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SALLIE AND ELIZABETH GALT:
COMPLIANCE AND RESISTANCE TO THE "SOUTHERN LADY" ROLE
IN ANTEBELLUM WILLIAMSBURG

A Thesis

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
Master of Arts

by
Elizabeth Neal Pitzer

1985

APPROVAL SHEET

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

Master of Arts

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father, the late Charles Lewis Pitzer, Junior.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express her appreciation for the time, effort, and thoughtful criticism of Associate Professor H. Cam Walker. She is also indebted to Professor M. Boyd Coyner, Jr., and Associate Professor James P. Whittenburg for their careful reading and criticism of the manuscript. Thanks are also due to Miss Margaret C. Cook, Curator of manuscripts and rare books in the Special Collections Department of Swem Library, for her help with the Galt Family Papers.

Special appreciation goes to my mother, Colette Pitzer, and my husband, Wallace Gusler, for their abiding encouragement.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the lives of two women of nineteenth-century Williamsburg, Virginia. Letters and manuscripts in the Galt Family Papers, along with secondary sources, provided the basis of the study. The characters of Sallie and Lizzie Galt were molded by the mores of the antebellum era, by the intellectual atmosphere of upper class Williamsburg society, and by the tenets of the nineteenth-century phenomenon--the "cult of true womanhood" and its particularly Southern aspect, the "Southern lady ideal."

The "true womanhood" cult emphasized piety, domesticity, purity, and submissiveness as qualities desirable in an ideal woman. The cult prescribed marriage and motherhood as a woman's only path to fulfillment, and suggested that an unmarried woman was incapable of self-reliance.

Neither of the Galt sisters married, and some aspect of the personality of each complied with the "Southern lady" role. Each woman, however, countered in some way the myth of feminine weakness and dependence--Lizzie in her literary accomplishments and determination to continue household management despite poor health, and Sallie in her solitary struggle against the adversity caused by the Civil War and Reconstruction. They are representative of the Southern women liberated by modern scholarship from the myth of feminine frailty.

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INTRODUCTION

The Galt Family Papers in Special Collections at Swem Library of the College of William and Mary provide a rich resource of Virginia history in the nineteenth century. The Galts lived in Williamsburg for over two centuries, from before 1750 until 1977, when Mary Ware Galt Kirby, the last local resident died. Fortunately for historians, family members saved letters and drafts of correspondence, diaries, scrapbooks, receipts, and newspaper clippings. The Galts directed the Public Hospital for the insane in Williamsburg for nearly one hundred years, and their accumulated documents of medical treatment are a valuable record of the history of early psychotherapy and treatment of the mentally ill. These Medical Papers, as the business portions of the family papers are called, have been important in the interpretation of the reconstructed Public Hospital, a Colonial Williamsburg Foundation museum.

The Personal Papers formed the basis of this study of Sallie and Elizabeth Galt, two nineteenth-century spinsters. Although a few of the Personal Papers date to the eighteenth century, and the collection extends into the twentieth century, the majority are from the antebellum period, circa 1820 to 1860. Most of the papers were written or collected by the children of Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Dickie Galt: Elizabeth and Sallie, and their brothers Alexander, Jr., and John Minson Galt II. Because the letters record so many details of family life--housekeeping,

interaction with servants, social gatherings, literary tastes, events relating to the College of William and Mary and Bruton Parish Church-- they offer an intimate picture of life in an upper class household in antebellum Williamsburg. Since women were usually the family correspondents, the papers reflect the preoccupation with courtship and marriage typical in that era of the "cult of true womanhood."¹

This thesis examines the lives of two women--Sallie and Lizzie Galt--as seen through their own writings, along with other documents in the Galt Personal Papers and secondary sources. They both were nurtured in an atmosphere which stressed the goals of true womanhood: piety, domesticity, docility, and purity. They were also products of the peculiarly Southern aspect of this "cult," named the "Southern lady ideal" by historian Anne Firor Scott.² Southern women were characterized as frail and helpless, needing a man as protector and provider. The Galt sisters were reared to fit this mold, and some aspects of the character of each illustrates the stereotype of the Southern lady. Both were chaste spinsters, thus fulfilling the requirement for purity. While both were devout Christians, their piety was expressed in different ways. Lizzie voiced her faith through poetry and private worship, while Sallie helped with church fairs and attended services at Bruton Parish Episcopal Church. After their parents' deaths they lived with their brother John, following the traditional pattern of women depending upon men for economic support. The sisters shared the responsibility of supervising his household, thus exhibiting the domestic ingredient in the formula for a proper Southern lady.

But research by Scott and by Catherine Clinton in The Plantation Mistress³ suggests that the Southern lady is a myth. They prove, with

the letters and diaries of hundreds of Southern women as evidence, that the supposed fragile female was often the backbone of the family: the doctor, teacher, feeder, and "mantua maker" to a large family of white children and black slaves. During and after the Civil War many Southern women were forced to provide the economic support for their families as well.

Sallie and Lizzie Galt, while fitting the "Southern lady" image in many ways, corroborate the alter ego of Southern womanhood detected by Clinton and Scott. Lizzie, despite poor health and a reclusive nature, worked long and hard to manage her brother's household, to help with his professional reports to the hospital board, and to teach her young sister and cousins. Sallie, who according to the myth should not have been able to cope without a husband's or brother's manly support, was the sole survivor of her family to face the financial and personal losses of the Civil War, yet she coped with dignity, self-possession, and courage. Ironically, her source of male strength, her brother John--discouraged after the Confederate loss of the Battle of Williamsburg and by Federal usurpation of his duties at the mental hospital--took his own life.⁴ Sallie, like many of her Southern sisters, found an inner strength which helped her to deal with hardship and despair. Southern women proved to posterity that they were not fragile flowers, but strong, tensile willows which might bend but not break during many ill winds.

CHAPTER I

THE GALT FAMILY OF WILLIAMSBURG

The Galts were among the civic and social leaders of nineteenth-century Williamsburg. One resident remembered the "Tuckers, Millingtons, Saunders, Galts, Southalls, Wallers, and Mercers" as the most prominent citizens during the 1840s.¹ The Galts' standing was reiterated by a man who recalled them sitting in the wings of Bruton Parish Church among families "representative of the best in Virginia."²

Williamsburg Personal Property Tax records bear out those subjective comments. While antebellum Williamsburg boasted no really wealthy residents, it contained a substantial upper middle class population, and three generations of Galt physicians were regularly among the town's highest taxpayers. In 1814 the estate of Dr. John Minson Galt I was taxed \$5.74; most citizens were charged about \$1.50, while a very few paid \$13.00 or \$30.00. The next year his son Dr. A. D. Galt inherited his father's property, including eight slaves, three horses, and a two-wheeled vehicle. For the next thirty years the family consistently owned eight to ten slaves and three or four horses. As a basis of comparison, in 1822 Galt owned nine slaves and one two-wheeled gig, while St. George Tucker, Williamsburg's wealthiest resident, owned twelve slaves and a four-wheeled carriage. In 1823 Galt paid \$4.03 in taxes, and Tucker paid \$13.25, but most men paid two or three dollars. By 1827 the Galt economic status was rising: with the addition of a

four-wheeled carriage to his gig and nine slaves, A.D. Galt paid \$11.15. Robert Saunders, with the same number of slaves and horses, a four-wheeled carriage, but no gig, paid \$7.09. Tucker paid \$10.00. The 1830s were a period of low taxes for all residents, but by 1844, with Dr. John M. Galt as head of the household, the Galts were in the highest bracket, paying \$19.95 as contrasted with \$13.25 paid by college professor John Millington and \$11.47 paid by merchant E. A. Vest. In 1843 income over \$400 was included in the tax assessments. (The basis of taxation changed periodically.) That year John M. Galt II was the highest-salaried resident of Williamsburg, making \$1267 [over \$400.] Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, with \$1200, and Thomas R. Dew, president of the College of William and Mary, at \$1250, were the only taxpayers with anywhere near as much income.³

The Galts had not always known the social and economic standing they enjoyed in the nineteenth century. When Williamsburg was the colonial capital of Virginia the Galts immigrated from Scotland and worked as tradesmen. Samuel Galt, who appears in Williamsburg records about 1750, was a goldsmith and clockmaker, and also served as Keeper of the Public Gaol.⁴ The family rose to prominence through several generations' medical practice and supervision of the Eastern State Hospital, the first hospital in America devoted exclusively to the treatment of the mentally ill.

Samuel Galt's son John Minson Galt (1744-1808) was an apothecary and surgeon. In the eighteenth century these were considered trades, rather than professions, but Galt's thorough education--at the College of William and Mary, and medical training at Edinburgh and Paris⁵--indicates the evolution of a physician's status as well as the upward

mobility of the Galt family. As a part of his civic responsibilities as a member of the College Board of Visitors, Galt would have met many of the governmental and social leaders who came to Williamsburg to transact business.⁶ Both he and his brother James belonged to the Williamsburg Lodge of Freemasons which included George Washington and Speaker of the House of Burgesses Peyton Randolph among its members.⁷ Perhaps this Masonic association with other patriots encouraged Galt to join Williamsburg's Committee of Safety in 1774.⁸ Galt served as a surgeon during the Revolution and was senior field surgeon during the siege of Yorktown.⁹ After the war Galt returned to private practice and in 1791 was appointed Attending Physician at the Public Hospital for the insane, a post which he held until his death in 1808.¹⁰

Dr. John Minson Galt established a family precedent for medical service and community leadership. Both his son, Dr. Alexander Dickie Galt (the father of Lizzie and Sallie), and his grandson and namesake Dr. John Minson Galt II succeeded him as superintendent of Eastern State Hospital, providing uninterrupted Galt family direction for nearly a century.¹¹ All three generations of Galt physicians had reputations for philanthropy, donating medical services to the needy and giving medicine to the hospital without charge. Sallie Galt was proud that both her father and brother continually refused the annual raises voted to them by the hospital Court of Directors. The increased stature of the medical profession, combined with Williamsburg's diminished importance after the capital moved to Richmond in 1780, made possible the upward mobility of the Galt family and its consequent philanthropic largesse.

Dr. Alexander Dickie Galt (1771-1841) married his cousin Mary

Dorothea (Polly) Galt (1786-1858) of Richmond in 1812. Both were descended from Samuel Galt, Dr. Galt from Samuel's first marriage, and Polly from his second.¹² Dr. and Mrs. Galt had four children: John Minson, Alexander, Jr., Elizabeth Judith, born May 20, 1816, and Sarah Maria, born February 27, 1822.¹³

The children were reared in a house on the north side of Francis Street, or Woodpecker Lane, as the east end of the street was called in the nineteenth century. Dr. Galt rented the house from the estate of Thomas Nelson of Yorktown from 1814 until 1821, when he arranged to buy it.¹⁴ The house had been built in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, so as the children grew older it must have seemed old-fashioned, as well as cramped for a family of six. In 1835 Dr. Galt commissioned Richard Bucktrout to make extensive repairs and to add a rear wing which doubled the size of the house.¹⁵ The family did not have long to enjoy these improvements in the house, for when John assumed the superintendency of the hospital upon his father's death in 1841, they moved up the street to the newly-designated superintendent's residence across from the hospital. They left their old house in the care of a servant.

The furnishings of the house were typical of many homes in antebellum Virginia--a mixture of family pieces from the colonial era and contemporary Victorian decoration. A significant amount of Williamsburg-made furniture--a tea table, chairs, clothespresses, desks, even a bed and bed hangings--have survived in the Galt family until the present.¹⁶ Family members expressed antiquarian interests by acquiring furnishings with historical provenance, such as a table used by the "Literary Club" of London, a group which included Sir Joshua Reynolds, David Garrick, and Dr. Samuel Johnson.¹⁷ With typical Virginian

ancestral pride, Sallie Galt prized the bed hangings sent to her grandfather by Lafayette's soldiers in thanks for his hospitality.

The antiques were updated by the addition of carpets, girandoles, and a new sofa ordered from the metropolis of Richmond.¹⁸ An inventory of furnishings taken at Sallie Galt's death in 1880 records plentiful mahogany furniture and a genteel amount of family silver, which probably stayed within the family only because there was no local market for such luxuries after the Civil War.¹⁹ This comfortable environment--an expansive house furnished with a mixture of heirloom furniture and fashionable empire style additions--provided the perfect setting for the nurture of an upper class female in antebellum Virginia--the "Southern lady."

The physical setting appropriate to the breeding of a "flower of Southern womanhood" was complemented by the proper emotional environment. A suitable atmosphere was intended to induce piety, purity, domesticity, and docility in young women. The emotional environment of the Galt home was unusual in being dominated by an extremely protective mother, but it effectively instilled the virtues of true womanhood in the daughters of the house.

The Galt family was exceptionally close knit, even in an era of strong nuclear families. Dr. Galt had married his first cousin once removed. This close relationship, while not incestuous or even irregular in Virginia kinship patterns, was not a strengthening link for the family, who tended to be introspective and reclusive, and often depended upon themselves for companionship and entertainment. Mrs. Galt was a perfect product of the cult of domesticity. Her life revolved around her family and home; in fact, she seldom left the house. Ironically,

her consuming interest in her children's lives seems to have stifled their development.

