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“I had a visit from Bishop Quintard”: The Life of Kate Cumming and the Creation of the ‘Episcopal Woman’ Archetype

By

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Dedicated in Memory of Ian Roger Burns

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Introduction

Kate Cumming was a woman who never quite fit in with the expectations laid out for her by white upper-class society in the 19th century American South. Born in Scotland in 1835 and raised in Mobile, Alabama, Cumming never married or had children, but she traveled extensively, wrote multiple books, was heavily involved in the Episcopal Church and had access to elite Southern circles that included plantation owners, Civil War generals, and bishops. The Civil War defined Cumming's life, whether in her writing, her work as a nurse in the Civil War, or in how she conceived of herself as an Episcopal woman. Cumming and her writings shed light on a new perspective within the Episcopal Church in the South: that of a woman who defined herself by her religious practices in both the public and private spheres. Cumming took the traditions and theology of the Episcopal faith and forged a new identity during and in the wake of the upheaval of the Civil War: an 'Episcopal Woman,' a new archetype within the Episcopal Church of a white socially elite woman who defined her social status through her participation in the religious practices of the Episcopal Church.

Cumming worked within this patriarchal institution that tried to limit her role within its governmental structure and excluded her from any formal role in the Episcopal Church because of her gender. For most of the Episcopal Church's history, the only defined vocational role for women was that of a nun, while men were able to be deacons, priests, bishops, convention delegates, or vestry members in many parishes. But the gender disparity did not exist in the pews of the churches, where women made up large sections of congregations and took on many of the undefined and unrecognized roles within churches. Moreover, it was women who did much of the religious work for families in the home like the education of children and attention to

liturgical calendars as it pertained to meals and events. The informal but integral religious work of women went largely unrecognized by the formal ecclesial structures for much of the Episcopal Church's existence. Those unrecognized spaces inadvertently gave women their own gendered spaces within the structure of the Episcopal Church to create their own understanding of what it means to be a woman in the Episcopal Church in both public and private spheres.

The unofficial identity creation and definition of roles for women by the women within Episcopal Church history enabled the expansion of more formalized social roles, like that of deaconesses, for Episcopal women, such as within Southern Episcopal churches in the time during and after the Civil War. During the Civil War and through the rest of the 19th century, the social, economic, and political systems of the South were in a state of complete upheaval. Southerners held on strongly to cultural institutions that remained unchanged or affected as completely by the paradigm shift that the Civil War wrought. To this end, it is necessary to understand the position of the Episcopal Church in the lives of individual women in order to define what being a woman in the Episcopal Church meant when operating in the social context of the Episcopal Church and the South at large.

By studying the life of Kate Cumming and her actions within the structures of the Episcopal Church, a social narrative of women in the Episcopal Church emerges. The women of this narrative took a vested interest in the liturgy they attended, had close relationships with priests and bishops, and explored traditional avenues in new ways. The creation of and typification of the cultural category of the 'Episcopal Woman' traces back to this time, when Southern women sought to understand the world around them from the cultural lenses that survived the Civil War. Kate Cumming exemplifies this category through her actions and her writings, by showcasing the breadth of work women could perform in a denomination that

historically disregards any contributions from women. Moreover, by studying the life of Kate Cumming, this 'Episcopal Woman' archetype and its origins can aid in better understanding the place of women in the Episcopal Church in contemporary times.

The term 'Episcopal Woman,' references an Episcopal woman in the 19th century who was socially elite, comfortable with Episcopal liturgy and traditions, and who worked to define herself through a hierarchical and regimented lens by the unofficial gendered roles she inhabited within that environment. The archetype of the 'Episcopal Woman' is the epitome of the normative gendered expectation of women in this denomination as crafted by the patriarchal structure and the women themselves. The Episcopal Woman archetype mostly existed in the American South and took shape during and in the wake of the Civil War. Because of the immense change that occurred in the American South during the Civil War, socially elite women needed to hold onto roles and gendered ideals that recalled the traditions and hierarchies of the Old South. The Episcopal Church's emphasis on traditions and hierarchies that stretched back to the Church of England, its integral ties to the English aristocracy, and the original English colonists of the South was a natural choice for these Southern Episcopal women to cling to and craft a new gendered religious ideal from.

The study of women in the Episcopal Church is a fairly new area of research; academic studies in this field have only occurred for the last forty years. The focus has been on the way women of the church were complicit in the patriarchy of the Episcopal Church and not on how the women of the Episcopal Church understood themselves as religious actors in their own right, with unique and important religious practices of their own. For many women in the Episcopal Church, religion was not something that just occurred within the confines of the parish grounds,

but something that permeated everything from menus, education of children, and social relationships.

While there have been many studies on the history of women's ordination and in the social ministry movements of the 20th century, Episcopal women in the 19th century have garnered little attention. Additionally, in the small collection of extant literature, there have been very few dedicated volumes to the religious life of Episcopal women in the American South. Research exists on Anglican women in the colonial era, most notably within a study on the religious life of Anglican women in colonial Virginia, titled *A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith: Anglican Religious Practices in the Elite Households of Eighteenth-Century Virginia* by Lauren F. Winner. Within this book, household objects such as embroidery, family bibles, recipe books, and kitchenware explain and nuance the religious lives of Anglican women. This study by Winner helps to underscore a certain importance to the ritual practice and liturgy that existed within church buildings. But, much of the impetus for the continuance of tradition and the performance of lived religious practice relied on women in the home. Through this book, the idea that the Anglican and later Episcopal faith was one that involved social performance within a sacred environment precipitates the later creation of the Episcopal Woman archetype in the wake of the Civil War. Additionally, there is a monograph of the wife of a South Carolina planter, *The Life and Times of Martha Laurens Ramsey, 1759-1811,* by Joanna Gillespie, which provides an informative guide for how to explain and follow the life of a socially elite Christian woman within the South through her diaries and letters. It is important to note though that Ramsey differs from Kate Cumming both in her geographical location, her religious denomination during her adulthood, and in time period, so while the methodology is similar, it is difficult to use the same theoretical framework for both women. While important additions to the

historical narrative because of their studies on the domestic religious practices of Episcopal women in the colonial era, they fail to touch upon the American South in the post-Civil War era. This neglect continues to disregard the important place of Episcopal women in the rebuilding of the South, in the codification of the Lost Cause narrative, and in the growth and history of the Episcopal Church itself.

Much of the past historiography written on Kate Cumming has focused almost entirely on her efforts as a Confederate nurse, and her contribution to the study of Confederate medical practices. Very little study of her personal and religious life beyond the Civil War has occurred. Within this small collection of literature, references to Cumming occur in books such as *Mothers of Invention* by Drew Gilpin Faust, which reference Cumming's work as a nurse among others and uses excerpts from Cumming's Civil War diary to explain the work of women as nurses. The book *Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse* edited by Richard Harwell works to compile Cumming's Civil War diary and contextualize it within the larger Civil War, focusing mostly on her work as a nurse. Much like the scholarly work on other women in the Episcopal Church, there is a lack of research on Kate Cumming and her life outside of being a Civil War nurse despite a wealth of primary source documents available.

For this thesis, many of the sources referenced and evidence presented come from Cumming's personal writings, diaries, letters, and manuscripts. Many of Cumming's papers reside in the Alabama State Archives in Montgomery, Alabama, which include letters from various members of her family from before her birth in 1835 to her death in 1909. Additionally, her writings—both manuscripts of books and personal diaries, and other memorabilia such as Sunday School information, hymn books, and various obituaries and newspaper clippings which Cumming saved over the course of her life—are in this collection. Additionally, I utilized

Cumming's own published books, *A Journal of Hospital Life in the Confederate Army of Tennessee, from the Battle of Shiloh to the End of the War* and *Gleanings from Southland*, along with many of the aforementioned books on women in the Episcopal Church. But Cumming's private writings allow the most insight into her religious views and her conception of herself as an Episcopal Woman. By carefully studying and contextualizing Cumming within the larger narrative of the Episcopal Church, women and the roles that they inhabited are essential to the history of the Episcopal Church during this time of change during and following the Civil War.

In dividing this thesis into three distinct sections which correspond to three eras in both Cumming's life and the South at large, the creation of the Episcopal Woman archetype gains important nuance. The first chapter is concerned with Cumming's life during the Antebellum era, explaining the history of her family and their move from Scotland to Mobile, her formation as both a Southern woman and an Episcopalian. The immigration of the Cummings from Scotland and their reconciliation of their Scottish and Southern identities is integral to understanding the family's later Episcopal identity as formed in the Civil War. Within the same chapter, there is an explanation of the history of the Episcopal Church in Alabama and its place in the lives of Southerners in the Antebellum era. The second chapter follows Cumming and the Episcopal Church during and immediately after the Civil War, showcasing how the Civil War helped create the 'Episcopal Woman' and how Cumming's understanding of herself shifts during the Civil War from that of a Southern Woman or a Scottish Woman to one of an Episcopal Woman. The final chapter covers Cumming's life from the late 1860s until her death in 1909, and explains the codification of the Episcopal Woman archetype in this time both for Cumming and the Episcopal Church, as well as the way in which Cumming performed this archetype throughout her daily

life. By separating this thesis into three sections, the pivotal place of the Civil War as the catalyst for the creation of the Episcopal Woman as a religious identity becomes clear.

In the Episcopal Church, there is this unsaid archetype of an 'Episcopal Woman,' that is, a socially elite woman whose fulfills the religious ideal of a woman in the Episcopal Church through her interactions with clergy and bishops, her views on Episcopal liturgy and traditions, and her participation in gendered roles within the denomination. This archetype originated in the 19th century, in the years during and after the Civil War, coming to fruition in the wake of the social upheaval caused by the Civil War. Through an exploration into one Episcopal woman's life in Alabama, Kate Cumming, the Episcopal Woman archetype comes to life through her diaries, letters, manuscripts, and other archival material. By looking at Kate Cumming as an example of this archetype of Episcopal women and contextualizing Cumming's life within the larger history of the Diocese of Alabama and the Episcopal Church in the 19th century, there is a better understanding of women in this highly patriarchal denomination and allows for further study outside of the confines of Cumming's life.

Chapter I

"Like all Southern women": The Early Life of Kate Cumming and the History of the Diocese of Alabama

When looking at the broad strokes of Kate Cumming's life, it would be easier to classify her as an untypical Southern woman. Born in Leith, Scotland in 1835, Cumming moved to Montreal, then New York, and finally settled in Mobile, Alabama with her family by 1841.[1] She never married and never had children, and instead chose to travel and be an author. But upon closer examination, Cumming did embody the typical Southern woman through her daily life and interactions with Southern society. It was in the South that she felt most at ease, despite she and her family not moving to Mobile until she was around seven. In order to understand Cumming as an Episcopal Woman in the Civil War and in the post-war South, it is necessary to understand her family, her pre-war life, and the state of the Southern Episcopal Church prior to the Civil War. Despite her unorthodox childhood, Cumming came to represent the beginnings of the archetype of the Episcopal Woman through her embrace of the Southern identity in the Antebellum South.

The Early Life of Kate Cumming and her Sacred and Social Life Before the Civil War

David Cumming, the father of Kate Cumming, was born in 1798,[2] the son of Thomas and Katherine Cumming, and was the oldest of five children.[3] Thomas Cumming, Kate's grandfather, was a captain in the British Navy and traveled to many different places around Africa and the

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[1] Kate Cumming, "Biographical Sketch of Kate Cumming and Family" Box One Folder One, Kate Cumming Papers, 1795-1909, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL.
[2] Kate Cumming, "Scrapbook Clippings" Box Two Folder Twenty Three, Kate Cumming Papers, 1795-1909, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL.
[3] Cumming, "Biographical Sketch."

Caribbean. It was through Thomas' influence that David Cumming found work in Aberdeen in the shipping industry.[4] At some point in the early 1820s, David married Kate's mother, and David rapidly gained recognition for his work, and by the time Kate was born the family had moved to Leith, Scotland, and was soon to move to Montreal.[5] During the family's time in Montreal, David worked at the Bank of Montreal, but also opened a grocery store in the city.[6] This was met with resistance from the Bank of Montreal, with a biographical sketch of the family in Cumming's papers saying:

> "Her father, being a man of energy, and his duties in the bank occupying very little of his time, opened a grocery store [2] At that time, such was the distinction of caste that he was informed by the directors of the bank, that being a tradesman was incompatible with the dignity of a gentleman holding an office in that establishment, and one or the other must be abandoned. He immediately gave up both and came to the States."[7]

After this disagreement with the Bank of Montreal, the family moved from Montreal to New York City for a year, before finally traveling to Mobile and settling down.[8] In Mobile, David Cumming worked in insurance, running the City One Insurance Company based in Mobile for many years.[9]

It was in Mobile that the Cumming family, consisting of David, his wife, and their ten children,[10] fully assimilated into Southern culture. This final move occurred sometime before 1841, when Kate's younger brother James was born in Mobile.[11] Because the family's move occurred when Kate was around seven years old, she was able to feel as connected to Southern

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[4] Cumming, "Biographical Sketch."
[5] Cumming, "Biographical Sketch."
[6] Cumming, "Biographical Sketch."
[7] Cumming, "Biographical Sketch."
[8] Cumming, "Biographical Sketch."
[9] Cumming, "Scrapbook Clippings."
[10] Cumming, "Biographical Sketch."
[11] Cumming, "Scrapbook Clippings."

culture as someone born in the South. The family was among the elite in Mobile because of David Cumming's position in the insurance company and their familial connections to trade in the region. For this reason, the family attended many upper-class social events in the city, and Kate and her siblings grew up within the upper social tier of the South, a system that was familiar to them because it mirrored the aristocracy of Great Britain but also the hierarchy of the Episcopal Church. This acceptance into upper-class society continued during and after the Civil War, when Kate and her family were invited to many balls that included Confederate generals and members of the Confederate government.[12] This embrace of upper-class Southern culture through these events and actions can be seen in many aspects of her life, from the writing and depictions of the South in her later books and manuscripts, her admirations of Confederate generals, and her espousal of the Lost Cause narrative later in life. It is important to note though, that the family's ties to Scotland were never fully broken, as showcased in another portion of that same biographical sketch from Cumming's papers, which states:

> "Her mother, who had never become reconciled to leaving 'Bonnie Scotland' notwithstanding her inherent prejudice against slavery, used to say, that the congenial, warmhearted hospitality of the South, reminded her more of her native land, then any place in which she had resided since leaving it. So the family grew up in that beautiful Southern City, loving and venerating it with as much zeast [sic] as any native-born."[13]

The Cumming family understood the South to be the most akin culturally to the British Isles and to Scotland in particular, which eased their entrance into Mobile society despite not being native to the South. Throughout the years between their move to Mobile and the onset of the Civil War, Cumming enjoyed the typical life of an upper-class, white southern woman—she was educated

[12] Kate Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868" Box Three Folder One, Kate Cumming Papers, 1795-1909, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL.
[13]Cumming, "Biographical Sketch."

at home,[14] she busied herself with activities at church, she visited family in New Orleans as a young woman,[15] and she helped her siblings raise their children.[16] Overall, Cumming embodied many of the cultural touchstones of an unmarried Southern woman, and she worked hard within her community to perform the normative gendered role of a Southern woman.

