-16, 1865).

⁴³*Ibid.*, 826 (May 20, 1865), emphasis in the original. Even at this point, Lee did not blame Jefferson Davis for the South's defeat. "Our President is a pure patriot," she wrote, "the hope of whose reputation was drowned by the insane actions of other branches of the government."

⁴⁴LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia: 1860-1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995) 132-135.

⁴⁵MGL, 836 (June 12, 1865).

Upon learning that the North's Reconstruction policies were inhibiting former secessionist politicians' political power and securing the election of old-line Whigs and Unionists to the constitutional convention, she became further embittered. In fact, it called up her deep reserves of stubbornness, evidenced by her announcement that although "political reconstruction might be unavoidable,...social re-construction" was something that she "might prevent." When forced into company with northerners, she ignored them and steered the conversation to topics they "could not appreciate." She suspected that they thought her "an insufferable aristocrat," but did not care.⁴⁶

As she renewed acquaintances in Richmond, Mary Greenhow Lee's identity remained unchanged. Still a staunch "Secesh," she visited hospitalized Confederate soldiers, treating them with gifts of oranges, and reported with pleasure that "there is a stronger & more united feeling against the Yankees than existed a year ago." Mary Greenhow Lee felt no reticence in agreeing with "old & young men" alike who "fire with wrath at our present condition & are ready to side with any party who will chastise our tyrannical foe."⁴⁷

Although a Secesh to her toes, Lee was no longer fighting a battle of the sexes, but urging the men of her circle to regain their own power. Instead of a war of weapons, she considered the South engaged in a political battle and, without hesitation, proclaimed her opinions on the way to go about winning. Chafing under Reconstruction policies, she

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 844 (July 12, 1865), 868 (September 13, 1865), 870 (September 19, 1865). For an analysis of the effects of Reconstruction policies on Virginia's political landscape, especially in the election of delegates to the constitutional convention immediately after the war, see Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1990) 90-92.

⁴⁷MGL, 874 (October 4, 1865), 877 (October 8, 1865).

stated her case with men of "different interests; some the monied, some the mercantile, the literary, the agricultural & professional," and found many who agreed with her "views about the proper course for the South to pursue." She believed that in "every election where the semblance of free voting is allowed, we should vote for our soldiers even though we know they will not be allowed to hold the Office."⁴⁸ Clearly Mary Greenhow Lee was convinced that males who voted for what she believed in were casting her votes.

Part of the South's distinction came from its Code of Honor, with the Southern Lady perched atop the Code, the reason for white men to assume and maintain their power. When the men lost the war and then had to fight through Reconstruction to regain power, southern ladies could not simultaneously struggle against their men for their own political rights. As opinionated as Lee was, it did not occur to her to argue for a political voice of her own. For Mary Greenhow Lee, the course to follow was to bring power back to the men who had led the South politically before and during the war.⁴⁹

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 873 (September 28, 1865), emphasis added.

⁴⁹Historians are now beginning to question if all of the national tensions before the war were merely between the North and South or if there was also growing discontent among southern women with the patriarchal system they were under, still debating whether or not the war halted or escalated women's questioning their place in society. War created more work and worry for women, but, argues Anne Firor Scott, also allowed them to "do business in their own right, make decisions,...and in many other ways assert themselves as individual human beings." The myth of the Lost Cause arising after the war is credited for postponing an organized women's movement in the South. The question is whether historians are describing the myth or perpetuating it. As Sandra Gioia Treadway has put it, "it is fair to say that the Virginia women of the Civil War era are as obscured today by the spell of the Lost Cause as they were in the 1860s and 1870s." See Anne 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, NC: Duke University Press, 1994) 76-92: 78, 87; Sandra Gioia Treadway, "New Directions in Virginia Women's History," in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 100 no. 1 (January 1992) 5-28: 18.

Lee also turned her back on Winchester where, she predicted, Reconstruction and emancipation would produce a "heterogeneous mass" of society, and made plans to start over in Baltimore, saving her the trouble of reinstating *visitable* requirements on associations she had made during the war. Even as she prepared to leave Virginia for good, she remained proud of her "grand old State," which she was sure would "weather this storm even yet, if her true men can get the ascendancy."⁵⁰ Although filled with misgivings about her own future, she did not doubt the future of Virginia.

Her decision to move to Baltimore did not come easily even though she had no desire to return to Winchester. When soldiers tried taunting her by singing "impromptu verses" under her window in Staunton, such as, "There's one light they can't put out & that's a bitter pill; his last name was Sheridan--his first name was Phil," they were disappointed. Although she tried to be angry, she could not help but laugh at their "happy hit" because the soldiers did not realize how "obliged" she was to Sheridan for giving her a reason to leave Winchester.⁵¹ She had not perceived the pressure she had been under until removed from it, and began enjoying an uneventful life within her own lines.⁵²

In addition, the house in Winchester was in a sad state of disrepair, with "part of the wall...caving in," and in need of a new roof.⁵³ A Mrs. Cochrane moved in the day the Lee family left, then Union officers occupied the house for a time. Conflicting

⁵⁰MGL, 845 (July 13, 1865), 878 (October 10, 1865).

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 845 (July 13, 1865).

⁵²*Ibid.*, 805 (March 22, 1865).