Polly Galt cited the continual illness of Lizzie and Alexander as the reason for her anti-social tendencies, but she worried constantly (often needlessly) about all of her children. When John traveled to Philadelphia she fretted that his boat might swamp in a storm or that he might catch pleurisy.²⁰ In 1847 Sallie visited Richmond in August, yet Mrs. Galt wrote her an anxious note about using enough blankets and flannels and getting plenty of rest. Despite these admonitions, Lizzie wrote that "Mama is quite easy about you, having had the pleasure of wrapping you up to her heart's content."²¹ When Sallie spent Christmas of that year in Richmond, Mrs. Galt relented and admitted that she was glad Sallie had enjoyed a happy holiday there, since she did not freeze on the trip.²² Lizzie's two trips to Richmond seem to have occurred because Dr. Galt persuaded his wife that a trip might benefit their daughter's health. Only then was Mrs. Galt "willing to part with her for ten days," and she admitted being selfish in her gladness to have her back home.²³

Letters seldom mention Mrs. Galt as actually being sick, but they do emphasize her reclusive nature. It was considered an event when she went to church in 1841.²⁴ Such infrequent church attendance was unusual because in the precepts of the "Southern lady ideal" church is considered second only to home as the appropriate realm of a "true woman." Similarly, Lizzie became so reclusive that upon her death in 1854 a former rector of Bruton Parish Church would write, "It was not my privilege ever to have seen her. . . ."²⁵ Cousins encouraged Mrs. Galt and Lizzie to visit, admonishing that they both stayed home entirely too

much, and promising that they could have as much privacy as desired in their home in a secluded part of Richmond.²⁶

Mrs. Galt disliked the social rituals expected of an antebellum matron. She declined to pay social calls and was wary of entertaining company in her own home. Even Lizzie realized her social discomfiture and criticized her "inscrutable incognito."²⁷ She suspected that her mother suffered hypochondria and confided to her sister in 1851: "With this discreet diet and management of mine, Mama is . . . much better than she will usually acknowledge herself to be."²⁸

Although her home confinement may have been an overreaction, Mrs. Galt's concerns for her children's health were valid. Alexander was in poor health throughout most of his life and died in his mid-twenties. His pastimes included keeping a commonplace book of daily family life and detailed meteorological records. He particularly enjoyed carriage rides, and even when too weak to walk was lifted into the gig for his daily ride, which his father called Alex's great comfort and only communication with society.²⁹

Lizzie's illness was not as immediately debilitating, but it affected her personality and her interaction with the community. The nature of her malady is unclear, but for nearly twenty-five years, until her death in 1854, illness kept Lizzie confined to home. The papers contain occasional comments about her having cancer: Dr. Galt referred to Lizzie's nasal disease and warned the absent John of the change in her appearance: "Your sister's face is improving, but you must be prepared to see some deformity in the nose from the loss of a small portion of the right [illegible]. Her lip is still covered with the scab, and is occasionally uncovered."³⁰

It is unclear how much of Lizzie's retirement from the world was due to actual ongoing illness and how much to her self-consciousness about the physical effects of the condition. Even when she was a teenager she was almost unnaturally shy, a situation which her over-protective mother did nothing to correct. At age nineteen she wrote to her best friend:

W. Pryor attributes the Christian love that I bear to the whole human race to my having had so little intercourse with the world . . . which still appears as an unmarred Eden to my eyes. Still I visit less than ever, and never was anyone endowed with so little taste for making new acquaintances. Strangers come and go, and sometimes I ought to see them--but I always play the delinquent. . . .³¹

The continual theme of get well wishes to Lizzie first appears in correspondence in 1827. A cousin encouraged her to visit Richmond, claiming, "I know by experience how discouraging these lingering diseases are, and that a change of air and scene prevents one from thinking of self, and with us it would be a second home."³²

Correspondents constantly inquired about Lizzie's health and expressed admiration for her fortitude and resigned piety in the face of such distress. Occasionally a rebuke surfaced to hint that her maladies might be exaggerated. In 1837 cousin Cary Lambert wrote from Richmond,

I was quite disappointed, Lizzie, . . . to learn . . . that you are still confined upstairs, too unwell to admit your friends to see you. I am sure, dear Liz, you have tried staying home long enough, and as you are no better, and it [the Williamsburg climate] is so very sickly, summon up all your resolution, and determine to come here; everybody says change of air will be the best thing in the world for you.³³

In the fall of that year her friend Mary Tyler Jones chastised Lizzie for not going to White Sulphur Springs for the summer. She accused

Lizzie of committing a sin by being in such bad health for one so young and doing nothing to restore it.³⁴ Even Lizzie's brother John, away at medical school in Philadelphia, hinted that she stayed in too much. He wrote of a former William and Mary student who had done nothing but general reading for four or five years and realized that happiness required some active pursuit, for he had become quite "hypochondriacal."³⁵

Apparently Lizzie did not discourage the attention lavished upon an invalid. One aspect of the "Southern lady" persona was frailty and delicacy. She admitted that she fostered the image appropriate for a woman of her station when she joked about her position as senior invalid of the family: "I am never sick enough to require attention, and always too much occupied to require amusement; and moreover I do not like that she [Sallie] should usurp my prerogative [sic] of being the only invalid--quite a regal power in a household. . . ."³⁶

Lizzie refused most of her many invitations to visit family and friends. She made only two known ventures outside Williamsburg--trips in 1835 and 1836 to stay with relatives in Richmond. John persuaded Lizzie and their mother that a trip would do Lizzie good. She enjoyed herself, writing:

It really appears like a dream when I think I have been to Richmond. And you imagine it must have been some powerful cause to induce Mama to let me go--our Friends have been beseeching her . . . since I was six years old Nothing but Brother John's intention of going to the West, and his extreme anxiety for me to accompany him to Paradise, as he styles Richmond, could have made her let me go.³⁷

Despite her evident enjoyment of those trips, she declined to travel to Gloucester, Virginia, to attend the wedding of her best friend Mary Tyler, claiming illness. Her own letters, however, suggest that

slight envy of Mary's marriage and self-pity at losing her primary place in Mary's life may have spurred her indisposition.

Lizzie recognized that the over-zealous attitude of her mother and the sick ward atmosphere of the Galt home had instilled a lack of confidence in Sallie. She realized that Sallie's social reticence exceeded the demure nature recommended for a young woman. Lizzie wrote that nothing would give Sallie more pleasure than visiting her uncle John Strobias:

If she could only be there without going out to get there. Such is the natural timidity of her disposition, that I believe nothing but firm moral principle would ever have induced her to leave the house. And nearly two years of entire seclusion and deep sorry [after her father's death] have only given strength to the shrinking modesty which was the most striking characteristic of her childhood. . . . She lets her intelligence and wit slumber in obscurity, when she had better put diffidence asleep and wake confidence. . . . Sally's only fault is want of confidence.³⁸

Although Lizzie declined to overcome her own shyness and reclusive disposition, she hoped that her younger sister would overcome her social "modesty" and enjoy a full life.

The emotional atmosphere of the Galt home did much to forge the personalities of its younger occupants: it encouraged the traits of submissiveness, piety, and nurture of home and hearth in the girls. The essential difference in Sallie and Lizzie's outlook on life lay in the way they reacted to this stifling environment. Lizzie accepted the dictates that a woman should be submissive, and so she did not resist the claustrophobic atmosphere her mother fostered in their home. While she refuted the delicate stereotype of Southern womanhood by continuing strenuous household management despite her physical infirmities, she

did not resist the admonition to submissiveness in a "true woman." Her docile nature, combined with the approval given to female frailty, encouraged her avoidance of social intercourse. She depended upon her illness as an excuse for her retirement from the world outside her home.

Sallie, in contrast, finally rejected the gloomy mantle imposed upon her at home and ventured into the world. As a young woman in her twenties she blossomed and acquired the confidence which Lizzie had wished for her. That confidence, along with her Christian faith, enabled her to adjust to the changes wrought upon her life by the death of all her family and the loss of her income and comfortable way of living during the Civil War. In her adjustment Sallie was typical of many Southern women who found that when necessary they could survive many traumas for which their upbringing did not prepare them.

CHAPTER II

"THE BLACK FAMILY:" SLAVES IN THE GALT HOUSEHOLD

From the beginning of the nineteenth century until emancipation in 1863 the Galt family owned between three and ten adult slaves.¹ The Galts used the typical Southern term "black family" when referring collectively to the slave members of the household.² They referred to individuals as "servants." Black servants--in slavery and in freedom--were considered as part of an extended family in the Galt home, and from all indications, both blacks and whites held each other in high esteem. Letters reveal the fondness of the white masters for their black family. Sallie pleaded for Federal protection of her servants during the Union occupation of Williamsburg, and remembered Arena Baker and her family in her will. Correspondence suggests that the blacks reciprocated the genial respect of their owners despite natural resentment of the slave system. The decision of several family retainers to stay with Sallie Galt after emancipation, when she could have afforded to pay them little, is testimony of the bonds between the black and white members of the Galt family.

The familial atmosphere is reflected in letters. Dr. A. D. Galt wrote, "The Christmas of our family has not been a very jovial one--all the whites except Sallie being on the sick list."³ The death of anyone in the household bereaved all. Alex mourned the death of slave Susannah's daughter in his commonplace book: "Poor little Maria died

this evening. . . . Her death caused much distress to all the Family, both black and white, it is the first death we have had in this yard for many years. She was five years old."⁴ Alex's father was less sentimental about the death of his slave Gaby, perhaps because the loss of an adult male slave meant the loss of labor or investment. He wrote, "Whiskey has thinned the ranks of my domestics: in a year or two there will be none left on the field."⁵

One slave's perspective on the Galt family is revealed in a letter (dictated to Sallie) sent by a ninety-year-old blind servant to her daughter. She reported the death of Mrs. Galt and praised her as a mistress: "This has been a mournful year to all of us. We have lost the kindest, most generous mistress that mortals could be blest with. None knew her but to love her, and her place can never be supplied."⁶ It may be argued that the slave felt obligated to praise her late mistress or at least was in no position to criticize her while dictating a letter to Sallie. The woman could, however, have told of Mrs. Galt's death without such apparent devotion. Since slaves generally perceived the master as the ultimate authority figure in the household, and the mistress as their nurse and source of well-being,⁷ it is possible that the old woman's words of praise for Mrs. Galt were a truthful reflection of her feelings.

The Galts actively fostered this family spirit, inviting the slaves into the house for Sunday Bible readings and helping in their celebrations. Lizzie helped "Aunt Phoebe" prepare for the "coloured carnival the Holydays."⁸ If the Galts made the same efforts for the comfort of their slaves as did their cousin John Strobria of Richmond, then their commitment to the personal welfare of their black family was exceptional.

Strobia hosted a wedding for his cook in his home; his wife assisted with the wedding preparations. He revealed his fond indulgence for the slave woman in his account of the event:

Our cook was married last Sunday week . . . and nothing would do but that she must be married by the Rev. Doctor Jones, and that too in our drawing room, in the presence of a large congregation of coloured persons! After the ceremony, the company retired to our dining room in the basement, where a procession of good things such as bridecake, and a great variety of confectionary, served up in the most abundant manner: and all to accommodate a parcel of invited slaves and coloured free people. You can depend on it, a jolly gathering, and folks enjoyed themselves accordingly. Maria [Mrs. Strobia] assisted in these doings, though it fatigued her very much.⁹

A similar easy interaction between the black and white members of the Galt household is revealed in Lizzie's letter to Sallie in 1852. "The servants desire that you may be informed that they are enjoying the usual holiday which they have during your departure. But they agree that 'tis better than to have swarms of company 'everlastin' buzzin' in, when you are at home during the process" [summer removal of carpets.]¹⁰ Sallie's letters indicate that when she was away, letters passed between her and the servants. She would write to Arena (the "mammy" of the Galt family) of sights seen and friends visited in Richmond. The blacks wrote (or dictated) her news of other servants and gossip about townspeople. In 1877 freedwoman Delia Braithwaite thanked Sallie for lending her some things: "I took good care of them and how I do thank you for your kindness as i no allwais [know always] how kind you air to all."¹¹

Comments in correspondence suggest that slaves' letters occasionally afforded amusement to their white recipients, especially for their long-winded closings. Sallie wrote to a friend, "If I mention all who

send love my letter would be like the servants' letters."¹² The whites also joked good naturedly about slave couriers of letters, as when John Galt Williamson wrote, "This you will receive by a woolly Mercury and a black Iris who are to be [illegible] down below this day."¹³

Arena Baker and Aleck Preston seem to have been especially close to Sallie; both stayed with her as free blacks after the Civil War. She was impoverished herself by then, so could not have paid much to the faithful servants who stood by her, but perhaps their loyalty to the family, along with a desire for security, shelter, and a share of whatever food she had, kept them with her.

Aleck Preston was an old man by 1864, so Sallie took pains to see that he was protected by the occupying Federal army. Her words on his behalf bespeak the regard which the Galt family felt for him:

I earnestly and prayerfully entreat the bearer of this, Aleck Preston, may be protected and Kindly treated by the Federals, for I know they know how to do a kind action. He is 73 years of age, and has lived for three generations in my family, and given to them and received from them the deepest love and affection, and the bitterest anguish tortures my heart at parting with him and his wife.

Not a more honest and benevolent being lives on earth and there is nothing I would not give him to make his old age comfortable. My Philanthro[pist] Brother, Dr. Galt, spent hundreds, almost thousands of dollars to save this good old man's family from distress, and counted it as nothing compared to the love he had for him.¹⁴

When "Uncle Aleck" died in 1873 at age 83 Sallie was truly bereaved. She had appreciated his devotion to her father and enjoyed his remembrances of the past. She recognized that in his love for animals and nature he was much like members of her "white" family. Sallie revealed her genuine fondness for "Uncle Aleck" when she wrote, "I thank the

people here so much for the respect with which he was treated in life and in death. You can't imagine how much I miss him. . . . He died as he lived, a true Christian, and I will say it, a gentleman."¹⁵ For a Southern woman of that era to call a former slave a gentleman revealed genuine respect and devotion, as well as an unusual disregard for the conventions which fostered the belief that only wealthy whites merited the title of "lady" or "gentleman."

Sallie was equally as fond of Arena Baker. Despite an occasional disagreement, such as Arena's staunch disapproval of Sallie's post-war plans to operate a boarding house, the women were devoted to one another. Arena named two of her daughters Sallie and Eliza, which could be interpreted as a sincere compliment to her mistresses. Catherine Clinton acknowledges the peculiar friendship which sometimes arose between black slave and white mistress: "The bonds of womanhood could and sometimes did cement relationships between owner and owned."¹⁶

Sallie was solicitous of Arena's welfare during the Yankee occupancy of Williamsburg. As she had with Aleck Preston, Sallie petitioned the Union officials for Arena's safekeeping.

And now my darling Arena, her children and grandchildren I humbly, prayerfully, and tearfully commend to the kind care of the Federals. From youth to mature age Arena's life has been altogether lovely, blameless, and pure, and I know Heaven will bless those who are kind to her.