Cumming and her family considered themselves completely invested in the Southern Cause narrative, with the biographical sketch working to blend the Scottish heritage of the Cumming family with their adopted Southern views, stating:

> "On the war's breaking out between the North and the South, Mr. Cumming espoused the cause of the latter with all the zeal for which his countrymen are renowned when knowing they are right. His whole family were as enthusiastic for 'Southern Rights' as himself and did all in there power to promote the interest of the Cause."[17]

While this zeal was not necessarily unique to the Cumming family, the continued pronouncement of love for and commitment to the South exemplified the family's belief in the values of new home and allowed for the seamless integration they experienced in Southern society despite their immigrant status. In this melding of culture, Cumming grew up with a fierce emphasis on holding onto her Scottish roots while working to integrate to Southern society. The commitment to Scottish heritage remained in her life even during the Civil War, when Cumming saved her grandfather's dress sword from the British admiral Horatio Nelson after the war,[18] grouping the sword with her own "relics of the war"[19]. The actions and statements by the Cumming family work to showcase not only a love for the South or a desire to proclaim their Scottish heritage but

[14] Cumming, "Biographical Sketch."
[15] Kate Cumming, "Letters, 1830-1859," Box One Folder Six, Kate Cumming Papers, 1795-1909, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL.
[16] Cumming, "Letters, 1830-1859."
[17] Cumming, "Biographical Sketch."
[18] Kate Cumming, *Gleanings from Southland: Sketches of Life and Manners of the People of the South Before, During and After the War of Secession,* (Birmingham, AL: Roberts and Son, 1895): 262.
[19] Cumming, Gleanings, 262.

show a continual emphasis on utilizing their heritage as a means of establishing their credibility in the hierarchical structure of the South. By acknowledging their heritage and their familial place in the gentry in Scotland, it enabled the Cumming family to make the transition into Southern society without much issue. The family also bolstered their position by participating in the Episcopal Church because of its historical place in upper-class Southern society through its long-reaching ties to the British aristocracy. The full-hearted embrace of Southern culture while still holding onto their Scottish heritage began with Kate Cumming's parents. Through Cumming's life, she used her heritage not just to create her social identity as one of a Southern Woman or a Scottish Woman, but that of an Episcopal Woman.

Feeling of Southern pride held by Cumming's parents on their adopted home of the South echoed in Kate's own writing, such as in her book, *Gleanings from Southland: Sketches of Life and Manners of the People of the South Before, During and After the War of Secession.* She wrote *Gleanings from Southland* later in her life in 1892, and when Cumming begins with the 1860 Presidential election and her understanding of herself in reference to those events, she states: "Like all Southern women, being perfectly satisfied with our rights, we thought it extremely unladylike to meddle with politics. I cannot tell why, but during that campaign we zealously entered into all concerning it."[20] In this, Cumming is positioning herself as a Southern woman, and very specifically one who's social status allows her to adhere to both the Southern code of honor for women and the established legal code, in that all of her rights and her political status is handled by the men in her life, specifically her father and brothers. In looking at letters saved by Cumming before the Civil War, there was no discussion of the political events or of anything outside of the personal lives of her family and friends.[21] But, this shift during the 1860

[20] Cumming, Gleanings, 19.
[21] Cumming, "Letters 1830-1859."

Presidential election shows how unstable Cumming's self-identification as a Southern woman in the Antebellum era was just before the Civil War. The cultural institutions which she had fashioned herself within, whether it be the upper-class Southern society of Mobile, or the Southern Episcopal Church, began to come under attack by the highly charged political landscape in the late 1850s. In the same paragraph of *Gleanings from Southland*, Cumming continues to say "although not allowed to vote, [we] were ready at any time to advise the 'lords of creation' on that absorbing subject."[22] Cumming was establishing herself in this time as a politically minded person despite avoiding the subject in her writings for much of her life prior to this. Until the 1860s, Cumming existed within codified and protected social and cultural institutions, enabled by generations of upper-class Southern culture that perpetuated chattel slavery, heavily gendered social roles, and Southern codes of honor. In 1860, those systems in which Southern people understood themselves were under attack from both a cultural and political sense. Through this turmoil, Cumming began to reinvent herself and her personal image, turning to one of the few institutions not under siege by the brimming conflict—The Episcopal Church.

The History of the Diocese of Alabama and the Creation of the Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church was one of the first Christian denominations to come over from the England to the British colonies. In the colonial era, the Episcopal Church had not yet separated from the Church of England and was completely under the auspices of the Church of England. All Anglican priests answered to the Bishop of London, with no bishops existing in the colonies. Within the American colonies, the Anglican Church became the state religion for colonies such as Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. Because of this, many early settlers and

[22] Cumming, Gleanings, 19.

those who were among the social elites were Anglican. Adherence to the Anglican Church, at least in name, occurred in many important families who kept their church membership at established Anglican churches in both the Northern and Southern colonies.[23] This included signers of the Declaration of Independence, senators, representatives, Supreme Court justices, and presidents such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson.

This is not to say that people of lower classes did not also attend Anglican churches, especially in the South. Many members of the church would bring their slaves to services and the lower-class farmers and other colonists would typically attend Anglican churches because communal worship was rare in the South outside of the Anglican establishment.[24] While slaves and those of a lower class were allowed into the churches and attended the same services, certain systems were introduced that enabled the continuance of the social hierarchy that was already in place within Southern society. One such system was the advent of the pew system. Within the pew system, the more money that a family paid for a pew, the closer to the altar their pew would be, thereby designating their place in the social strata. For those of lower classes and enslaved people, it was normative to sit in the back of church or up to balconies above the congregation. This division of physical space in churches further divided the people of the church by inserting the social divisions of the secular world into the sacred space. This system was one of many that has it roots in this time, and were pervading aspects of the Episcopal Church in Cumming's time. The integration of social hierarchy into the Episcopal setting was something that Cumming discussed at length in her diaries during the Civil War and afterward. The action of defining social hierarchies through concrete objects like pews allowed those in the upper class like Cumming to clearly designate where in the social strata they operated.

[23] David Hein and Gardiner Shattuck, *The Episcopalians*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004): 35, 19.
[24] Hein and Shattuck, 20.

Often, churches were the place where gossip was exchanged, social relationships were codified, and displays of wealth, such as new clothes, happened.[25] Even the hierarchical nature of the pew system worked to delineate the social structure within the church that mirrored the world outside of it.[26] The symbolism associated with these behaviors like the pew system and the display of new clothes emplaced in church services was not unique to one gender, though the actions associated with those symbols were different between men and women. For men, the desire to assert their social status manifested by coming into services late to make a scene or in their use of vestries to guide the direction of the church and community.[27] For women, the assertion of their station took different forms. Through wearing opulent clothes imported from London and the influence that women had on children and their religious education, women worked to define their social status through less ostentatious means. Because women not only participated in their religion through public services but also in daily services and religious education at home, the religious actions of her children and her family as well as her own factored into a woman's social status. Women during the colonial era used their Anglican faith and the roles associated with it to judge themselves and others against the normative roles for women. By aligning the roles for women in the Anglican Church with the expectations that society had for women, such as raising religious children and running a proper household while being a prop for their husbands' wealth, the women in these churches formed their own systems of social stratification within the same religious tradition as the men. These traditions of religious education and social commentary on services held similar symbolism for women like Cumming after the Civil War. The colonial era system differed from the system found after the Civil War

[25] Hein and Shattuck, 19.
[26] Hein and Shattuck, 19-20.
[27] Hein and Shattuck, 20.

because it did not encompass the range of women's roles that the post-Civil War South saw in the Episcopal Church.

This hierarchical attitude towards religion was indicative of the Anglican Church in the colonies, where religion was not just just a sacred experience, but a social activity that further cemented existing social structures. The structured social atmosphere of Episcopal churches that Cumming encountered grew from these colonial beginnings as the larger upper-class society grew around the church in places like Alabama. By recalling these beginnings and retaining the traditions of these Anglican churches, the place of the Episcopal Church within the upper-class that Cumming belonged to was secure. The first change to this denomination, though not its long-held traditions and structure, came when the Church officially separated from the Church of England and gained the autonomy to truly invest in and grow the denomination beyond its colonial roots.

The instability and change during the American Revolution had much influence on the Episcopal Church over the course of the 19th century. The actions that precipitated the split from the Church of England and the resulting difficulties in establishing a new American Episcopal Church led the Episcopal Church in the 19th century to make the continuance of a united denomination a priority. That desire for unity led to an avoidance of any divisive political or social issue, such as slavery, within the official Episcopal Church record. The separation from the Church of England was not an amicable one. First, there were questions about the validity of the line of apostolic succession for the Episcopal Church after the ordination of its first bishop, Samuel Seabury in 1789. This occurred because the Church of England refused to ordain him as a bishop because he could not swear fealty to the King of England as required by the Church of England due to being an American citizen. Because of this, the Scottish Episcopal Church

ordained Seabury, but the Church of England did not recognize the place of the Scottish bishops within the apostolic line of succession. Due to this, there was much debate about the line of succession; eventually the Church of England relented and the Episcopal Church was able to get three bishops ordained by the Church of England to ensure apostolic succession. These conflicts during the formative stages of the denomination meant the Episcopal Church in the 19th century desired unity as a denomination above all else, which led it to avoid many political and social issues working to divide other denominations.

During the early 1800s, the Episcopal Church grew slowly but surely. As a result of the renewed emphasis on evangelism, missionary work, and creation of new dioceses in both established states and territories, the Episcopal Church worked to grow their denomination in more rural areas of the country. This growth primarily occurred in the South where many plantation owners would attempt to evangelize their slaves and bring them to church with them. While the Episcopal Church could not match the missionary activity of the Methodist or Baptist Churches, it still held onto its unofficial designation as the church of the social elite, many elected officials in the United States still belonged to Episcopal churches. Though the church of the 1790s and first decade of the 1800s was still tied to the old Anglican Church structure by many Americans, missionary activity was not successful until the next generation came of age.[28] Because of the association with the upper class and the ritualized nature of the denomination, the Episcopal Church thrived in urban settings, where many of the churches that were established in the early 1800s are still operating today. As the Episcopal Church was growing it was also revising and establishing its own Book of Common Prayer, first created in 1789, with later printings and editions coming over the course of the 19th century. Many dioceses created supplementary prayer books and devotionals, such as one for slaves and another for children.

[28] Hein and Shattuck, 64.

Overall, the first half of the 19th century for the Episcopal Church was focused on missionary activity, unity in theology and liturgy, and a continuation of the already established social structures within the laity of the Episcopal Church that mirrored the social hierarchy of the Antebellum United States.

While the Episcopal Church and its predecessors had been in place in the colonies since the founding of Jamestown, the Episcopal Church did not exist in Alabama until 1825 with the founding of Christ Church in Mobile. Because Alabama was frequently changing hands between different European powers, the opportunity for missionary activity was slim. But, when the United States admitted Alabama as the 22nd state in 1819, the state finally gained the governmental framework and infrastructure necessary to draw white people en masse to Alabama. White immigrants began to create large plantations and urban centers centered around the cotton trade, such as Mobile. The massive population influx that occurred in this time is indicative of that white migration, with the population of Alabama in 1810 being less than 10,000 people but by 1830 it was more than 300,000 people.[29] Rapid population growth brought the birth of industry, the rise of cotton plantations in the state, and the opportunity for religious organizations to move into the area. Though Christ Church in Mobile was the first Episcopal church established in the state, the Diocese of Alabama would not be created until seven years later in 1830.[30] The first bishop of Alabama was not elected until 1844, with the Rev. Nicolas Hamner Cobbs' election to the position.[31] Prior to that point, the diocese operated as a missionary diocese with help from bishops in the surrounding area to visit parishes, ordain priests, and perform confirmations.