⁵³*Ibid.*, 821 (May 6, 1865), 861 (August 25, 1865).

reports came to her from Winchester and she was never sure what to believe but, when Phil Williams let her know that the house was finally rented to a man named Hollenbach to use as a restaurant, she said, "so the fact is at last established that for six months I am to be a wanderer." The renter "kept such a disreputable establishment," however, that "Williams had to turn him out," putting her in "a maze" again.⁵⁴

Lee's first decision was to not return to Winchester. Her next, to choose another location, became a struggle. She had alternatives. Several friends and family invited her to live with them, at least for the time being. Hugh Lee's brother, Henry, and his wife Anna invited the family to New Orleans to live with them, an option that appealed to Lee since they were favorites of hers and it would give her more time to make a more permanent decision.⁵⁵ The Maurys, Dunlaps, and Powells all offered a place for Lee in Richmond. And James Murray Mason and his family asked her to stay with them for a while in Canada, where Mason was in exile pending the resolution of Reconstruction policies.⁵⁶ Lee did not take advantage of any of these offers. She agonized over the decision, feared that she would "shrink into the insignificance that is the fate of all middle-aged women," felt "bewildered," and wondered if her "darling would approve,"

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 791-792 (February 28-March 1, 1865), 819 (May 2, 1865), 821 (May 6, 1865), 823 (May 12, 1865), 829 (May 25, 1865), 830 (May 31, 1865), 834 (June 8, 1865), 837 (June 15, 1865), 837 (June 18, 1865), 861 (August 25, 1865), 864 (September 1, 1865). It is not clear what happened to the Winchester house from 1865 until 1872 when William L. Bent bought the Lee house on Market Street. If Lee rented the house, records of any transactions are lost. See Winchester City Deed Book 13: 273, 275-277, 283-285, 344-345, Frederick County Court House, Winchester, Virginia.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 837 (June 18, 1865).

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 831 (June 2, 1865), 832 (June 4, 1865), 845 (July 14, 1865), 852 (August 5, 1865), 864 (September 2, 1865), 872 (September 22, 1865), 879 (October 11, 1865); Mason, *The Public Life...of James M. Mason*, 586-587. According to Mason's daughter, Virginia, "Mr. Mason was classed among the chief offenders, and he never for a moment entertained the thought of applying for pardon." The Masons settled, instead, in Niagara, Ontario, where Mason raised vegetables and chickens.

but finally made plans to start over in Baltimore, running a boarding house to make a living.⁵⁷ It is probable that Lee did not want to live near relatives because she wanted to test her independence. Consistent with her character, she ventured into a new life.

Mary Greenhow Lee "left Richmond with great regret," again traveling by train, under the "nominal...protection" of a "Mr. Davenport...who was taking his own family to the North." A "delay in Washington," caused her to miss her connection so, instead of arriving in Baltimore at five in the evening, "was put out hurriedly" in Philadelphia, "at night, by [her]self, some distance from the baggage office." Trying to locate a driver, she "was nearly run over," then "stood at the office in a crowd of men" to get her baggage, and sat on her "trunk till the driver found some one to help him move it." Finally, "after sundry adventures," she was "very kindly received" at the Dorseys' in Baltimore.⁵⁸

She had to make arrangements for a home and furniture. There were times when her feet ached from traversing the city on errands, often feeling "very alone" and close to tears. At the same time, however, she felt "perfectly independent" and began to see herself as "a mere adventuress."⁵⁹ After a month of searching for a house and wrangling with lawyers, Lee finally signed a lease on one at 160 Calvert Street. She was

⁵⁷MGL, 852 (August 5, 1865), 857 (August 17, 1865), 860 (August 23, 1865), 878 (October 10, 1865).

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 882 (October 19, 1865). Research has not revealed who the Dorseys were. Lee refers to them as "Mr. Dorsey" and "Kate." Margaretta Barton Colt states that a J. T. B. Dorsey was married to Kate Mason, a daughter of James Murray Mason. The Baltimore Directory for 1858-1859 lists a J. T. B. Dorsey as an attorney located at 35 St. Paul Street. Although this might be the Dorsey Lee stayed with, Colt also has Kate Dorsey and her husband living in Richmond on Franklin Street during the war. See Colt, *Defend the Valley*, 243, 422n47; *Woods' Baltimore Directory, for 1858-'59* (Baltimore: John W. Woods, 1858) 147.

⁵⁹MGL, 882-891 (October 19, to November 17, 1865).

not happy with its location, but felt pressured to get things settled. After signing, she wrote, "so the die is cast for a year," then went out for a "lunch of cake & ice-cream."⁶⁰ Whether ice cream was a celebratory food or a comfort food is unclear, but it punctuated the end of her old life and the start of a new one.

Mary Greenhow Lee did not operate her boarding house alone, but staffed it with servants. Her slaves had not left Winchester with her, becoming truly liberated with Lee's banishment. Ironically, although she had continually worried that they would leave her, she left them. It could be that Sheridan would not allow her to take them, although she did not mention it, or Emily and Sarah may have refused to leave their family and friends in Winchester. It is also possible that Lee made the decision herself, not relishing the added worry of taking care of them in exile that many planter refugees faced.⁶¹

The Masons' slave, William, found Lee in Staunton, and moved in with her, though she did not explain how or why he followed them. Witty and flamboyant, "a wag," as Lee called him, William might have enjoyed living in the Lee household. He did not, however, follow her to Baltimore but instead returned to Winchester where he found work for "50 cts a day in silver." Lee tried convincing Sarah to relocate in Baltimore with her, but "found Sarah would not come, so [she] engaged a servant" in Baltimore "for the cooking department," and had "the prospect of a good house servant,"

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 891 (November 17, 1865); letter from Mary Greenhow Lee to Mary Williams, June 6, 1866, Philip Williams Papers, HL. This is the last entry in Mary Greenhow Lee's Civil War journal, which is close to a promise she had made to herself. On August 18, 1865, while visiting in Charlottesville, she wrote: "I have determined to continue with my journal till & have a home again & the scattered members of my family are reunited." Although the family was not with her, she had at least found a home.

