TO "CURE HER OF HER PRIDE AND BOASTING": THE GENDERED IMPLICATIONS OF SHERMAN’S MARCH

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2001
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by

Lisa Tendrich Frank
Although writing a dissertation is a lonely endeavor, it cannot be done alone. I feel lucky to have had a tremendous amount of support along the way from a large group of people. First and foremost, I would like to thank my doctoral committee. I am fortunate to have a committee that all along has both encouraged my ideas and challenged me to push them further. My work has benefited from their advice and insights. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, my advisor, encouraged me to find a topic that I could get excited about and supported me when I finally found it. His helpful comments and insights, generous use of Milbauer funds, and introduction to a particular Brandeis graduate made my time in graduate school far more enjoyable than I had anticipated. Louise Newman, in particular, pushed me to expand my understandings and conceptions of gender, women, and women’s history. Fitz Brundage, Thomas Gallant, and David Leverenz all helped me at different stages of my project, even when I moved 3,000 miles away.

Many other scholars have helped me refine my ideas and incorporate new ones over the years. Kathleen Donohue, Laura Edwards, Michael Fellman, Gary Gallagher, John Marszalek, Joan Waugh, and the members of the Tucker Society all read portions of my work and offered helpful suggestions. Their insights proved invaluable. I have also
benefited from conversations over meals, drinks, and desserts with Ed Baptist, Jackie Campbell, Clark Davis, Stan Deaton, Philip Goff, Marcus Harvey, Helen Kinsella, Cheryl Koos, Susan Lewis, Karen Lystra, Andy Moore, Marcus Nenn, and Frankie White. I hope I have been able to incorporate all of their ideas and answer all of their questions. In junior high, Veda Mara Levin encouraged my love of writing and taught me how to express myself. Later in life, Stephen B. Oates revived my love of history and the Civil War and encouraged me to pursue it into graduate school. I cannot thank them enough.

The staffs at several libraries helped me immensely by pointing out manuscript collections that might prove useful and regaling me with family stories about Sherman’s March. I would especially like to thank Dick Shrader at the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina, Henry Fulmer at the South Caroliniana Library of the University of South Carolina, Elizabeth Dunn at the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library of Duke University, Dale Couch at the Georgia Department of Archives and History, as well as Roy Ritchie, Susi Krasnoo, and Christopher Adde at the Henry E. Huntington Library. I would also like to thank the rest of the staffs at these three institutions as well as those at the Atlanta History Center, the Special Collections Department in the Robert W. Woodruff Library at Emory University, the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library at the University of Georgia, the Georgia Historical Society, the Library of Congress, the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, the South Carolina Historical Society, and the University of Florida. In addition, the members of the office staff of the University of Florida’s History
Department have done whatever was in their power to make things easy for me. For that, and their friendship, I thank Betty Corwine, Barbara Guynn, and Linda Opper.

I am grateful for financial support from an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation fellowship at the Henry E. Huntington Library, a Women’s Studies Research Grant from Duke University, and an Albert J. Beveridge Grant from the American Historical Association. The University of Florida has also generously assisted me through a Gerson Dissertation Fellowship, Grinter Fellowship, George Pozzetta Fellowship, and Richard J. Milbauer Fellowship.

For giving me places to stay when I was on the road and making research trips a lot less lonely than they could have been, special thanks go to Amy Cavanaugh, Stan and Debbie Deaton, Donna and Mark Fleishman, Peter Hartog, Lynne and Roger Irvine, Jennifer and Jay Langdale, Jim and Maxine Perlmutter, Sherry Seitlin, Pat Solley, and Keith and Tara Spolan. All of these friends and family, Southern or not, have shown me the best of Southern hospitality. Vanessa Guzzi, Brenda Rosen, and Deborah Roth do not live in places where I needed to do research, but they each gave me moral support and kept me smiling through the long process.