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[29] Richard Forstall, comp., *Population of Sates and Counties of the United States: 1790-1990* (Washington DC: US Bureau of the Census, 1996), 3.
[30] Olive Patton Ziegler, "Alabama: Protestant Episcopal Church," Container 21 Folder 8, Alabama Church and Synagogue Records Collection, 1805-2008, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL, 1.
[31] Ziegler, 3.

After the election of Bishop Cobbs in 1844, the Diocese of Alabama grew at an unprecedented rate through the rest of the 1840s and the 1850s. Across the state, churches appeared. The membership rolls of established churches swelled, and some cities saw multiple Episcopal churches opened.[32] In the case of Mobile, there was the aforementioned Christ Church, but between 1847 and 1860, three other Episcopal churches were established in the city—Trinity Church, the Church of the Good Shepard, and St. John's,[33] where Kate Cumming and her family were lifelong members.[34] Mobile's significance as a port for the exportation of cotton was second only to New Orleans. Consequently, many bishops and important priests either worked in or visited Mobile frequently, including James Otey of Tennessee, Leonidas Polk, Nicolas Cobbs, and the rector of St. John's, Henry Pierce, who later became the Bishop of Arkansas. The Cummings and other Episcopalians of Mobile, because of the port's importance, were therefore able to have many close relationships with some of the most important Southern Episcopal bishops and priests. The fast growth of the Episcopal Church in Alabama along with the expansion of Southern society and social codes allowed for the social systems of the colonial era to transplant themselves easily into this new Southern context. Through its long-standing traditions and roots in the English and Southern aristocracies, the Episcopal Church in Alabama remained the church of social elite and attract new families, like the Cummings, to its membership rolls to sustain the relationship between the Southern and Episcopal social structures.

While Mobile's growth matched the growth that the entire state was experiencing, it, like the growth of Alabama, was not sustainable. Amid the secession crisis caused by the 1860 Presidential Election, Nicolas Cobbs died and left the future of the Diocese of Alabama on

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[32] Ziegler, 7.
[33] Ziegler, 7.
[34] Cumming, "Scrapbook clippings."

uncertain terms. This uncertainty existed beyond the Diocese of Alabama; all the Southern dioceses grappled with their future in the Episcopal Church before finally deciding to form the Confederate Episcopal Church. Overall, the history of the Diocese of Alabama mirrors many of the Southern dioceses in this period, where many people were moving to the South and communities were springing up with churches and other features of American life following. In this, the individual history of Mobile and the Diocese of Alabama, are a prime example of the ways the founding of the Episcopal Church occurred in Southern communities.

It was in this evolving world of the Episcopal Church in Alabama that Kate Cumming came of age. In the Antebellum era, there is little evidence to suggest that Cumming would specifically identify herself as an Episcopal Woman, and in fact she would identify herself more strongly as a Southern Woman than anything else. But later in her life this self-identification changed, with her Episcopal identity being one of the most important aspects of her presentation in the public sphere. While her religious convictions remained the same from her childhood through her later years, the public presentation of them and her self-identification shifted beginning with the Civil War. By understanding this shift, and understanding the perception that Cumming held prior to the Civil War, it allows for better understanding of the Episcopal Woman archetype not just as it pertains to Kate Cumming or to women in the Diocese of Alabama, but to Episcopal women throughout the South in this time.

Chapter II

“She was a member of the Episcopal Church”: Kate Cumming and the Episcopal Woman Archetype During the Civil War

> “The city was one blaze of light from the illuminations, scarcely a window in the whole city was not lit. The noise from the fireworks and firearms was deafening. Speeches were made, processions paraded the streets with banners flying and drums beating, and in fact everything was done to prove that Mobile, at least, approved of what South Carolina had done.”[35]

This excerpt from Cumming’s book, *Gleaning from Southland*, exemplifying her personal feelings and experience of the secession of South Carolina, encapsulates in a concise fashion not just a turning point in her life, but a turning point for the whole of the United States. The Civil War did not just end slavery in the United States or bring the Union back together, but integrally changed the social and cultural fabric of the South. Across the South, people and communities reckoned with the changes that the war brought. This change fundamentally shifted how religions functioned in the South, how Southerners treated death, and how the social structure of the South functioned. For Kate Cumming, the Civil War was a time where she found her agency as a nurse, traveled extensively, and began to tie her Episcopal faith more intimately with her Southern identity.

During the Civil War and in the years immediately after, there was a concerted effort by many in the South, Kate Cumming included, to redefine and establish new ways of understanding their place in both the Confederacy and in the Reconstruction South. It was in this

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[35] Cumming, Gleanings, 21.

time that Cumming began to truly embody the Episcopal Woman archetype. Through investigation of her Civil War journals, explanation of the Episcopal Church in Alabama from the split of Episcopal Church to its reunification, and through the diaries Cumming kept in the late 1860s, the archetype of the Episcopal Woman begins to take shape in her narrative. This chapter will explore the instances of Episcopal Womanhood within Cumming's Civil War writings and will place both Cumming and the archetype of the Episcopal Woman into the larger story of the Confederate Episcopal Church. By investigating how Cumming discussed people in her daily life, commented on religious services, and wrote about her own thoughts on religion, her experience of the Civil War and begins to blend with her identity as a Southern woman to manufacture the archetype of the Episcopal Woman.

"It is not a charity to care for them, but a sacred duty": Kate Cumming's Work as a Nurse and the Effect of the Civil War on her Identity as an Episcopal Woman

In the spring of 1862, Kate Cumming was still in Mobile. Two of her sisters and her mother had gone to Liverpool at the very outset of the war and did not return until after the Civil War ended.[36] With their departure, only Kate, her brother, and her father remained in Mobile. During Lent of 1862, an Episcopal priest, Benjamin Miller, visited St. John's Episcopal Church in Mobile and implored the women of the church to travel to Corinth and nurse wounded soldiers.[37] While Kate was not personally at the church service, her family reported back and it was at that time that she decided to go with Rev. Miller and his group.[38] This decision was not one that Kate took lightly but was something that she thought was her duty as a Christian.

When explaining her decision to go to the front in her book, *Gleanings from Southland*, Cumming states "My subsequent experience proved that none, excepting the most high-toned

[36] Cumming, Gleanings, 24.
[37] Cumming, Gleanings, 37.
[38] Cumming, Gleanings, 37.

and refined women, had any business doing that most sacred of all duties—alleviating suffering."[39] Through this statement, Cumming is placing this work of nursing into the hands of women like herself, and integrating a devotional aspect to the work akin to the likes of Florence Nightingale, who she references multiple times.[40] Cumming recalled the work of Nightingale and others in sentences like "It seems strange that the aristocratic women of Great Britain have done with honor what is a disgrace for their sisters on this side of the Atlantic to do."[41] By placing the women of the South in concert with the aristocracy of Great Britain, and even calling them sisters, Cumming is connecting the common ancestry of the Southern social elite and the British aristocracy. This connection become more poignant when taking into account Cumming's own Scottish heritage, because her family has existed within British aristocratic circles. Connecting the British aristocracy and the Southern elite enabled Cumming to tie her work as a nurse into aspects of her identity that existed outside the bounds of Southern womanhood. Through connecting herself to the British aristocracy through this work Cumming is tying her service to a larger ideal that has English precepts, akin to her religious ties to the Episcopal Church and its British traditions. In this way, Cumming is enveloping her work in these English overtones that connect to her understanding of herself as an Episcopal Woman, and feed directly into her decision to go to the war front despite the larger Southern culture that discouraged work as a nurse.

Cumming returned many times to this idea of nursing as a sacred devotion and placed importance on her ability to not just tend to the wounded soldiers, but to sit and pray or read hymns to them like in this interaction with a dying solider: "This morning he begged me not to

[39] Cumming, Gleanings, 39.
[40] Cumming, Gleanings 38.
[41] Kate Cumming, ed. Richard Barksdale Harwell, *Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse,* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987): 65.

leave him, and I did not unless when compelled…. I read him some hymns, two of which seemed to give him great consolation; they were 'Just as I am without one plea,' and 'Jesus, savior of my soul.'"[42] Through this instance and others, Cumming embodied a normative gendered role, that of a devoted nurse, and integrated her religious ideals into the role in order to justify her work in this Episcopal context because her identity as a Southern woman was not supporting these actions on her part.

In multiple passages in her book, *A Journal of Hospital Life in the Confederate Army of Tennessee, from the Battle of Shiloh to the End of the War*, Cumming expounds upon her feeling that her nursing is both her duty as a Southern woman and as an Episcopal Woman. Drew Gilpin Faust discusses the understanding that Cumming had of duty as it related to her work as a nurse in her book, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War.* Faust sets Cumming's work as a nurse as imperative to a feminine ideology, saying: "For Cumming the Christian and feminine imperative of service far outweighed superficial notions of female delicacy."[43] Though Faust does set Cumming's understanding of service within a Christian context, it is important to distinguish that it was not just a Christian, but an Episcopal context. Without correctly naming Cumming's understanding as an Episcopal Woman, it inadvertently strips away the important social and classist distinctions within the Episcopal denomination. Important denominational distinctions, such as adherence to a social hierarchy and the historical understanding of the Episcopal Church as the denomination of the social elite, are inherent to the archetype of an Episcopal Woman that Cumming is inhabiting. Cumming's identity as an Episcopal Woman goes far beyond the distinctions placed upon a broad Christian identity and recall the traditions of the British aristocracy as mentioned earlier.

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[42] Cumming, Journal, 206-7.
[43] Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War,* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996): 101.

There are multiple instances where Cumming makes reference to what she perceives to the be the duty of the women in the South, and in doing so make reference to God which recalls her Episcopal faith. In this passage, Cumming is imploring women to take action and not sit idly by, saying:

> "Women of the South, let us remember that our fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons are giving up all that mortals can for us; …. Are we aware to all of this, and unwilling to nurse these brave heroes who are sacrificing so much for us? What, in the name of common sense, are we to do? Sit calmly down, knowing that there is many a parched lip which would bless us for a drop of water, and many a wound to be bound up? These things are not to be done, because it is not considered respectable! Heaven help the future of our country, for nothing but God's special aid can save any country where such doctrines are inculcated."[44]

Cumming knew the place of women and the need for the insertion of normative Southern gender roles in this war, and what her specific role in the conflict was. For Cumming, it was essential to nurse the wounded as, believed that through her work as a nurse she was doing everything she could to help the cause of the Confederates from both a social and religious perspective. In the same diary entry she stated her beliefs to that effect, saying "unless every man and woman in the South do their duty he [the Union] will succeed, even though we had a president gifted with the wisdom of Solomon, and general endowed with the genius of Frederick and Napoleon."[45] Cumming expresses the hope that more women will take up the Confederate cause, and in this references the duty that she has previously situated within an Episcopal context, using the ideals of Episcopal Womanhood rather than Southern gender ideals to make her plea to other women.

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[44] Cumming, Journal, 65-6.
[45] Cumming, Journal, 66.

Cumming instead integrates ideals of Southern nationalism rather than Southern gender ideal through the deification of Jefferson Davis and the Confederate generals in this passage, exemplifying the transmutability of this identities for Cumming. In later entries, Cumming becomes more critical of Southern gendered ideals and shows a marked change when comparing passages like this to ones to just a year later, when the South losing more and more battles. In this entry from the fall of 1863, she states:

> "Are the women of the South going into the hospitals? I am afraid candor will compel me to say they are not! It is not respectable, and requires too much constant attention, and a hospital has none of the comforts of home! About the first excuse I have already said much; but will here add, from my experience since last writing on that subject, that a lady's respectability must be at low ebb when it can be endangered by going into a hospital."[46]

This excerpt from her journal showcases the extent to which Cumming saw her work as a nurse imperative. By ignoring the duty of nursing, a role laced with heavily religious overtones for Cumming and thereby indicative of her identity as an Episcopal Woman, Southern women would be endangering not just their respectability but their place in the larger social hierarchy. Nursing was an explicit task in which women could show their devotion not only to the Confederacy but to God. In this way, nursing was not just a social activity or a way to find a husband— a pursuit that Cumming specifically denounced in her journal, calling a woman who had found a beau a "black sheep" but still hoped that "such women are very rare."[47] Nursing was the most overt and concrete way that Cumming thought women should aid the war effort, and that in looking back, she thought that because it was only a small percentage of women helping the war effort that

[46] Cumming, Journal, 136.
[47] Cumming, Journal, 26.

"very much of this failure is to be attributed to us."[48] In tying her religious understanding as an Episcopal Woman to her perceived duty as a nurse for the Confederacy, Cumming is showing how her identity as a Episcopal Woman works within her identity as Southern woman to bolster and justify her actions even when they are seemingly contrary to the gendered expectations of Southern women.

Throughout Cumming's diary it is clear that she understood her life through an Episcopal lens. From the way she dated her journal, her commentary on various people within the journal, and her descriptions of various Episcopal priests, bishops, and services, Cumming embodied an emplaced sense of religious devotion, one which shied away from public announcements of faith and belief, instead favoring a lived tradition which and inherently subdued in nature. These small indications of faith are integral to this identity as an Episcopal Woman and it is through these small actions that Cumming showcases her understanding of self in relation to the rapidly shifting world she was inhabiting.