⁶¹Massey, *Refugee Life*, 109.

as well, for her first boarding house.⁶² By 1870, Lee had five "domestic servants" living with her, one of them a white woman from Ireland, Catherine O'Brien; the other four were black women who were natives of Maryland.⁶³

When Mary Greenhow Lee migrated to Baltimore, she was not a stranger in the city. Several of the Winchester *connexion* had relocated there. St. George Hopkins wanted to "take his meals" at her boarding house; Ranny Barton boarded with her while he got his law practice going; and Frank Clark, brother of Peyton, relocated there, as well.⁶⁴ In addition, Lee could call for help and companionship from several native Baltimore friends. Other than Baltimore members of her *connexion* who had aided in her war effort, the city became home to some of the young soldiers she had befriended. When Basil Gildersleeve had visited with her during the war, he acted out his departure like a scene in a play, throwing "himself against his horse and wip[ing] away imaginary tears with his cuff." This was not the last time he would see Mary Greenhow Lee, however. Gildersleeve became a prominent professor of ancient languages at Johns Hopkins University and settled down in Baltimore with his family.⁶⁵ [See illustrations 45 and 46]

Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve had originally taught Greek at the University of

⁶²MGL, 811, 812 (April, 1865), 824 (May 16, 1865), 828 (May 24, 1865), 832 (June 4, 1865), 883 (October 21, 1865), 885 (October 25, 1865).

⁶³Ninth Census of the United States.

⁶⁴MGL, 885 (October 27, 1865), 889 (November 10, 1865); Frank P. Clark, Secretary of the Wednesday Club, located on the corner of St. Paul and Centre Streets, to Henry Rowland, October 3, 1879, Henry Augustus Rowland Papers, Special Collections, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University, hereafter cited as JHU.

⁶⁵MGL, 678 (September 6, 1864), 680 (September 9, 1864).



45. Captain Randolph J. Barton, 1865



46. Randolph Barton, chairman, Baltimore City draft board, leading World War I recruits

Virginia in 1856. One of his students was Randolph McKim, beginning a lifelong friendship that intensified through their shared military experiences. Gildersleeve's knowledge of ancient languages and McKim's study of theology prompted discussions of the classics between the two men. There is also some evidence that the Gildersleeves kept in contact with Dr. Philip C. Williams. A letter from Eliza ("Bettie") to Basil from Germany states that she saw Williams's son, John, during her travels. These relationships do not mean that Mary Greenhow Lee provided all of the links. She obviously did not. But it does depict a tightly woven network of friends and family connecting various urban areas together, not just for the Old South, but also for the New.⁶⁶

Lee's friendship with Randolph McKim in Baltimore is one of the best-documented of her relationships, beginning with her attendance at Emmanuel Protestant Episcopal Church where McKim served as Assistant Minister and continuing throughout Lee's life.⁶⁷ In 1904, when McKim delivered a speech to Confederate veterans in Tennessee, Lee suggested that he send a copy of the speech to Lord Wolseley. At this point, Lee lived in Baltimore, McKim in Washington, D. C., and Wolseley in England, yet the three had remained connected through letters long after the war. One of Lee's "special favourites," David Gregg McIntosh and his wife Jennie Pegram McIntosh of

⁶⁶See McKim, *Soldier's Recollections*, 258-259n; Barringer, *et. al.*, *University of Virginia*, 362, 517-518; letters between Gildersleeve and McKim, dated July 8, 1898 to December 28, 1905; and letter from Eliza Gildersleeve to B. L. Gildersleeve, March 24, 1889; Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve Papers, JHU.

⁶⁷Barringer, *et. al.*, *University of Virginia*, 517-518; MGL, 886 (October 29, 1865). At the close of the war, McKim served as Assistant Minister of Emmanuel Protestant Episcopal Church in Baltimore, the same church Lee attended while she lived in Baltimore. McKim did not stay there long, however, moving first to Portsmouth, Virginia, and then to Alexandria by 1867. From there he moved to New York City, then New Orleans, and then to Washington, D. C.

Richmond, also left the South to settle in Baltimore, putting them within close proximity to Lee.⁶⁸

All of these links helped Mary Greenhow Lee in her business. Even if they did not live with her, these people sometimes stopped by for dinner at her boarding house. When Gildersleeve's wife, "Bettie," was out of town, she suggested that he take his meals at "Mrs. Lee's table" instead of eating "cooked over...dishes" elsewhere. Bettie Gildersleeve also recommended Lee's boarding house to friends as transitional housing when they relocated.⁶⁹

The Calvert Street place was not Lee's only boarding house. Although it is not certain when she made the move, by 1876 "Mrs. Lee's" was on the corner of St. Paul and Read Streets.⁷⁰ She had probably moved to 806 St. Paul Street by 1870, when the United States Census lists twenty-three people living under her roof, including Laura Lee and brother-in-law Henry Lee and his wife Anna, three families with a combined total of four children ages three and under, an attorney, and a "liquor dealer."⁷¹

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 871 (September 21, 1865); Stannard, *Richmond: Its People*, 192-193; letter from Wolseley to McKim, November 12, 1904, reprinted in McKim, *Soldiers Recollections*, 258-259n. The letter is in appreciation for a copy of the speech entitled "The Confederate Soldier, His Motives and Aims," which McKim sent to Wolseley. In a postscript, Wolseley states, "It was most kind of Mrs. Hugh Lee to ask you to send me the copy of the speech in question," which suggests that McKim had sent a copy to Lee, as well, and also speaks to the contact the three still maintained.