My own pious mother brought her up as one of her own children. . . . well did she give back this fostering care for she took care of my darling Brother and myself when we were children and loved us with a love which I must remember with gratitude. In the past two years when I have been bereft of all kin . . . she has been kind, generous, and sympathizing to a degree that words are weak to express.¹⁷

Sallie corresponded with Arena when she visited relatives in Richmond. Her letters mention letters from Arena, but none of Arena's correspondence survives. Even after emancipation she was concerned for the well-being of Arena and her family after her own death, and so provided in her will that they might live in the "Old House" and yard as long as they desired.¹⁸

Unlike many upper class women who considered slavery to be a "white woman's burden," Sallie did not express resentment of the duties of slave ownership. As an urban mistress she was not responsible for the larger "black family" that a plantation mistress would have to feed, clothe, and nurse. While urban women had the responsibility of supervision of house servants in exchange for their freedom from manual chores of housekeeping, this was slight burden to Sallie, at least until Lizzie's death. Lizzie handled most domestic management, including the cutting out of slave clothing, during the years when the Galts owned a larger number of slaves.¹⁹

Furthermore, one of the few advantages accorded to an unmarried woman in the antebellum South was that she was not subjected to the indignity experienced by many planter's wives--the recognition of mulatto children as their husband's offspring.²⁰ Mary Boykin Chestnut, whose often acerbic comments on Southern life acutely reflected the views of many upper class Southern women, voiced the unspoken protests of many when she wrote, "You know what the Bible says about slavery--and marriage. Poor women, poor slaves."²¹ Her tirade against slavery and consequent miscegenation has been frequently quoted as the reaction of Southern women against the evils of a slave owning society:

I wonder if it be a sin to think slavery
a curse to any land. . . . Men and women

are punished when their masters and mistresses are brutes and not when they do wrong--and then we live surrounded by prostitutes. An abandoned woman is sent out of any decent house elsewhere. Who thinks worse of a Negro or mulatto woman for being a thing we can't name? God forgive us, but ours is a monstrous system and wrong and iniquity. . . . Like the patriarchs of old our men live all in one house with their wives and their concubines, and the mulattoes one sees in every family partly resemble the white children--and every lady is ready to tell you who is the father of all the mulatto children in everybody's household, but those in her own she seems to think drop from the clouds or pretends to think so. Good women we have, but they talk of all nastiness. . . . my disgust sometimes is boiling over--but they are, I believe, in conduct the purest women God ever made. Thank God for my country women--alas for the men! No worse than men everywhere, but the lower their mistresses, the more degraded they must be.²²

The tax records show a variable number of slaves within the Galt household; the range from three to ten slaves seems to have varied by death and birth, rather than from the sale of slaves, which is never discussed. Slave deaths are mentioned several times, including a bill from builder/undertaker Richard Bucktrout for making a coffin and digging a grave for "old man Jack."²³

The Galts seem to have handled their fluctuating needs for, and availability of, servants by the local system of "hiring out" slaves. For instance in 1848, when they owned five blacks over age sixteen, they also hired two additional female servants.²⁴ The increased need for servants in that year may have been to nurse Lizzie or to help with her housekeeping duties if she were too ill to work. Mrs. Galt hired "servant girl Judy" in 1852, and in January of 1860 Sallie hired Arena's daughter Sallie from Richard Bucktrout.²⁵ (Arena's husband was a slave or freedman working for Bucktrout.) Sallie and John

apparently decided to make do with their own four slaves, because six months later a friend in Lynchburg wrote to praise young servant Sallie, who had been sent to her by the Williamsburg Galts.²⁶

Arena's daughter Eliza Baker described the life of a Williamsburg slave in a 1933 interview with Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin. She recalled that her parents were owned by Colonel Burwell Bassett, who at his death "gave [her] father his time" [freed him.] She accurately described her mother as the nurse of Dr. John Galt and acknowledged that Arena stayed with the Galts until her death at 92. Her memory may have been faulty [she was 88] regarding her mother's ownership, because all indications suggest that the Galts owned Arena Baker. It is possible that the Galts purchased Arena from Colonel Bassett. Eliza claimed that to see her mother she would have to "steal into the house where she was, hide in the cellar coal bin just to speak to her when I got a chance."²⁷

As a young girl Eliza worked for the Bucktrouts doing general housework, including laundry, gardening, milking the cow, and tending the children. The Bucktrouts "hired [her] out" to the Whitings, whom Eliza classified as "plain folks."²⁸ She left the Whitings when a Yankee soldier informed her that she was free.

At several points in the memoirs Eliza may have exaggerated the cruelty of slave treatment, such as when she said that if a slave were caught with a book he would be whipped. Dr. Goodwin's footnote qualified that this was not true among the "better" families.²⁹ It is understandable that a former slave might emphasize the harsh elements of the slave system. She may have embellished her remembrance of the "coal bin" visits to her mother for dramatic effect. If her story is

true, it refutes the strong impression of benevolent paternalism practiced by the Galts toward their "black family." Most evidence suggests that--within a cruel and unnatural system--the Galts were comparatively beneficent masters to their slaves, and that Sallie Galt was not as "burdened" with the evils and duties of slavery as were many married plantation mistresses.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATION: NO "FASHIONABLE TREADMILL OF THE MIND"

Like many older daughters or unmarried aunts in Southern families, Lizzie Galt was responsible for educating her younger sister and two young cousins.¹ Although she was only six years older than Sallie, she was in many ways a mentor and mother figure and may have been a more positive role model than their mother. Lizzie must have been conscientious in her teaching duties because her library contained several manuals of instruction on female education.² John Burton's Lectures on Female Education and Manners (3rd ed., Dublin, 1794) recommends that gentlewomen excel in the domestic sphere and acquire proficiency in needlework, dancing, and music. Although it was written in the late eighteenth century it espouses the same platitudes about frail, docile womanhood that were prevalent in antebellum female training.

Lizzie tempered Burton's advices with the more rational approach of James Garnett, school master at Elmwood in Essex County, Virginia. She owned his Lectures on Various Topicks of Morals, Manners, Conduct, & Intellectual Improvement (Richmond, 1827) and his Lectures on Female Education (3rd ed., Richmond, 1825.) She took Garnett's advice to heart and scribbled her own pious thoughts next to many of his admonitions to godliness, noting, "Reader, choose this day whom thou wilt serve--God or Mammon." The Galt girls also heeded Garnett's

admonitions against marriage for the sake of marriage. He criticized the irrational belief that a woman was incapable and insignificant unless coupled with a man and urged his readers to use great discretion when embarking on matrimony. He warned that tremendous pain came from marriage to a man whose "principles, habits, and passions" were unsuitable.³ This was unusual advice in an age which generally considered the unmarried woman unfulfilled and inferior.

Garnett was advanced in recommending moral virtues necessary to both sexes: he stressed courage, fortitude in pain, temperance in prosperity, diligence in learning and perseverance in duty as commendable attributes.⁴ Lizzie--or someone--must have instilled these virtues well in Sallie, because her strength of character enabled her to deal with the traumas of her later years.

Fortunately for Lizzie and Sallie, their father, like Garnett, did not espouse the teachings of the cult of true womanhood but believed in encouraging intellectual pursuits for his daughters. Consequently the Galt girls received scholastic training similar to that of their brothers, though, of course, they lacked the advanced education that John received at the College of William and Mary and in medical school. The boys attended Nathaniel Beverley Tucker's grammar school for a short time.⁵ The older children had home tutors.⁶ John, and presumably Alexander when he was well, attended the grammar school at the College.⁷ While the boys were at formal school, Lizzie continued a reading program at home, probably reading many of the same books assigned to her brothers.

On the academic side of the girls' education, Lizzie encouraged Sallie to read and then write a practice letter evaluating each assignment.

She stressed that letter writing was a necessary feminine accomplishment, as women were generally the chief correspondents in a family.⁸ Catherine Clinton perceives that women's letters had import beyond amusement--that they were the link which communicated births, deaths, and marriages to distant kin.⁹ Therefore, Lizzie's chosen teaching method instructed Sallie in a fundamental female responsibility of the period.

In addition to writing practice letters Sallie kept a copybook in which she copied numerous poems and an occasional essay. Her historical reading included Lives of the Painters. After reading it she praised Hogarth's and Gainsborough's triumphs over early indigent circumstances.¹⁰ She was less admiring of the Chinese [probably reflecting instilled prejudice of the period], calling them "remarkably stupid" for "knowing the proper use of gunpowder several centuries before the Europeans and never using it but for fireworks."¹¹ Her other historical reading included Machiavelli and the Life of Lord Nelson. She also read American history, including George Tucker's Life of Jefferson (Philadelphia, 1837) and Jefferson's own Notes on the State of Virginia.¹²

The Galt family was especially fond of poetry. They subscribed to the Southern Literary Messenger and to many other periodicals from America and England, including the popular Godey's Lady's Book and London Punch. John followed with interest the literary career of the young poet and editor Edgar Allan Poe and was disappointed when one of Poe's literary magazines failed as a result of financial problems.¹³ Lizzie wrote poetry as a hobby, finding it solace from her maladies, and enjoyed local repute as a poet. Her work was published in the Messenger, The Southern Churchman, and Harper's Magazine.¹⁴ It is not surprising, therefore, that Sallie's literary background was strong;

she read Shakespeare, Milton, and contemporary novels. Lizzie evidently passed on her penchant for poetry for Sallie wrote biographical sketches of Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth.¹⁵

She also read Latin pastoral poetry, commenting that "Virgil is like the Romans with respect to the Greeks, for the Grecians usually invented, and the Romans improved upon the invention."¹⁶ Sallie's practice letters to Lizzie mention reading Plutarch's Lives in Latin (an unusual feat for a nineteenth-century woman), along with Sallust, Tacitus, and Livy, among other works of ancient history and philosophy. This teaching of Roman and Greek history was in keeping with the recommendation of Mrs. Virginia Cary, whose Letters on Female Character served as another of Lizzie's guidelines on Sallie's education.¹⁷

Sallie's was an academic education quite unlike the finishing school polish received by many of her peers. In 1843 Elizabeth evaluated Sallie's home education, and considered it an advantage:

. . . Sallie is very unlike anyone else, for having been educated entirely at home, her mental powers are not taught to death, and fagged out. In her, and in a young lady 'finished off' in a fashionable Treadmill of the Mind, you would find the same difference which exists between a fresh blush-cluster rose and one made up of glue and coloured muslin. She is an intellectual, witty companion; tho' it seems almost incongruous to give that last attribute to one who retains the shrinking modesty which characterized her childhood.¹⁸

This rigorous academic training prepared Sallie well for interaction with the intelligentsia of Williamsburg. As a college town, antebellum Williamsburg had a high proportion of well-educated people among its leading families, so social occasions took a literary bent. Sallie described the community thus: "As the professors and their families

form a very prominent portion of the society here, much of our social enjoyment . . . depends upon the action of the Visitors at their convocation."¹⁹ She referred to the 1848 scandal which racked the College community when the Board of Visitors requested all faculty members to resign. The faculty had protested the appointment of a professor whom they deemed unqualified, but who was related to a Board of Visitors member.²⁰

During the disruption John M. Galt offered to help the College by filling a vacant professorship in literature. Citing his lack of celebrity in letters he modestly demurred to make a formal application, but he felt that his literary habits made him competent to handle the position.²¹ John was not required to sacrifice his more lucrative position as superintendent of the public hospital for classes at the College resumed the next year. His personal avocational reading would have equipped him for such a teaching position. Tradition holds that he read more than twenty languages,²² which is doubtful. He was obviously intelligent, however, and he did order from London an Arabic dictionary and grammar and Swedish and Spanish dictionaries, thus giving some credence to the myth.²³

The Galts had many associates among the College community. Dr. A. D. Galt was a friend of two professors of "natural philosophy:" Dr. John Millington and William Barton Rogers, who left William and Mary to become president of the University of Virginia, and later of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.²⁴ Sallie was occasionally escorted to a dinner party by Dr. Thomas R. Dew, president of the College.²⁵ Sallie's best friend was Marianna Saunders, whose father Robert Saunders, Jr., was a mathematics professor and president of the College

from 1846 to 1848.²⁶

For many residents of Williamsburg organized learning did not stop when one reached adulthood; citizens enjoyed taking classes offered by itinerant lecturers. One very popular class was the series on shells offered at the courthouse. Sallie persuaded Dr. Dew to join her in that course, even though he was reluctant to purchase the two dollar accompanying textbook.²⁷ She and several other young ladies also enjoyed a course in French taught by her cousin William R. Galt of Norfolk.²⁸

Given the nature of Williamsburg's upper classes, it is not surprising that the Galt home should have had a literary inclination. One Williamsburg resident recalled her childhood visits to the Galt house: she would spend the day with "Miss Sallie," reading the books stored in a closet. While Sallie read to the children, Lizzie, in her more domestic role, refreshed the children with freshly baked sweets.²⁹ The Galts were unselfish with their library and honored many requests for the loan of books and magazines. The papers are filled with references to book lending, with frequent requests for Godey's Lady's Book. Sallie once wrote to Mr. Godey praising his magazine and telling of its popularity in Williamsburg. More serious literary requests included Jane Eyre, Vanity Fair, Cooper's novels, and the poems of Tennyson, Longfellow, Scott, Shelley, Southey, and Poe. The servants occasionally protested the multitude of books, as when "Uncle Aleck" mildly rebuked John for purchasing more books when "there ain't room in the house for the people!"³⁰

These books must have been useful in Lizzie's role as schoolmistress, which continued after Sallie was grown with the instruction

of two young cousins, Lizzie and Tom Williamson. They lived with the Galts from 1838 to 1843 because their mother was dead and their father served in the Navy.³¹

Further evidence of the literary nature of the Galts' social life is the "Cheerful Club," a group of about a dozen "belles and beaux" who met at the Galt home every Friday evening to play word games and to discuss literary topics. The group was organized in the early 1850s, seemingly a singles' club in which the members exchanged witty riddles, conundrums, puns, and definitions. Elizabeth Galt kept the minutes of the group, recording in four volumes their punning definitions of such words as love, decision, and fashion. A sampling of their definitions of the word beau reflects the antebellum pre-occupation with courthship:

By Miss Sally Maria Galt: 'An important ingredient in the composition of a party.'

By Dr. John M. Galt: 'The rain beau resembles a gentleman in at least one respect-- the Ladies take an interest in the former because they admire it for its beauty; and they take an interest in the latter because of the admiration which the Beaux entertain for their beauty.'

Sent by Miss Elizabeth J. Galt: 'A beau is most welcome when his chivalrous devotion prompts him to visit on a cloudy, rainy day, for then he is a Rainbeau, a Beau of Promise in the Cloud.'

By Mr. Johnson: 'A Beau shoots arrows (cupid's darts, of course.)³²

Occasionally the group discussed philosophy or politics as when it debated "European as Contrasted with American Policy."³³

The Galt family was philanthropic in supporting the educational institutions which cultivated the literary environment of Williamsburg.