From 1862 to 1864, Cumming dutifully kept an almost daily record of her activities in the war—from the patients she saw, the events she attended, and the people she met and conversed with. Through her dating of the journal, she kept a record of not just the normal calendar, but the liturgical calendar. In most cases, her entry would only be dated with the month and date, but each Sunday was explicitly marked and most liturgical holidays, such as Whitsunday,[49] Easter,[50] Christmas,[51] and Good Friday[52] were specifically marked and discussed in her journal entries, as were some saint's days, like John the Baptist's day.[53] Through this system of defining and

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[48] Cumming, Journal, 4.
[49] Cumming, Journal, 46.
[50] Cumming, Journal, 98.
[51] Cumming, Journal, 181.
[52] Cumming, Journal, 193.
[53] Cumming, Journal, 110.

writing down liturgical days, Cumming situates her view of a year and the important dates therein. This practice also recalls the strong adherence that the Episcopal Church holds for the liturgical calendar and the emphasis on traditional celebration of not just Easter and Christmas but days like Whitsunday and All Saint's Day. Within Cumming's journal she also repeatedly mentions the use of prayer books by her and the men[54]— another highly traditional and defining feature of Episcopal practice. These continual reminders of her Episcopal faith are very typical of traits of the Episcopal Church and establish Cumming as the latest in a long line of men and women who lived their lives by adherence to a liturgical calendar and by the use of prayer books for Daily Office services. This unintentional use of traditional aspects of church life delineates Cumming from others because of her continued adherence to a liturgical calendar and prayer books despite the unorthodox climate of war work. Cumming is thereby placing herself within a group of not just Christian Southerners, but Episcopalian Southerners that still subscribe to a high church liturgy where there is an emphasis on keeping within the traditions that have existed for hundreds of years.

Though Cumming weaves own religious identity and prayers through her journal and in looking at the way she discusses other Episcopalians and Christians aids in setting Cumming's understanding of herself within Southern society. Throughout the journal, there is a precedence given to other laypeople and clergy who are Episcopalian, as opposed to those of other denominations. Whether it was a soldier, another nurse or a general, whenever she wished to express a complimentary tone to someone, she would explicitly mention their membership in the Episcopal Church. This was done with a woman named Mrs. Marks, where Cumming states quite matter of factly: "Mrs. Marks is not expected to live. She has made up her mind to that

[54] Cumming, Journal, 161.

effect and is perfectly resigned. She is a member of the Episcopal Church."[55] This addition of an explicit denominational preference is a very abrupt statement, but is one that is consistently found all over Cumming's journal, like when she is referencing the death of a soldier, Cumming writes: "He was a member of the Episcopal Church, and, I believe, a sincere and devout Christian. I feel for his poor mother and sisters who mourn for him."[56] When she discusses the death of Leonidas Polk and her impression of him both as a general and as a bishop within the Episcopal Church Cumming is more implicit but still referenced Polk's status as bishop with phrases like "pastoral staff" and in him being a "soldier of the cross," despite Polk's decision to give up his bishopric when he became a general.[57] There are a few instances of Cumming stating someone's membership in a denomination other than in the Episcopal Church, such as with Mrs. Williamson, who was her companion through most of the war, though it was a rare occurrence.[58] The division of people according to their denominational membership further structured Southern life for Cumming in this liminal time, and allowed Cumming to understand her changing environment through already established systems of division.

By naming someone as a member of the Episcopal Church, the soldiers and nurses symbolically enter into the social strata of Episcopalians. The Episcopal Church recalls the long tradition within the United States of being hierarchical, mixing social systems with religious practices, being the realm of the social elite. Through this label of an Episcopalian intones the perception of being a social elite and thereby integrated into the social and sacred culture of the Episcopal Church. In the use of transplanted social and religious traditions from Great Britain, especially in the South where the transplant of strict social hierarchies from English society

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[55] Cumming, Journal, 36.
[56] Cumming, Journal, 71.
[57] Cumming, Journal, 206.
[58] Cumming, Journal, 92-3.

began in the colonial era, the idea of being a member of the Episcopal Church is laden with more than just an interest in a broad theology or the use of a prayer book. The labeling of someone as an Episcopalian becomes a distinct definition of one's place in society and creates a role both inside and outside of the church. Furthermore, the definition of an Episcopalian expands in Cumming's realm to include social expectations of holding to a Lenten diet or how to live according to a liturgical calendar as well as sanctified ritual practices. In taking the official label of denominational membership and placing larger social implications onto it, Southern society is continuing despite social upheaval of the war. For Cumming, these labels provide justification for her work in the war because she was not going against the societal perceptions of being an Episcopal Woman, but rather was part of a larger culture of Episcopalians who participated in the war effort. In naming others who shared her religious views, Cumming situated herself into a normative role for Episcopal women in the war. Cumming was then able to use her religious views, such as those on duty, to continue her work without being anomalous to typical gendered expectations for women in the South.

In much of her journal, Cumming places much importance on the work she undertook in hospitals around the South. Despite this, there is equal importance placed upon the church services that she regularly attended through the Civil War. Throughout the journal, Cumming dutifully notes which church she attends, the denomination when it is not Episcopal, the many priests and bishops that she encountered and various other members of the different congregations. Of particular importance were the services she attended that were presided by the Rev. Dr. Charles Todd Quintard. Quintard, who later became Bishop of the Diocese of Tennessee, was active in the Civil War as both a doctor and a priest, and Cumming met him multiple times during her time as a nurse in Newnan, GA. Some of the services she wrote about

were weddings, Eucharists, and Evening Prayer services, showcasing a variety of different liturgies and different environments in which services took place, from church buildings to under oak trees.[59] Looking at Cumming's specific descriptions of services, she typically wrote on the scripture each sermon was based on, and any particular thoughts that were of importance to her. Additionally, Cumming noted a variety of other details, like the robes a priest wore, the clothing members of the congregation wore, and which hymns they sang. One of her most detailed descriptions was that of a wedding between one of the doctors in the Newnan hospital, Dr. Divine, and the daughter of another doctor. Within this journal entry, Cumming touched on the lighting in the church, the clerical robes worn, the dresses the bridesmaids wore, and the subject of the sermon.[60] This description of spiritual musings interspersed with wonderings on the cost of fabric is indicative of the culture in Episcopal churches of mixing the social with the sacred. Cumming mixes her social and sacred concerns seamlessly, signaling that it was an ingrained behavior, much like commenting on the sermon or critiquing a hymn.

Other services garnered similar attention within her journal, though some have a much more derogatory tone, in that it speaks to someone's social faux pas and how that damaged the service. The most concrete example was not one which Cumming witnessed herself but heard second-hand on a train. The severe social faux-pas occurred in an Episcopal church in Richmond and the wife of Confederate general Birkett Fry witnessed the incident. Talking about the incident, Cumming says:

> "One of them [incidents] I will notice, occurred in an Episcopal Church, as I have witnessed the like more than once in our own churches in Mobile—and which I think reflects little credit, not only on Christians, but on all who claim to have a sense of

[59] Cumming, Journal, 129.
[60] Cumming, Journal, 196-7.

> politeness. It seems that the wife of one of our generals, who is high in command, and a member of one of the most aristocratic families in Virginia, was dressed very plainly, as true greatness needs no adorning. She went to one of the churches, I suppose a stranger there, took her seat in the pew of one who she thought would make her welcome, when a member of his family, a young lady fashionably dressed, came to the pew, and judging of the occupant from appearances, ordered her out, and did not find out her mistake until too late to retrieve it, and until a dozen of the pew doors were flung open to receive Mrs. General —-."[61]

This faux pas on the part of the young woman showcases the way in which the social behavior of the South as based on material things like clothing was pervasive throughout the region and was not unique to Cumming and her experience. In the young woman rejecting the wife of the general and then realizing her mistake only after the community reacts, it recalls the social and sacred culture of the Episcopal Church, which goes beyond the trappings of the church and the pews. It is representative of the larger community and of the place that the Episcopal Church held as the denomination for the elite, wherein this story becomes common knowledge and told throughout the South.

Cumming's own commentary on this story is important to note, because she provides credibility to this denominational culture. By stating that she had experienced similar situations, she is indicating an aspect of Episcopal culture that exists across diocesan and regional lines. Codes of conduct as established by pew designations in the Episcopal Church have been in place in the denomination since the colonial era, as discussed in the last chapter. It is important to note though, that every aspect of this story is heavily woman-centered, from the women involved in the incident, the woman telling it, to Cumming herself. Feeding into the gendered expectations in

[61] Cumming, Journal, 285.

the Episcopal Church in this time, women regulated a large part of the social culture of churches in situations having to do with dress, pews, and relationships between parishioners. Through the retelling of this story and other commentaries, like the wedding of Dr. Divine, Cumming is presenting herself as an active participant in this social culture, fulfilling the gendered expectations for a woman in the Episcopal Church. While there is no official doctrine from the Episcopal Church on the methods of dress or pew seating arrangements in a church, the tradition of the Episcopal Church in matters like this had become codified by this point to create an unofficial doctrine dictated by women. Episcopal Women all over the South drew on that unofficial doctrine as a measure of someone's worth in society and their place in the social hierarchy of the religious and social community.

Cumming's thoughts on dress in church services and its ability to interpret and understand the place of others in Southern society did not remain within the congregation but extended to members of the clergy as well. For example, there was a priest one Sunday that Cumming discusses by saying "I should have enjoyed the sermon much better if my attention had not been drawn to the extravagant dress of the speaker. I could not but think, if he had worn a gown to hide it, that it would have been much more in keeping with his priestly office."[62] Additionally, Cumming goes onto say " I do wish he would not wear them, especially at this time, when such clothes are certain to be the subject of remark, worn by any one, but much more by an embassador [sic] of the lowly Jesus."[63] Through these two quotes, Cumming defines not just what is appropriate of a priest in a service, but what is expected of one who holds a clerical office. This commentary on dress showcases an attention to the way in which the sacred and secular realms of Cumming's life interact and where the division between the social and sacred

[62] Cumming, Journal, 108-9.
[63] Cumming, Journal, 109.

exists— impressive fabric is a sign of wealth and power for a bridesmaid to wear, but if a priest were to wear that fabric it is an affront to their ecclesial office. These elements are not integrally part of any service as designated by the Episcopal Church, and there is no pronouncement against forms of clerical dress, but it is a socially constructed tradition which places emphasis on the use of robes for priests, and it is in this tradition that Cumming is existing and perpetuating with her comments. In this, she is recalling generations of tradition and normative social and cultural expectations of a priest, despite no explicit theology in place. This commentary is a feature of the Episcopal Woman, where the elements of a service extend beyond the sermon preached or the hymns sung, but the dress of the priest and congregation and the ability of the singers in the service. Cumming is embodying her religious identity as an Episcopal Woman as her understanding of herself as a Southern Woman is integrally changing with every event of the Civil War. In contrast, her identity as an Episcopal Woman is not changing, but rather is justifying her work in the war and enabling her to understand her changing world through a preexisting framework. Cumming is exemplifying the Episcopal Woman by using her the ritual and social aspects of her religion as a lens for viewing the rapidly shifting world of the South in the Civil War.

Splitting Along National Lines: The History of the Confederate Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Alabama in the Civil War

While Cumming was serving as a nurse in the Civil War and creating this new identity for herself as an Episcopal Woman, the denomination which she belonged to was experiencing many changes. Without this background information on the Episcopal Church, it becomes more difficult to understand the world in which Cumming, her fellow congregants, and clergy lived, which inhibits understanding the unique creation of the Episcopal Woman archetype in this time.

The hierarchy and ecclesial government of the Episcopal Church is one of its most defining features. Though Cumming and other women were not participants in that government, the events and actions of the Confederate Episcopal Church affected them through the small changes that did take place in the denomination despite the desire for consistency and unity across both the Episcopal Church and the Confederate Episcopal Church.

In the last chapter, the history of the Episcopal Church in the South ended right at the split that occurred on July 4th, 1861, when the already seceded Southern dioceses began steps to create the Confederate Episcopal Church. This separation was the largest split within the Episcopal Church to occur since its founding. Through the span of the Civil War, the Confederate Episcopal Church held three General Conventions—in 1861, 1862, and 1865–and was composed of ten dioceses all over the Confederacy.[64] Plans began to create a Confederate Prayer Book and the new denomination ordained bishops into this new denomination. This new Confederate Episcopal Church, created in the wake of Southern secession, is telling in every aspect of its existence. From the continued usage of the same prayer books, the adherence to the same liturgy, and the predominance of Episcopalians in the Confederate army and government, the existence of the Confederate Episcopal Church allows a unique insight into the way Episcopalians in the South understood the causes of the Civil War and the intersection of Southern religion and the Lost Cause narrative.

For much of the war, congregations used the same prayer books and liturgies as before the war, with only minor changes in prayers that referenced the United States. All Episcopal traditions, both official and unofficial, remained the same. In this way, this split was mostly one

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[64] Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, *Journal of Proceedings of an Adjourned Convention of Bishops, Clergymen, and Laymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America: Held in Christ Church, Columbia, South Carolina, from Oct. 16th to Oct. 24th, Inclusive, in the Year of Our Lord 1861* (Montgomery, AL: Montgomery Advertiser Job Print Office, 1861), 8.

in name for many Episcopalians. Because the split of the Episcopal Church happened along the dividing lines of country borders and only happened after the secession of states from the Union, the Confederate dioceses sidestepped the issue of slavery in official discussions of division. Looking at the political make-up of the Episcopal Church prior to the split, Edward Blum states in his book, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism 1865-1898,* that "unlike most northern denominations, the Episcopal Church was not dominated by Republicans. In fact, its leadership and rank-and-file members were far more likely to be members of the Democratic Party."[65] In fact, many Episcopal bishops in the North supported slavery, such as John Hopkins of Vermont, who even wrote *Bible View of Slavery* in 1860, which "asserted that southerners not only had every religious and moral right to hold African Americans in bondage, but also had the political right to secede from the Union."[66] For the Episcopal Church, both in the view of the official church doctrine and in the view of the bishops, the was not a moral or religious precept against slavery either in the North or the South. Further explained by David Hein and Gardiner Shattuck in their book, *The Episcopalians*, where they state:

> "the religious defense of slavery was by no means strictly southern in origin. In fact, many of its assumptions dovetailed neatly with the social ideas of high church Episcopalians in the North…. several of the high church party's key concerns—its emphasis on the church's ancient, spiritual roots; its concomitant indifference to secular and political affairs; and its general disdain for individualism and moral perfectionism—

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[65] Edward J Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism 1865-1898.* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press): 34.
[66] Blum, 35.

predisposed significant numbers of Episcopal clergy to regard anyone who condemned slavery with suspicion."[67]

This is to say, the Episcopal Church, while there were exceptions like William Jay,[68] did not have a moral issue with slavery, and even in the North there existed bishops who supported secession from the Union based on slavery.