⁶⁹Eliza Gildersleeve to Basil Gildersleeve, from Europe, October 21, and September 28, 1888, Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve Papers, JHU. "Bettie" Gildersleeve was daughter of Raleigh Colston of Albemarle County, and Fanny Barton's second cousin. See Colt, *Defend the Valley*, 286; MGL, 827 (May 22, 1865).

⁷⁰Handwritten notation on the back of an invoice from the Mount Vernon Hotel, September 1, 1876, Henry A. Rowland Papers, JHU.

⁷¹Ninth Census of the United States; Hopkins, "Journal of Mrs. Hugh H. Lee," 381. In 1872 Lee sold the Winchester house for \$3,625, but had a lien on the house for \$2,643.44, which came out of the sale of the home. Is not clear what the \$2,643.44 loan was for, but it may have been money she borrowed in part to make the move to St. Paul Street, not to purchase the house, but to furnish it. For a house large enough to house twenty-three people, it undoubtedly required a great deal of furnishings. See Winchester

In 1886, the tax assessor recorded Lee as living at 119 Madison Street and in 1889 Lee listed her boarding house, the *Shirley*, at "Madison St. nr. Park Av.," under "Principal Hotels" in Miss Remington's *Society Visiting List*.⁷² By advertising her boarding house, Lee's success no longer depended merely upon her *connexion*.

The location of her boarding house was both a sign of, and possibly a contribution to, any success Lee may have had. The Madison Street house was located in a prominent section of the city and men associated with the Peabody Conservatory of Music, and several professors from Johns Hopkins University, including Herbert Baxter Adams, Joseph Ames, Daniel Colt Gilman, and Kirby Flower Smith, frequented the *Shirley*. Gildersleeve and General Francis Pegram were also academic visitors to "Lee's table," but had been known to her during the war.⁷³

When Henry A. Rowland first came to Baltimore to teach at Johns Hopkins, he stayed at the Mount Vernon Hotel, but searched for a less expensive place to board. On the back of a September 1876 bill from the Mount Vernon, Rowland listed several

City Deed Book 13: 273, 275-277, 283-285, 344-345, Frederick County Court House, Winchester, Virginia.

⁷²Baltimore General Property Taxes, 1886, Ledger 5, Vol. 1, Reel 424, 614, Baltimore City Archives; Miss Remington, *Society Visiting List of 1889 and 1890, Baltimore, Md.* (Baltimore: Thos. E. Lycett & Co.) 214. If Mary Greenhow Lee named her new boarding house rather than taking over an establishment already named, it is possible that her choice stemmed from her Virginia heritage, claiming association with the Tidewater economic giants of the Georgian era, such as the Hill and Carter families of the Shirley Plantation. See Ruth S. Coski, "'Under Vines and Fig-Trees': Charles City County in the Georgian Age," in James P. Whittenburg and John M. Coski, eds., *Charles City County Virginia: An Official History* (Salem, WV: Don Mills, Inc., 1989), 35-44: 39.

⁷³Greenhow Family Papers, Genealogical Collection, CWM. I would like to thank Laura Odendahl of the College of William & Mary, and former resident of Maryland, for her insight into the class divisions of Baltimore real estate. Odendahl's assurance that Lee's migration from one house to another moved her up in scale of residence was affirmed when I visited the Maryland Historical Association on Monument Avenue. Circling two or three blocks several times to find a parking space, it finally dawned on me that I had been passing by the site of the *Shirley* which is, at least today, in an extremely pleasant section of the city.

options open to him, including "Mrs. Lee, St. Paul cor. Read," and "Mrs. Murdoch, 36 Hamilton." The next bill he paid was \$50 to Mrs. Murdoch for "two months rent of room." Whether because of the amount or the location or that Lee had no vacancies, Rowland chose Murdoch's place over Lee's in 1876, but became a visitor to the *Shirley* later on.⁷⁴

Although Lee could not have wanted for company in her busy boarding house, she probably did feel lonesome at times for family members she had grown to love in Winchester. The summer after the war while still in Staunton, as Lee took communion in church, kneeling "at the altar between Lute & Lal," she was saddened "to think" that they "might never meet there together again." Her thought at that time was that she could not "shake off the presentiment that" her "shattered family" would "never again be reunited."⁷⁵ Lee was right.

When Laura Lee Burwell's engagement to Sandy Pendleton broke off, Laura would have nothing more to do with him, even to the point of "cut[ting] him dead on the street in Winchester," but Lee and the Burwell nephews retained an attachment to Pendleton until his death.⁷⁶ Lee clearly began to look for other young men. One of these was Ranny McKim, who was "the loveliest boy in the world," but who married Agnes Gray Phillips of Staunton, instead.⁷⁷ Next was David Gregg McIntosh who seemed interested in Lute, but never learned the spelling of her name, asking Lee to "tell

⁷⁴*Ibid.*; invoice from the Mount Vernon Hotel, September 1, 1876, and receipt from M. L. Murdoch, September 8, 1876, Henry A. Rowland Papers, JHU.

⁷⁵MGL, 852, (August 7, 1865).

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 630 (July 3, 1864), 692 (September 26, 1864), 705 (October 13, 1864); Bean, *Pendleton*, 75.

⁷⁷MGL, 112 (May 27, 1862); McKim, *Soldier's Recollections*, 117.