John donated \$240 to the Female Academy, even though his family had believed in home education for its female members.³⁴ He also contributed twice to the building fund at the College.³⁵ Because the social life of Williamsburg's elite depended so heavily upon the College community, Galt's support of these institutions helped to guarantee a continued intellectual atmosphere in his home town. The Galt home--as the meeting place of the Cheerful Club and as an unofficial lending library for friends and hospital patients--served as a focal point for Williamsburg's learned upper classes.

CHAPTER IV

BELLES AND BEAUX OF WILLIAMSBURG

The Galt Family Papers gauge the local intensity of the Anglo-American absorption with "true womanhood." Since the duty and destiny of every "true woman" was marriage and motherhood, it naturally followed that courtship was a topic of zealous interest in female correspondence and conversation. Marital prospects, the rituals of courtship, and speculation on "belles and beaux" (as unmarried young persons were called) formed the gist of most correspondence.

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's article "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America" analyzes this antebellum feminine sub-culture as it appears in period letters and diaries. She discovers a strong woman-to-woman "homosocial" support network in which the sexual restrictions between men and women encouraged a feminine sphere of emotional intimacy. Girls developed close emotional, and sometimes physical, friendships which frequently resulted in life-long interdependence. Daughters served domestic apprenticeships under their mothers and were thus trained for housework and motherhood. Yet marriage required a difficult adjustment to the hitherto strange male psyche. That transition was eased by the feminine support rituals surrounding weddings and childbirth. Smith-Rosenberg contends that nineteenth-century American attitudes encouraged intimate female relationships and discouraged heterosexual social interaction. For

example, we characterize "Victorian prudery" as typical behavior of the period.¹

Sallie and Lizzie Galt's female network paralleled the patterns established in Smith-Rosenberg's study. Lizzie's relationship with Mary Tyler was similar to the two case studies of adolescent friendship presented in the article. As girls Sallie and Lizzie were trained in domesticity by their mother, and as women they were vital links in the feminine kinship network connected by correspondence and visits.

Although neither of the Galt women married, during their youth they certainly had romantic aspirations toward courtship and marriage. As girls they exchanged with friends the giggling, wistful, secret desires for marital bliss typical of adolescent females.² But Sallie and Lizzie were victims of the nineteenth-century Williamsburg phenomenon of an overabundance of marriageable young women vying for a scant supply of eligible bachelors other than students at the College. The preponderance of spinsters in nineteenth-century Williamsburg prompted Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin to ask, "Why didn't more of those Williamsburg girls get married?" The response given by Martha Vandegrift was that they had too many beaux from the College to narrow the choice to one, but her joke avoided the real problem.³ Williamsburg was a small town capable of supporting one or two doctors, lawyers, merchants, and the small faculty at the College. While many young men studied at William and Mary, they were forced to look elsewhere to build the professional reputation and income usually considered prerequisites for marriage.

In the Galt Papers the correspondence of female relatives sets the tone of emphasis on courtship and marriage. The Galts had cousins in Richmond, Norfolk, and Louisville, each of whom kept Lizzie and Sallie

abreast of her current romance, and followed the Williamsburg courtship scene assiduously. These letters between women kin represented a thread of continuity in an increasingly geographically mobile society.⁴ The Louisville Galts felt out of touch with their former home and depended upon Lizzie for gossip. Correspondent for that branch of the family was Mary Browne, who worried about the lack of beaux in her new environs. While in Williamsburg Mary had been jilted by local swain Ben Anderson, causing Mary Tyler to protest that he and his new bride "ought to be hung without judge or jury."⁵ Mary Browne's joking lament that the dearth of beaux to escort her home from choir practice would prevent improvement in her singing voice illustrates the social paralysis caused by a lack of bachelors.⁶

Then, as now, marriage of the very old or very young caused comment. A cousin reported the marriage of an uncle to a lady young enough to be his daughter and the wedding of a fourteen year old girl to a nineteen year old boy. In Richmond, tongues wagged when a young man proposed to a woman old enough to be his mother, especially since she had no fortune!⁷ Letters record other morsels of romantic interest: babies born six months prematurely, the suicide of a rejected suitor, broken engagements, and the extravagance of a bride's trousseau. Pieces of wedding cake were often sent to friends as tokens of that rite of passage into womanhood.

The Galt siblings were by no means exempt from friendly speculation regarding their marital prospects. Letters hinted at Sallie's or Lizzie's beaux and mentioned John's popularity with the ladies. John was advised on his "love fits" and on when to take a wife. The many facets of weddings and marriage were pondered by young girls. Annie Galt of

Norfolk speculated as to why brides were always pretty, deciding that it was because they dressed handsomely and were shut up in dark rooms.⁸

Lizzie made some astute comments on the relationship between marriage and money. In discussing a friend's vacation reading while at the springs, she wrote, "So you bought Miss Ferrier's 'Marriage' instead of her 'Inheritance'--well, you are not the first Belle who preferred marriage to an inheritance--the two hinges of many a romance."⁹ Lizzie wrote a diatribe against fortune hunters, lamenting that wealth too frequently outweighed character, wit, and intelligence in the choice of a spouse. She recommended that men adopt her father's creed of holding the wife's money sacred to her own disposal and secured to her by law before marriage.¹⁰

Lizzie, as the elder of the two girls, had to cope with social pressures first. Her bosom friend was Mary Tyler, whose father John later became President of the United States. Through their teen years in the 1830s the two girls were inseparable, exchanging every confidence, opinion, and romantic aspiration. Their friendship waned when Mary married. Lizzie may have been envious that her friend had married when she doubted her own prospects. Or she may have resented Henry Jones for replacing her as the foremost person in Mary's affections. The letters exchanged by the two girls offer a glimpse into the hearts and minds of two antebellum Virginia belles. Their correspondence illustrates not only Smith-Rosenberg's thesis concerning the emotional bonding of young women, but also the preoccupation with courtship and hopes for ultimate marital bliss among Southern girls of the nineteenth century.

Lizzie admired Mary Tyler's social graces and skill at flirtation.

Mary had traveled widely and been entertained in diplomatic circles, so Lizzie looked to her as an experienced belle. For Lizzie's edification Mary described her "Rules for Romance."

Never think a gentleman intends addressing you till he asks you to marry him.
 Never be engaged for more than six months.
 Never act in such a way as to lead any man to suppose you are a flirt.
 Never let a gentleman know that you love him till he tells you he feels something for you.
 Never go in a store when you see a certain gentleman go in for fear that gentleman may think you went in to see him.
 Never go all over town following a certain Captain.
 Never be engaged to dance with more than one gentleman at the time.
 Lastly never wear a red turban unless you wish to create a great effect.¹¹

Notes flew between the two girls, who wrote of soirées, gentleman callers, and party dresses. They played Halloween games to predict what sort of man they would marry.¹² A late night conversation produced a compendium of topics of interest to teenaged girls:

A Short Catalogue of a few of the Principal Subjects discussed by Miss Tyler and Miss Galt on the night of the 15th of August, 1834.

1st. Love affairs to their fullest extent.

.

3rd. Flirts and flirtation--in which class several of our acquaintances were numbered.

4th. Those rare and most important of all occasions--weddings. . . [and] the paraphernalia necessary on such occasions.

5th. An exordium on the respective merits of apple brandy and preserved blackberries. Mrs. Galt being forthwith solicited to open the grand piano and bring forth the said articles--a magnificent banquet was partaken. . . . Toasts were drunk--followed by a few nasal airs warbled by Miss G. and some political ponys chanted forth by Miss T. in a very fine bravura style.

6th. Politics--and all the great men of the day.

7th. Domestic economy--the making of pickles, preserves, soup, etc.

8th. A visit to Washington--Miss G. endeavoring to enumerate the caravans of beaus [sic] which the dazzling beauty of her Friend Miss T. would entrap and bring captive to Virginia.

9th. Woman being an animal delighting in finery the vast importance of dress was then introduced and viewed in all of its various bearings. . . . [Mary captured one of Lizzie's dresses and pleaded to borrow it for her trip north.]

.

12th. At 4 o'clock in the morning it was debated with great warmth whether the most vigorous and scrutinizing judges of female decorum could accuse Miss Galt and Miss Tyler of having conversed too much, or decanted on too great a variety of subjects during the past night.¹³

By winter of 1835 Mary was writing of Henry Jones, her suitor from Charles City County. Even the thrills of attending the President's levée at the White House did not diminish devotion to her local swain. In the midst of the whirl of Washington parties, Mary declared that she was almost mad with "the dark eyed one" and that she would enjoy herself more if she did not constantly think of him. From her description of the Bachelor's Ball, however, it is obvious that she was not desolate: "I was quite a belle--before I could get from the door in the ballroom a half-dozen arms were poked at me and 'Miss Tyler' resounded through the house." But perhaps in her fun she felt disloyal to Henry, admitting that if he were as jealous as she was, he might feel uneasy at her carrying on.¹⁴

Mary admitted to Lizzie her ambivalent feelings about Henry. During one of his visits she pondered whether she had imagined her strong

feelings for him but she felt miserable when he left. She gave him her ring as a token of her affection, but he was reluctant to wear it openly at her home. Mary confided that Henry and her father would likely have a "little talk" in the near future.¹⁵

Mary may have persuaded herself that marriage to Jones would make her happy. Like most girls of her generation she had been taught that marriage was the right and proper state for a "true woman." She and Lizzie both seem to have been shy girls, and perhaps plain. They admired men from afar, and suffered the bittersweet agony of many secret crushes. Mary socialized more than Lizzie, but this may have been a result of her father's social and political position. As reclusive as Lizzie was, Mary was unlikely to have been an extrovert, or the two girls would not have been such close friends.

Although Mary admitted hesitation (which was likely a by-product of the female homosocial segregation discussed by Smith-Rosenberg) about her relationship with Henry, she asked Lizzie to be a bridesmaid long before she became officially engaged.¹⁶ Lizzie agreed, as long as the marriage did not occur too soon: "I want a little more of your company before you leave the state of single blessedness."¹⁷ Mary was twenty--certainly old enough to marry--so this may be an early sign of Lizzie's resentment of Mary's plans for marriage. Perhaps she was jealous of Mary's social success in Washington. Mary's letters were boastful: "I shall be very vain before I get home if flattery and compliments can make me so."¹⁸ Mary's success with beaux would have been especially hurtful to Lizzie if she saw slim prospects for her own marriage. She admitted that she felt herself a victim of the "always a bridesmaid" syndrome, declaring the third time that she acted in that

capacity that the bridesmaid superstition was the only one she believed.¹⁹

Lizzie's dependence on Mary (and withdrawal from others) becomes increasingly obvious in their correspondence. "Still I visit less than ever, and never was anyone endowed with so little taste for making new acquaintances. Strangers come and go, and sometimes I ought to go see them--but I always play the delinquent. . . . I appreciate the implicit confidence which you . . . repose in me. . . . I think more frequently and speak more constantly of you than even he (with whom e're long I hope to be well acquainted) or any other person in the world."²⁰

As Mary's wedding approached and she worked on her trousseau, she felt apprehensive and wanted Lizzie's company for a last fling at girlish pleasures before settling down as a responsible matron, but Mrs. Galt denied her hopes of Lizzie visiting Gloucester. Mary protested, "Just to think, only sixteen miles and she cannot part with you for a few days, when it would be making me so supremely happy."²¹ The family must have pressured Mrs. Galt, for Lizzie wrote, "Mama's inexorable disposition displays more signs of relenting than I have ever seen--she acknowledges it herself--and if she ever lets me visit you it will be in December (or whenever you are married.)"²² When the long anticipated event took place, however, Lizzie was too sick to make the trip to Gloucester.²³

Mary, disappointed, wrote to describe to Lizzie all the details of the wedding and post-nuptial parties, and again asked Lizzie to visit her while Henry was away on business.²⁴ Illness, feigned or actual, prevented Lizzie from making the trip, and she saw Mary thereafter only when Mary passed through Williamsburg. Lizzie felt that the dissolution of the close tie between her and Mary was inevitable after

Mary's marriage.

Perfect love and confidence can exist only before marriage. Thus far can it go and no farther. Different feelings and separate objects of interests inevitably spring up and the ties by which female hearts, 'til then, had been bound together, are either loosened or snapped in twain. The love may still remain but the confidence . . . is gone.²⁵

The relationship withered within a year of Mary's marriage and the birth of her first child. She resented Lizzie's neglect and probably did not understand that her own matrimonial happiness gave jealous pain to her dear friend. A more gradual dissolution of the emotional support and companionship provided by their girlhood friendship would likely have helped Mary ease into the realistic, but alien world of marriage and its incumbent responsibilities.²⁶ A slow transition from their emotional dependence would have probably been beneficial to Lizzie also, but she insisted on ending their friendship. Finally, hurt but resigned, Mary wrote to Lizzie after her son was born:

Not a line from my sweet Liz to congratulate me on being a mother--what is the meaning of this? I cannot unravel it, but to tell the truth there always was something unfathomable about you, and in the last twelve months you have been to me a perfect enigma. . . . My little boy is a sweet little fellow. . . . I wish you could see him; to ask you to come to Gloucester will be useless--I have ceased to hope or to expect a visit from you, altho' I have told you nothing could afford me more pleasure.²⁷

By the 1840s Lizzie had apparently resigned herself to a life as a semi-invalid spinster. Her poor health, combined with Southern tradition that unmarried women lived with their parents or with siblings, determined that she live at home.²⁸ In the North it was not uncommon for women of independent means to maintain residences on their own or with

other women.²⁹ The mores of the neo-chivalrous South protected women-folk from such supposedly dangerous independence.