In 1861, the bishops of Georgia and Louisiana, the Rt. Revs. Stephen Elliott and Leonidas Polk released a pastoral letter to all Episcopal churches in the Confederacy which states:

> "this necessity does not arise out of dissension which has occurred within the Church itself, nor out of any dissatisfaction with with the doctrine or discipline of the Church. We rejoice to record the fact, that we are to-day, as Churchmen, as truly brethren as we have ever been; and that no deed had been done, nor word uttered, which leaves a single wound rankling in our hearts. We are still one in Faith, in purpose and in Hope; but political changes, forced upon us by a stern necessity, have occurred, which have placed our Dioceses in a position requiring consultation as to our ecclesiastical relations. It is better that those relations should be arranged by the common consent of all the Dioceses within the Confederate States, than by the independent action of each Diocese. The one will probably lead to harmonious action; the other might produce inconvenient diversity."[69]

Within this letter, Polk and Elliott argued that the split of the church was based on the dividing national lines of the Union and Confederacy. Support for this assertion comes from the way in which the two denominations remained the same through the split, such as in the use of an

[67] Hein and Shattuck, 77.
[68] Hein and Shattuck, 77.
[69] Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, *Proceedings of a Meeting*, 3.

almost identical prayer book, constitution, and canon laws,[70] as well as the continuance of the same social and sacred culture as before. Additionally, when discussing another pastoral letter from Polk to his diocese, Hein and Shattuck further say:

> "Despite wishing to remain on good terms with U.S. Episcopalians, Polk emphasized it was necessary for Southern Episcopalians to 'follow our nationality.' Just as American Anglicans had formally separated from the Church of England at the conclusion of the Revolution, so Episcopalians in the Confederacy needed to create their own national church in 1861."[71]

In recalling the split from the Church of England, Polk is further lending legitimacy to this split, and equating the two situations. This comparison also works to situate the catalyst for the split as that of national lines, not slavery, at least in the official record.

Despite these pronouncements from Polk and Elliott, slavery was an unspoken factor in their decisions to support the Confederacy, as both of them were among the largest slaveholders in the country.[72] This individual support of slavery did not only come from the bishops in the denomination, but the place that the Episcopal Church had in the life of many of the ranking members of the Confederate army and government. Within the Episcopal Church's membership records, there was Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and many generals.[73] In his book, *Baptized in Blood: Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920,* Charles Reagan Wilson states:

> "the Episcopalians played an especially prominent role in the Southern civil religion, particularly in its rituals. This stemmed partly from their position in Southern society: the

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[70] Hein and Shattuck, 78.
[71] Hein and Shattuck, 78.
[72] Hein and Shattuck, 77.
[73] Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920,* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2009): 35.

> Episcopal church was the church of the Antebellum planter class, and after the war the Episcopalians helped make the Lost Cause a defender of aristocratic values."[74]

Because the ritual and traditional aspects of the Episcopal Church had such long reaching roots into the establishment and perpetuation of Southern culture, it was a natural choice for the prominent members of the Confederacy. The ranking members of the Confederacy could be members of the Episcopal Church and still support slavery individually but not have to confront the issue of slavery within their religion. Additionally, the culture of the Episcopal Church had for so long supported the very paternalistic aspects of Southern culture by weaving ideas around the social expectations of women and theologies which supported the subjugation of anyone who was not white into the social culture of churches. Southern society as Episcopalians understood it remained intact through the efforts of Episcopal Church and its social and sacred culture because the split was officially based on borders. The fact that the two denominations reunified not even a year after the end of the Civil War further proves that slavery was not a theological issue dividing the two sections of the church. By retaining the pedigree of those old traditions, seemingly unchanged from the Northern Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Church provided a framework for the Confederacy to establish religious and moral justification for secession outside of the issue of slavery, even before the war ended.

Kate Cumming did not inhabit any official role in the Episcopal Church or within the Confederacy outside of her nursing, but through her actions both in the war and afterwards echo the same sentiments. When looking at how Cumming approached slavery and issues of race, she spoke on similar lines as Episcopal bishops, Confederate generals, and other women. Cumming never touched upon the split of the Episcopal Church, showcasing how the split was not of concern to even devout members of the laity. Instead, Cumming did comment multiple times

[74] Wilson, 35.

about the actions of slaves in Episcopal Church, with one entry from Easter Sunday 1864 speaking of the attitude of Methodist slaves in comparison to Episcopal slaves, saying:

> "After getting through he [the priest] came down from the pulpit, and the negroes crowding around him, shaking his hands. They seemed perfectly happy; some of the older ones fairly dancing with joy. This excitement is in keeping with the excitable character of the negro—although we have an Episcopal Church in Mobile, while belongs to them, where they go through the service as solemnly as we do."[75]

Cumming is establishing the place of slaves in the larger Episcopal Church, in that they inhabit the same place they had for generations—that of subjugated masses under the oppression of the Episcopal patriarchy. Portraying the Episcopal slaves as solemn and compliant to the will of the Episcopal denomination, Cumming is showing that the Episcopal Church is continuing the paternal attitude of the Antebellum South.

Cumming is giving a glimpse into her own views on slaves, establishing that she subscribed to the normative Southern belief that slaves were only beneficial members of society if under the influence of a white-dominated system such as the plantation household or the Episcopal Church. By setting the story within the context of slave worship at an Episcopal service and stating how well behaved the Episcopal slaves are Cumming is recalling the normative position of many Episcopalians in the South. Cumming is establishing how a normative Episcopal Woman would have confronted these issues of division and slavery amid e destruction of normative venues of paternal views of slavery like the plantation complex. Chattel slavery was under attack in this war, but its connection to generations of affiliation with the social elite of the South to a cultural institution that set itself apart from the conflict—the Episcopal Church—aided its cultural continuance. By giving the official reason for the split as

[75] Cumming, Journal, 194.

borders, the Confederate Episcopal Church allowed not just the bishops and generals of the Confederacy to perpetuate their pro-slavery views within the denomination and thereby Southern society, but also the Episcopal Women of the South who full-heartedly supported the pro-slavery individuals within the Episcopal Church.

When looking at the Confederate Episcopal Church it is impossible to ignore two of its most defining moments— the election and ordination of the Rt. Rev. Richard Wilmer, and the following crisis between Wilmer and the United States military in 1865.[76] When the previous bishop of Alabama, Nicolas Cobbs, passed away in January of 1861,[77] the Diocese of Alabama had the job of finding and ordaining a new bishop, and turned to the Confederate Episcopal Church for help in this matter. In the General Convention in Columbia in October of 1861, representatives from Alabama petitioned the House of Bishops to allow for the conservation of someone to the bishopric, writing:

> "the delegation to this Convention, from the Diocese of Alabama, beg leave respectfully to petition this Convention to determine what, if any, provision can be made by this Convention for the consecration of Bishops before the ratification, by the Diocesan Conventions in the Confederate States, of any Constitution or Canons adopted by this Convention."[78]

Following this the senior bishops of the Confederate Episcopal Church informed the representatives from the Diocese of Alabama to begin the search and election of their bishop according to the same rules and procedures as written by the Episcopal Church of the United

[76] Richard H. Wilmer, "A Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and Laity oft the Diocese of Alabama," September 28th, 1865, Container 20 Folder 10, Alabama Church and Synagogue Records Collection, 1805-2008, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL, 7.
[77] Richard H. Wilmer, *The Recent Past from a Southern Standpoint. Reminiscences of a Grandfather. By Richard H. Wilmer,* New York, NY: T. Whittaker, 1887.
[78] Protestant Episcopal Church in the Confederate States of America, *Journal of Proceedings*, 25.

States. By November of 1861, the Diocese of Alabama General Convention returned their search for a new bishop, stating:

> "The clergy returned and reported that the Rev. Richard H. Wilmer, D.D., was nominated by them for the office of the Bishop of Alabama. The nomination was unanimously confirmed by the Laity, and the Rev. R.H. Wilmer, D.D., was declared to be by a unanimous vote of both orders, the Bishop elect of the Diocese of Alabama."[79]

This shared procedure later allowed for an easier transition for Bishop Wilmer once reunification of the two Churches began, though there was still some debate because of Wilmer's Declaration of Conformity to the Constitution of the Confederate Episcopal Church and because of his fight with the United States military. Wilmer took the same Declaration of Conformity that all other Episcopal bishops must take, solving the issue of his consecration but the fight between the Diocese of Alabama and the United States military was not as easy to resolve.

The central issue surrounding this fight was Wilmer's action against praying for the President of the United States by Episcopal priests in Alabama. On June 20th, 1865, Richard Wilmer issued a pastoral letter to the clergy and laity of the Diocese of Alabama that outlined the state of the diocese and its standing with the Episcopal Church in the wake of the dissolution of the Confederacy. While Wilmer states in his letter: "I observe that the lapse of the Confederate Government requires, of necessity, the omission of the 'Prayer for the President of the Confederate States and all in Civil Authority'"[80] he did not then instruct his clergy to use the prayer for the President of the United States, instead saying: "the subject of the prayer— 'All in

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[79] Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama, *Journal of an Adjourned Meeting of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, of the Thirty-First Annual Convention, and of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama*, Montgomery, AL: Montgomery Advertiser Book and Job Office, 1863, 4.

[80] Richard H. Wilmer, "A Pastoral Letter to the Clergy and Laity oft the Diocese of Alabama," September 28th, 1865, Container 20 Folder 10, Alabama Church and Synagogue Records Collection, 1805-2008, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL, 7.

Civil Authority;' and she [The Episcopal Church] desires for that authority prosperity and long continuance. No one can reasonably be expected to desire a long continuance of military rule. Therefore, the prayer is altogether inappropriate and inapplicable to the present condition of things."[81] This is to say, while Wilmer recognized the end of the Confederacy and the control that the United States exerted, he could not pray for a government run by the military, like it was in Alabama in 1865. To this end, Wilson in his book, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*, discussed this action of Wilmer's, saying: "No Southern minister expressed this idea better than Richard Wilmer….Wilmer expounded the ministerial belief in the Confederacy's moral and religious significance."[82] Wilmer, especially with his purview over the entire diocese of Alabama, was able to hold onto the remnants of Confederate rule within the Episcopal Church and challenge the Union. Wilmer could not support the Union when he still so clearly espoused the social and political beliefs of the Confederacy, being a strong supporter of slavery before the war, and continuing to believe that black people were not "heathen savages" only because of the influence of white patriarchal rule.[83] His viewpoint found support with the priests and parishes of Alabama, who ceased use of the prayer for the President for the length of the conflict between the Diocese of Alabama and the United States military.

This pastoral letter was not received well by the United States military in Alabama, who issued General Order No. 38, which stated: "the Bishop of Alabama and his clergy, to 'preach or perform Divine Service.'"[84] To this intrusion of the state into the sacred realm, Wilmer retorted by saying that "I do not, for one moment, recognize the right of any Civil or Military Officer to

[81] Wilmer, "A Pastoral Letter," 8.
[82] Wilson, 42.
[83] Wilson, 102-103.
[84] Wilmer, "A Pastoral Letter," 1.

dictate to me in the performance of my duty in the Church of God."[85] With this statement, Wilmer continues to stand his ground on this issue and in another pastoral letter dated September 28th, 1865, he again reiterates: "the obligations to pray at all is a matter of religious, and not of political origin…. if the Secular Authority be allowed to prescribe, in one iota, in regard to the worship of the Church, there is no assignable limit to its possible usurpations of prerogative."[86] In this pastoral letter, Wilmer rebukes any interference of the secular into the sacred realm, holds his ground against the military rule of the state.[87] This standoff between Wilmer and the military was only ended by Andrew Johnson calling for the order to be rescinded. Cumming even recounted the standoff between the military and the diocese in her book *Gleanings from Southland*, where she writes from her home in Mobile:

> "The whole State being under military rule, the bishop thinking it mockery to use the prayer for those in civil authority, ordered the clergy of the diocese to discontinue its use. As the president is prayed for in the same prayer, not using it gave great offence [sic] to General Thomas, who was in command of our district. He issues a pompous proclamation, ordering the use of the prayer, or he would close the churches and arrest any one who would attempt to hold service. Here was the dark ages upon us in earnest—being forced to bend our knees and offer up a prayer at the point of the bayonet.
>
> The Sunday after the proclamation was issued, a guard of soldiers was placed around St. John's Church to see that it was not opened, and I suppose, the same was done to all the Episcopal churches thought the State. The churches remained closed for many months, and on several Northern bishops appealing to President Johnston in our behalf, he

[85] Wilmer, "A Pastoral Letter," 1.
[86] Wilmer, "A Pastoral Letter," 2.
[87] Wilmer, "A Pastoral Letter," 2.

immediately ordered General Thomas to rescind his order, which he very ungraciously did."[88]

With this story, Cumming allows for a more personal and typical understanding of these events, outside of the lofty pastoral letters and military orders. For Cumming, this intrusion of the state into her religious practices represented a regression of the government and an act of aggression against both her identity as a Southerner but also as an Episcopalian, because of how closely tied her religious identity is to her Southern identity. This standoff between the Diocese of Alabama and the military ended without much conflict, but it left a lasting impression on the larger Episcopal Church, with the House of Bishops even issuing formal retreats on the situation during the 1865 General Convention in Philadelphia.[89]

On a larger perspective, though cultural institutions like the Episcopal Church officially disregarded slavery, the people with the denominations espoused beliefs contrary to the official position of the denomination. Through that difference of the institutional and the individual reason for the split, the Lost Cause narrative was able to flourish in the Episcopal Church even before the end of the war. The Episcopal Church therefore became a bastion for those upper-class Southern elites who desired a return to the antebellum South where the social hierarchy was highly regimented, the sacred and the social occupied the same place, and the patriarchal rituals inherent to the Episcopal faith supported the subjugation of enslaved people. Not only did this viewpoint pervade the upper levels of the Confederate military and government, it was an ingrained behavior and philosophy for people like Kate Cumming, who supported the continuance of Episcopal traditions even during the war. This continuance not only allows insight into the Episcopal Church, but into the archetype of the Episcopal Woman and how its

[88] Cumming, Gleanings, 267.
[89] Wilmer, *From a Southern Standpoint*, 147-152.

creation during and in the wake of the Civil War enabled the perpetuation of the social structures of the Episcopal Church in the antebellum era and before.