Miss Lieut. Burrill she gave me a very chilling good bye with the tips of her fingers, which I shan't forget."⁷⁸ In the end, McIntosh married Jennie Pegram of Richmond. When Mary Greenhow Lee heard of their engagement she wrote that she "very much regret[ted]" it "for several reasons." One reason was probably that he would not be available for one of her nieces. The other reasons can only be guessed.⁷⁹ In any event, Laura Lee Burwell found her own mate. She married Spencer Livingston Davidson of Washington, D.C., in 1868, and produced two children, Laura Lee Davidson and Spencer Livingston Davidson, Jr.⁸⁰

In 1866 Louisa Burwell married Benjamin M. Cromwell, a surgeon who had boarded in the Lee household in 1864, a match that Lee herself had cultivated. "All the rage" at the hospital among young Winchester women, Cromwell met with Lee's approval as well. When he moved into her home, Lee began noting significant exchanges between Lute and the surgeon. He had a "passion for music & was perfectly delighted...by Lute's voice," she wrote, and also recorded that Lute gave Cromwell private French lessons.⁸¹ After "a balcony scene," and a "very confidential talk" with

⁷⁸MGL, 244 (October 17, 1862); letter from McIntosh to Lee, November 10, 1862, McIntosh Papers, Special Collections, VHS.

⁷⁹MGL, 871 (September 21, 1865); Stannard, *Richmond: Its People*, 192-193. Jennie Pegram was one of the women who posed for the painting by William D. Washington entitled "The Burial of Latane," commemorating the women of Westwood and Summer Hill plantations who buried Captain William Latane when he died nearby during the Seven Days Battles.

⁸⁰See Brown, *Burwell: Kith and Kin*, 31; Carlton, *Known Descendants of Robert Carter*, 134. Laura Lee Burwell Davidson died in 1887.

⁸¹MGL, 693 (September 22, 1864), 698 (October 1, 1864), 700 (October 4, 1864), 701 (October 6, 1864), 702 (October 7-9, 1864), 710 (October 23, 1864), 717 (November 6-7, 1864). On June 12, 1864, Benjamin Mellichamp Cromwell wrote to the Surgeon General, requesting transfer from field duty to hospital duty since there was "an adequate supply of medical officers in the field," and he "desire[d] to perfect the knowledge" he had gained by "more extended observations that can only be obtained in the Hospital." His request was denied but, because he was taken prisoner, he ironically got his wish when the

Lee, it became fairly clear that Louisa and Benjamin had formed a romantic attachment of which Lee clearly approved.⁸²

Lewis Burwell married Sarah Bastable of Clarksburg, West Virginia in 1866, and they made their home in Mount Savage, Maryland.⁸³ Robert Burwell married Anne Elizabeth Clayton of Athens, Georgia, in 1870, and appears to have remained in Georgia at least for a time, since his first child was born there in 1871.⁸⁴ Antoinette and Laura Lee moved to Baltimore for a time, but Antoinette did not stay. In September of 1866, while visiting with George's family in Clarksburg, Laura and Antoinette told their niece Hortensia Lee that they planned "returning to Winchester in October."⁸⁵ It is not certain

Union command put him to work in the Winchester hospitals. See Cromwell's obituary in *Confederate Veteran*, August, 1917, 374; Order of J. P. Benjamin, Acting Secretary of War, October 28, 1861, Appointment Certificate, May 26, 1862, letter from Cromwell to Moore, June 12, 1864, with responses on back by G. W. Briggs, Senior Surgeon, June 12, L. Guild, June 13, and S. Moore, June 20, 1864, Mary De Renne Letterbook, ESB; MGL, 689 (September 22, 1864).

⁸²Louisa and Benjamin Cromwell moved to western Maryland in 1882, when Cromwell took the position of resident physician at Consolidated Coal Company at Eckhart Mines, in Alleghany County, Maryland. Louisa died in March of the following year. Together the Cromwells had six children. One of them, Laura Lee Cromwell, married Samuel Johnson Poe of Baltimore, in 1900. A daughter born to them in 1904 received the name Mary Greenhow Lee Poe. Then in 1942, Mary Greenhow Lee Poe Skinner (Mrs. Dessa Mason Skinner, Jr.) named her new daughter, born in Washington, D C., Mary Lee Cromwell Skinner. Through their naming practices, the *connexion* clearly indicated how highly they valued heritage and kinship among the many attributes that admitted them into the network. It was Mary Greenhow Lee Poe Skinner who donated Mary Lee's Civil War journal to the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society, indicating that Lee's namesake had been the beneficiary of this historical document. See *Confederate Veteran*, August, 1917, 374; Carlton, *Known Descendants of Robert Carter*, 133; Louisa Carter Burwell gravestone, Mount Hebron Cemetery, Winchester, Virginia; *Winchester Evening Star*, March 5, 1963.

⁸³Carlton, *Known Descendants of Robert Carter*, 134; Brown, *Burwell: Kith and Kin*, 31. Lewis and Sarah ("Sallie") had five children: a son named after Lewis, a daughter named after Sarah, and Mary Burwell, Antoinette Lee Burwell, and Louisa Burwell, which continued the naming practices of the *connexion*. Lewis died in 1909, possibly the only one of the four children Mary helped raise who outlived her.

⁸⁴*Ibid.* Robert and Anne had four children: Edward Clayton Burwell, Elizabeth Lee Burwell, Mary Burwell, and Lewis Carter Burwell. There is some question as to the date of Robert's death. The year listed in the genealogy is 1870, yet all of his children were born in years subsequent to that.

