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“In Good Hands, in a Safe Place”: Female Academies in Confederate North Carolina¹

The Civil War had a devastating effect on higher education in the South. As young men joined the Confederate ranks, the enrollment of men’s institutions dropped precipitously, leading many schools and colleges to close, with those remaining open serving only a fraction of their antebellum enrollment. Women’s schools fared little better, with female academies across the South closing their doors for the duration of the conflict, due to low enrollment, financial insolvency, or appropriation by Confederate forces to be used as hospitals. Many Southerners worried that the war could create an entire generation of uneducated men and women.² A widely reprinted editorial from May 1861 lamented that “It is deeply to be regretted that the present disturbed state of affairs is having such a disastrous effect upon the schools of the country. Several of our most flourishing institutions of learning, both male and female, either have already suspended or are expecting shortly to suspend. It is of the utmost importance that our schools should be maintained, and that our children should be educated.”³

North Carolina’s female academies proved the exception to this rule. Not only did the female academies in North Carolina remain open and financially viable during the Civil War, but their enrollment increased significantly during this period, often doubling their antebellum levels. This study of three dozen Civil War female academies in North Carolina seeks to explore why these schools survived and even prospered when so many educational institutions in the Confederacy closed their doors. It argues that North Carolina’s female academies flourished during the Civil War because they became seen as places of refuge, sites where parents could send their teenage daughters away from the front lines. North Carolina’s female academies were located primarily in the state’s central piedmont region, an area that saw almost no threat from

Union armies until the war's final months and was therefore seen as one of the safest and most secure areas in the Confederacy.

Despite efforts by teachers and principals to maintain a sense of normality for their refugee students and operate their schools as if their nascent country were not fighting its independence, the war had a significant effect on the students who attended these female academies. While at school, these young women were physically and psychologically separated from both their homes and the front lines. They sought to make sense of a world which was changing rapidly around them, yet from which they were comparatively isolated within the confines of female academies. Part of a larger project that seeks to understand the Confederate refugee experience, this essay focuses on the experience of the more than five thousand young women who studied, lived, and came of age at female academies in North Carolina during the bloodiest war in American history.⁴

The female academy movement in North Carolina began in the early nineteenth century, as Southern slaveholding families sought to create educational opportunities for their daughters that prepared them for the particular social and cultural demands that came with becoming a plantation mistress. Many historians have recognized that female academies served an important role in coming of age for young women in the antebellum South.⁵ For most upper class white women, their years at school proved to be the only time in their lives in which they lived away from home and family, offering what Anya Jabour has described as “an alternative definition of southern womanhood, one that revolved around self-improvement and female community rather than around self-sacrifice and male dominance.”⁶ Entering the schools as girls, they left as women.

By 1860, the development of higher education for women had advanced to a point where there were more educational options for elite young women than young men in North Carolina. On the eve of the Civil War, Gov. John W. Ellis remarked that North Carolina had 13 female and 6 male colleges, with 1,500 female and 900 male college students.⁷ To be sure, the distinction between colleges and other institutions of secondary or higher education was ill defined, and the difference between those schools which described themselves as colleges, seminaries, or academies was negligible.⁸ Regardless of the nomenclature, the students at female colleges or academies considered themselves to be social and intellectual peers of their counterparts at male institutions. Although they tended to be three or four years younger than their brothers and cousins at Wake Forest, Davidson, or the University of North Carolina, the students at North Carolina's female academies came from the same cultural background and social demographic that populated male institutions.⁹

The election of Abraham Lincoln and the subsequent secession of seven Southern states placed North Carolina's female academies in a precarious position. Like Virginia, North Carolina remained within the Union throughout secession winter, joining the Confederacy only after the firing on Fort Sumter and Abraham Lincoln's call for troops in April 1861. For students attending school during this period, the threat and possibility of war created anxiety and excitement. Rose Biddle, a student at Chowan Female Baptist Institute in Murfreesboro wrote in a letter home to New Bern after Abraham Lincoln's election in November 1860 that, "The papers say that Lincoln is elected by 150 majority & that S. Carolina is ready & Virginia is nearly ready & N. Carolina will soon begin to get ready. I don't think it can be so but I trouble myself so little about it that I don't take time to read the papers enough to find out whether it is so or not! I think Pa will come if there was any danger at hand & besides I don't have time to trouble myself

about such things.”¹⁰ Three months later, she wrote again, and pleading her father to “Tell me all the news about war & every thing of the kind whether you think we will have war or not, or whether those states that have threatened to secede & if Old No Carolina is likely to or not.”¹¹ A student at St. Mary’s School in Raleigh expressed a similar anxiety about the consequences of Lincoln’s election. “This week is elections,” she wrote home, “Such excitement! I never did see among people before. The girls talk as if they were the greatest politicians, but ask them the difference between the whig and democrat they say they do not know; neither do I. I have tried to find out, but in vain ... Today at intermission the schoolroom was the sound of the tower of babel ... for there was such a noise about the politics ... They say that Lincoln is elected. ... All of us are like tigers about Lincoln’s election.”¹²

In April 1861, Rose Biddle received a letter from a childhood friend who attended Louisburg Female College: “If the people there talk as much about wars & secession as they do here I am certain you are quite tired of it; for it seems to me I hear nothing else.”¹³ On April 17, less than a week after Fort Sumter, Rose wrote to her father, “So war is declared! I am sorry this continent is shaken with civil war, one which has stood for so many years & on such a firm basis. I begin to think dear Pa that the end of all things is not far hence, predictions are so fast being fulfilled. How important that we all should be preparing to meet it. ... Write me something about the state of this most favored of all countries what you think will be the termination of these commotions. I hope it is only a cloud, & that the sun will soon burst forth in all its magnificent glory.”¹⁴ Pauline Hill, a student at Louisburg Female College, wrote in her journal that “Ever since the school opened this winter we have heard nothing talked about but war. Fort Sumter has fallen, and all over the South and in our State they are forming companies.”¹⁵

The uncertain state of North Carolina within the Confederacy temporarily reduced enrollment in female academies, as parents hesitated before placing their daughters in a potentially precarious position. St. Mary's student Kate Curtis wrote shortly before North Carolina's secession from the Union that "There has been such a panic in school about the times, that many of the girls have written home, entirely misrepresenting the state of affairs here and have been sent for. Some left yesterday, and some this morning."¹⁶

After the firing on Fort Sumter and North Carolina's secession from the Union, wealthy Southern parents began to send their daughters away from areas in the Confederacy where the threats of war loomed largest. Although North Carolina's female academies had always attracted some out of state students, their numbers swelled starting in 1861 and increasing every year thereafter. They also attracted an increasing number of students from North Carolina's coastal counties, the one area of the state threatened and (after 1862) occupied by Union forces. Rev. A.G. Stacy, president of Lenoir's Davenport Female College, boasted in 1863 that "the success of the institution has exceeded the most sanguine expectations of its friends[;] a larger number of pupils have been in attendance than at any former period. Six states in the Confederacy have been represented and in North Carolina, 10 counties."¹⁷ In 1863, Salem Female Academy reported that of its 310 students, nearly half came from outside of North Carolina, including from "Tennessee 32, Georgia 24, Virginia 21, Alabama 19, Mississippi 18, South Carolina 15, Florida 9, Texas 4, Louisiana 2, [and] Arkansas 2."¹⁸ A St. Mary's student observed in 1862 that "There are a good many Wilmington girls here. ... The school is larger than it has been some years at the commencement of the session."¹⁹ Another St. Mary's student remembered that "quite a number of them [students] then at St. Mary's were there for protection, since their homes were in Federal lines early in the War."²⁰

These refugee students included the daughters of many prominent Confederate politicians and military leaders, leading Lou Sullivan, a St. Mary's student, to observe in February 1863 that "The school is pretty full. There are over a hundred boarders who have already come in... There are a good many girls here who are daughters, or near relations of distinguished characters."²¹ The most famous of these was Robert E. Lee's daughter Mildred, who attended St. Mary's from 1862 to 1863.²² Fearing that his daughter would be captured by Union forces, Lee arranged for her to be transferred from a school in Winchester, Virginia to St. Mary's School in Raleigh.²³

Some parents worried about sending their daughters so far from home during wartime. Edmund Pendleton of Virginia wrote to his daughter Elizabeth that "As at present advised, I am inclined to think that the Moravian School [Salem Female Academy] at Salem NC will be the best for you. The objection to it is its distance from where your mother & myself will probably be."²⁴ Despite his misgivings, Pendleton sent his daughter to Salem Female Academy, where she stayed for the duration of the war. Living in Union-occupied coastal North Carolina, Richard Creecy also expressed concerns about the distance between himself and his daughter Bettie, a student at St. Mary's in Raleigh. Despite these concerns, Creecy wrote to his daughter that he felt that she should stay at St. Mary's where "you are in good hands, in a safe place."²⁵