Even unmarried women were expected to adhere to the feminine virtue of domesticity, so Lizzie carried out a housewifely role in her brother's home. She dedicated herself to work for her family, managing the household, helping John with his reports, teaching young Lizzie and Tom Williamson, and supervising the servants. Ten years of her domestic efforts are documented in a memorandum book she kept from 1842 to 1851. Lizzie recorded that she assisted her brother in his work by transcribing "Galt's Practice of Medicine" and "Galt's Insanity." Annually she "folded, sealed, and directed" John's reports on the asylum, usually 500 to 600 per year. In 1845 she painted 350 lithographs to illustrate the reports. She regularly kept house, cut out all of the sewing work, and tended the garden. After the move to the new house she varnished all of the furniture over a period of several years.³⁰

Those domestic duties did not cause her to abandon her literary pursuits. Because of her reputation as a poet local girls implored her to write their "Queen of the May" addresses.³¹ In 1850 she copied, in ornamental penmanship, her own compositions into a morocco leather bound blank book.³² The next year she served as the assiduous secretary of the Cheerful Club, transcribing four volumes (400 pages) of minutes, word games, and literary criticism.³³ She also compiled a cookbook of family recipes, calling it "The Virginia Dessert Book."³⁴

Because antebellum society emphasized marriage as the true means of happiness for a woman, Lizzie must have been disappointed by her spinsterhood. To cope with her fate, she molded the tenets of true Southern womanhood to her state of "single blessedness." She played

the domestic role of wife for her bachelor brother's household and served as teacher and mother figure to her sister and younger cousins. Her unmarried status was an implicit statement of virginal purity. Her letters and poems reveal a deep faith in God. A cousin gave witness to her piety: "There is nothing I could say to comfort you, dearest Liz . . . for you have all the comforts of religion, with a faith which cannot be shaken, and I know that in the midst of all your suffering you can cry out: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.'"³⁵ For years Lizzie was patiently submissive to an overbearing and overprotective mother who stifled her interaction with friends and family. These traits of Lizzie Galt's character personified the archetypal Southern lady.

Despite her many similarities to the stereotype, however, Lizzie displayed a hint of the mettle of Southern women in her determination to continue with management of the household in spite of her ill health. Her literary accomplishments proved female intellectual capabilities and foreshadowed more liberal education for women. She paved the way for her sister and the generation of Southern women who survived the Civil War to debunk the Southern lady myth.

Lizzie fostered Sallie's social development and self-confidence by encouraging her to mix with the young people of town. Because Lizzie saw to the family's domestic comforts her sister was able to enjoy the leisurely pleasures of being a "belle." Lizzie took a vicarious enjoyment in Sallie's social life. Sallie visited with the local belles and beaux, traveled to see relatives, and accompanied John on business trips and to church conventions. She retained hopes for marriage until her late thirties. It was not unusual for Williamsburg girls to marry late; Sallie's good friend Marianna Saunders was a mature bride in her early

thirties. Sallie's own parents had married late in life, and Dr. Galt had been fifty-one at her birth, so her hopes were not unrealistic.

Sallie's shy nature as a child was much commented upon, but she outgrew or conquered her timidity by her early twenties. Through Sallie the Galt family interacted with the rest of the world. She kept them from becoming a family of eccentric recluses, which they could easily have become--Mrs. Galt and Lizzie with their illnesses and retiring natures, and John in his intellectual ivory tower. She encouraged John to break from his studies and join in fun on occasion. They attended the "levées" and "soirées," card parties, exhibitions, lectures, and cotillions of Williamsburg's social and literary set. The Galt papers are full of invitations to commencement parties at nearby colleges, or a Washington's Birthnight at the Hall of Apollo in the old Raleigh Tavern, or a small get together of belles with "student and citizen beaux."³⁶ Sallie had no lack of escorts to church, parties, or even to an "Odd Fellows' Celebration."

In the late 1840s and early 1850s the Galt house became a popular gathering spot for the belles and beaux, with several visitors calling each night, and thirty or forty "uninvited guests" descending occasionally, as Lizzie complained.³⁷ Lizzie teased Sallie good naturedly about the constant company, saying that the servants claimed it was easier to work without her friends about and that a neighbor said she could do no work for watching the beaux and belles come to see Sallie.³⁸ She wrote that when Sallie and Marianna Saunders left town, the beaux were "out of their senses with anguish."³⁹

Sallie delighted in her newfound skills at coquetry, boasting of being a "great belle" in Richmond.⁴⁰ She must have enjoyed the accusation that she would "take the hearts of the poor students by storm

this year as she did last."⁴¹ John and Lizzie encouraged new newfound independence and happiness by ordering her special dresses, hats, and capes from Richmond--splurging on pretty party clothes for their pet. This attention helped her to overcome the "shrinking modesty" which had characterized her girlhood to blossom into a belle in her late twenties. Letters hint at the expectation of Sallie's engagement to a Mr. Eubank, but this did not occur. However, her state of "single blessedness," as Lizzie called spinsterhood, did not diminish her enjoyment of life.

Once Sallie overcame her shyness, she was not afraid to explore the world beyond Williamsburg. She enjoyed excursions to historical sites and attended church conventions in various Virginia cities. She went to Richmond about once a year to visit family there and found the capital much more exciting than Williamsburg. While Sallie did not follow the popular spa circuit at the various hot springs, she did take a trip to Old Point Comfort in Hampton and stayed at the resort hotel there. She once ventured so far as New York to accompany John on a business trip. She especially enjoyed seeing Niagara Falls and comparing Northerners to Virginians, noting that the ladies dressed more plainly in New York than in Virginia. She was surprised at seeing white servants, whom she called "very civil and obliging." She wrote, however, "It rejoices my soul when I see a coloured face. I look upon them as old Virginia friends."⁴²

Sallie's diversions were not entirely frivolous. She attended lectures, took classes, and did church work, a responsibility of a "true woman." Although not as overtly pious as her sister in her early years (earthly delights such as clothes and beaux filled her time and

thoughts), Sallie did participate in the affairs of Bruton Parish Episcopal Church. The family paid an annual pew rent, and letters mention Sallie being escorted to church by various gentlemen. When the ladies of the church organized a fair to raise money for renovation of the old building, Sallie helped Miss Barbara Page set up a table, but demurred from selling any goods.

By her mid-thirties Sallie must have realized that she was unlikely to marry. She does not seem to have been as fearful of spinsterhood as was Lizzie, perhaps because Sallie's life was filled with more pleasures and diversions. She never complained about not finding a life mate, although she was undoubtedly disappointed, considering societal pressures to marry. Sallie maintained a cheerful disposition and found her satisfaction in giving happiness to others, rather than expecting a husband to be her source of pleasure.

The lack of a husband was probably more bearable for Sallie and Lizzie because their brother John never married. Had he acquired a wife and children, the role of maiden aunt might have been painful. The Galts' unusual household unit seemed satisfactory for all three siblings. John fulfilled the typical male role as economic provider. Lacking a wife, he was free to pursue zealously his professional and literary interests because his sisters managed his household. Sallie also tempered his scholarly tendencies by forcing him to socialize, which (not incidentally) provided her with an escort to social functions. The Galt family unit fit into the male/female roles expected by society, and which therefore seemed most natural.

CHAPTER V

GRIEF: DEATH OF LOVED ONES, AND RAVAGES OF CIVIL WAR

In the early 1850s the Galts were a contented family unit, each sibling seeming comfortable, if resigned, in being unmarried, fulfilled by usefulness to the patients at the hospital and to family members, and happy within their intimate home circle. Fortunately for their peace of mind, they could not know the ravages which would be wrought upon the family during the next decade. Sallie was the sole member of her family to live through the Civil War and the pain of rebuilding a lost world. The "Southern lady ideal" did little to prepare the daughters of the South for poverty, death, and destruction.

But Sallie was sustained by religious faith in the face of the deaths of her sister, mother, and brother; in fact, her spiritual belief seems to have been strengthened by adversity. In letters she frequently quoted scripture and exhibited a Christian attitude; her belief that her troubles were God's will made them easier to bear. As an example, when cancelling a twenty-year subscription to a newspaper she apologized that she could no longer afford it, but added, "Even the bitterest adversity brings its tribute of good, and we have learnt a lesson of self denial, we poor Southern people."¹ She found courage to defy the Yankee captors by refusing to sign the loyalty oath to the Union, and she possessed the fortitude and wits to survive the financial reverses of the war. She became part of a spiritual "sisterhood" of

Southern women who proved that they were equal, if not superior, to the male propagators of the myth of the dependent, fragile flower of Southern womanhood.

The changes in Sallie's placid life began in 1854, when Lizzie died on May 16. Lizzie seems to have peacefully given up the struggle against her long illness. At her death, Henry Denison, a former rector at Bruton Parish Church, wrote:

It was not my privilege ever to have seen her, but . . . she was an object of deep interest to the entire community from the seclusion in which she lived, the misfortune that she suffered, and the disinterestedness that made her live even more for the happiness of others than for herself. Her influence over the social circle of her numerous friends was exerted like that of a benign but invisible spirit, ever present in the kind deeds to promote happiness of others.²

Her death had been expected for some time, so Sallie had probably begun to assume many of Lizzie's housekeeping responsibilities. In 1858 Mrs. Galt died, thus strengthening the already close ties between Sallie and John as the two remaining members of an extremely close-knit family.

With the exception of those not-unexpected deaths, life was pleasant and uneventful in those last few calm years before the storm of civil war. A visit from Dorothea Dix in August 1858 cheered both the Galt household and the patients at the hospital. Sallie considered it a great compliment that Miss Dix found no fault with the asylum. The patients were delighted with Miss Dix's gifts of books, pictures, ribbons, and fabrics to sew into quilts.³

Even in 1860 Southerners were blissfully unaware of the financial devastation soon to come. John continued the family's philanthropic tradition by contributing \$166 toward the building fund at the College of William and Mary.⁴ This sort of easy generosity would soon be halted

all over the South as war wreaked its havoc, ruining personal fortunes and reducing once prosperous citizens to near starvation. During the four years of war Sallie Galt suffered the plight of most fellow Southerners--falling from financial security to near destitution.

Sallie Galt's contributions to the war effort, and her grief and sacrifices, both personal and monetary, are representative of many other Southern women of the time. She lost the person most dear to her, she struggled against signing the loyalty oath to the United States, even in the face of threatened deportation and the confiscation of her belongings. But most important, Sallie overcame her youthful reticence--so appropriate for a stereotypical Southern lady--and managed by herself to survive with dignity.

Early in the war Sallie Galt was as valiant as her Southern comrades. In May of 1861 she boasted that "the uprising of the people in Virginia is as one man, and all are prepared to defend the dear 'Old Dominion.'"⁵ Confidence in "the Cause" was easy in the early days of the war, when food, supplies, troops, and Southern valor were plentiful. The Union forces were beginning their fight up the Peninsula to Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy. The Peninsula campaign began in earnest in the spring of 1862, when Williamsburg fell in early May; three more years passed before they forced Richmond to surrender.

In May of 1861 Williamsburg was still relatively secure, so women and children refugees from enemy-occupied Hampton fled up the Peninsula to safety. Sallie described how they arrived in town at night with nothing but the clothes they were wearing, and slept the night on the courthouse green. In the morning Williamsburg citizens discovered the refugees and opened their homes to them.⁶ The Galts invited refugees

into their home and also let them occupy their empty house on east Francis Street.⁷ One of the refugees who stayed with the Galts told of the betrayal of a servant in Hampton who revealed to the Yankees where the family valuables were buried. The Union soldiers proceeded to dig it up, demolish all china and glass with an axe, and to tear up the feather beds looking for further loot. Sallie commented, perhaps overly optimistically, that thus far all slaves in Williamsburg seemed to be as opposed to the enemy as were their masters.⁸

The Galts opened up their home not only to refugees, but also to military men. Sallie wrote that many officers stayed with them; she was quite impressed with these fine specimens of Southern manhood, claiming that "a more gallant set of men never lived. They say they will fight all the more bravely for the unbounded hospitality of ladies of Williamsburg."⁹

Sallie was immensely proud that Colonel John Bankhead Magruder, commander of the Confederate forces in the area, had sent to John for the old map of the battleground which had belonged to their grandfather Dr. John Minson Galt, field surgeon during the Revolution. General Lee also sent for a copy, stressing the map's inestimable value to the war effort.¹⁰

Sallie contributed to the war effort in a number of ways. She was not above such physical labors as making beds for the Williamsburg hospital for wounded soldiers.¹¹ Meanwhile, her cousins in Richmond were sewing clothes for the soldiers, and stitching heavy duck into tents. The ladies of St. James Episcopal Church in Richmond had made 140 tents after only a few months of war had passed.¹² The letters between Sallie Galt and her family in Richmond indicate the cheerful sacrifice and

noble efforts of Southern women throughout the discouraging course of the war.

Southern enthusiasm was high in July of 1861. John Galt commented on the extreme optimism of the Confederate troops: in discussing the great inequality of numbers at Bethel, his friend observed, "Well, that is the exact proportion, four of the Yankees being equal to but one of our soldiers."¹³ John also remarked on the change in the town to a martial support unit, with the College and the Academy (on the site of the old Capitol) being used as hospitals, and all churches and public buildings housing troops.¹⁴

By October of 1861 life was a bit more difficult in the Confederacy. Sallie was forced to make her own candles and soap and so ordered candle molds and potash from Richmond.¹⁵ Her complaints of not being able to receive Godey's Lady's Book or to order seeds for her flower garden would later seem inconsequential. Town ministers were obliged to hold services in the asylum chapel, since churches were filled with 750 sick soldiers. Townswomen stayed busy fixing appetizing food for them. During the first half-year of the war the Galts housed twenty-seven sick soldiers, all of whom recovered. Sallie appreciated that they had an excellent nurse from the camp, so she had little trouble in caring for them.¹⁶

Although the town was filled with sick soldiers, there were enough healthy gentlemen to entertain the town's ladies, and spirits were cheerful enough to make citizens relish a good party. Sallie described two balls given by the Zouave and Louisiana regiments. The first was at their camp outside town, but it was damp without a floor, so the next was held at Colonel Mumford's house (Tazewell Hall). The soldiers decorated the house with flags and evergreens; they hoped to have a series

of balls during the winter.¹⁷

Throughout the next months Sallie was constantly petitioned for items to aid the soldiers in local hospitals: tea or milk when the hospital at the African Church had none,¹⁸ or some pieces of cloth suitable for blisters.¹⁹ As late as March 1862 she was still able to afford the scarce ham, molasses, coal, candles, and soap when they were available,²⁰ so she made jellies and custards for the sick soldiers, especially for those at the nearby African Church hospital, of which she considered herself the "Patron Saint."²¹ She wrote that most of the ladies of Williamsburg visited the sick soldiers but that she never did (perhaps due to her shyness, but apparently not due to any lack of concern), so consequently she wanted to do as much as possible for them at home.²²

Sallie was at the same time keeping communication with the asylum, answering queries from relatives of patients there. Patients visited her daily. She was particularly interested in a Mrs. Jones, a niece of General Winfield Scott. Mrs. Jones claimed that grief at her uncle's behavior and anxiety over her soldier son had caused her insanity. Sallie was happy that Mrs. Jones and her son could be reunited at the Galt home.²³

On May 5, 1862, Sallie's world began to crumble. In a one day battle east of Williamsburg the Confederates, under Brigadier General John Magruder, attempted to halt the progress toward Richmond of General McClellan's Army of the Potomac. The Southern forces were outnumbered; realizing defeat after a day of fighting (which some townspeople watched from the tower of the asylum),²⁴ they retreated westward into the swamps near the Chickahominy River.²⁵ Victoria King Lee, a

refugee from Hampton, recounted the sorrowful retreat of a still courageous Confederate army: she spent an entire day passing out biscuits and fried meat to weary soldiers. Joseph E. Johnston, the commander of the Confederate army at that time, shouted encouragement to his troops as he passed the helpful young ladies, "That's what we're fighting for, boys." She never forgot one of the last officers to leave the defenseless town: he handed her his sword, asking her to clean it and save it for his return. She cleaned and cherished the sword, but never again saw its owner.²⁶

The Galt household, too, offered food and comfort to the retreating Confederate army. Sallie had a barrel of flour baked into biscuits, but it was not enough to feed the hungry soldiers seeking sustenance for the march. She and John let nearly one hundred of the cold, wet, wounded soldiers sleep at their house; when the soldiers fled at sunrise, they warned that the Galts had only half an hour to remove all traces of having sheltered them, for the Yankees followed in close pursuit.²⁷

Close on the heels of the departing Confederates marched the triumphant Union army. The conquerors paraded into town playing "Yankee Doodle" and "On To Richmond."²⁸ Victoria King Lee called McClellan's army one of the most magnificent sights she ever saw--"countless thousands of blue-clad troops, all in new uniforms."²⁹ The new uniforms made an impression in contrast to the ragged and motley uniforms of the Confederate army, which lacked funds to clothe its soldiers adequately.