⁸⁵Hortensia Lee to John J. Williams, September 6, 1866, Philip Williams Papers, HL.

when Antoinette left or where she went, but she was not listed on the 1870 Census with Mary Greenhow Lee and died in Brooklyn, New York, in 1881.⁸⁶ She might have been living with relatives at the time, or just visiting. In any case, Mary Greenhow Lee's "presentiment that" her "shattered family" would "never again be reunited" was correct.⁸⁷ Except for Laura Lee, and Henry and Anna for a time, Lee's "family" consisted mostly of boarders for the last half of her life.

She wrote on November 17, 1865, "no one knows how I dread the new life before me," and, in a letter to Mary Williams on June 7, 1866, she wrote, "I never felt it so much as now, being amongst strangers &...having really no interest in the world around me."⁸⁸ Somehow she overcame these dreary notions, however, because she became involved in numerous associations. In 1895, at age 76, "Mrs. Hugh H. Lee, of Winchester, Va." became a charter member and one of the managers of the newly organized Baltimore Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. By 1896, she was secretary of the U. D. C., which, in April 1898, held a bazaar for the benefit of Confederate veterans, mothers, and widows. In 1904, at age 85, Mary Greenhow Lee was still listed as Recording Secretary for the chapter, now grown to 736 members.⁸⁹

⁸⁶Gravestone of Marie Antoinette Lee, Mount Hebron Cemetery, Winchester, Virginia. The epitaph on her very large stone, topped by a cross, reads: "Our Father hath willed it, why should we weep. For so He giveth His beloved sleep."

⁸⁷MGL, 852 (August 7, 1865).

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 891 (November 17, 1865); letter from Lee to Mary Williams, June 7, 1866, Philip Williams Papers, HL.

⁸⁹*Confederate Veteran*, Vol. III, No. 8 (August 1895) 226; No 11 (Nov 1895) 331, Vol. IV, No 4 (Ap 1896) 133; Vol. V, No. 12 (Dec 1897) 602; *Minutes of the Eleventh Annual Meeting of the United Daughters of the Confederacy Held in St. Louis, MO, Oct 4-8, 1904* (Nashville, Tenn: Press of Foster & Webb, Printers, 1905) 35, 312.

In an undated letter to Lucy Parke Bagby, widow of George Bagby of Richmond, Lee wrote that she "must decline" taking on the position of Vice-President of a new association Bagby was forming. Her reasons were that she was "familiar with the beginnings of so many associations in Baltimore," and knew that much depended "on the one at the helm." Explaining that adding to the time she already gave to the Confederate Home, the Maryland Branch of Woman's Auxiliary to the Board of Missions, and "other charities" with which she had been involved for years, she would have very little to contribute to Bagby's cause. The only thing she could offer to the position, given her "home duties," would be "good will and a very limited portion of time," so she suggested that Bagby ask someone else.⁹⁰ Besides these groups, Lee was active in her church and served as Secretary for the Southern Education Association, organized to help build schools in the South.⁹¹

Laura Lee died on June 24, 1902, of cerebral hemorrhage brought on by arteriosclerosis. A funeral service for Laura was conducted "at her late home and only the nearest relatives and most intimate friends" were present. Then her body was transported to Winchester where she was buried at Mount Hebron Cemetery, next to Antoinette.⁹² By the time of Laura's death, Mary was over eighty-two years old and too feeble to travel far, which was probably one reason for the Baltimore funeral service.

⁹⁰Letter from Lee to Lucy Parke (Chamberlayne) Bagby, undated, Bagby Family Papers, Special Collections, VHS; Lee obituary, *Evening Star and Morning News*, May 27, 1907.

⁹¹Hopkins, "Journal of Mrs. Hugh H. Lee," 380.

⁹²Certificate of Death, Laura Lee, Baltimore Archives; *The Evening Star*, June 26, 1902.

Mary is not mentioned among those who attended Laura's burial in Winchester. Many of those who did, however, also attended Mary's services five years later.

At nine in the morning of May 25, 1907, Mary Greenhow Lee died at the home of Spencer L. Davidson, her great-nephew, at 1119 Park Avenue, after being "confined to her bed for four months." The primary reason given for her death appears to be kidney failure, a condition of her "advanced age." As with Laura Lee, funeral services were held for Mary in Baltimore, this time at Emmanuel Protestant Episcopal Church. She then took her last trip to Winchester, her casket met at the train depot by old friends who followed her to Mt. Hebron Cemetery for burial next to Hugh Holmes Lee. Fittingly, the funeral director in charge of the arrangements was George Kurtz, a former Confederate hero, and surely someone Mary Greenhow Lee would have entrusted with her final ceremony. Instead of separate gravestones, Mary and Hugh share one, marred by a bullet hole left from the war that raged nearby. A small stone labelled "M.G.L." marks her actual grave.⁹³ *[See illustration 47]*

In 1915, Laura Lee Davidson, Mary's great-niece, wrote from Barridge, Ontario, to Mrs. Thomas Baxter Gresham of Park Avenue in Baltimore. In the course of catching up on news, Davidson wrote:

I am so very glad that the chair, that Aunt Lee cherished so, is in your care. It was....the chair in which General ["Stonewall"] Jackson sat, forever sacred on that account. I remember that dear Aunt Lee never

⁹³Death Certificate, Mary Greenhow Lee, Baltimore Archives; *Evening Star and Morning News Item*, May 27, 1907; MGL, 556. On the evening of February 12, 1864, Lee had written: "went to the cemetery this evening & amongst other signs of war observed a bullet, embedded in the centre of the shaft of the monument, which marks the spot where my last home will be--where my heart is now."