The influx of refugee students led to a dramatic increase in enrollment in almost all of North Carolina's female academies. St. Mary's School, for instance, had 78 boarding students on the eve of the Civil War. By the war's end, the school's enrollment had increased to 125 boarders.²⁶ Salem Female Academy witnessed an even more dramatic increase in enrollment from 152 to more than 320 students.²⁷ At many schools, enrollment continued to increase throughout the war, with many schools hosting a record number of students in the spring of 1865. Even in the war's final months, when almost all educational institutions in the

Confederacy had closed, North Carolina's female academies continued to attract new students. In February 1865, even though the Confederate economy had utterly collapsed and military defeat imminent, Carolina Female College in Ansonville was able to report that "The second term of this institute begins under very favorable auspices. It is already nearly filled up to its ability to accommodate boarders."²⁸

Both students and teachers began to see the female academies as places of refuge. In a sermon in the fall of 1861, the principal of St. Mary's School in Raleigh told his students that they should be thankful for "our comparative immunity from the consequences of war."²⁹ Many students, such as Lucie Malone, a Salem Female Academy student from Alabama, described themselves and many of their classmates as "refugees."³⁰ The term refugee had a particular meaning within the context of the Confederate experiment, referring primarily to slave holding pro-Confederate women and their children. While many Confederate refugees suffered considerable hardship and loss during the Civil War, the term "refugee" retained a certain romantic aura, leading many students and others to embrace the term.

Students became convinced early in the war that they were safer at school than they would be at home. St. Mary's student Kate Curtis wrote home in late April 1861 that "I should think we were quite as safe and well protected here as we could be at home."³¹ A student at Salem Female Academy remembered, "Those long years in the sheltered nest, while the storm rage around and beyond, ... Not for a single day was the regular routine interrupted, but life moved on in its accustomed grooves with its little every day ups and downs."³²

Indeed, many schools began to employ this idea of schools as places of refuge in their advertising. In May 1861, the principal of Greensboro Female College urged parents in an advertisement that despite the onset of war, "their daughters will be perfectly safe at

Greensboro.”³³ An 1863 advertisement for Louisburg Female College noted that the school was “remote from the lines of the public enemy.”³⁴ Similarly, an 1864 advertisement for Davenport Female College noted that the school was in a “Locality remote from Yankee invasion.”³⁵ Concord Female College recommended itself “to those in the South desiring a safe and pleasant retreat for pupils during the war. . . . This college has suffered less from the war than any other of a like kind of which we have heard.”³⁶

Despite their physical isolation, students at female academies often found their connections to home strengthened. Letters to and from parents at home took on an increased importance, especially when that home was threatened by invasion. Letters between parents and children commonly began with entreaties to write more often. In these letters, both parents and children exhibited an anxiety about their separation in the time of national crisis. They also reveal significant gendered differences in how mothers and fathers communicated with their daughters (and how daughters communicated with their mothers and fathers). While fathers often wrote to their daughters at school to reassure them that their home and family were safe, embodying the traditionally male role of the protector of the household, mothers were more likely to console their daughters on emotional issues, such as homesickness.

For students whose homes were in territory occupied by the Union army, direct correspondence was often impossible, and families developed elaborate procedures to communicate through intermediaries. For instance, the correspondence between Bettie Crecy at St. Mary’s and her parents on Nag’s Head was often interrupted or delayed by the presence of Union forces on the Outer Banks. Richard Crecy wrote his daughter that “I cannot account for you not receiving our letters regularly. We write quite often. We have written twice since we got home from Nags Head. Your ma proposes that you number your letters & we will number

ours.”³⁷ Unable to communicate directly through the mail, the family devised plans to communicate through relatives in nearby Norfolk where mail delivery was more regular, plans that frequently went awry. After several months of pleading for shoes and clothing, Bettie’s parents sent her a parcel delivered by a family friend to the railyard. Several days after she was to receive her long-awaited package, Bettie received a letter that informed her that “The box of clothing which was in E. [Elizabeth] City to be sent to the Express office in Norfolk for you was burnt with the Hotel on Monday morning [by Union soldiers]. Don’t be distressed. We don’t apprehend any danger. But we are without any mail.”³⁸

As the war progressed, many students found corresponding with home almost impossible. By 1863, the Confederate Postal Service had begun to collapse, resulting in highly irregular mail delivery.³⁹ Writing to her daughter at St. Mary’s, one mother lamented that “The letters now take ten days to come” from Raleigh to their home in Asheville.⁴⁰ Bettie Dobson, a student at Gilmer’s Female Academy in Mt. Airy, complained in a letter to her sister that “I have not received a letter from you in nine weeks, and I must by that think you all have forgotten me.”⁴¹

Many students manifested their anxiety and psychological isolation through severe homesickness. While such longings for home were typical among antebellum school girls, within the context of the Civil War, when many of the girls’ homes and families were under physical threat, these natural feeling became exacerbated.⁴² A student at Edgeworth Female Seminary wrote to her mother, “[I] wish I had never heard of Greensboro. I am terribly homesick. . . . O Mama I must come home. I don’t think I can stand it for ten long months. Won’t you take us South with you when you go through here?”⁴³ Two weeks later, her anxiety had not abated, writing “I am just as homesick as I can be, you have no idea my precious Ma how much I would give to see and kiss you. I feel as if I did not care about learning anything more.”⁴⁴ Min Curtis

wrote to her mother that her St. Mary's classmate "Mary Easton cries the whole time to go home. She is so dreadfully homesick, the first thing I hear in the morning is Mary E. sobbing and crying fit to kill herself."⁴⁵

Almost all of the students had a close family member who was fighting in the war, and therefore news from the front became not only a matter of political and military interest, but of significant personal importance. When students received letters from brothers, fathers, uncles, and cousins in the Confederate army, news and rumors spread among the students who speculated about the consequences for their loved ones and for their new country. More often than not, however, school girls complained that they did not know enough about the welfare of those in the military. A student at Davenport Female College in Lenoir wrote to her uncle that he must "when you write give me the war news."⁴⁶ A student at Edgeworth Female Seminary wrote, "We have not heard any news since we have been here so we have nothing to distract our attention but I feel very anxious to here [hear] from our army, so please write and tell us if their [there] is any."⁴⁷

At Louisburg Female Institute, Pauline Hill recorded the movements of the Union and Confederate armies carefully (although not always accurately) in her journal and noted when battles imperiled her family members or those of her classmates. On August 20, 1861, she noted that "a terrible battle has been fought at Manassas ... I have four cousins in the army. Charlie, my brother, says he wishes he was old enough to go, too."⁴⁸ A year later, during the Peninsula Campaign, she wrote that "there are sad hearts in Louisburg, for we don't know how many of our dear boys were killed or wounded."⁴⁹ Lou Sullivan, a St. Mary's student, wrote home in 1864 that "We are still in suspense about the recent battles. But very little news has been received. Lizzie has heard nothing from her brother."⁵⁰ Lucy Walke, a student at St. Mary's,

remembered that after significant battles, both students and teachers anxiously awaited news about their loved ones' welfare. One "lovely Sunday in the summer of '64" proved to be particularly memorable. "We knew," she recalled, "on Saturday that a fierce battle was raging many of the girls had near and dear relatives in the army." A telegram arrived during the Sunday morning chapel service, informing the principal that he had lost a third son in the Confederate war effort.⁵¹

The information that students did receive from home or from relatives on the front lines tended to downplay any risks to person or property. In his correspondence with his daughter at St. Mary's, Richard Creecy repeatedly attempted to reassure her that he and her mother were safe. Although "Fort Hattress has been taken," he wrote her in August 1861, "we do not think there is any danger here, so you need not be uneasy about us."⁵² Two weeks later, he informed her that there were "1500 Southern troops on Roanoke Island. No danger here."⁵³ In letter after letter, the Creecy parents attempted to temper any fears that their daughter may have had for their safety. After repeatedly assuring his daughter that Union forces would never attack Roanoke, when the attack did happen in February 1862, Richard Creecy told his daughter that "You must not distress yourself about it," as he assured her that the attack would undoubtedly fail.⁵⁴ When Union forces proceeded to take and occupy Roanoke, Richard Creecy continued to maintain that the presence of enemy soldiers a few miles from their home should elicit concern, as "We do not think we are in any danger in the country and don't wish you to be alarmed about it."⁵⁵ Despite her parents' repeated claims that family and property were safe, Bettie Creecy evidently found the Union occupation of North Carolina's coastal counties worthy of alarm. Reading panic in his daughter's letters, Richard Creecy continued to maintain their safety: "We

are all safe & well and do not anticipate any harm. ... You must not be distressed. You magnify dangers because you are not near them.”⁵⁶