The South and its culture were shifting more rapidly in the Civil War than at any other point prior to 1861 - from the emancipation of enslaved people, to the rise and fall of the Confederacy, the military occupation of the South, and the shift in the Southern economy, there were very few cultural institutions that remained the same after the Civil War. For Kate Cumming, her Episcopal identity was the lens in which she viewed these changes within her community and attempted to bring normalcy to her existence. By keeping her religious traditions and identity as intact as possible in the wake of the Civil War, Cumming is inhabiting the archetype of the Episcopal Woman in her emphasis on the retention of Episcopal cultural markers like adhering to a liturgical calendar and the mix of the sacred and social environments within church services. When looking at the last page of Cumming's Civil War journal, she states:

> "Time has revealed the utter loss of all our hopes. A change must pass over every political and social idea, custom, and relation…. it begins a new era, midst poverty, tears, and sad memories of the past. O, may we learn the lesson that all of this is designed to teach; that all things sublunary are transient and fleeting, and lift our souls to that which is alone ever-during and immutable—God and eternity!"[90]

In this last paragraph, Cumming explains how much her world has shifted from the beginning of the war, and how her identity has changed. She is no longer the Southern woman who eschews all things political but is an Episcopal Woman who recognizes the change that occurred in her home and the rebuilding that needed to occur, both socially and culturally. It is her faith in God that she recalls in the last moment, signaling her adherence to the Episcopal Church in the wake

[90] Cumming, Journal, 307.

of the war. By integrating her religious faith with the social structures of the South to understand her rapidly changing society, Cumming inhabits her Episcopal Woman identity during the war. Her actions in the war, as they pertained to her Episcopal faith, allow for the codification of the Episcopal Woman archetype in the unstable environment of the Reconstruction South and the eventual creation of the Lost Cause narrative.

Chapter III

"I admire more and more the beauty and order of the Liturgy of our Church": The Later Life of Kate Cumming and The Episcopal Church in the Post-Civil War South

The Civil War changed many aspects of Southern life—bringing about the end of slavery, the redefining of social hierarchies, and the creation of the 'Lost Cause' narrative. In the aftermath of the Civil War, Kate Cumming worked to reestablish a sense of normalcy in her life moving forward. To this point, she wrote books, she traveled throughout Tennessee and Alabama, and she threw herself into her work in the Episcopal Church. For Cumming, the years of Reconstruction and the late 19th century codified her understanding of an Episcopal Woman, a woman who was socially elite, comfortable with liturgy and Episcopal traditions, and who worked to define herself through the Episcopal lens in the public sphere. Cumming took on this gendered ideal by continuing her relationships with bishops and priests, taking part in the daily life of churches, and through her late work as a Sunday School teacher. By positioning herself as a woman who defines herself and her social status through the religious and social practices inherent to the Episcopal Church, Cumming thus embodies the Episcopal Woman and its new place within Southern society in the later half of the 19th century.

A Writer and a Teacher: Kate Cumming and the Episcopal Woman Archetype from the End of the Civil War to 1909

Kate Cumming's book of her Civil War journal ends in May of 1865. Her next journal resumes in August of 1865 when she is back in Mobile. It was during this time that the Episcopal

churches in Alabama were closed by order of the United States military.[91] Churches in Mobile and across the state of Alabama were closed from June 1865 until January of 1866, when the order was finally rescinded according to Cumming.[92] This order did not stop Cumming from attending Episcopal services during this time—as she recounts over the course of the fall of 1865, she did not attend services in the physical church building but did attend services held in the home of Rev. Henry Pierce almost every Sunday.[93] This level of commitment to attending service was normative for Cumming and is highly indicative of the place that religion held in her life in this time. The majority of her journal entries in the years after the war were written on Sunday, and would often recount her service schedule in that she would sometimes attend services at three different churches in a day.[94] Her attendance of three services was indicative of her perceived need to strengthen her relationship with her religious beliefs during a time of high instability with all other parts of her life. In an attempt to regain order and to establish herself in the places she travelled, church services became Cumming's filter to understanding the larger community beyond the church doors. Without attending these services, Cumming could not easily introduce herself to others of a similar social status and religious views. The social and sacred atmosphere of the Episcopal Church allowed Cumming to participate in a familiar culture despite a strange environment, a behavior that began in the Civil War with her wartime attention to services and continued through her travels during Reconstruction.

Cumming was encouraged to turn her journal into a book by many people including the now Bishop Charles Quintard, as she stated as such in her Reconstruction journal, saying "I had

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[91] Kate Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868" Box Three Folder One, Kate Cumming Papers, 1795-1909, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL.
[92] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868."
[93] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868."
[94] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 9.

a visit from Bishop Quintard, and he gave me a great deal of encouragement about my book."[95] This relationship between Quintard and Cuming had begun when he was a priest in the war, and continued through Reconstruction, exemplifying Cumming's ability as an Episcopal Woman to be close to bishops not just in the context of services but in social settings outside of church. In addition, there were any priests that Cumming consulted about her book, and overall there was a fair amount of support for her book from those in her social circles, according to her Reconstruction journal.

As the reality of Reconstruction set in for the South, there was an extreme economic downturn in the region. Due to this, was no one able to buy her book due to a lack of funds despite the earlier encouragement. Cumming discusses the lack of sales in her Reconstruction journal when she states: "had got no subsidies yet for my book."[96] Cumming then reaffirms her independence and her resolve to try to sell more books, saying "I have half made up my mind to go around with the book myself, I profess to live independent of the world, I do not live up to what I profess if I shrink from doing my duty, and it certainly is my duty when I am in debt to use every honest means in my power to extricate myself."[97] Despite being in debt, Cumming is still appealing to her understanding of duty in this excerpt. For Cumming, duty functioned as a driving force that connected her secular work, such as writing or nursing, to her religious identity. Cumming later references a sacred connection to her work in the same entry, where she states:

> "I can never be a true Christian without humility. I must renounce the world and the opinion of the world, or else I can never be a sincere follower of the Lowly Jesus. Until I

[95] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 9.
[96] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 38-39.
[97] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 39.

have the spirit of Christ I am none of his. I have earnestly prayer all day that God would give me strength to bear up under my trials."[98]

Her faith is the metaphorical rock that she clings to in this time, when so many people are not living up to her perceived expectation of how to be Christian, including herself. To this end, Cumming further states: "I do not think that the Church members do their part to each other.... When I look around and see how lukewarm professers [sic] of Christ are in his cause, my wonder is that God does not blot us off the face of the earth."[99] Cumming intricately connected her work as an author and her perceived duty to tell her story with the belief that the Southerners were not following the precepts of their religion. Cumming's self-diagnosis of a lack of religious faith being the cause of her social problems is indicative of the Episcopal Woman archetype during Reconstruction. During Reconstruction, the idea of Southern womanhood was under assault because of the redefinition of most aspects of Southern life. Cumming thought that Southern women and their lack of duty in the Civil War was one of the reasons why the South lost and stated as such in her journal.[100] When looking at Cumming's publication of her Civil War journal and its subsequent failure, it recalls the failure of the South for Cumming. To this end, she again looked to her religious identity as an Episcopal Woman to contextualize and process these repeated failures in a time when her Southern identity was fraught with changes and instability.

Later in her journal, she becomes more despondent, saying "Oh I feel so miserable I have litter or no hope regarding my book.... I am afraid I am fast losing faith in the justice of God. I know how very wrong it is for me to feel that way but I did intend to do so much good with the money I made from this book.[101] With this excerpt, Cumming further indicates the

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[98] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 39-40.
[99] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 40.
[100] Cumming, Journal, 306.
[101] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 52.

economic and religious hardship she is experiencing because of the failure of her book. For Cumming, her book was not just a way to justify her actions in the war or to tell her story of the war but was how she had intended to do her part within Southern society to solve the problems created by the war. In the years after the war, churches worked to provide for the white Southerners that the war adversely affected. Episcopal Women like Cumming attempted to rectify this problem through their actions, though few other Episcopal women wrote their own books on their Civil war experience. Cumming and her ideas surrounding her continued sacred duty to the South as it is connected to her religious identity was echoed in other social movements within the South, like in the creation of Episcopal deaconess orders to help unmarried women during Reconstruction.[102] Cumming tied her faith to her life during Reconstruction and in doing so made her religious musings a social barometer of sorts for her perception of society. She threw herself into Episcopal worship in the wake of the failure of her book, and fully believed that the success of her book and her personal success in Southern society came from a strong faith in God and a strict adherence to going to services and performing daily prayers.[103] While the minute contours of Cumming's narrative are unique to her, the broad implications of her intense dedication to religion could be seen across the South. In this wake of the Civil War, Episcopal women throughout the South focused their efforts on improving the religious prospects of the Episcopal Church, and in doing so, the eventual social prospects of the women and the denomination at large.

Because of this general uptick in her attendance of services, Cumming's views on services became more critical in nature. While in her Civil War journal Cumming spoke well of almost every sermon she mentioned, in her later journal she would typically name which

[102] Barbara Brandon Schnorrenberg, "Alabama Deaconesses, 1864-1915," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 63, no. 4 (December 1994): 468-90.
[103] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868."

sermons she disliked and why— there was one Baptist minister's sermon that she heard which is particularly disliked, saying:

> "I must confess he [the minister] did not give us any information on the subject. He said that Sunday school and a good many other things were wrong, because our Savior did not lay down rules for them. But every body was wrong but the Hard Shell Baptists.... I scarcely think that he knew what he meant to preach about. He spoke very vulgar English and seemed to be very ignorant."[104]

This critical view of this minister's position on Sunday School, missionary activity, and his language is important because it allows insight into the aspects of Cumming's religious tradition that she found important. From the end of the war until her death, Cumming was a very active participant in Sunday School education. Sunday School enabled Cumming to participate in the Episcopal Church through a more formalized role while still being a member of the laity. Additionally, Cumming was very passionate about the phrasing of prayer and sermons—an aspect of the Episcopal Church that is highly ritualized and explicitly laid out in the Book of Common Prayer. In Cumming's denouncement of the Baptist minister, her Episcopal faith appears in the specific items that offended her. Her concerns about the Baptist minister went beyond the sacred realm and indeed stretched into the social aspect of her Episcopal faith, specifically through her comment about the vulgarity of the minister's language. In stating her feelings on his speech, Cumming intoned that there was speech which was appropriate for a minister to use, and speech that was not. Overall, through her critique of the Baptist minister, Cumming is defining the social and religious expectations that she had for a church service and sermon. The expectations that she laid out aligns with the historical understanding of the social and religious expectations for worship within the Episcopal Church during this period. Because

[104] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 30-1.

of this similarity, Cumming's desires for worship not just as an individual actor but as an Episcopal Woman gain credibility.

An important aspect of Cumming's rededication to her Episcopal faith in the aftermath of the Civil War was a renewed preference for Episcopal liturgy. Within her Reconstruction journal, Cumming proclaims her love for the liturgy of the Episcopal Church, at one point saying:

> "I went through all of the service for the day, third Sunday in Advent, and was forcibly struck with appreciation of the Lessons, to the subject of the day. I admire more and more the beauty and order of the Liturgy of the Church. If we only live up to it we will indeed be holy people and acceptable with God."[105]

The Episcopal liturgy functions as a set of guidelines for Cumming, especially because the Episcopal liturgy dates to before the founding of the United States in that the liturgy comes from the Church of England's Book of Common Prayer. In her preference for this liturgy, Cumming establishes that the order of the liturgy is an important part of her religious identity and continues to define herself as an Episcopal Woman. Conforming to the liturgy as written in the Book of Common Prayer is one of the defining factors of Episcopal worship. The liturgy of the Episcopal Church is not simple to understand because of its florid language, structured readings, and complex prayers. Cumming establishes her comfortability with this liturgy through the casual way that she speaks about going through the Daily Office herself, a further indication of the social implications that the sacred rituals of the Episcopal Church had. The archetype of the Episcopal Woman relies on being highly fluent in the rituals of the Episcopal Church, such as services like the Daily Office, and liturgical fluency signals not just to other Episcopalians but to

[105] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 59.

other Southerners the social status of an Episcopal Woman through the way she takes part in the performative rituals of liturgy.