47. Mary Greenhow Lee's grave markers to right of monument

liked to have any one use it.⁹⁴

Very few items belonging to Mary Greenhow Lee now exist. Her diaries, the Civil War journal, and a few letters remain, preserved in various archives. A pair of stockings she knitted from tenting material have been displayed at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. The family silver listed in the administration of her estate is, one hopes, treasured by a descendant of her family.

With so few sources available to reflect the last half of Mary Greenhow Lee's life, this one mention of the care she gave the chair Jackson sat in when he visited her on October 27, 1862, may give the clearest picture of her last years.⁹⁵ That chair was a reminder to Lee of the dedication she gave to the Cause, signified by the fact that Jackson had come in person to thank her for her "soldier work." It is also significant that Davidson understood clearly that "dear Aunt Lee" wanted no one to sit in the chair. Typically, Mary Greenhow Lee had made her likes and dislikes known right to the last.

Clearly, Mary Greenhow Lee remained loyal to the South, valuing the heritage of the cause she continued to serve to the end of her life. She also remained a member of the *connexion*.⁹⁶ Even though war knocked the economic pins out from under many

⁹⁴Letter from Laura Lee Davidson to Mrs. Thomas Baxter Gresham, May 16, 1915, Stonewall Jackson Papers, Preston Library, Virginia Military Institute Archives, Lexington, Virginia. Although not stated, Davidson implies in the letter that Mrs. Gresham received Mary Greenhow Lee's chair because of all her "kindnesses during the last years of Aunt Lee's life," and that "Aunt Lee" had become very attached to Mrs. Gresham through that time.

⁹⁵MGL, 246 (October 22, 1862).

⁹⁶Although one wonders how much weight Lee assigned to the gesture, in 1889, her name had appeared in Miss Remington's *Society Visiting List*, a public signal to Baltimore society that she was *visitable*. See Remington, *Society Visiting List*, 82.

members of the old southern aristocracy, they still maintained an advantaged attitude in their genteel poverty because they could rely upon the other characteristics that had made them visitable before the rebellion. Mary Greenhow Lee's life illuminates this stubborn retention of prestige and influence when the Old South turned New. Born into one of the wealthiest Richmond families, Mary Greenhow Lee was judged "worthless" by Baltimore's tax assessor in 1905, just two years before her death when the assessment of her estate was valued at less than \$300.⁹⁷

The criteria of tax assessors, fortunately, are not those of the historian. Her obituary gave her credit for the various charities she contributed her energy to and especially for giving "her heart and soul to the Confederate cause," styling her home into a "barometer of the fortunes of the Confederacy in this area."⁹⁸ Yet even this praise does not explain her value, which comes from the record she left of her personal reactions to life in the nineteenth-century South. Rather than a life lived well within the generalized notions we have about women of her class, her region, and her era, hers shows the exposed places in that social construction where women claimed the advantage. Her example complicates the picture we think we have of the past.

Once, when a "Yankee shop keeper" gave her trouble, she "*assumed* a grand air" and then "stood *like* the most helpless fine lady" until he provided someone to carry her

⁹⁷Baltimore General Property Taxes, Baltimore City Archives, 1905, Ledger 8, Vol 1, 448; Administration of Estate, Mary Lee, 1908, MSA; "Last Will and Testament of Mary G. Lee," Baltimore City Register of Wills, "Register of Wills of Orphans Court, Baltimore City, State of Maryland," 387; Administration of the Estate of Mary Lee, 1908, MSA; Richmond Circuit Court Book 1: 166, LOV; City of Richmond Hustings Court Book 8: 263, LOV.

⁹⁸*Evening Star and Morning News Item*, May 27, 1907.

purchases home for her.⁹⁹ Lee played her social and gender roles well. That is the value of Mary Greenhow Lee's biography. She is worthy of our consideration as an example of how one nineteenth-century southern woman could understand the roles society expected her to play, yet not lose her Self in the process of playing them.

In 1903, Henry Adams was asked for advice on the best southern figure upon whom to base a biography. Adams responded pessimistically that "southern society has left very little" in the way of "intimate letters, memoirs, or records" for such a project. He explained that there was nothing "duller than" the "pompositives" of biographies constructed from the speeches of statesmen—the bulk of the sources available—and suggested that most statesmen "took themselves too seriously for our amusement," anyway. He wished his correspondent well, but believed that "the man who makes the most mistakes, makes the best biography," the sources of which were virtually absent.¹⁰⁰

Given his place in time and his thoughts on the value of studying the life of southern *statesmen*, Adams would have been amazed at the suggestion that a biography of a southern *woman* who had no voice in affairs of state would be warranted. Although Mary Greenhow Lee had no political vote, she gave voice to her political concerns, but did so in the context of how government decisions affected society at her level. Though her economic decisions did not trickle down to alter life for the majority, her record shows the economic challenges that faced most people in her era. Economic and political

⁹⁹MGL, 762 (January 12, 1865), emphasis added.

¹⁰⁰Letter from Henry Adams in Washington, D.C., to Edwin A. Alderman, Esq., President, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, February 10, 1903, Miscellaneous Alderman Correspondence, UVA.

engines driving the changes in Lee's life provide the backdrop for her personal story.