Despite what Richard and Mary Creecy told their daughter, they were more forthcoming with their other correspondents, revealing that they were deeply fearful about the presence of Union forces near their home.⁵⁷ By sending their daughter to St. Mary’s, they hoped to shelter her from not only potential violence, but also from the anxiety that the threat of violence would evoke. In a letter to St. Mary’s principal Aldert Smedes shortly after his daughter’s arrival at the school in the fall of 1861, Richard Creecy wrote, “We are in the midst of excitement, confusion, & with some consternation, caused by the attack of Fort Hatteras and the complete defeat of our troops. ... Sustain Betty as well as you can, under the alarm that she will suffer as the report reaches her. Under the unfortunate disaster which has befallen us, Mrs. Creecy thought it would be better for Betty to return, but I regard your situation as much less perilous than ours, and I have full confidence in your parental care, kindness & watchfulness.”⁵⁸ This letter and others like it indicate that parents wanted school administrators not only to keep their daughters safe from physical harm, but engage in willful deception to protect their emotional and psychological wellbeing.

The absence of adequate and reliable information about loved ones in combat created the ideal conditions for rampant rumoring and conjecturing on the part of female academy students. Taking whatever fragmentary evidence they could accumulate about their relatives and the movements of the armies, they created imagined scenarios to fill in the gaps in their knowledge. In these speculative ventures, they posited battlefield experiences for their loved ones that were based in part on the sanitized accounts they received in the mail, their readings of romantic literature, and their fertile adolescent imaginations.⁵⁹ Often, their imagined war differed

significantly from the actual events on the battlefield. For instance, Pauline Hill of Louisburg Female College evidently believed that Robert E. Lee had launched a third invasion of the North in the summer of 1864, occupying portions of Maryland.⁶⁰

This anxiety about the fate of loved ones led some students to embrace spiritualism.⁶¹ By conducting séances, they hoped to learn about relatives and friends on the front lines. Lizzie Montgomery remembered that the students at St. Mary's "would hang a shawl before the window, light the gas and for hours, on Saturdays, cluster around the table. We soon found out a medium, and through the moving of the table, in reply to our calling over the alphabet, we asked many questions and thought we gained satisfactory replies. I recall that the sweetheart of one of the girls had just been killed on the battlefield in Virginia. It was known he was wild and dissipated and utterly fearless. The table spelled out that he wished to communicate with her, and the message that followed – 'Remorse,' caused a panic and we left off table turning for some time."⁶² Spiritualism was also popular among students at Greensboro Female College. Sophie Richardson recalled that "our favorite pastime on Friday nights, on Saturdays when there were no study hours, was Spirit rapping. It was quite a fad in those days, and there were some wonderful things told us in some mysterious way."⁶³

Like others on the Confederate homefront, students at female academies in North Carolina experienced a significant shift in material conditions caused by the war. The Union blockade of Confederate ports dramatically limited the availability of imported food, clothing, medicine, and other consumer goods. When available at all, many goods sold at prohibitively high prices, forcing Confederates of all classes to do without or to use inventive substitutes.⁶⁴

Wartimes shortages visibly manifested themselves in the physical appearance of female academy students. Because of a severe textile shortage, almost all schools abandoned their strict

antebellum dress codes. St. Mary's students had for decades been distinguished by a dress code of light blue or white dresses with pale blue ribbons.⁶⁵ According to the mother of two St. Mary's students, shortages made finding appropriate school clothes impossible, such that "It is quite useless to speak of calico and shirting which Min [her daughter] needs, but must do without, even if she goes to St. Mary's."⁶⁶ A similar situation existed at Louisburg Female College. By March 1862, Pauline Hill took pride in "our first homespun dresses," noting that hers was "blue, grey, and black check" with a "Garibaldi waist."⁶⁷ For her, this change in apparel was one way in which she could manifest her Confederate patriotism.⁶⁸ Two years later, however, she was less enthusiastic about the clothing shortage's effects, claiming that "It is getting to be a serious thing how we are to get clothes to wear. We have cut up our linen sheets for underclothes and handkerchiefs." School girls from privileged backgrounds were reduced to ransacking their trunks "to get the trimmings." Despite her misgivings, she maintained that she and her classmates were "willing to do without many of these things if we could only have peace."⁶⁹ However, repeated requests for clothing were a regular theme in correspondence between school girls and their parents; requests that more often than not went unfulfilled.

Shortages also transformed their diets. With the Confederate military receiving priority for foodstuffs, a decline in agricultural production in the South, and imported foods like coffee and sugar unavailable, female academies provided their students with a cuisine derived from local produce. Kate Curtis wrote home in early 1861 about the steps St. Mary's principal Aldert Smedes had taken to ensure that the school would be adequately provisioned. "We might, perhaps," Smedes told his students, "be obliged to forego some of luxuries, but we wouldn't be pinched for want of food." According to Curtis, Smedes' statement "just 'brought down the house.' The girls have been anxiously enquiring what the luxuries are, so that they may enjoy

them before they are taken away.”⁷⁰ Lou Sullivan wrote to her parents in 1864 that Rev. Smedes had “introduced a new dish for breakfast – fried okra. You have no idea how nice it is when fried brown. Try it.”⁷¹ Although she thought that the new cuisine was innovative, she recognized that her classmates did not always agree with her. “Though our fare is coarse,” she wrote to her parents, “it agrees with me. Our supplies are a little better, we have molasses 2 times a week & Sunday night we had cakes, 3 a piece. The girls complain considerably of the fare, I never have left the table without being satisfied & common is it is I always enjoy it. I believe Dr. Smedes furnishes the tables as nicely as he can, everything is so very scarce & dear around here.”⁷² Smedes himself was impressed with his students’ willingness to accommodate to the new menu, arguing that “Such is the patriotism of our girls that they not only are content, but even grow fat upon the plainest fare.”⁷³

Despite their occasional complaints, students at female academies fared far better materially than almost anyone else on the Confederate homefront. Although school administrators had difficulties at times securing provisions to support their robust student populations, at no point during the war did students at female academies experience real material hardship.⁷⁴ A student at Salem Female Academy remembered being reminded by the school’s principal of how fortunate they were. After being caught stealing sugar from the dining room, the students were called into the chapel, where they were admonished for their infraction and reminded “how much better they lived there than at their own homes, because coffee and sugar were not found in every man’s house during the war. We had well furnished tables three times a day, and a luncheon at four o’clock. On the Principal’s birthday we had big dinners, and the girls had big pockets made for the occasion, and the spoils we carried off lasted several days!’ But it was no easy task to provide for two hundred and fifty girls entrusted to their care, in

addition to the other members of the large family, and Principal and Steward had their hands full.”⁷⁵

For the slaves who worked at North Carolina’s female academies, the schools functioned more as prisons than as places of refuge. Slaves provided almost all of the manual labor at these schools, including cooking, cleaning, and laundry service.⁷⁶ At St. Mary’s, slave boys brought lunches and carried the school books for day students.⁷⁷ At least one student brought her own slave to do her laundry and attend to her personal needs.⁷⁸ Lou Sullivan remembered that every Saturday the students found "the freshly laundered clothes deposited on the foot of each bed by the long procession of smiling Negro washerwomen."⁷⁹ At the Nash and Kollack school in Hillsborough, it was customary for younger students to bring their "Negro mammy" to accompany them. When David Bell brought his three daughters to the school from Washington, N.C. as refugees in 1863, he was sure to leave a female slave to care for his daughters. Similarly, Hannah Emerson Williard, a thirteen-year old refugee also from Washington, brought an elderly slave named Caroline (whom she called "Nussie") with her in order to care for her "clothes and look after her in such other ways as might be necessary." Although most slaves at the school slept in separate quarters separate from the main school building, Caroline slept next to Hannah, ready to attend to her at any hour.⁸⁰

For these slaves, the schools’ increased enrollment brought additional labor and burdens, as schools rarely purchased or hired additional slaves in proportion to their increased enrollment. Anna Burwell, wife of Charlotte Female Institute headmaster Rev. Robert Burwell, wrote to her son in February 1865 that the school was "dirty beyond endurance" because her slaves "Mary Ann & Hannah have taken their usual spells. Hannah has not cooked for three weeks & Mary Ann has not been in the house more than two days since you left.... Our school is much larger

than we anticipated."⁸¹ Whether Mary Ann and Hannah's illnesses were real or feigned, they were probably brought about by continued labor in an overcrowded school.