During Reconstruction Cumming was rapidly developing new theological views. Her journal recounts these new views in social discussions with friends, such as in this exchange while at a dinner party where she states:

> "Mrs. H and myself had a long talk about religion... although her and ideas and mine are very different on many subjects. I did not get excited but once and that was when she said the Episcopal Church was like the Roman Catholic. I cannot see why people will be so willfully blind. But I must recollect that everybody cannot see with the same eyes that I do."[106]

In this way, Cumming, while not diving into theology within her journals, discusses how theology and denominational comparisons is a subject of discussion within her social circle. By rejecting the idea that the Episcopal Church is akin to Catholicism, Cumming is working against an ingrained stereotype of the Episcopal Church. Additionally, her rebuke of Catholicism and belief that some people are "willfully blind" feed into the social elitism that Cumming embodies by being an Episcopal Woman. Because of increased understanding of her own religious traditions during her period of renewed dedication to her Episcopal faith, Cumming strengthens her perception of herself as an Episcopal Woman in this time of continued economic and social instability.

After the Civil War and the reintroduction of Episcopal worship to Alabama, Cumming was able to go to traditional services again instead of the wartime services she had become accustomed to. To this end, she began commenting on elements of the services that were outside of the sermon, such as the psalm, the lessons, and the music chosen. Beginning in the later half

[106] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 42-3.

of her Civil War journal, Cumming mentioned music and her involvement in some services by serving in a choir, like when she mentioned "I have made several nice acquaintances, and as we have few patients, I have spent two or three evenings in their company, practicing for our church choir."[107] There are other mentions of choir practice in her journal, and even times in which she gathered with others for a hymn sing and was highly critical of the style in which others sang, saying: "She had a remarkable voice, but has put the science of music at defiance; sings to suit her fancy. She sang the 'Gloria in Excelsis,' the most solemn and beautiful anthem we have, with as many operative touches as 'Casta Diva.'"[108] When the war ended, Cumming was able to attend normative Episcopal services that allowed her experience more music than during the Civil War.

These small notes about music preface Cumming's later feelings on the matter as discussed in her Reconstruction era journal. Her later journals indicate a defined understanding of what sacred music was supposed to be in the Episcopal Church. Music became a lens that Cumming viewed her worship through, and the role of a musician was another gendered expectation for Cumming as an Episcopal Woman. Because the predominant social class within the Episcopal Church was the social elite, the women of the denomination typically had musical training due to their upper-class status in the larger Southern society. Musical knowledge and an advanced understanding of hymnology and liturgical musical practice was therefore a distinction of a woman's social status because the study of music required free time and money. Cumming herself sang and was able to play the piano—a musical skill that required lessons and access to a piano, an instrument that was a status symbol in many upper-class households.[109] In this way,

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[107] Cumming, Journal, 235.
[108] Cumming, Journal, 116.
[109] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 69.

music was a sacred element of Episcopal worship that distinguished an Episcopal Woman within the boundaries of liturgy.

This understanding of music and its place in the church was more defined in these later journals where Cumming discusses the first time she heard the psalm chanted, saying: "For the first time I heard the Psalter chanted. The music is very fine. One of the ladies has a magnificent voice."[110] Additionally, she makes a note whenever a favorite hymn of hers is sung or whenever she is particularly moved by a hymn, like in this passage: "The opening piece, 'I will arise' brought tears to my eyes, as I thought of home and the many happy times I had sung that anthem."[111] Music became a vehicle for Cumming's larger acceptance of a particular church and a measure by which she judged churches and their ability to properly execute a service. This is normative in the Episcopal Church because of the ritualized aspects of the tradition and the expectation for churches to conform to traditional rituals of worship and music. By judging the music and indeed taking part in choirs throughout her travels, Cumming is creating her place in this tradition in one of the few roles open to women who wanted to participate in service. While barred from serving on a vestry, the altar, or being a member of the clergy; women were able to participate in services through singing and working in Sunday Schools. In taking an active role in the music of the Episcopal Church and volunteering in Sunday Schools, Cumming is asserting her place in the church as an Episcopal Woman.

It was also during this time that Cumming began to help with another of her long-term ministries—Sunday School. Multiple times in this journal she mentions her work as a Sunday School teacher and the ways in which her own education in the tradition grew because of it. For example, Cumming stated in one entry "I have spent the day teaching the children, and reading

[110] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 7-8.
[111] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 53.

the Lessons appointed for the day, and also the Church service."[112] Cumming sees her work as a Sunday School teacher connected to her own ritual practices of the Episcopal liturgy, speaking about her own use of liturgy and tradition to grow in her religious identity at the same time as when she is teaching children about the same Episcopal faith. The integration of Cumming's own growth with that of the children through this ministry showcases Cumming's continued dedication to her own growth in faith her efforts to read through the Bible and pay more attention to services than she had in the past.

Work as a Sunday School teacher was one of the few avenues for vocational work for women in the Episcopal Church. Cumming is fulfilling gendered expectations for an Episcopal Woman through being a Sunday School teacher, thereby gaining credibility with others in the church and the larger community as an Episcopal Woman. Her ministerial work then gave her credibility to comment on some aspects of denominational education, extending her abilities beyond the typical place of women in the Episcopal Church. This work in the realm of religious education later extended to teaching as a schoolteacher, which was her chosen profession from the late 1880s onward. Through this work of education and music, Cumming solidified her understanding of herself as an Episcopal Woman by taking on the roles available to women and using them to her advantage in order to legitimate her social status both inside and outside of the church community.

Whether Kate Cumming was spending time in Mobile with her home parish priest, Henry Pierce,[113] exchanging letters and visits with Bishop Quintard,[114] or working with others on her book, she was constantly interacting with Episcopal clergy during Reconstruction. Because of the ties she had made in the Civil War, she had many friends in the clergy. Cumming used these

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[112] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 70.
[113] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868."
[114] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868."

relationships to her advantage by networking in different dioceses, even selling books to people because of her social connections. Without these priests, Cumming's travels around the South would have been fraught with more difficulties. Though she was an upper-class white woman, Cumming was unmarried and so it was more difficult for her to travel freely around the South because of her lack of a male figure. Her relationships with Episcopal priests and bishops gave her an increased level of respectability in unfamiliar places around the South because clergy in the Episcopal Church relied on a patriarchy that operated like a fraternal order. This use of clergy for her own social credibility arises in the dedication of her book, *Gleanings from Southland*, where she states:

> "To the Right Rev. Henry Niles Pierce, D.D., Bishop of Arkansas, who, while rector of St. John's Church, Mobile, Alabama, comforted his sorrowing flock and raised their minds to a home of peace when amid tribulation and desolation, and to his excellent wife, who by her energy, industry, and goodness of heart, supplied the temporal wants of many a soldier's widow and orphan."[115]

With this dedication, Cumming is not only showcasing thanks to her parish priest, but establishing her long history with him and his family which goes back to his service prior to being Bishop of Arkansas. In the same way, Cumming is recalling Pierce's wife and her service as a way of lending credibility to herself because Cumming knew Pierce's wife personally and was able to expound her virtues. This use of clerical relationships was important for establishing Cumming's identity as an Episcopal Woman in unfamiliar places around the South.

Most important than these clerical relationships in the establishment of social status was the relationships that Cumming accrued with other Southern Episcopal women. While she had many friendships over the years, one relationship in particular is vital to establishing Cumming's

[115] Cumming, Gleanings from Southland.

identity as an Episcopal Woman—her correspondence with Mrs. Mary Custis Lee. Mary Custis Lee was the wife of Robert E. Lee and was a part of the social elite in Virginia. Descending from some of the first families in Virginia, Lee kept with her heritage and was an Episcopalian who attended services all her life. She and Cumming began corresponding when Cumming sent Lee a copy of her book, *A Journal of Hospital Life in the Confederate Army of Tennessee.* Lee read her book, and found it very interesting, saying to Cumming: “I received and have read your very interesting book and think a record of all that passed in the prisons and hospitals is very important as many falsehoods have been propagated and believed by our Northern brethren.”[116] In addition to these comments, Lee goes into detail about the state of hospitals in the South and the amount of false narrative about the South that she perceived coming out the North. Additionally, Lee wrote in reference to Robert E Lee, saying “The Genl desires to write with me in kind regards to you”[117] which, while potentially a use of Southern pleasantries was also accompanied by a picture of Robert E Lee with his signature.[118] Overall, this first letter was very complimentary towards Cumming, and allowed for a correspondence between the two women to begin.

In later letters, Lee and Cumming discuss Cumming’s Scottish heritage, different Scottish books and poems, the topic of a photo of Lee herself, and a visit from a Bishop Whittle at Lee’s church in Lexington. On this subject, Lee wrote:

> “We have had a most interesting visit from Bishop Whittle, whom I suppose you have seen in Louisville. He has won all hearts in Va and this is the first time I have seen him. He confirmed here 50 cadets and 13 other persons…. daily almost there is some new

[116] Kate Cumming, “Letters 1868-1869” Box One Folder Fourteen, Kate Cumming Papers, 1795-1909, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL.
[117] Cumming, “Letters 1868-1869.”
[118] Cumming, “Letters 1868-1869.”

> inquirer after salvation some of the officers also united themselves with the church on this occasions—such a scene has rarely been witnessed here. I could not attend for I was not able to jet to church but rejoiced to hear that the Spirit of God was moving among us."[119]

This story by Lee is very telling of the relationship which she and Cumming had. Within this story she mentions the assistant bishop of the Diocese of Virginia, the Rt. Rev. Frances Whittle. What is of use in this mentioning is how Lee presupposes Cumming knows of Bishop Whittle through her travels. Of importance is also the way in which Lee discusses the confirmations and the evangelism that is occurring during Reconstruction. Through all of this, both Lee and Cumming are inhabiting this understanding of an Episcopal Woman. They are speaking about liturgical and religious matters but within the normative Episcopal culture of mixing the social with the sacred. Lee and Cumming discuss the confirmations in a way that is indicative of their station in life, and with a fluency that suggests intimate understanding on the way in which social customs Southern society integrated with the Episcopal Church. Much of these letters have a comfortable tone, suggesting a shared worldview that goes beyond the similarities in social class or regional heritage. Cumming embodied the Episcopal Woman archetype not just through her journals and in her private writings, but in the relationships she created and maintained with Episcopal priests, bishops, and other important Southern Episcopal Women.

Familial deaths punctuated Kate Cumming's life in her late years, beginning with her mother in the early 1870s.[120] This trend continued throughout the 19th century, with her father, brothers and sisters, and others passing away before the turn of the century. This is important to note though, because it represents a turn in Cumming's understanding of herself and of her

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[119] Cumming, "Letters 1868-1869."
[120] Cumming, "Scrapbook Clippings."

religion. Cumming moved to Birmingham with her father in 1874, shortly before his death.[121] This move from the Reconstruction era into Cumming's later life was one which was markedly different than her life before, during, or directly after the Civil War. During this time, the South was settling back into its place in the United States, and many Southerners, Cumming included, spent much time and energy invested in the Lost Cause Narrative. While the South was creating its new narrative of the Civil War, the Episcopal Church in this time was rapidly expanding and growing beyond the United States and the sectional conflicts that had previously divided it. In this period of expansion and growth, there were many women like Cumming who began to take a larger role in ministries like music, Sunday School, along with campaigns for women to become deaconesses. In Cumming's life, her religious practices and the growth of her ministries in the church took much of her time, like many Episcopal women across the country. Through looking at Cumming's diaries from the end of the century, her various catechisms and Sunday School materials, hymn books, and other personal effects, the story of Cumming's later life showcases how she continued to embrace her religious identity as an Episcopal Woman.

During the late 1880s and 1890s, Cumming not only became heavily involved in Sunday School but even acquired her teaching license in 1896.[122] This work with children was one of Cumming's most visible displays of her Episcopal faith. Her papers are filled with different catechisms to help instruct children, explanations of Gospel readings, simple hymns to sing, and even essays written by Cumming on subjects like "Essay on Moral Training in Public Schools"[123] In this essay, Cumming espouses the use of the Bible to help teach children and its integral place in even secular education, as evidenced by this statement:

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[121] Cumming, "Scrapbook Clippings."
[122] Cumming, "Sunday School Material."
[123] Kate Cumming, "Essays and Fragments of Manuscripts" Box Two Folder Thirteen, Kate Cumming Papers, 1795-1909, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL.

> "We are a Christian nation and the blessed truths of the Bible should be early instilled into the minds of the young. Even unbelievers, atheists, and infidels, prefer sending their children where the Bible truths are taught knowing, full well, that if properly followed the children will be benefited."[124]

This later emphasis on education showcases how seriously Cumming took her commitment to the Episcopal Church and her vocational callings therein. Cumming's earlier dedication to Sunday School and to her own Episcopal faith during Reconstruction has codified into her vocational practice of the late 1890s. Cumming worked in public schools, but still spent most of her time teaching and working in Sunday Schools. Within her papers, there are three different catechisms created specifically for children's use.[125] In addition to these catechisms, there were hymn books and different writings from bishops all over the Episcopal Church. This wide spread of materials gives insight into Cumming's ability to holistically teach on the Southern Episcopal faith and culture, not just sticking to prescribed sacred elements of the tradition but integrating the sacred and social culture of the Episcopal Church. Because Cumming was so adept in her ability to teach Sunday School and pass on the unique culture of the Episcopal Church, she worked to further codify her religious identity as an Episcopal Woman.