I feel fortunate to have both married into and been born into a wonderful family. It would take too long to mention everyone who has loved and supported me over the years, but a few deserve special mention. In addition to sharing Andrew with me, my in-laws have offered me nothing but support and encouragement. My mother- and father-in-law, Judie and Paul Frank, as well as my brother- and sister-in-law, Gary and Gail Frank,
have happily incorporated me into the family and treated me as if I had been born a
Frank. My parents, Marilyn and Howard Tendrich, have gladly supported me in
everything I ever wanted to do. They taught me to believe in myself and cheered me on
whenever I lost my confidence. I can never thank them enough for being such wonderful
parents and friends to me. I especially appreciate all they did in their efforts to
understand what I have been doing for the past seven years. My mom deserves special
thanks for going far beyond the call of duty by accompanying me on research trips. Not
only was she good company, but she also turned out to be a great research assistant. My
brother, Jon, has always kept me on my toes and cheered me on and I love him for both.
My grandparents, Shirley and Jack Seitlin and Helen Tendrich, have all been unbelievably
supportive throughout this process. I wish I could have taken them up on their offers of
help. Their quiet prodding and their constant love and encouragement have helped me get
through everything. Savannah has been a great distraction and calming influence.

Andrew has been the best of everything since I met him seven years ago. He has
always believed in me and has helped me believe in myself. The road to this point would
have been unbearably lonely and boring without him as my best friend, cheerleader, chef,
sounding board, psychologist, editor, research assistant, proofreader, traveling
companion, and husband. At this point, he probably knows more about Sherman,
Southern women, and the Civil War than he ever wanted to know, but he has been patient
and encouraging nonetheless. I know my work is better because of him. He’s been a
wonderful tour guide through history and life. I love him everything.
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TO "CURE HER OF HER PRIDE AND BOASTING": THE GENDERED IMPLICATIONS OF SHERMAN'S MARCH

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December 2001

Chair: Bertram Wyatt-Brown
Major Department: History

This dissertation explores the gendered aspects of Union General William Tecumseh Sherman's Civil War campaign through Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina homefront. It specifically addresses how Southern women adapted their gender identities to encompass regional concerns during the 1864 and 1865 campaign. In particular, it highlights the ways in which the march and its assault on domesticity galvanized Southern women and prompted them to embrace "Confederate womanhood." In their fight to protect themselves, their homes, their possessions, and their families from Union troops, Confederate women physically and verbally attacked the invaders. Such defiance, as well as women's continued support for the Confederacy, demonstrated their pride in and support for their nation. Instead of crushing female support for the...
Confederacy as planned, Sherman’s March provoked women to an intense, unwavering support for their country.

Elite white women were especially outraged by Sherman’s direct assault on the domestic sphere. Union troops focused their attack on slaveholding women, who they believed instigated and promoted rebellion by urging Southern men to secede, enlist, and remain on the battlefield. The recognition of women’s wartime participation allowed Northern soldiers to disregard gender conventions that traditionally shielded white women from direct attacks. Consequently, Union troops attacked the trappings of domesticity—women’s wardrobes, fine china, silver candlesticks, glass vases, private journals, and fancy linens. They deliberately ransacked spaces defined as domestic, not only the house as a whole, but also women’s bedrooms and private chambers and, subsequently, put the fear of rape in the forefront of Southern women’s minds. Destruction and terror on this level struck at the heart of the feminine sphere. By directly threatening the feminine sphere, the march reinforced the Rebel loyalty of its victims and provoked their persistent hatred of the Northern invaders.
INTRODUCTION:
"FULL OF FIRE AND PATRIOTISM": SHERMAN’S MARCH AND SOUTHERN WOMEN

In late 1864 and 1865, cries of "the Yankees are coming! The Yankees are coming!" echoed throughout Georgia and the Carolinas. 1 Although alarmed by the news, Confederate women in these states had prepared themselves for the possibility. From the beginning of the Georgia campaign, they had carefully tracked United States General William Tecumseh Sherman’s 60,000 Northern soldiers as they burned a trail through the lower South. In their pursuit of "hard war," the troops under Sherman’s command left a wide swath of destruction in their wake. The attack on the Southern homefront included burning plantations and houses, stealing food and household items, destroying railroads and unwanted food sources, as well as taunting and terrorizing civilians. These actions demonstrated Sherman’s determination to break the will of white Southerners by bringing the harsh realities of war home. The campaign’s success has often led scholars to

overlook the strong resistance of Confederate women. Although Sherman’s March has been widely studied and documented as an event of great military importance in the Civil War, the gendered implications of, and the experiences of women during, the campaign have not.