Although slave management was never part of the formal curriculum of female academies, the proper treatment of slaves naturally and regularly appeared in the context of religious instruction. In a sermon he regularly delivered to his female charges, St. Mary's headmaster Aldert Smedes implored them to treat their slaves with humanity. "In a community like ours, where we are surrounded in such numbers by servants born in our own house," Smedes argued, "surely the pious daughter need not go far, perhaps not beyond the precincts of her own abode, to find suitable objects of her benevolence." The object of such benevolence, Smedes claimed, was that slaves would become "more faithful servants of their masters upon earth [and] might also invest them with the freedom of the skies."⁸² Betty Creecy, from a slave-owning Pasquotank County family, wrote to her father that Smedes had assigned her to write an essay on the "Catechetical Instruction of Servants."⁸³

The dramatic increase in enrollment in North Carolina's female academies necessitated the hiring of additional teachers, and many of these positions were filled with refugees from war-torn areas of the Confederacy. By the end of the war, at least half of the teaching staff at St. Mary's were refugees.⁸⁴ At Concord Female Academy in Statesville, all but one member of the faculty were refugees, including the school's president, who had fled from Georgia in 1863, where he had been president of Rome Female College until that school was closed after Yankee raids.⁸⁵ Indeed, almost all of the schools in this study had at least one refugee teacher.

These refugee teachers filled vacancies created by male teachers departing for military service and Northern-born teachers who felt uncomfortable teaching in the South after secession.⁸⁶ A recent graduate of Lima Academy in New York, Maria Flint was hired by

Warrenton Female Academy in 1860 to teach music, French, German, and English. Although she was impressed by the grounds of the school and the wealthy of her students, whom she described in her diary as "mostly planter's daughters from the country around," Flint expressed anxiety about the prevalence of slavery at the school and in the town. After Lincoln's election, she and another Northern teacher left for Union lines.⁸⁷ Although, the war encouraged Southern women to enter the teaching profession, female academies in North Carolina often experienced a shortage of teachers. "Teachers were scarce," claimed one Confederate memoirist, "but many of our women filled the places vacated by soldiers. The boarding schools of St. Mary's, Raleigh, Greensboro, and Salem were kept open, as was the Charlotte Female Institute."⁸⁸ With some relief, Anna Burwell proudly reported in 1864 that her school had "a very full corps of Teachers."⁸⁹

From the very beginning of the conflict, students at North Carolina's female academies expressed their devotion to the Confederate cause. A month before North Carolina officially seceded from the Union, Kate Curtis wrote home from St. Mary's that "We have now three flags of the 'Southern Confederacy' waving from our windows. Saturday morning some people from town rode by here with their flags, and their cries of 'secession'. That first made us think of displaying our zeal, and all hands were immediately at work upon 'red, white, & blue.'"⁹⁰ In an August 1861 letter home, Emma Kimberley, a student at St. Mary's wrote, "The South is certainly right in everything ... Providence is certainly on our side."⁹¹

In April 1861, students at St. Mary's devoted themselves during a two-day holiday to producing war supplies. According to one student, "During that time we made 167 mattresses, and hemmed 118 towels," a feat which she proudly noted exceed those produced by military academy Cadets in nearby Hillsborough.⁹² Kate McKimmon remembered that "The first five

years if the Sixties found me as I still am, an un[re]constructed rebel! As a school girl at St. Mary's, I enjoyed marching with our 'crowd,' when with paper caps, Confederate flag, and a drum we paraded around the grove."⁹³

The Civil War had only a subtle effect on the educational experience at North Carolina's female academies. Comparing school bulletins from the Civil War to those from both before and after the war indicate that the subjects and texts studied remained largely unchanged.⁹⁴ For instance, students at Chowan Female Baptist Institute continued to study the same subjects throughout the middle decades of the nineteenth century: Arithmetic, Poetry, Latin (Caesar, Ovid, Virgil), French, Paley's *Natural Theology*, and "Trigonometry and Mensuration."⁹⁵ While many primary schools in the Confederacy adopted new textbooks printed in the South and intended to promote Confederate nationalism, female academy students read the same texts that they did prior to the Civil War.⁹⁶ Although they were not directly exposed to a nationalist curriculum, female academy students would have been aware of Confederate textbooks, as many of them were written by teachers at female academies.⁹⁷

While the official curriculum remained relatively static, students and teachers used the classroom assignments to reflect on war-related issues. On April 20, 1861 – shortly after the firing on Fort Sumter, students at Louisburg Female College were assigned the debate topic, "Has the South the Right to Secede?"⁹⁸ In the fall of 1862, the older students at St. Mary's School were assigned to write an essay on "Our Opinions of the Present War," while younger pupils were assigned the topic "On Leaving Home."⁹⁹ Unfortunately, the products of these assignments have not survived, although one may presume the result given the students' ardent Confederate nationalism.

While the curriculum did not change dramatically, the purpose of the female education did undergo a subtle, but significant shift during the Civil War. With many of the state's male teachers in the Confederate army, graduates of female academies were increasingly called upon to teach.¹⁰⁰ An editorial in the *North Carolina Journal of Education* opined "We again call upon the ladies to come to the rescue; to occupy our vacant school houses, and train up the children to take the places of those who are now pouring out their blood to defend our homes."¹⁰¹ The leaders of the state educational association publically appealed to young women's patriotism to entice them to teach. In notices published in newspapers across the state, they asked educated young women, "Will you not as patriots, come forward in this hour of your country's trial, when every strong arm is needed to defend you and your homes from a merciless foe? ... Teach, not for the pay, and, it may be, not for the love of the work, but teach for the sake of the children of the State, who must grow up in ignorance, if you do not instruct them."¹⁰²

Students and faculty at female academies responded to this demand for teachers.¹⁰³ Nowhere was this transformation more evident than at Concord Female College in Statesville. In 1864, the college's new president, Rev. J.M.M. Caldwell instituted a "teachers department" to help train the school's graduates to become educators. Caldwell, the scion of a famous Presbyterian family, had come to Concord after fleeing from Georgia, where he had been head of Rome Female College, which had closed after Yankee raids in the area.¹⁰⁴

At an address to the students at Concord shortly after Caldwell's instillation, Dr. James Ramsay argued that the war had fundamentally changed the purpose of female higher education in the South. "Your fathers and brothers are, perhaps, far away upon fields of strife and blood," Ramsay told the students, "and your mothers and sisters toiling and economizing at home while you are placed here. You are not here that you may idle your time away in listless folly, and

indulge your fancy and pride in dress and pleasure... No! No!! ... It is to prepare for the journey of life that you are placed here. Learn to labor, and labor to learn.”¹⁰⁵ Dr. Ramsay urged the students to use their education productively rather than ornamentally and to consider teaching as a possible vocation.

For more than three years, because of their location in the Confederate interior, female academies in North Carolina protected their students from the horrors of war and the threat of Yankee invasion. In the war’s final months, however, as the Confederacy collapsed and Union soldiers marched into central North Carolina, students at female academies came face-to-face with a war that they, their parents, and their teachers hoped they never would experience.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, female academies, which had served as places of refuge for most of the conflict, became, in the war’s final months, venues for intense interactions between their students and both Confederate and Union soldiers. Because their campuses were almost all located in urban areas, near railroad junctions, and had large open groves, North Carolina’s female academies became the preferred campground for both retreating Confederate and advancing Union forces. These brief but intense interactions between school girls and soldiers provided a unique venue for young women who had spent the duration of war physically separated from the conflict itself to express their thoughts and feelings on the Confederacy and its imminent defeat. Even when most Southerners, soldiers and civilians alike, had become convinced that the Confederacy would fail in its quest for independence, school girls in central North Carolina remained committed Confederate nationalists and resistant to Union occupation.

A handful of parents removed their daughters from female academies in anticipation of Union occupation of central North Carolina. In January 1865, Bessie Cain’s father wrote to a friend that “We regret very much to learn that our dear Bessie will not be able to continue her

education at St. Mary's at this time, but perhaps it is all for the best, as we are fearful that if Wilmington is taken, Raleigh will fall into the hands of the Yankees & you would be miserable to have your dear children within the Yankee lines & separated so far from us all."¹⁰⁷ One month later, however, Bessie returned to St. Mary's, where she stayed until the war's conclusion. Although the surviving correspondence does not indicate why her parents changed their mind about removing Bessie from school, the threat of Union occupation of Asheville may have persuaded them to keep their daughter in the more protected location in Raleigh. Expressing a similar anxiety about the safety of their daughter, Catherine Hanes' parents decided to move her from Salem Female Academy to Statesville Female Academy in the fall of 1864 so that she would be closer to their home in Davie County.¹⁰⁸ However, in the war's final months, most parents did not have the option of removing their daughters from school as the pressures of war kept families and daughters apart. Most families felt that their daughters were safer at school in central North Carolina than they would be at home.