As the departing Confederate soldiers had warned, the Yankees did indeed come to the Galt home. Sallie feared that they would tear her house apart, but admitted that there were some elegant officers among them, and that they were polite and agreeable in their search.³⁰ Her

magnanimous opinion of the Yankees would change during the course of the war.

McClellan's army took several days to pass through town in pursuit of the Confederates.³¹ Unfortunately for the citizens of Williamsburg, the Union Army did not pass through entirely; a group remained to garrison the town behind enemy lines, and to prohibit townspeople from aiding the Confederates nearer to Richmond. Anyone who could not or would not flee Williamsburg was forced to live under the martial law of the United States Army. McClellan made his headquarters in the Vest house at the east end of Main Street (Duke of Gloucester), just behind the Galts' old home.³² His soldiers seized the College and the mental hospital. Skirmishes on the outskirts of town were the only vestige of the lost security of the Confederate army.

The day following the battle John Galt attempted to report as usual to his duties at the asylum, but a Union sentry with a bayonet barred his entry.³³ Dr. Galt, as a loyal Confederate, was already disheartened at the disastrous outcome of the Battle of Williamsburg. To be barred from the hospital which he had lovingly tended for twenty years was too severe a blow for the sensitive man to handle. For days he refused to eat, then when he tried food, he became ill. Galt died on May 18, 1862-- family tradition suggests that he died of a broken heart. His diary, however, indicates a less romantic fate: Galt took an overdose of laudanum, an opiate which he often prescribed to soothe the nerves of his patients.³⁴

Sallie never fully recovered from her shock and grief at her brother's death. She struggled courageously through the following years of war and reconstruction, living until 1880, but some spark in her died

with her brother John. It is not known whether she realized the actual cause of his death or if she attributed it to a heart attack. She may have initiated the "broken heart" story as a cover-up. If she did know the truth about John's suicide one wonders if she felt angry that he-- who should by the code of Southern chivalry have protected his worshipful sister from care and harm--deserted her in her time of need.

Now all alone in the world, Sallie had to learn to cope with emotional desolation and the pragmatic aspects of living in a war-torn town. Williamsburg was in enemy hands, and her financial situation was precarious, but the thing which she missed most was the love and moral support of her family. She was distraught over John's death. A letter written to a cousin describes her despair:

Pity my wretchedness. My darling Brother was . . .
all the world to me, and without him life to me is
dark and dreary. I who have lived all my life in
an atmosphere of love, now have no one to love, or
to love me.³⁵

To compound the difficulty of her adjustment, Sallie had to move out of the superintendent's house near the hospital, back to the old family home on east Francis Street. Arena Baker and Aleck Preston, family retainers, stayed with her and took care of half of the house, while a Mrs. Sherwell lived in the other half. Sallie pleaded with family members in Richmond to join her to ease her loneliness,³⁶ but she repeatedly refused their entreaties to join them in Richmond for the dual solaces of family companionship and Confederate security. Although they begged Sallie to leave Williamsburg under a flag of truce and to come live with them,³⁷ she must have clung sentimentally to the family associations of her home in Williamsburg, for she did not leave until the war was over.

More than sentiment, however, grounded Sallie in Williamsburg during the first year after the Battle of Williamsburg. The town was behind enemy lines and was the scene of constant clashes between Confederate guerrillas and the Union army of occupation. Citizens were not allowed to leave, except with special dispensation. Letters, however, could pass through the lines, so Sallie wrote to friends in Richmond, describing her life as a "prisoner" and telling of McClennan's vast army (estimated at 190,000) marching by her house and picking the apples which hung from her tree over the street.³⁸

During the occupation street skirmishing became a spectator sport for Williamsburg citizens. Writing during shelling, Sallie reported watching with interest as Federal cavalry advanced down Francis Street until they encountered Confederate cavalry at the College, then beat a hasty retreat. Some Williamsburg citizens camped out in the woods to avoid the skirmishing in the streets. Colonel Durfey's family, who lived across the street from Sallie (at Bassett Hall), stayed with her while their yard was a fighting ground and their house was being hit a dozen times a day. Sallie, one of the few ladies remaining in town, felt lucky to have had her house hit only twice in eleven days.³⁹

Although almost everyone from the east end of town took refuge at the asylum, Sallie and the women who lived with her refused to leave their more comfortable home. Only a few slaves remained in town; most had fled to the enemy. But Sallie's servant Oliver had the pragmatic reaction that "nobody cares for him at Old Point, [so] no use for him to go!"⁴⁰

In 1863 food was not yet a problem for the Galt household. The house had been filled with provisions thought to be enough to last for

years, but this supply was depleted in six months because Sallie insisted on donating food to the soldiers in the hospitals. She also shared with the Confederate soldiers who protected the citizens of Williamsburg when they were able to penetrate the Union lines. When the South Carolina cavalry was in front of her house watching for the enemy she fed them because they could not get their rations from their base camp. The soldiers hated taking food from the townspeople, but the women gladly sacrificed to feed their protectors.⁴¹

Sallie claimed to have not felt a bit of fear since the enemy first invaded on May 6, 1862. She said that if she were killed, she would rejoin all whom she loved. This lack of trepidation allowed her to ignore the Federal blackout edict. When the ladies were sewing or reading at night, they would submissively put out their lamp when the Federal sentry prompted them to do so, but light it again as soon as he was gone. Sallie did not mind privations endured for the Confederate cause; she claimed that "in all Secessia there is not a more loyal place than this persecuted old city."⁴²

Sallie Galt's loyalty and intrepid spirit were soon put to test. Like all Williamsburg citizens she was required to take an oath of loyalty to the Union. This was tantamount to treason to Sallie, so she did everything within her power to avoid having to take the hated oath. The penalty for refusal was deportation to an area still held by the Confederacy, plus confiscation of property, but Sallie risked pleading with the Union authorities.

She wrote first to Colonel Robert W. West, commander of Fort Magruder, stressing her desolation and loneliness, and noting that she had no temptation to contact any Confederates, as she had no near

relations in the army. She emphasized that she had always abided by Federal laws and spoken well of the occupying army. Sallie told the colonel that she was tortured at the thought of leaving her aged servants, who might die of grief at seeing her house torn apart and her books and pictures scattered abroad. She pleaded with him to make her an exception to the rule of signing the oath.⁴³

Colonel West sympathized with Sallie's case, realizing that she was desolate with grief and would have no home beyond the lines. He recommended to General Wistar a favorable consideration of her plea and personally guaranteed her loyal deportment if she were allowed to remain.⁴⁴ Sallie, writing on behalf of the "ladies of Williamsburg," sent her own petition to General Wistar, invoking him to exercise "the noblest gift and prerogative of a soldier--clemency."⁴⁵ The ladies used the flowery, biblical language of the day to entreat him to mercy:

It is not the treasure which 'moth and dust doth corrupt' that our agonized hearts rebel at leaving, for . . . all that was most valuable has long ago--in the commencement of the war--been sent into the Confederacy, but we cannot without bitterest, deepest anguish leave the homes of our childhood. . . . All that is left to some bereaved hearts of what made life precious.⁴⁶

General Wistar kindly agreed to let Sallie Galt and all others like her remain undisturbed.⁴⁷

Despite General Wistar's intervention in February of 1864, the spectre of the loyalty oath reappeared in October of the same year. Sallie Galt received a notice commanding her to "take the oath as per general orders, or be sent across the lines." The order granted her desire to donate her property to the asylum.⁴⁸ Sallie evidently pleaded for time, for she was permitted to remain in Williamsburg until further

action was taken by the proper authority.⁴⁹

This extension allowed Sallie to contact Dorothea Dix, superintendent of female nurses for the Union forces, and an old friend of the Galt family, through her work as champion of humane treatment for the mentally ill. The two women had become friends during Miss Dix's inspection tours of the public hospital in Williamsburg, so Sallie asked her help in acquiring an exemption from signing the oath, or leniency in the consequences if she refused to comply with the edict. Miss Dix proved her friendship by going to plead with General Butler on Sallie's behalf. Later she visited Petersburg during the siege of that city to ask General Butler to prevent the confiscation of Sallie's "goods and chattels." In addition to her letters, telegrams, and conversations with General Butler, she visited Sallie in Williamsburg to comfort her.⁵⁰ Sallie, grateful for all of Miss Dix's kindnesses, offered her anything in the house as a token of thanks. She chose one panel from the set of bedcurtains given to Dr. John Minson Galt I by Lafayette's officers in thanks for his hospitality.

Evidently Miss Dix's intercessions helped, because there is no evidence that Sallie was deported. She may have been harassed with the threat of deportation like one group of Williamsburg citizens who also refused to sign the loyalty oath: they were transported to the Kingsmill wharf, with threatened exile to Norfolk or Richmond. At the wharf, however, they were let go and left to get back to town any way possible.⁵¹

Although she escaped deportation, Sallie's furnishings were seized, but returned after the war. As a consequence of these difficulties her feelings toward the United States were ambivalent: she loathed the Federal government but felt respect and appreciation toward those

Federal officers who treated her kindly. Years after the war she wrote:

When I say our country, I mean the South, for I claim no allegiance to that wicked country, the United States; preferring during the war, the confiscation of all possessions to taking the oath of allegiance; though I will say, for my enemies, that after the war was over, they restored all back to me.⁵²

She praised the Federals who allowed her to keep family manuscripts and pictures and to send them to safe keeping.⁵³

Sallie Galt's surviving notes and letters stop in 1864 and resume after the war, in June 1965[!], when she finally visited relatives in Richmond. Her fate during the loyalty oath controversy is pieced together from comments written later. The unpleasantness of her refusal to sign the loyalty oath marked a turning point in Sallie Galt's hitherto sheltered life. She proved her commitment to a principle, even at the cost of discomfort and personal loss. Her cousin, Gabriella Galt, a schoolteacher, displayed a more pragmatic and self-serving approach to the loyalty oath: "I'll sign anything which will make life easier for my people."⁵⁴ Gabriella's complacent attitude suggests an origin of the docility prescribed in the "Southern lady" myth, while Sallie's tougher stance embodies the approach of the Southern women who have been revealed by modern scholarship.

CHAPTER VI

RECONSTRUCTION: SALLIE REBUILDS HER LIFE AFTER THE WAR

The years of Reconstruction were nearly as hard for Sallie Galt as the war years, for she, like most Southerners, had lost almost all of her income during the war. She was suddenly her own financial manager and provider, after years of comfortable prosperity during which her father or brother had earned a generous income to pay for shelter, clothing, food and amusements. Like many genteel ladies in her circumstances she opened her home to boarders, despite the disapproval of her long-term servant Arena Baker. When she attempted to sell a piece of property, she found no buyers, since most Southerners were as indigent as she, and as land poor. Desperate, she even petitioned Dorothea Dix for a matron's position in a mental hospital, but proudly resisted a paying job in the facility at Williamsburg. Such carefully thought out attempts to support herself were the acts of an intelligent, if newly independent, woman, not the self-pitying excuses of the fragile and feeble-minded parasite espoused in the "Southern lady" myth. Sallie seems to have found strength in adversity, a fortitude that came from having no choice but to succeed on her own.

Sallie had the responsibility of supporting not only herself, but also the older family servants who had elected to stay with her after emancipation. Her attitude toward money was an ambivalent mixture of Southern pride, philanthropy, and cavalier disinterest, along with a

burgeoning awareness of the necessity to concern herself with such mundane details. Using attorney Talbot Sweeney as her advisor, she attempted first to turn her home into a boarding house, as many Southern women who had lost family and fortune in the war were forced to do. It was the one recourse for the Southern gentlewoman to whom gainful employment was prohibited. Although she had let several ladies stay with her as guests during the war years, this new plan was met with vigorous objections from her "mammy" Arena Baker. Arena threatened to leave her room in "the old House," and to take her family from the kitchen and yard if Sallie carried out such plans. Sweeney, the mediator between the two women, advised Sallie: "She [Arena] is willing and anxious to cling to and serve you as long as the life of either, but says she cannot be subjected to others under existing circumstances."¹ Perhaps Arena was enjoying her new freedom by refusing to comply with Sallie's plans. Arena was an older woman at this time, so it is likely that despite her fondness for Sallie, she resented the prospect of having to keep house for more people, especially if Sallie had little or no money to pay her.