If Henry Adams desired "intimate letters, memoirs, and records" for a better understanding of life in the past, Mary Greenhow Lee's record provides the human element, not just for herself, but also for her community. If Adams believed that only historic subjects who did not take "themselves too seriously" or who could admit their mistakes make the best biographies, then Lee's approach to life meets his criteria. A woman who confessed that she could be "intensely stupid" without her tea or coffee for stimulant, who asked if she was one of the "many queer people...in this world," and who admitted after running out in the rain and catching cold that she did "very senseless things" at times was not shy about displaying her mistakes. The story of her life can add to our understanding about the southern world of the nineteenth century, about women's part in creating that world, and also offer a connection to people of all eras, the timelessness of human effort to confront change.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹MGL 461 (August 1863), 477 (September 1863), 518 (November 1866).

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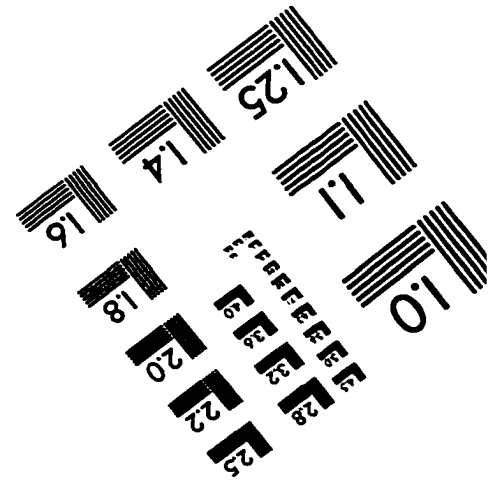
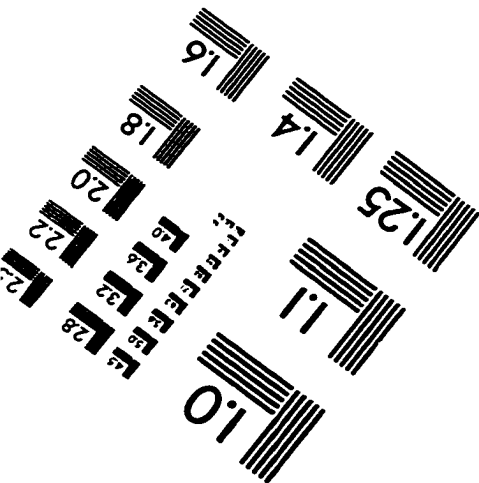
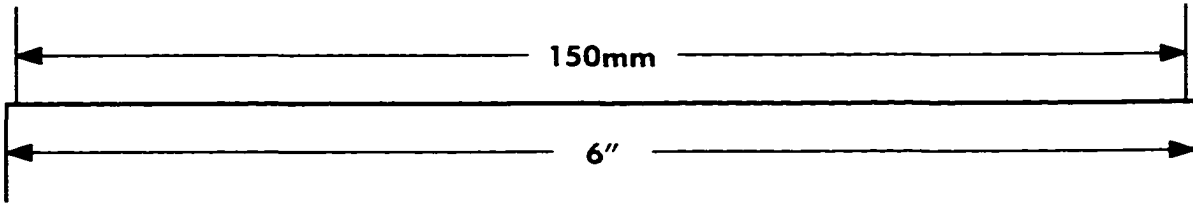
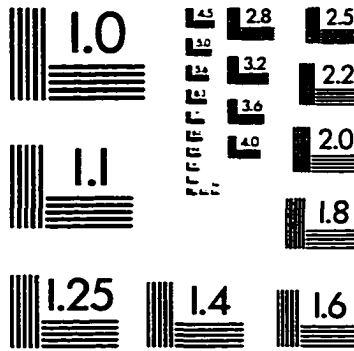
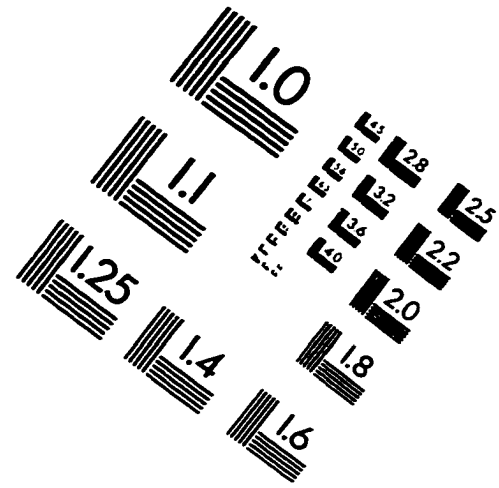
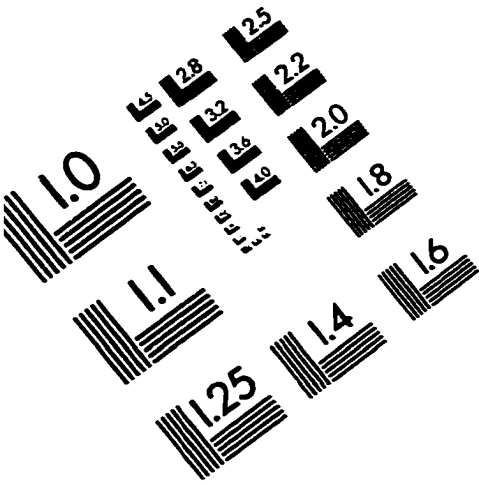
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VITA

Sheila Rae Phipps

Born in Glenwood, Minnesota, September 24, 1948. Graduated from Stonewall Jackson High School, Manassas, Virginia, June 1966. In 1991, graduated *summa cum laude* from Clinch Valley College of the University of Virginia, in Wise, Virginia. Inducted into the Darden Society, 1991. Entered the College of William and Mary M.A. program in History in August 1991, and the Ph.D. program in History in August 1992. Author earned an M.A. in History in May 1996, a Ph.D. in August 1998, and begins as an Assistant Professor at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, in the Fall 1998 semester.

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