For many schoolgirls, the sight of retreating Confederate soldiers in the spring of 1865 marked the first time that they had seen so many grey uniforms since the soldiers had departed nearly four years earlier. A student from St. Mary's recorded in her scrapbook that "The confederate soldiers came marching in each one with a blooming sprig of lilac tucked in his hat, like plumes, though almost barefoot, wearing ragged and worn uniforms. Unshaved and gaunt they were but unconquered still. The girls gladly took their dinner from the table to the soldiers in the grove."¹⁰⁹ Susan Collier, a student at St. Mary's, expressed surprise and concern that the army before them did not conform to her imagined ideal of Confederate manhood, noting in her diary that "I was really surprised to see our men so desponding but they were the least class of men and did not feel like the men that are in the Army of their free wills fighting for their all."¹¹⁰

Despite their misgivings at the soldiers' appearance, the schoolgirls at St. Mary's reveled at the opportunity to see and talk with retreating Confederate soldiers. After persuading their reluctant principal, the students lined themselves along the fence separating the school's grove from Hillsborough Road. Susan Collier recalled their enthusiasm in her journal: "Just to think to see our dear soldiers. ... How we all rushed when we knew we could go. We had a charming time feeding the soldiers. We girls gave them our dinners. They were so grateful for it. We gave them water also. I was quite exhausted carrying great tubs of water, but we were all willing to do any and every thing for our dear soldiers."¹¹¹ Students at Louisburg Female College responded similarly to the "crowds of weary, hungry soldiers ... thronging our streets." Pauline Hill recorded in her diary that "They are so worn out they fall down on the sidewalks and sleep. We all do everything for them we can, feeding them and caring for the sick ones."¹¹²

The passing of the Confederate army brought about feelings of elation and regret. Susan Collier recalled that "All the girls seem wild with joy, though we know tomorrow at this time we will be left desolate. Perfectly so. But we are determined to have a nice, nice time."¹¹³ After a day of talking, dining, and flirting with Confederate soldiers, the students at St. Mary's watched uneasily as Gen. Wheeler's cavalry rode by protecting the Confederate rear. "We girls watched the last one," wrote Susan Collier. "Oh what a night we all spent. Expecting the Yankees every moment."¹¹⁴

Students at female academies expressed deep fear and anxiety for their safety as Union forces approached. Maggie Ramsay wrote from Concord Female Academy in Statesville to her father in Richmond that "We heard if they burnt the College the Yankees would not let you take anything out. Some of the girls put on nearly all the clothing they had. If the Yankees had come they would have seen some fleshy looking girls."¹¹⁵

Their fears that Union forces would ransack the school and even impose themselves sexually on students were not without justification. As Sherman's forces marched through Georgia and the Carolinas, they regularly invaded private female spaces within the home, leading one North Carolina woman to complain that "there was no place, no chamber, trunk, drawer, desk, garret, closet, or cellar that was private to their unholy eyes."¹¹⁶ While the rape of white Confederate women by Union soldiers was comparatively rare (at least by the standards of nineteenth century warfare), the belief that Union soldiers preyed upon vulnerable women was widespread.¹¹⁷

These fears proved to be largely unfounded, as Union soldiers demonstrated a remarkable degree of civility. Even Bessie Cain, a committed Confederate nationalist, had to admit in her diary that Union soldiers "thus far they have treated us with the greatest possible kindness & respect."¹¹⁸ Her fear of sexual and physical violence returned, however, after news of Lincoln's assassination reached the troops encamped in St. Mary's grove. "We knew that on the least provocation the Yankees would do anything they wanted to us," she wrote in her diary. "How uneasy we were! Last night we were frightened to death. They [sic] officers thought they could restrain their soldiers, but they thought if the news about Lincoln spread among the soldiers, they would set fire to houses & how a tremendous uproar; the noise would be heard up here & then St. Mary's would be set on fire. We all slept in our clothes having filled the pocket of our dresses with anything we wanted particularly to save."¹¹⁹

The principals of female academies often played a decisive role in protecting their institutions from the potential threat posed by Union forces. When Gen. Stoneman's forces threatened Salem in 1865, the principal of Salem Female Academy joined a delegation lead by "the Mayor of the town, and several prominent citizens" to confront the brigade before it entered

the community. They successfully negotiated a surrender of the town and arranged for Union soldiers to protect the Academy from looters.¹²⁰

While the principals attempted to negotiate a careful *détente* with Union forces, the students took every opportunity to insult and antagonize Union soldiers and officers. Emboldened by their protected status granted to them by their race, gender, and age, school girls openly expressed their continued loyalty to the Confederacy and their hatred and revulsion at the thought of reunion with the North. At Louisburg Female College, Pauline Hill, who had rejoiced upon seeing retreating Confederate soldiers, fumed when Union soldiers arrived a few days later. “I shall never forget my feelings [of anger] when I saw the first Yankees,” she wrote in her diary.¹²¹

Female academy students took particular umbrage at the sight of the Union flag. With several thousand Union soldiers encamped in the grove adjacent to the school, St. Mary’s students were confronted with tangible evidence of Confederate defeat. Bessie Cain noted in her diary “This morning O horrors the United States flag was hoisted in the grove.”¹²² In a sign of defiance, “Every morning, when the United States flag was raised, [the St. Mary’s students] rushed to the windows and drew the curtain, that they might not look upon it.” Correctly interpreting this behavior as hostile, Union “Gen. Howard gladdened their hearts by making them martyrs to their cause. He sent in word to the principal that unless all such expressions of dislike to the United States flag were stopped he would close the school.”¹²³ Students at Louisburg Female College expressed the same outrage at the presence of Union soldiers on their school grounds. One resident described the horror of occupation: “The town is full of Yankee soldiers riding and walking up and down every street and coming in our yards and kitchens. ... Their tents are pitched in the college ... The reality is upon us that we are a subjugated people.

Two very large US flags are unfurled and waving in the breeze.”¹²⁴ Anna Maria Clewell, a student at Salem Female Academy, repeatedly crossed the street rather than walk underneath the Union flag hanging from the requisitioned Union headquarters near the school.. When confronted by Union soldiers, who threatened to arrest her for insulting the flag, Anna maintained her Confederate nationalism, shouting at the soldiers that “I will not live under it. I am going to South America or Mexico, or somewhere out of the United States. I am not going to live under it.”¹²⁵

Female academy students also expressed their anger and nationalism when confronting Union officers. When Gen. William T. Sherman visited St. Mary’s in April 1865, the students initially treated him respectfully, presumably at the request of their principal, who was eager to maintain cordial relations with the soldiers who occupied the grounds around the school. When Sherman turned to leave, however, their tone changed dramatically. When Sherman turned to give the building a final look, he found the students “all making such mouths as only angry school girls can make, while some more daring ones were absolutely shaking their pretty little fists at him.”¹²⁶ A student at Chowan Female Baptist Institute displayed a similar antipathy to Union officers. When a captain asked if she would play for him on the school’s piano, she replied that “I don’t play anything but Southern songs,” and proceeded to regale him and his men with “Dixie” and “Bonnie Blue Flag.”¹²⁷ Even after Union occupation, female academy students continued to express their disbelief that their beloved Confederacy had been defeated. Bessie Cain wrote in her diary that “After fighting four years in a noble cause, and after gaining so many brilliant victories, how could we have been defeated?”¹²⁸

The Civil War experience of female academy students shaped their later development in two significant ways. First, they increasingly saw education not only as a symbol of social status,

but as a means of financial advancement. Whereas antebellum schoolgirls usually returned home to marry, have children, and run a plantation, the Civil War generation and those that followed them went into teaching in record numbers.¹²⁹ The Civil War marked a watershed in the gender demographics of teaching in North Carolina. What had been a male-dominated profession before the Civil War gradually transitioned into a female field. On the eve of the Civil War, less than 8% of public school teachers in North Carolina were women.¹³⁰ The gendered transformation of teaching began during the war itself, as female academy graduates replaced male teachers who had entered the Confederate Army. Surviving county records indicate that the number of female primary school teachers in North Carolina doubled between 1861 and 1865, while the number of male teachers declined by an equal measure, though men continued to hold more than half of available teaching posts.¹³¹ In 1899, Mont Amoena Female Seminary in Mount Pleasant proudly reported that 69 percent of its graduates since 1859 had become teachers and that the school had graduated few “parlor boarders” only interested in ornamental education.¹³² By 1900, teaching in North Carolina had become a female dominated occupation.¹³³

Their particular vantage point from within female academies also shaped how school girls would later remember and memorialize the Civil War. Spared from the horrors of the front lines and from many of the deprivations that most Confederates experienced on the home front, the students at female academies saw the war in largely celebratory terms. According to Kate McKimmon, who attended St. Mary’s from 1861 to 1866, “Tho’ much interested in ‘The War’ my class-mates and I were too young to realize any of the horrors of it.”¹³⁴ They maintained their unflagging passion for the Confederate cause long after most Southerners had recognized the futility of the war efforts and reconciled themselves to defeat.