They must have reconciled their differences, for Sallie continued to have a few select ladies stay at her home. In 1868 she rented out two rooms to a couple whose house was under construction and saved five rooms for her own use.² Arena stayed on and was remembered in Sallie's will, which gave Arena Baker and Aleck Preston the kitchen and land east of it for their lifetimes.³

In pursuing other possible means of gathering funds Sallie met discouragement. In 1868 she found that there was no hope of realizing anything from her investments in the Virginia and Exchange Banks.⁴ The

next year she was advised that it was "a most unpropitious time" to attempt to sell her property in Richmond.⁵ She was discouraged enough at one point to consider selling off some of her prized antique books and so drafted a letter seeking to sell the medical books of her grandfather Dr. John Minson Galt I, a 1752 volume of the Virginia Gazette, and an eighteenth-century cookbook by Mrs. [Hannah] Glasse.⁶ She was undoubtedly relieved when farm property she owned near the York River was sold for a \$1000 cash deposit, with the balance to be paid in one year.⁷ Lots she owned in Richmond were not sold until 1871.⁸

The sale of the farm did little to ease her financial situation. Sallie wrote to the Staunton Spectator cancelling a twenty year subscription, apologizing for having no money to continue it. Her spirit remained undaunted, for she commented that "even the bitterest adversity brings its tribute of good, and we have learnt a lesson of self-denial, we poor Southern people."⁹

Adversity enhanced Sallie's charitable nature. She continued the spirit of noblesse oblige of her father and brother, refusing to accept the past due portion of her brother's salary that he had always refused. "It is my ardent endeavor to exercise the same self-forgetting spirit and disinterestedness which characterized every action of his life," she said.¹⁰

A family story relates that a tramp came to Sallie's door during these hard times. When he asked for something to eat she gave him a dry piece of crust, all she had for her own breakfast. When she learned from a neighbor that he had thrown it down in disgust as soon as he reached the street, Sallie's quiet response was, "I am glad he did not want it as much as I did."¹¹ Her problems during Reconstruction were

representative of many Southerners, who suffered as much in the aftermath of war as they did during the actual conflict.

During these difficult years Sallie was preoccupied and cheered by preserving the memory of her brother, father, and grandfather. She corresponded regularly with J. M. Jones in Washington, D.C.; he was compiling a Biographical Dictionary of Deceased American Physicians.¹² Sallie, proud of her family's contributions to medical and psychiatric knowledge, gladly assisted him. She and her cousin William R. Galt of Norfolk collaborated on biographical sketches of these relatives. She also sent Jones a number of pamphlets written by her brother. This writing was therapeutic for Sallie, serving as a catharsis for her grief and an escape from the incessant struggles of daily life.

Perhaps it was reverence for her brother's memory that prompted Sallie to continue her association with the mental hospital. She was especially interested in its post-war leadership,¹³ and concerned with the rapid turnover of superintendents since her brother's death. In the early 1870s she protested that there had been thirteen or fourteen superintendents since 1862.¹⁴ She did not hold a grudge against the new regime, however. She admired Dr. D. R. Brower, superintendent in the early 1870s, and claimed that he kept the asylum in "shining order."¹⁵ He made a point of inviting her to the first service held in the new chapel at the hospital because of her long interest in services there.¹⁶ She did disapprove of later superintendents who campaigned for the office, recalling that none of her kindred ever applied for office but were sought out by the directors. She was proud that her brother had refused an increase in salary three times.¹⁷

Sallie's attitudes toward the insane were those of her brother:

that the calm atmosphere of home, family, and friends, plus time spent with music, art, and good books were soothing to the troubled mind. She wrote:

. . . so desirable for the insane to visit the home, social visiting is refreshing to us all. One of my theories is . . . that the sane and insane minds are analogous, what is good for one is good for the other. I intensely enjoy the patients visiting me, and have many friendships and warm attachments in my circle of insane friends."¹⁸

Sallie practiced her philosophy, inviting one of the former patients to share her home. "I have a very good lady living with me. She is one of my Dear Brother's recovered patients, and having lost all of her friends has no home, and I tell her she must think my house and home as much hers as mine. . . ."¹⁹

Despite Sallie's fondness for many patients, she viewed her role as the charitable "Lady Bountiful" and would not have relished taking a paying position at the institution. She must have felt desperate, indeed, when she wrote to Dorothea Dix requesting help in finding a job in some facility for the mentally ill. "You will naturally inquire . . . why I don't get a position at our asylum. There are no Female offices vacant and perhaps I may not like to serve where I have resided."²⁰

Either Sallie's job search came to no avail, or she decided that her financial situation was not precarious enough to warrant such a drastic move, because she never took a position at any hospital, so did not have to leave the home she loved.

Sallie seems to have kept her adventuresome spirit and enjoyment of travel. This was probably difficult, since she had almost always had an escort on previous trips away from Williamsburg, as was proper for a Southern gentlewoman. But she enjoyed these excursions to visit

family in Richmond. As an antiquarian and historian she explored the state library at the Capitol, enjoying the interesting manuscripts and historical objects displayed there.²¹ Sallie made a point of being in Richmond for the unveiling of a statue of Stonewall Jackson.²² She was active in Williamsburg's centennial celebration, lending family heirlooms to a reenactment of "the beauty and chivalry of the last century."²³ She also lent several family pieces to the 1879 Art Loan Exhibition held by the Ladies' Aid Society of St. Paul's Church in Norfolk.

Sallie adapted herself amazingly well to the changes brought on by the war and Reconstruction. The ability to keep the family home, and the emotional and physical comforts supplied by faithful family retainers like Aleck Preston and Arena Baker must have sustained her in her loneliness. Writing about her father and brother's medical efforts helped to memorialize them and to comfort her. Although she wrote that she did not fear death because she would join all those whom she loved best, self pity did not overwhelm her once the initial shock and grief at John's death was past. She valiantly faced the necessity of shaping a new life, and was sustained by self will, faith, and inner strength. The platitudes of "true womanhood" espoused in easier times were inadequate and anachronistic in the face of war and its aftermath, so Sallie Galt found the deeper truth of self reliance.

When Sarah Maria Galt died in 1880 she had triumphed over the limitations of "true womanhood." While retaining her femininity, she had coped with problems beyond the ken of the frail womankind idealized in antebellum America. If she welcomed death as a reunion with her loved ones, at least she had the satisfaction of having lived--on her

own--against odds insurmountable by others of her sex paralyzed by the myth of feminine frailty and dependence.

Sallie seems never to have been as domestic as her older sister, although she did manage John's household after the death of Lizzie and their mother. Her piety emerged strongly in the adversity of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Throughout her life, friends praised her sweet nature. But Sallie Galt, like many Southern women, broke the spell of the cult during the Civil War. Women, maiden or married, were forced to be independent--to feed themselves and their families, to nurse and clothe an army, to manage farms and businesses--proving that they were not inferior to the men at the front.

Sallie fit the "true womanhood" ideal to a point: She was pure and pious--a true Christian--and domestic when necessary. But submissive she was not--not to Federal officers or regulations, not to adversity or poverty, and not to the emotional strain of being the sole survivor of her very close family. Sallie used the "Southern lady" ideal as a model for her girlhood, but upon demand, found inner strength equal to any man's.

NOTES

Abbreviations:

ADG	Dr. Alexander Dickie Galt
ADG, Jr.	Alexander Dickie Galt, Junior
EJG	Elizabeth Judith (Lizzie) Galt
JMG	John Minson Galt, II
MT or MTJ	Mary Tyler; after Dec. 24, 1835, Mary Tyler Jones
MDG	Mary Dorothea (Polly) Galt, Mrs. A. D. Galt
SMG	Sarah Maria (Sallie) Galt

All letters and manuscript references cited in the notes are from the Galt Family Papers I and II in Special Collections, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Introduction

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Chapter I

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¹⁴Mary A. Stephenson, "Illustration #5--Nelson Indenture 1823 [deed of sale to A.D. Galt]," History of the Nelson-Galt House, an unpublished research report for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, 1945, appendix material from Galt MSS on loan to Colonial Williamsburg, 1951.

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¹⁶Wallace B. Gusler, Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790 (Richmond: 1979), passim; also Research Files, Department of Collections, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

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²¹EJG to SMG, Aug. 24, 1847; also postscript from MDG.

- ²²EJG to SMG, Dec. 29, 1847.
- ²³MDG to MTJ, July 21, 1836, postscript to letter from EJG to MTJ.
- ²⁴ADG, Jr., "Commonplace Book," May 2, 1841.
- ²⁵Henry M. Denison to JMG, June 1, 1854.
- ²⁶John H. Strobria to EJG, June 10, 1846.
- ²⁷EJG to SMG, May 28, 1852.
- ²⁸EJG to SMG, Sept. 24, 1851.
- ²⁹ADG to JMG, July 17, 1840, and Oct. 20, 1840.
- ³⁰ADG to JMG, Dec. 8, 1839, and Oct. 20, 1840.
- ³¹EJG to MT, Apr. 21, 1835.
- ³²Unidentified correspondent to MDG, April 1, 1827.
- ³³Cary Lambert to EJG, Aug. 1, 1837.
- ³⁴MTJ to EJG, Oct. 13, 1837.
- ³⁵JMG to MDG, Dec. 8, 1839.
- ³⁶EJG to Marianna Saunders, n.d.
- ³⁷EJG to MT, June 6, 1835.
- ³⁸EJG to [John Strobria], Apr. 1843.

Chapter II

- ¹Williamsburg Personal Property Tax Records, 1783-1861, (M-1-47); also several tax receipts in the Galt Personal Papers.
- ²Clinton, Plantation Mistress, p.185.
- ³ADG to JMG, Dec. 30, 1840.
- ⁴ADG, Jr., "Commonplace Book," 1839.
- ⁵ADG to JMG, Nov. 24, 1840.
- ⁶Unidentified Galt family slave to [daughter], Oct. 8, 1858, draft in SMG's handwriting.
- ⁷Clinton, Plantation Mistress, pp.187-189.
- ⁸EJG to SMG, May 30, 1852.

- ⁹J. H. Strobia to EJG, Sept. 27, 1852.
- ¹⁰EJG to SMG, May 24, 1852.
- ¹¹Delia A. Braithwaite to SMG, 1877. It is not possible to ascertain whether the Galt slaves were literate. Most evidence of slaves' correspondence is by way of owners' comments about news contained in letters from servants. The Galt papers contain several drafts of letters written by family members as dictated by slaves. By 1877 a literate freedwoman wrote herself to Sallie Galt, but it is not known whether she was literate before emancipation.
- ¹²SMG to "Lethe," n.d.
- ¹³John Galt Williamson to SMG, Oct. 31, 1838.
- ¹⁴SMG to [Federal officials], Jan. 1864.
- ¹⁵SMG to Eliza [Lambert], Mar. 17, 1873.
- ¹⁶Clinton, Plantation Mistress, p.190; also Scott, Southern Lady, pp.47-48.
- ¹⁷SMG to [Federal officials], Jan. 1864.
- ¹⁸SMG will, dated May 18, 1869, in Galt Personal Papers.
- ¹⁹EJG, "Memorandum Book," 1842-1851, in Galt Personal Papers.
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- ²¹Mary Boykin Chesnut, Mary Chesnut's Civil War, ed. by C. Vann Woodward (New Haven: 1981), p.15.
- ²²Ibid., pp.29, 31.
- ²³Richard M. Bucktrout to estate of Dr. A. D. Galt, Jan. 20, 1852.
- ²⁴Receipt from Lewis H. Piggott to JMG, acknowledging payment of \$40 for hire of Mrs. Warburton's servant Eliza, 1848; and receipt from Robert Williamson to Mrs. M. D. Galt, acknowledging payment of \$5 for the time of Phoebe for the year, 1848.
- ²⁵Receipt from Ann Garrett to Mrs. Dr. Galt, Jan. 26, 1852; also receipt from Richard M. Bucktrout to SMG, Jan. 7, 1860.
- ²⁶Mary Copland to SMG, July 7, 1860.
- ²⁷Eliza Baker, transcription of interview with Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin, Williamsburg, Virginia, May 4, 1933, p.2. Special Collections, Department of the Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

²⁸Ibid., p.1.

²⁹Ibid., p.4.

Chapter III

¹Clinton, Plantation Mistress, p.126.

²A number of books owned by the Galt family were purchased by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Research Library in 1978. The manuals on female education bear Elizabeth J. Galt's signature on the fly leaves.

³James Garnett, Lectures on Female Education (3rd ed.; Richmond: 1825), pp.37-39.

⁴Ibid., pp.89-90.

⁵N. B. Tucker to ADG, n.d., returning \$10 since both boys had left his class.

⁶ADG to unidentified correspondent, July 10, 1831; recommendation for Mr. and Mrs. Sanford, who taught two of his children 1829-30. Also receipt from Leroy Anderson to ADG, Oct. 4, 1831, acknowledging payment of \$30 for tutoring Alex and Elizabeth in English.

⁷Dain, Disordered Minds, p.69.

⁸EJG to SMG, July 1836.

⁹Clinton, Plantation Mistress, p.158.

¹⁰SMG to EJG, Apr. 28, 1838. Sallie called the book "Lives of the Painters," but no such title appears in standard catalogues. The work may have been Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters and Sculptors, by Allan Cunningham, New York, 1837.

¹¹SMG to EJG, July 7, 1838.

¹²SMG copybooks in Galt Personal Papers.

¹³JMG to EJG, Mar. 30, 1841, and Oct. 1, 1840.

¹⁴Published items, n.d., in EJG's scrapbook in Galt Personal Papers.

¹⁵Lists in SMG's copybooks, Galt Personal Papers.

¹⁶SMG to EJG, Sept. 1838.

¹⁷Virginia Cary, Letters on Female Character (Richmond: 1828), pp.128-130.

¹⁸EJG to "Aunt" [probably Sally Lambert], Apr. 1843.

- ¹⁹SMG to Mrs. Campbell, [circa July 1848].
- ²⁰Parke Rouse, Jr., A House for a President (Richmond: 1983), p.114.
- ²¹JMG to Mr. Lyons, [July 1848].
- ²²H. S. Galt, Galt Families, p.38.
- ²³John Wiley, bookseller in London, to JMG, Oct. 4, 1853.
- ²⁴William Barton Rogers to ADG, Dec. 17, 1839.
- ²⁵Professor Dew to SMG, Feb. 12, 1845.
- ²⁶Rouse, House, pp.113-114.
- ²⁷SMG to JMG, Mar. 1 and 2, 1840, and Mar. 3 and 4, 1840.
- ²⁸Alexina Galt to William R. Galt, Nov. 5, 1842.
- ²⁹Vandegrift, interview, p.6.
- ³⁰EJG to SMG, Oct. 4, 1852.
- ³¹EJG, "Memorandum Book," and Galt Personal Papers, passim.
- ³²EJG's minutes of the Cheerful Club, [1851].
- ³³Ibid.
- ³⁴Receipt from W. W. Vest, Treasurer, to JMG, Apr. 1, 1852.
- ³⁵Benj. S. Ewell to JMG, July 31, 1860, and Jan. 30, 1861.