In addition to Cumming's Sunday School materials, she also left multiple journals from this time. While in the past Cumming focused mostly on the services she went to or her service in hospitals, these journals, which date from 1898 and 1899 focus almost entirely on her Sunday School efforts. In these, she wrote on almost every aspect of her experiences in Sunday School—from the number of students, to which adults from the community came to help, what they

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[124] Cumming, "Essays and Fragments of Manuscripts."
[125] Cumming, "Sunday School Material."

discussed to which hymns they sang.[126] This change in Cumming's diary indicates a shift in how she understands not just her work but her place in her religious traditions. Earlier in her life during Reconstruction, Cumming's journal was very centered on her own emotions and her own spiritual growth, with many of the passages talking at length about her state of mind and her perceptions of services and biblical passages. These journals in contrast, focus on the growth of the children in her Sunday School class, with many references to perceived markers of success like class sizes. While there are still some passages that focus on Cumming's perception of services and her relationship with clergy like Bishops Wilmer and Jackson,[127] a grand majority of entries focus almost exclusively on her Sunday School work.

This shift in importance from herself and her inward religious growth to outward growth exemplifies Cumming's understanding of herself and her role as a Sunday School teacher. Cumming can better teach the children because she has gained the credibility as an Episcopal Woman through decades of immersion in Episcopal culture. Cumming's identity as an Episcopal Woman is not something that she has to work at embodying in the last decade of her life, it is as much a part of her as her identity as a Southerner or a Scottish woman. Because of the many years that she focused on striving towards the complete embodiment of the Episcopal Woman and identity, it is the identity she is most comfortable with in her daily life. Cumming's perception of herself as an Episcopal Woman establishes her social status in the larger community and allows her to perform her work as a teacher, Sunday School teacher, and author beginning in Reconstruction and continuing through the turn of the century.

[126] Kate Cumming, "Journal 1898-1899," Box Three Folder Four, Kate Cumming Papers, 1795-1909, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL.
[127] Cumming, "Journal 1898-1899.

The Episcopal Church and the Lost Cause: The Episcopal Church in the Second Half of the 19th Century

While Kate Cumming was becoming comfortable in her identity as an Episcopal Woman, the Episcopal Church in the South was becoming comfortable with the use of the Lost Cause narrative. Looking at the Diocese of Alabama, there was tremendous growth under Richard Wilmer's tenure from 1861 through to 1900,[128] and in this time, Wilmer worked to found an order of deaconesses to help Confederate orphans and widows.[129] In addition to the actions of Wilmer, the diocese as a whole was experiencing a large amount of growth as the South slowly bounced back from the devastation of the Civil War and more people moved to Alabama. Around Cumming's new home of Birmingham, there were multiple churches founded, including St. Mary's-in-the-Highlands, a church that Cumming herself attended.[130] The growth of the Diocese of Alabama matched that of surrounding dioceses, with dioceses in Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, and other states experiencing the same level of growth.

This period of growth brought stability back to the churches in the South, but it also brought the Lost Cause narrative into Episcopal churches. Even before the end of the war, the Confederate Episcopal Church worked to craft its response to a Southern loss, as seen in the previous chapter. When the South lost the Civil War and the Confederate Episcopal Church dissolved, the pro-slavery views of the individual bishops and priests did not disappear. One of the most vocal proponents of the Lost Cause was Bishop Richard Wilmer from Alabama. In the early 1880s, Wilmer was the strongest proponent against the so-called Sewanee Conference. This Conference would have established a separate organization for black Episcopalians. Wilmer vehemently opposed this plan, believing that "African-Americans were likely to degenerate

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[128] Wilmer, *From a Southern Standpoint.*
[129] Wilmer, *From a Southern Standpoint.*
[130] Cumming, "Journal 1898-1899," "Sunday School Material."

morally unless they were constantly supervised by white church leaders."[131] Wilmer remained pro-slavery through the rest of his life, recalling the typical paternalistic arguments for its continuation.[132] This espousal of the Lost Cause narrative is not surprising, but it is indicative of the Episcopal Church in Alabama, and lends understanding to Kate Cumming's own predilection to holding onto the Lost Cause narrative.

Kate Cumming began her Lost Cause narrative very soon after the end of the Civil War. In her Reconstruction journal, Cumming espouses her view on the state of affairs in March of 1867, stating:

> "The Yankee Congress have filled the bitter cup of Southern people to overflowing. They have passed a law that the South are to have military rulers, and that the property is to be taken from the white people and given to the blacks, and that none but the loyal people (the negroes) are to vote. All of this is a great trial to the people but one that they will have bear, as their seems to be no alternative."[133]

This excerpt from Cumming's journal is indicative of the animosity that the white Southerners felt against both the North and the black people of the South. While the validity of Cumming's assertions on the property rights is questionable, her feelings of marginalization are important to note. Her identity as an upper-class white Southerner was under attack by the United States government because of Congressional Reconstruction and the punishment of white Southerners by the passing of laws. Due to this, it makes sense that Cumming would turn to her religion to understand the actions of the Unites States government, especially because the actions of her bishop echoed her own sentiments, the military stand-off between the Union and the Diocese of Alabama only ending a year prior. During Reconstruction, white women in the South turned to

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[131] Hein and Shattuck, 326.
[132] Wilson, 102-3.
[133] Cumming, "Journal 1866-1868," 72.

institutions like the Episcopal Church to support their Lost Cause narratives. Kate Cumming took the fear that she was feeling as a white woman in the South and integrated it seamlessly into her Episcopal Woman identity.

Her continued belief in the Lost Cause later in life manifested through her participation in the United Daughters of the Confederacy and in her fiction writing of the 1890s. Cumming's book, *The Bostonians, or, Seeing is Believing*, paints a very paternalistic view of slavery in the Antebellum era, and portrays enslaved people as willing participants in slavery. Cumming foresaw a potential issue with the insertion of a rose-colored lens into a story on the Antebellum South and included a note to the public about the portrayal of slavery in this book, saying: "Her object is to show that all was not evil in the system and that often the good predominated.... that the slaveowner had too much power, I think, nearly all will admit, but people who used that power unmercifully were ostracized."[134] This is to say that Cumming never forgot the paternalistic roots of her Southern identity and of her Episcopal identity. The Lost Cause wove itself into Cumming's Episcopal Woman identity because the men in charge of the church sanctified this inclusion through their individual actions. The archetype of the Episcopal Woman therefore took on the auspices of the Lost Cause narrative in order to further signal the superiority of upper-class white women in the Southern social hierarchy. The archetype of the Episcopal Woman exhibited many of the markers of the Lost Cause narrative even before the end of the war, but in the changes brought by Reconstruction and the second half of the 19th century, the Lost Cause was fully integrated into the Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Woman through the actions of the men in charge and the women who supported them.

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[134] Kate Cumming, "Manuscript: 'The Bostonians' or 'Seeing is Believing,'" Box Two Folder One, Kate Cumming Papers, 1795-1909, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL.

By studying Cumming during Reconstruction and at the turn of the century, a better understanding of Cumming as a woman grappling with the destruction of her way of life leads to a more nuanced understanding of the peace that Cumming embodied with her religious identity later in life. Her relationship with the social and sacred culture of the Episcopal Church went through many different shifts and changes during her later years. From her use of her faith to understand the failure of her book, her rededication to her religious identity during the changes of Reconstruction, and her use of Episcopal relationships to gain credibility, Cumming took on the identity of the Episcopal Woman after the monumental shifts of the Civil War. At the turn of the century, Cumming is at peace with her Episcopal identity, and takes on the vocational role of Sunday School teacher. She performs this to pass on the Southern Episcopal culture to the next generation, while also bolstering the Lost Cause narrative through her work to pass on the Southern Episcopal culture that mirrors the social systems and hierarchies of the Old South. For Cumming this slow transition into a comfortable identity as an Episcopal Woman was integral to her life as a Southern social elite and to the way in which she made sense of and became at peace with the continually shifting world of the post-Civil War South.

Conclusion

Over the course of Kate Cumming's life she took on many different roles: daughter, sister, nurse, Southerner, author, teacher, and Episcopalian. In looking at the different eras of Cumming's life, her understanding of herself shifts depending on the social and cultural climate of the time as well as the trials that she is facing at that moment. By situating her life through a religious lens and contextualizing her within the larger history of the Episcopal Church, her Episcopal faith becomes the undercurrent which connects all the differing aspects of her life. This undercurrent creates this unconscious but very present archetype of the Episcopal Woman: An Episcopal woman who is a member of the social elite that integrates and defines her social status through participation in the social and sacred culture inherent to the Episcopal Church and its traditions.

Women in the Episcopal Church existed as participants in the patriarchal organization of the Episcopal Church for much of its existence. The women of the 19th century South were no exception to this rule. Kate Cumming placed herself within a long line of women who practiced the traditions of the Episcopal Church, took on unofficial vocational roles, and used their religious identity to establish their social status in Southern society. Because Cumming embodied many of the normative aspects of the Episcopal Woman. her writings and her life provide an enlightening case study in which to situate the Episcopal Woman archetype within the larger context of the Episcopal Church and its place in 19th century Southern history.

The archetype of the Episcopal Woman goes hand in hand with the antebellum conception of a Southern Woman. From its support of a patriarchal organization, ritualized activity, and the integration of the sacred and the social into a unified culture, the Episcopal

Woman is the Southern Woman of the Antebellum era. The only shift that needs to occur between these two identities is the overarching patriarchal organization—just with the plantation household exchanged for the Episcopal Church. Often, the women who participated in the Episcopal Church as an Episcopal Woman after the Civil War were slaveholders and supporters of the plantation household.

Though Cumming did not own slaves, she existed in the upper social tier of Mobile society, participated in the upper-class social events of the city, and embodied the gendered expectations for Southern women in this time. When the Civil War began, Cumming shirked aspects of her Southern identity in favor of appealing to her religious identity when faced with problems surrounding respectability and nursing. While the precepts and expectations for Southern women discouraged nursing, the archetype of the Episcopal Woman endorsed nursing because these women were allowed to perform their sacred duty and take care of the men—an aspect of the Episcopal Woman that hearkened back to the Cult of True Womanhood.[135] Nursing became an embodied performance of the Episcopal Woman archetype.

Throughout the war, the understanding of the Southern Woman waned as cultural institutions which supported its existence fell to the changes wrought by the war. In its place, the Episcopal Woman archetype emerged, fusing the patriarchal attitudes of the Episcopal Church, the pro-slavery views of individual actors, and the pre-existing historical social framework of the Episcopal Church to the vestiges of white Southern womanhood. In order to understand the new world of the South, the women of the Episcopal Church reframed their existence according to the liturgy, calendar, and other traditional and cultural aspects of the denomination. In the later half of the Civil War and during Reconstruction, Episcopal women took the remaining aspects of

[135] Marie Molloy, *Single, White, Slaveholding Women in the Nineteenth-Century American South,* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2018): 92.

Southern womanhood and refashioned them in the image of past Episcopal gender ideals, recalling Anglican women in the colonial era and in Great Britain. Rededicating themselves to learning more about their Episcopal faith and inserting their Episcopal faith into social ideas such as the Lost Cause narrative, Episcopal women created a new gendered religious ideal: The Episcopal Woman. The archetype of the 'Episcopal Woman' is the epitome of the normative gendered expectation of women in this denomination as crafted by the patriarchal structure and the women of the denomination. The Episcopal Woman archetype mostly existed in the American South and took shape during and in the wake of the Civil War. Because of the immense change that occurred in the American South during the Civil War, socially elite women needed to hold onto roles and gendered ideals that recalled the traditions and hierarchies of the Old South. The Episcopal Church's emphasis on traditions and hierarchies that stretched back to the Church of England, its integral ties to the English aristocracy, and the original English colonists of the South was a natural choice for these Southern Episcopal women to cling to in this period of change.

Interwoven in this crafting of a new religious ideal is the difficult conversations about race that the Episcopal Church attempted to avoid, at least in the official record. Individually, most bishops and priests in the Episcopal Church held pro-slavery views, with many believing the typical religious arguments for the preservation of slavery as a means of civilizing enslaved people. During and immediately after the Civil War, the Episcopal Church sidestepped the conversation around race in favor of reestablishing the unity of the denomination in the face of rapidly changing racial dynamics. White Episcopalians across the country were feeling threatened by emancipation, and while officially the split of the Episcopal Church ended because of return of the Confederate States to the Union, unofficially white Episcopalians were craving a

return to the former culture of subjugation and patriarchal values that enabled whiteness to thrive in the Episcopal Church. The formation of the archetype of the Episcopal Woman occurred in this environment of fear for the loss of superiority and sustained through the codification of the upper-class white woman's superiority over everyone within the denomination outside of the men who crafted the patriarchy these women full-heartedly supported.

In contemporary times, women in the Episcopal Church can hold any job within the ecclesial structure. The time where men denominated the Episcopal Church and solely decided its future has ended, but the significance of that time and the archetypes created remain today. The Episcopal Woman of the 19th century was a repackaging of the patriarchal ideals of Southern Women in the Antebellum period. By using Kate Cumming and her understanding of herself in the time before, during, and after the Civil War as a case study, the Episcopal Woman and her distinct understanding of Southern society comes to life.

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