As adults, the students at North Carolina's female academies became the architects of the Lost Cause.¹³⁵ In North Carolina and across the former Confederacy, students who had attended school in North Carolina during the Civil War helped to establish chapters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Ladies Memorial Associations, and other organizations committed to preserving a particular memory of the Confederate past. Kate McKimmon, who later taught at St. Mary's and became the founding secretary of the North Carolina Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, was described by a classmate as "possessed of two supreme loyalties – the Confederacy and the Church. One wonders if this early experience [seeing Yankee soldiers] did not serve to deepen that inborn devotion to the Confederate cause."¹³⁶ McKimmon herself believed that her schoolgirl patriotism informed her later work with the UDC, claiming that "The first five years of the Sixties found me as I still am, an un[re]constructed rebel!"¹³⁷ Similarly, Sallie Southall Cotten, who attended Wesleyan Female College and Greensboro Female College during the Civil War, held leadership positions within the United Daughters of the Confederacy and helped to establish the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, an organization which helped to orchestrate Lost Cause commemoration.¹³⁸ Women such as McKimmon and Cotten used the UDC and other Lost Cause organizations to promote a version of the Confederate experience that drew heavily from their atypical vantage point from the relatively safe and well provisioned sanctuaries provided by female academies.¹³⁹

¹ The author would like to thank the archivists and librarians at the many institutions who made this work possible. Over the course of this project, I have been aided by archivist and librarians at the Southern Historical Collection and the North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, East Carolina University, Chowan University, Duke University, Louisburg College, Greensboro College, the Greensboro Historical Association, Salem College,

the Moravian Archives in Winston-Salem, Wake Forest University, St. Mary's School, and the North Carolina Department of Archives and Records.

² Rachel Bryan Stillman, "Education in the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois – Champaign, 1971); Clement Eaton, *The Waning of the Old South Civilization, 1860-1880s* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1968), 103-109; Tom Downey, "'The Light of Learning Extinguished Within Our Borders': The College Hospitals, Columbia, South Carolina, 1862-1865," *Proceeding of the South Carolina Historical Association*, 1994: 117-122; Philip C. Cook, "Mt. Lebanon University in Peace and War," *North Louisiana History* 1978 9(2): 55-63; Samuel Luttrell Akers, *The First Hundred Years of Wesleyan College: 1836-1936*, (Savannah: Beehive, 1976); Merton E. Coulter, *College Life in the Old South* (New York: Macmillan, 1928); Ricky Harold Gray, "Corona Female College, 1857-1864," *Journal of Mississippi History* 42(1980): 129-134; Richard R. Duncan, "The Impact of the Civil War on Education in Maryland" *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 61 (1966): 37-52; William Webb Pusey, "Lexington Female Academy," *Virginia Cavalcade* 32 (1982): 40-47; Elizabeth Paton Hollow, "Development of the Brownsville Baptist Female College: An Example of Female Education in the South, 1850-1910," *West Tennessee Historical Society* 32 (1978): 48-59.

³ *Greensboro Patriot*, 31 May 1861.

⁴ Because the enrollment records for many schools are incomplete or non-existent, the figure of five thousand students who attended female academies in North Carolina during the Civil War is a rough estimate based on existing enrollment records. Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Refugee Life in the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964); Joan E. Cashin, "Into the

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⁵ Anya Jabour, *Scarlett’s Sisters: Young Women in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 47-82; Christie Farnham Pope, “Preparation for Pedestals: North Carolina Antebellum Female Seminaries.” (Ph.D dissertation, University of Chicago, 1977); Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Steven M. Stowe, “The Not-So-Cloistered Academy: Elite Women’s Education and Family Feeling in the Old South,” in ed. Walter J. Fraser, Jr., R. Frank Saunders, Jr., and Jon L. Wakelyn, *The Web of Southern Social Relations: Women, Family & Education*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 90-106; Victoria E. Ott, *Confederate Daughters: Coming of Age during the Civil War* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008); Jane Turner Censer, *North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 23, 43-46; Catherine Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 124-137; Giselle Roberts, *The Confederate Belle* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003); James Martin, *The Children’s Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

⁶ Jabour, 49.

⁷ William S. Powell, *Higher Education in North Carolina* (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1970), 7.

⁸ Pope, 29.

⁹ On the culture of antebellum Southern men's colleges, see Robert F. Pace, *Halls of Honor: College Men in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004); Merton E. Coulter, *College Life in the Old South* (New York: Macmillan, 1928). On military academies, see Jennifer R. Green, *Military Education and the Emerging Middle Class in the Old South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Rod Andrew Jr., *Long Gray Lines: The Southern Military School Tradition, 1839-1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). Also see Kim Tolley, "Science for Ladies, Classics for Gentlemen: A Comparative Analysis of Scientific Subjects in the Curricula of Boys' and Girls' Secondary Schools in the United States, 1794-1850," *History of Education Quarterly* 36 (1996): 129-153; Kathryn Walbert, "Endeavor to Improve Yourself: The Education of White Women in the Antebellum South" in *Chartered Schools: Two Hundred Years of Independent Academies in the United States, 1727-1925*, ed. Nancy Beadie and Kim Tolley (New York: Routledge, 2002), 116-136.

¹⁰ 14 November 1860, Samuel Biddle Papers, Duke University

¹¹ 20 January 1861, Samuel Biddle Papers, Duke University

¹² 6 November 1860, Kimberly Family Papers, SHC.

¹³ 14 April 1861, Samuel Biddle Papers.

¹⁴ 15 April 1861, Samuel Biddle Papers.

¹⁵ Pauline Hill Brooks, "Extracts From a School Girl's Journal During the Sixties," *The Collegian*, July 1903: 59.

¹⁶ 27 April 1861, Moses Curtis Ashley Papers, SHC.

¹⁷ Davenport College Collection, Greensboro College Archives.

¹⁸ *People's Press* 22 May 1863.

¹⁹ 24 January 1862, James W. Patton Papers, SHC.

²⁰ Lizzie Wilson Montgomery, *The St. Mary's of Olden Days* (Raleigh: Bynam Printing, 1932), 25.

²¹ 17 February 1863, Lou Sullivan Papers, St. Mary's School Archives.

²² Other daughters of prominent Confederates included Lucia Polk, daughter of General Leonidas Polk and Laura Pearson, daughter of North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice. Lizzie Wilson Montgomery, *The St. Mary's of Olden Days* (Raleigh: Bynam Printing, 1932), 16; Katherine Batts Salley, *Life at St. Mary's* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), 35-36.

²³ Martha Stoops, *The Heritage: The Education of Woman at St. Mary's College, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1842-1982* (Raleigh: St. Mary's College, 1984), 64-65; Mary P. Coulling, *The Lee Girls* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1987), 106-108, 112, 120-121, 128, 130.

²⁴ 6 February 1863, Elizabeth Pendleton Coles Papers, SHC.

²⁵ 3 March 1862, Creecy Family Papers, SHC.

²⁶ Martha Stoops, *The Heritage: The Education of Woman at St. Mary's College, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1842-1982* (Raleigh: St. Mary's College, 1984), 37, 72; Richard H. Battle, *An Historical Sketch of St. Mary's School* (Charlotte: Observer Printing, 1902), 7-8.

²⁷ Adelaide L. Fries, *Historical Sketch of Salem Female Academy* (Salem, NC: Crist & Keehln, 1902), 20-21; *People's Press*, 9 June 1864.

²⁸ *Christian Advocate*, 14 February 1865.

²⁹ Martha Stoops, *The Heritage: The Education of Woman at St. Mary's College, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1842-1982* (Raleigh: St. Mary's College, 1984), 61.