“To ‘Cure Her of Her Pride and Boasting’: The Gendered Implications of Sherman’s March” treats the 1864-1865 campaign as Sherman understood it, as a direct assault on the South’s elite white women. This controversial tactic resulted from Sherman’s understanding of Southern society, and his conviction that slaveholding women were essential to the Confederate war effort. Sherman made his appreciation of Southern women clear early in the war, explaining to his brother, Ohio Senator John Sherman, that “the entire South, man, woman, and child are against us, armed and determined.”2 With this rationale, General Sherman justified a military assault that would strike at all Southerners, and elite women in particular. In the Georgia and Carolinas campaign Sherman targeted slaveholding women, who he believed had instigated and promoted rebellion by urging Southern men to secede, enlist, and remain on the battlefield. His recognition of women’s wartime participation allowed Sherman to disregard gender conventions that traditionally shielded white women from direct attacks. Sherman

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conceived of white Southern women as Confederates, rebels, and enemies, and treated them accordingly.

As he planned the Georgia and Carolinas campaign, Sherman specified goals that clearly targeted Southern women and their domestic worlds. Hoping to "make Georgia howl" and the South as a whole submit, Sherman ordered his troops to wage "hard war." In addition to "forag[ing] liberally" for food and destroying Confederate supply lines, Sherman's men struck at domestic and female targets. Union troops attacked the trappings of domesticity—women's wardrobes, fine china, silver candlesticks, glass vases, private journals, and fancy linens. They also deliberately ransacked spaces defined as domestic, not only the house as a whole, but also women's bedrooms and private chambers. Destruction on this level extended to the breaking of those items that would not necessarily directly assist the Confederate war effort, and instead struck at the heart of the feminine sphere. As the focus of this Union campaign, the white women in Georgia and the Carolinas could not help but participate as central actors in the Civil War. A study of Sherman's March provides an ideal opportunity to take women and gender

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out of the margins and place them within the narrative of Civil War history. The march, and the Civil War as a whole, cannot be understood without an examination of women's roles as civilian combatants.

Scholars of Sherman's March are not alone in marginalizing women's place in the conflict. Until recently, most Civil War historians have focused primarily on the male aspects of war. What happened on the battlefield and in the political realm has taken precedence over all else. Consequently, they often leave women on the outskirts of Civil War history, minimizing their roles in both experiencing and shaping the course of the war. Historians have not yet integrated women into general studies of the war, but have segregated them into the domain of "women's history." Instead of synthesizing women

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into studies of the war, explorations of them during the Civil War era generally fall into three discrete categories, all influenced by traditional views of women and gender roles. A large number of studies emphasize organized female activities, especially nursing, soldiers’ aid, and fundraising. Other historical works focus on women’s role in what

scholars consider the war’s background—the homefront. Finally, in an effort to show women’s feats beyond the conventional female sphere, a few investigations highlight women’s extraordinary acts as spies or soldiers. In all of these instances, scholars have


maintained long-standing ideas about women and womanhood, only allowing their subjects to act in prototypically feminine or feminist ways. As a result, they have confined women to their own separate sphere in Civil War history. This segregation does not allow for a nuanced understanding of Sherman’s March, the Southern homefront, Confederate women, or the war.