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²See also C. Smith-Rosenberg, "Female World," p.21.

³Vandegrift, interview, p.15.

⁴C. Smith-Rosenberg, "Female World," p.11.

⁵MTJ to EJG, Sept. 6, 1836.

⁶Mary Browne to EJG, Jan. 23, 1833.

⁷Cary Lambert to EJG, Nov. 15, 1836.

⁸Annie J. Galt to William R. Galt, Apr. 29, 1841.

- ⁹EJG to Marianna Saunders, n.d.
- ¹⁰EJG to Mrs. [Lucy Burwell Page] Saunders, Aug. 1841.
- ¹¹MT to EJG, Mar. 11, 1834.
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- ¹³Notes of EJG, Aug. 15, 1834, Galt Personal Papers.
- ¹⁴MT to EJG, Feb. 28, 1835.
- ¹⁵MT to EJG, Mar. 23, 1835.
- ¹⁶MT to EJG, July 13, 1834.
- ¹⁷EJG to MT, Aug. 7, 1834.
- ¹⁸MT to EJG, Feb. 22, 1835.
- ¹⁹EJG to MT, June 6, 1835.
- ²⁰EJG to MT, Apr. 21, 1835.
- ²¹MT to EJG, Aug. 1835.
- ²²EJG to MT, [1835].
- ²³MT to EJG, Dec. 15, 1835.
- ²⁴MTJ to EJG, Dec. 30, 1835.
- ²⁵EJG to MTJ, Jan. 18, 1836.
- ²⁶C. Smith-Rosenberg, "Female World," p. 22.
- ²⁷MTJ to EJG, Feb. 7 to 20, 1837.
- ²⁸Scott, Southern Lady, pp.35-36.
- ²⁹Clinton, Plantation Mistress, p.56.
- ³⁰EJG, "Memorandum Book."
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- ³⁸EJG to John H. Strobria, Sept. 19, 1847.
- ³⁹EJG to SMG, Dec. 24, 1847.
- ⁴⁰SMG to [family], Dec. 24, 1847.
- ⁴¹Jennie Waller to EJG, n.d.
- ⁴²SMG to [MDG], several letters, May 1848.

Chapter V

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- ²Henry M. Denison to JMG, June 1, 1854.
- ³SMG to Sallie Lambert, Aug. 28, 1858.
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- ⁵SMG to unidentified "cousin," May 30, 1861.
- ⁶Ibid.
- ⁷Victoria King Lee, "Williamsburg in 1861," an oral history compiled by Peticolas Lee, Williamsburg, Feb. 1933, p.8. Special Collections, Department of the Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
- ⁸SMG to unidentified "cousin," May 30, 1861.
- ⁹[SMG] to unidentified correspondent, draft similar to preceding letter, [May, 1861].
- ¹⁰Ibid.
- ¹¹Ibid.
- ¹²Eliza Lambert to SMG, June 1861.
- ¹³JMG to unidentified correspondent, July 22, 1861.
- ¹⁴Ibid.
- ¹⁵SMG to "cousin" [probably Sallie Lambert], Oct. 31, 1861.
- ¹⁶Ibid.
- ¹⁷Ibid.

- ¹⁸William Kirk to SMG, Dec. 25, 1861.
- ¹⁹Joseph C. Lively, Ward Physician, to SMG, Feb. 6, 1862.
- ²⁰Receipts, March 1862, in Galt Personal Papers.
- ²¹SMG to unidentified correspondent, March 26, 1862.
- ²²Ibid.
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- ²⁴John S. Charles, "Recollections of Williamsburg, Virginia, As it Appeared at the Beginning of the Civil War" (memoirs commissioned by Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin for Colonial Williamsburg, Incorporated, May 1928), p.25. Special Collections, Department of the Library, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
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- ²⁶Lee, "Williamsburg in 1861," p.14.
- ²⁷SMG to unidentified "cousin," Apr. 15, 1863.
- ²⁸Charles, "Recollections of Williamsburg," p.55.
- ²⁹Lee, "Williamsburg in 1861," p.14.
- ³⁰SMG to unidentified "cousin," Apr. 15, 1863.
- ³¹Lee, "Williamsburg in 1861," p.14.
- ³²Charles, "Recollections of Williamsburg," p.55.
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- ³⁴Zwelling, Quest for a Cure, p.43 of draft.
- ³⁵SMG to unidentified "cousin," [after May 1862].
- ³⁶SMG to unidentified correspondents, [circa July 1862].
- ³⁷Sallie Lambert to SMG, Nov. 3, 1862.
- ³⁸SMG to unidentified "cousin," Apr. 15, 1863.
- ³⁹Ibid.
- ⁴⁰Ibid.
- ⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³SMG to Colonel West, Jan. 1864.

⁴⁴Col. Robert W. West, Commander of Fort Magruder, to General Wistar, [circa Jan. 1864].

⁴⁵SMG for "Ladies of Williamsburg" to General Wistar, Feb. 2, 1864.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Brigadier General J. J. Wistar to Col. West, Feb. 3, 1864.

⁴⁸A. J. Puffer, Capt. and A.D.C., to SMG, Oct. 22, 1864.

⁴⁹Horace W. Fowler, Capt. and Acting Provost Marshal, to SMG, Oct. 23, 1864.

⁵⁰SMG to unidentified correspondent, n.d.

⁵¹Memo, Elizabeth L. Henderson to Dr. W. A. R. Goodwin (an addendum to her grandmother Victoria Lee's "Williamsburg in 1861"), Sept. 27, 1939.

⁵²SMG to Dr. Thurman, n.d.

⁵³SMG to Dr. Jones, July 29, 1867.

⁵⁴Rouse, Cows, p.66.

Chapter VI

¹Talbot Sweeney to SMG, Feb. 6, 1866.

²SMG to William R. Galt, Sept. 4, 1868.

³Will of Sarah Maria Galt, written May 18, 1868; probated Sept. 3, 1880; clerk's copy in Galt Personal Papers.

⁴Jas. C. Taylor to [SMG], Nov. 30, 1868.

⁵J. Enders to SMG, Jan. 25, 1869.

⁶Draft, SMG handwriting, n.d.

⁷SMG to General Richardson, July 2, 1869.

⁸R. E. Blankenship to SMG, May 12, 1871.

⁹SMG to Editor, Staunton Spectator, Aug. 23, 1869.

¹⁰SMG to [Talbot] Sweeney, Jan. 16, 1867.

¹¹H. S. Galt, Galt Families, p.44.

- ¹²J. M. Jones to SMG, Nov. 13, 1866.
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- ¹⁴Dain, Disordered Minds, p.194.
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- ¹⁶D. R. Brower to SMG, Jan. 31, 1872.
- ¹⁷SMG to unidentified "cousin," Dec. 25, 1878.
- ¹⁸SMG to unidentified correspondent, Nov. 3, 1876.
- ¹⁹SMG to unidentified correspondent, Aug. 18, 1869.
- ²⁰Dain, Disordered Minds, p.194.
- ²¹SMG to Mary Browne, Jan. 7, 1876.
- ²²SMG to Dorothea Dix, Feb. 21, 1876.
- ²³Ibid.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY:

THE SOUTHERN LADY AND THE GALT FAMILY OF WILLIAMSBURG

Anne Firor Scott pioneered the study of antebellum Southern women with the publication of The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago, 1970.) After reading countless diaries and letters written by Southern women she realized that beneath the serene facade of the Southern gentlewoman of myth festered a seething discontent. The myth portrayed these women as ladies of leisure whom the slave system allowed to live in luxury. In reality the responsibility for the care of both house servants and field hands fell upon the mistress of the household: she had to nurse, feed, clothe, and minister to an extended family of dependent blacks. Moreover, the women resented the evils of miscegenation made easily available by the slave system.

The myth of the "Southern lady ideal" also portrayed her as queen of her home and family, contented in her secondary position to her "Lord and Master" husband. Actually many women resented bearing a seemingly infinite number of children, with the attendant physical discomfort and risk of life. They disliked being totally economically dependent upon their husbands and receiving inferior educational opportunities.

The Civil War provided the dual necessity and opportunity for Southern women to prove that they were equal to men when challenged. With husbands away at war, women were forced to provide for their families--to feed and clothe children and remaining slaves, and to

raise crops and manage business and personal finances. The difficulties multiplied during Reconstruction when the South had to rebuild with a different labor system. But Southern women, having once savored the freedoms which accompanied the responsibilities of independence, were never again content with the hollow veneration of the "Southern lady ideal."

Scott's early efforts in the study of the Southern woman were continued by Catherine Clinton with the publication of The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South (New York, 1982.) Although Lizzie and Sallie Galt lived in an urban environment, many of their attitudes and situations were analogous to those of the rural women studied in Clinton's work. Her analysis of a plantation mistress as a "slave of slaves" was helpful in understanding the moral responsibilities and physical duties a slave owner took on in exchange for freedom from some manual chores. She, along with Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, in "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in the Nineteenth Century," (Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, I, pt. 1 [1975] pp.1-29) emphasized the importance of the feminine network of friends and kin which provided emotional support to antebellum women.

The genteel image of the "Southern lady" as a universal role model is challenged by D. Harland Hagler in "The Ideal Woman in the Antebellum South: Lady or Farmwife?" (Journal of Southern History, 46 [1980], pp.405-418.) He investigated Southern agricultural journals and concluded that the yeoman agricultural classes of the South esteemed a diligent farmwife rather than an ornamental "lady" as an ideal woman.

The Southern perspective on marriage and domestic virtue as the

ultimate goal for females is balanced by Barbara Welter's examination of "The Cult of True Womanhood" (American Quarterly, vol. XVIII, no. 2, part 1, Summer 1966.) At the same period that the Southern lady image was being formulated as an ideal for Southern women, a veneration for "true womanhood" was being established in the North. This cult advocated piety, domesticity, purity, and submissiveness in women and preached that marriage and motherhood were the only means to true happiness for a proper woman. The cult was practiced throughout England and America during the whole of the nineteenth century and died a slow death as women struggled for better education and job opportunities. Nancy Cott also examined the roots of this phenomenon in The Bonds of Womanhood: Woman's Sphere in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven, 1977.)

Three College of William and Mary theses provided insight into the Virginia perspective on the "Southern lady ideal." Doris Sturzenburger examined "The Southern Lady Ideal in the Life of Cynthia Beverly Tucker" (M. A. thesis, 1978.) Rebecca Mitchell studied Richmond women of the same period in "Extending Their Usefulness: Women in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Richmond" (M. A. thesis, 1978.) Linda Singleton's "Richmond Women and the Southern Lady Ideal, 1850-1870" (honors thesis, 1977) was also helpful.

In attempting to find the origin of the Southern lady stereotype I read a number of period accounts of life in Virginia and the South. Daniel Hundley, in Social Relations in Our Southern States (New York, 1860) advocated the biblical admonition that women content themselves with "their humble household duties. . . . Mothers should be pure, peaceable, gentle, long-suffering, and godly. . . . Women should not be forced to bear burdens too heavy for their frailer shoulders." [p.74.]

Hundley's vision of women was continued by Thomas Nelson Page in Social Life in Old Virginia Before the War (New York, 1897) and in The Old South (New York, 1892.) Reminiscences of life in Virginia before the Civil War by authors such as Constance Cary Harrison seem to have viewed a woman's role through rose-colored glasses.

Novels propagated the stereotype of the Southern woman as suited for and desiring only the role of wife and mother. Ellen Glasgow's The Battle Ground (New York, 1903) is one of many novels which describe with pity the old maid aunt who "pensively gazed at the mirror for a moment, and then went to her chamber to read Saint Paul on woman." [p.53.] Glasgow also has her Mrs. Ambler protest that "women do not need as much sense as men." [p.49.]

Those biased perceptions of Southern women are tempered by accounts written by women themselves during the antebellum period and during and after the Civil War. Allie Bayne Windham Webb has edited the letters of Rachel O'Connor, a resourceful Louisiana plantation mistress: Mistress of Evergreen Plantation: Rachel O'Connor's Legacy of Letters, 1823-1845 (Albany, 1983.) Mary Chesnut's Civil War, edited by C. Vann Woodward (New Haven, 1981), is a sophisticated woman's observance of her countrywomen during the war. Other contemporary accounts include Phoebe Yates Pember's A Southern Woman's Story, edited by Bell I. Wiley (New York, 1959) and Myrta Lockett Avary's Dixie After the War (New York, 1970, orig. printed 1906.)

Williamsburg history of the nineteenth century was gleaned from oral histories of nineteenth-century residents done by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in the 1930s. The Foundation's research and house reports were also helpful. Parke Rouse, Jr., has written several

books which include material on nineteenth-century Williamsburg, among them Cows on the Campus (Richmond, 1973) and A House for a President (Richmond, 1983.)

Other historians have investigated the Galt family from various perspectives, so I was able to use their information as background for my study of Sallie and Lizzie Galt. Norman Dain discussed the Galt family's involvement in the public mental hospital in Disordered Minds: The First Century of Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg, Virginia, 1766-1866 (Charlottesville, 1971.) James H. Siske wrote "A History of Eastern State Hospital of Virginia Under the Galt Family, 1773-1862" as an M.A. thesis for the College of William and Mary in 1949. Shomer Zwelling was kind enough to share his forthcoming manuscript on the public hospital: Quest for a Cure: Treatment and Care in the Public Hospital, 1773-1885 (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, forthcoming.) Stuart C. Pickell's "Alexander Dickie Galt: A Williamsburg Physician, 1771-1841" (an undergraduate honors thesis for the College of William and Mary, 1982) provided pertinent information on the medical career of Sallie and Lizzie's father.

Galt family genealogy and anecdotal material were provided by Howard Spilman Galt in The Galt Families: Notes on Their Origin and Their History (Peiping, 1938). Another family historian, Mary Meares Galt, wrote on "The Galt Family of Williamsburg" in the William and Mary Quarterly, 1st Ser., VIII (1900), pp.259-262. Wallace B. Gusler's Furniture of Williamsburg and Eastern Virginia, 1710-1790 (Richmond, 1979), along with files in the Department of Collections of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, yielded information regarding furniture owned by the Galt family.

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