³⁰ Autobiographical Sketch of Lucie Blackwell Malone Thompson, Thompson Family Papers, SHC. Also see Pauline Hill Brooks, "Extracts From a School Girl's Journal During the Sixties," *The Collegian*, July 1903: 61.

³¹ 27 April 1861, Moses Curtis Ashley Papers, SHC.

³² Adelaide L. Fries, *Historical Sketch of Salem Female Academy* (Salem, NC: Crist & Keehln, 1902), 21.

³³ *Greensboro Patriot*, 28 May 1861.

³⁴ *Christian Advocate*, 26 November 1863; George-Anne Willard, *Louisburg College Echoes* (Louisburg, NC: Louisburg College, 1988), 54.

³⁵ *Greensboro Patriot*, 1 August 1864; *Christian Advocate*, 23 April 1863.

³⁶ William Moose, *A History of Mitchell Community College* (Statesville, NC: Mitchell Community College, 2005), 32.

³⁷ 17 October 1861, Creecy Family Papers, SHC.

³⁸ 18 February 1862, Creecy Family Papers.

³⁹ August Dietz, *The Postal Service of Confederate States of America* (Richmond: Dietz, 1929).

⁴⁰ 12 March 1864, John Bailey Lancaster Papers, SHC.

⁴¹ Letter. 11 March 1865, Dobson Family Papers, SHC.

⁴² On homesickness at antebellum schools, see Loyce Braswell Miles, "Forgotten Scholars: Female Secondary Education in Three Antebellum Deep South States," PhD. dissertation, Mississippi State University, 2003, 238; Jabour, *Scarlett's Sisters*, 47. On homesick among Confederate refugees, see Joe A. Mobley, *Weary of War: Life on the Confederate Home Front* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 6-7.

⁴³ 4 August 1863, Edward McCrady L'Engle Papers, SHC.

⁴⁴ 16 August 1863, Edward McCrady L'Engle Papers, SHC.

⁴⁵ 11 August 1864, Moses Curtis Ashley Papers, SHC.

⁴⁶ 10 August 1863, Sims Family Papers, SHC.

⁴⁷ 16 August 1863, Edward McCrady L'Engle Papers, SHC.

⁴⁸ Pauline Hill Brooks, "Extracts From a School Girl's Journal During the Sixties," *The Collegian*, July 1903: 60.

⁴⁹ Pauline Hill Brooks, "Extracts From a School Girl's Journal During the Sixties," *The Collegian*, July 1903: 61.

⁵⁰ 17 May 1864, Lou Sullivan Papers, St. Mary's School Archives

⁵¹ Lucy Walke, "A Few Recollections, 1863-1864," *St. Mary's Muse*, 10 (Dec. 1906), 14.

⁵² 31 August 1861, Creecy Family Papers, SHC.

⁵³ 12 September 1861, Creecy Family Papers, SHC.

⁵⁴ 8 February 1862, Creecy Family Papers, SHC.

⁵⁵ 13 February 1862, Creecy Family Papers, SHC.

⁵⁶ 3 March 1862, Creecy Family Papers, SHC.

⁵⁷ In letters to other correspondents, Creecy was far more forthcoming about the peril he and his family faced. Creecy later described the situation in eastern North Carolina as "a time of horrors, ... brotherhood and civilization were rudely sundered." Richard B. Creecy, *Grandfather's Tales* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1901), 235-236.

⁵⁸ 31 August 1861, Creecy Family Papers, SHC.

⁵⁹ On the role of rumor in the Confederacy, see Jason Phillips, "The Grave Vine Telegraph: Rumors and Confederate Persistence," *Journal of Southern History* 72 (2006): 753-788. Also see Joan E. Cashin, "Into the Trackless Wilderness: The Refugee Experience in the Civil War," in *A Woman's War: Southern Women, Civil War, and the Confederate Legacy*, ed. Edward D.C. Campbell, Jr. and Kym S. Rice (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997), 48.

⁶⁰ Pauline Hill Brooks, "Extracts From a School Girl's Journal During the Sixties," *The Collegian*, July 1903: 63.

⁶¹ On spiritualism during the Civil War era, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Knopf, 2008), 180-185; Mark S. Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 46-47

⁶² Lizzie Wilson Montgomery, *The St. Mary's of Olden Days* (Raleigh: Bynam Printing, 1932), 20.

⁶³ Sophie Richardson Patrick letter (1937), Greensboro College Archives.

⁶⁴ Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Ersatz in the Confederacy: Shortages and Substitutes on the Southern Homefront* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1952); Joe A. Mobley, *Weary of War: Life on the Confederate Home Front* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 33-48.

⁶⁵ Martha Stoops, *The Heritage: The Education of Woman at St. Mary's College, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1842-1982* (Raleigh: St. Mary's College, 1984), 51.

⁶⁶ 12 May 1863, Moses Curtis Ashley Papers, SHC.

⁶⁷ Pauline Hill Brooks, "Extracts From a School Girl's Journal During the Sixties," *The Collegian*, July 1903: 60.

⁶⁸ On the Confederate textile shortage and the use of homespun as a symbol of Confederate patriotism, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 220-226, 269-270; Victoria Ott, *Confederate Daughters: Coming of Age in during the Civil War* (Carbondale,

Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 52-54; Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Ersatz in the Confederacy* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1952), 79-98, Roberts, 79-84.

⁶⁹ Pauline Hill Brooks, "Extracts From a School Girl's Journal During the Sixties," *The Collegian*, July 1903: 64.

⁷⁰ 27 April 1861, Moses Curtis Ashley Papers, SHC.

⁷¹ August 1864, Lou Sullivan Letters, St. Mary's School Archives

⁷² 13 April 1864, Lou Sullivan Letters, St. Mary's School Archives

⁷³ Circular, 14 March 1864, St. Mary's School Archives

⁷⁴ For accounts of the lengths to which school administrators went to secure provisions and other supplies, see Adelaide L. Fries, *Historical Sketch of Salem Female Academy* (Salem, NC: Crist & Keehln, 1902), 21; Memoir of Augustus Fogel, Moravian Archive (Salem, NC); Francis Griffin, *Less Time for Meddling: A History of Salem Academy and College, 1772-1866* (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, 1979), 264-265; Edmund Strudwick Burwell Papers, SHC. In 1864-1865 many schools accepted foodstuffs for tuition in lieu of highly inflated Confederate currency. Account books provide insight into how schools managed to feed and supply so many students. See Aldert Smedes Account book, St. Mary's School Archives; Account book of Augustus Fogle, Salem College Archive; Edgeworth Female Academy Account Book, Greensboro Historical Society.

⁷⁵ Adelaide L. Fries, *Historical Sketch of Salem Female Academy* (Salem, NC: Crist & Keehln, 1902), 21.

⁷⁶ Although the evidence for slave life at female academies is scanty, there is evidence that slaves were present at almost all of the schools for which substantial records survive.

⁷⁷ Martha Stoops, *The Heritage: The Education of Woman at St. Mary's College, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1842-1982* (Raleigh: St. Mary's College, 1984), 44; Kate McKimmon, "Some Notes of Happenings at St. Mary's During Her School Days, by the Oldest Inhabitant," *St. Mary's Muse* X:9 (April 1906): 11.

⁷⁸ Martha Stoops, *The Heritage: The Education of Woman at St. Mary's College, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1842-1982* (Raleigh: St. Mary's College, 1984), 52.

⁷⁹ Lou Sullivan Papers, St. Mary's School.

⁸⁰ Ann Strudwick Nash, *Ladies in Making* (Hillsborough, NC: np, 1964), 19, 26-27.

⁸¹ 16 February 1865, Edmund Strudwick Burwell Papers

⁸² Aldert Smedes, *She Hath Done What She Could* (Raleigh: Seaton Gales, 1851), 7.

⁸³ 21 December 1861, Creecy Family Papers, SHC.

⁸⁴ The school had refugee teachers from Maryland, Virginia, and Fayetteville, North Carolina. Lizzie Wilson Montgomery, *The St. Mary's of Olden Days* (Raleigh: Bynam Printing, 1932), 23-25.

⁸⁵ William Moose, *A History of Mitchell Community College* (Statesville, NC: Mitchell Community College, 2005), 39-40.

⁸⁶ Although male teachers were exempt from the Confederate draft, many enlisted. According to Calvin Wiley, "our schools contributed their full share to the ranks of the brave and patriotic army which volunteered its services in defense of our rights and freedoms." Southern schools

had traditionally employed a significant number of Northern-born teachers. Rachel Bryan Stillman, "Education in the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois – Champaign, 1971), 61-71, 83, 153, 265-268; *North Carolina Journal of Education* 4(1861): 193-207.

⁸⁷ Maria Florilla Flint Hamblen Papers, SHC.

⁸⁸ Lucy London Anderson, *North Carolina Women of the Confederacy*, (Wilmington, NC: Winoca Press, 2006/1927), 105.

⁸⁹ 21 September 1864, Edmund Strudwick Burwell Papers, SHC.

⁹⁰ 22 April 1861, Moses Curtis Ashley Papers, SHC.

⁹¹ 3 August 1861, Kimberly Papers, SHC.

⁹² 27 April 1861, Moses Curtis Ashley Papers, SHC.

⁹³ Lucy London Anderson, *North Carolina Women of the Confederacy* (Wilmington: Winoca Press, 2006), 127.

⁹⁴ On the curriculum of antebellum female academies, see Jabour, 55-61; Clinton, *The Plantation Mistress*, 31-33.

⁹⁵ Catalogue of Chowan Female Baptist Institute (1853-1854, 1856-1857, 1867-1870), Chowan University Archives. Also see Ivy May Hixson, "Academic Requirement of Salem College, 1854-1909" *North Carolina Historical Review* XXVII (1950): 419-429.

⁹⁶ There has been considerable scholarly attention to the issue of Confederate textbooks: Rachel Bryan Stillman, "Education in the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865" (Ph.D.

dissertation, University of Illinois – Champaign, 1971), 196-254; Stephen B. Weeks, *Confederate Textbooks: A Preliminary Biography* (Washington: GPO, 1900); George C. Rable, *The Confederate Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 179-183; James Marten, *The Children's Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 33, 52-61.

⁹⁷ Edgeworth Female Academy principal Richard Sterling published (with Edgeworth teacher J. D. Campbell) several primary textbooks during the Civil War, including *Our Own First Reader*, *Our Own Second Reader*, *Our Own Third Reader*, *Our Own Fourth Reader*, *Our Own Fifth Reader*, *Our Own Primer*, and *Our Own Spelling Book*. He also opened his own printing business to produce textbooks. See Karen C. Carroll, "Sterling, Campbell, and Albright: Textbook Publishers, 1861-1865" *North Carolina Historical Review* 63 (1986): 169-198. Samuel Lander, principal of High Point Female Seminary and later Lincolnton Female Seminary, published *Our Own Primary Arithmetic* in 1863 and the *Verbal Primer* in 1865. Female academy graduates also produced Confederate textbooks. Greensboro Female College graduate Marinda Branson Moore produced *The Geographical Reader for Dixie Children* in 1863. See O.L. Davis, Jr. and Serena Rankin Parks, "Confederate School Geographies, I: Marinda Branson Moore's *Dixie Geography*" *Peabody Journal of Education*, 40: 5 (Mar., 1963): 265-274.

⁹⁸ Pauline Hill Brooks, "Extracts From a School Girl's Journal During the Sixties," *The Collegian*, July 1903: 59.

⁹⁹ 5 February 1862, Moses Ashley Curtis Papers, SHC.

¹⁰⁰ M.C.S. Noble, *A History of the Public Schools of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 239; Rachel Bryan Stillman, “Education in the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois – Champaign, 1971), 265-268.

¹⁰¹ *North Carolina Journal of Education* 5 (1862): 62.

¹⁰² *People’s Press*, 12 January 1865.

¹⁰³ Victoria E. Ott, *Confederate Daughters: Coming of Age during the Civil War* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 97.

¹⁰⁴ William Moose, *A History of Mitchell Community College* (Statesville, NC: Mitchell Community College, 2005), 39-42.

¹⁰⁵ “An Address Delivered by Hon. James G. Ramsay, M.D., before the Young Ladies of Concord Female College at Statesville, May 29th, 1863”, 17-18.

¹⁰⁶ On the final months of the Civil War in North Carolina, see John G. Barrett, *The Civil War in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 285-392; John G. Barrett, *Sherman’s March Through the Carolinas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956); Mark Bradley, *This Astounding Close* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Jacqueline Campbell Glass, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Cornelia Phillips Spencer, *The Last Ninety Days of the War in North Carolina* (New York: Watchmen, 1866).

¹⁰⁷ 22 January 1865, John Bailey Lancaster Papers, SHC.

¹⁰⁸ Catherine E. Hanes Papers, SHC.

¹⁰⁹ Scrapbook, St. Mary's School Archives.

¹¹⁰ Susan Collier diary, St. Mary's School Archives.

¹¹¹ Susan Collier diary, St. Mary's School Archives.

¹¹² Pauline Hill Brooks, "Extracts From a School Girl's Journal During the Sixties," *The Collegian*, July 1903: 68.

¹¹³ Susan Collier diary, St. Mary's School Archives.

¹¹⁴ Susan Collier diary, St. Mary's School Archives.

¹¹⁵ 4 April 1865, John Graham Ramsay Papers, SHC.

¹¹⁶ Quoted in Lisa Tendrich Frank, "Bedrooms as Battlefields: The Role of Gender Politics in Sherman's March" in *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation, and the American Civil War*, ed. LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 33.

¹¹⁷ Frank, 40-41; E. Susan Barber and Charles F. Ritter, "'Physical Abuse ... and Rough Handling': Race, Gender, and Sexual Justice in the Occupied South," in *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation, and the American Civil War*, ed. LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 49-64; Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 200; Crystal Feimster, "General Benjamin Butler & the Threat of Sexual Violence during the American Civil War," *Daedalus* (Spring 2009): 126-134; Joan E. Cashin, "Into the Trackless Wilderness: The Refugee Experience in the Civil War," in *A Woman's War: Southern Women*,

Civil War, and the Confederate Legacy, ed. Edward D.C. Campbell, Jr. and Kym S. Rice
(Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997), 47-48.

¹¹⁸ Bessie Cain diary, John Bailey Lancaster Papers, SHC.

¹¹⁹ Bessie Cain diary, John Bailey Lancaster Papers, SHC.

¹²⁰ Adelaide L. Fries, *Historical Sketch of Salem Female Academy* (Salem, NC: Crist & Keehn, 1902), 21.

¹²¹ Pauline Hill Brooks, "Extracts From a School Girl's Journal During the Sixties," *The Collegian*, July 1903: 68.

¹²² Bessie Cain diary, John Bailey Lancaster Papers, SHC.

¹²³ Mary Bayard Clark, "General Sherman in Raleigh," *Old Guard* IV April 1866.

¹²⁴ Myrtle C. King, ed. , *Anna Long Thomas Fullers' Journal, 1856-1890: A Civil War Diary* (Alpharetta, GA: Priority Publishing, 1999), 46.

¹²⁵ Gertrude Jenkins Papers, Duke University.

¹²⁶ Mary Bayard Clark, "General Sherman in Raleigh," *Old Guard* IV April 1866.

¹²⁷ Edward V. Knight and Oscar Creech, *A History of Chowan College* (Murfreesboro, NC: Chowan University, 1964), 164.

¹²⁸ Bessie Cain diary, John Bailey Lancaster Papers, SHC.

¹²⁹ Jane Turner Censer, *The Reconstruction of Southern Womanhood, 1865-1895* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003), 166-183

¹³⁰ M.C.S. Noble, *A History of Public Schools of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), 245.

¹³¹ Rachel Bryan Stillman, "Education in the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois – Champaign, 1971) 268-269. Male teachers with more than 20 students were exempt from the Confederate draft.

¹³² *Mont Amoenian* 2:2 (Feb. 1899): 7-8, Kirkman Family Papers, SHC.

¹³³ James L. Lelouids, *Schooling in the New South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 73-78.

¹³⁴ Kate McKimmon, "Some Notes of the Happenings at St. Mary's During Her School Days, by the Oldest Inhabitant," *St. Mary's Muse*, 10 (April 1906): 10.

¹³⁵ Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson, ed., *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003); Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980); Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of*

Confederate Culture (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); Anastasia Sims, *The Power of Femininity in the New South: Women's Organizations and Politics in North Carolina, 1880-1930* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 129-151.

¹³⁶ Katherine Batts Salley, *Life at St. Mary's* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), 48.

¹³⁷ Lucy London Anderson, *North Carolina Women of the Confederacy* (Wilmington: Winoca Press, 2006), 127.

¹³⁸ Margaret Supplee Smith & Emily Herring Wilson, *North Carolina Women Making History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 201-204.

¹³⁹ Although slightly younger than the generation examined by Pete Carmichael, female academy students experienced the Civil War as a similarly transformative event. See Peter S. Carmichael, *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).