Women’s marginalization in Civil War history, and in Confederate history in particular, reflects the contours of Southern women’s history. Despite the general consensus regarding the mythologized ideal of the Southern lady, scholars of slaveholding women disagree over the extent to which their subjects embraced their society. Some, like Catherine Clinton, assert that “the plantation mistress” lived between worlds, privileged by her class and race while constrained by her gender. In the antebellum South, Clinton argues, “white men ruled, and both white women and slaves served the same master.” This was not a comfortable position for slaveholding women to hold, but “women did not resist as much as resent” this system. Elite white women, in this interpretation, found

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slaveholding and plantation life a burden.⁹ Others disagree. Instead, they argue, “slaveholding women, who never figured as mere passive victims of male dominance, benefited from the membership in a ruling class.” Elite white women, in this view, served as proponents rather than detractors of the South and its social order. Once again debunking the myth of the “Southern lady,” these scholars place elite white women at the core of Southern slaveholding culture. Women not only benefited from slavery, but they also embraced it. Slaveholding women, like their husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons, often treated slaves cruelly, avidly supported secession, resented abolitionist intervention, and adhered to the tenets of Southern honor.¹⁰


The debate over the position of elite white women in Southern society extends into the historiography of the Civil War. Those who believe that white women resented the antebellum patriarchal society naturally argue that these women had few reasons to support the Confederacy. Clearly not all elite white women, or men, supported the Confederacy. Historians such as Thomas G. Dyer, Jane H. Pease, and William H. Pease, have drawn attention to the “Secret Yankees,” Unionist women, and families of mixed loyalties across the South.11


Gilpin Faust and George C. Rable, argue that women’s conditional support for the Confederacy was a natural outgrowth of their gender; white women’s femininity would not allow them to support a protracted war effort that required extended sacrifice and self-abnegation. As a result, Faust and Rable present women whose femininity took precedence over their regional loyalties. They were women in the South, not women of the South. Few scholars would disagree with this assessment of women’s strong gender identity, and only recently have some begun to accept Southern women as ardent Confederate nationalists.


13 Gary W. Gallagher, The Confederate War: How Popular Will, Nationalism, and Military Strategy Could Not Stave Off Defeat (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Jacqueline Glass Campbell, “‘Terrible has been the Storm’: Sherman, the South and the Cultural Politics of Invasion,” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2000). Although George C. Rable stresses women’s conditional Confederate patriotism in Civil Wars, he acknowledges their sustained loyalty in a more recent study. “Indeed, what remains most remarkable about the Confederacy was not its internal weaknesses--political, social, or economic--but its staying power and especially the ability of so many men and women to endure and make sacrifices.” George C. Rable, The Confederate Republic: A Revolution Against Politics (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 300.
“To ‘Cure Her of Her Pride and Boasting’” explores how the march and its assault on domesticity galvanized Southern women and prompted them to embrace a Confederate identity. It closely examines the white Southern women whose regional identities evolved into a vehement Confederate patriotism. As Confederate women, they consistently behaved in ways that encompassed both their regional and gender identities. Furthermore, these female Rebels did not consider their loyalty to the Confederacy as unfeminine. They saw adherence to the cause and their faith in the men engaged in warfare as a natural extension of their Southernness. Activities that might have seemed unfeminine during peacetime became appropriate during wartime. Confederate women physically and verbally attacked the invading troops as they fought to protect themselves, their homes, their possessions, and their families from “Satan Sherman and his imps.”

Such defiance, especially among elite women in Georgia and the Carolinas, as well as women’s continued support for the Confederacy, demonstrated their pride in and support for their nation. As a result, instead of crushing female support for the Confederacy as planned, Sherman’s March provoked women to an intense, unwavering support for their country. Confederate women supported their homeland while adhering to the ideals of Southern ladyhood as they understood them.

Chapter 1, "'War Means Ruin and Misery': Punishing Southern Women," places the gendered motives and tactics of Union troops at the center of the campaign's basic narrative. It contends that Sherman specifically designed his campaign through Georgia and the Carolinas as a comprehensive assault on Southern domesticity. This, Sherman believed, would eradicate white Southern women's support for their nation and the war. In addition, it would "cure her of her pride and boasting." Consequently, during the campaign Union troops purposefully ransacked homes and bedrooms, taunted and threatened Southern women, as well as ravaged women's personal letters, journals, sheet music, wedding dresses, and other sentimental treasures. Union soldiers primarily justified the attack on these non-military items and areas as part of a campaign to destroy the pride and punish the disloyalty of Confederate women.

Chapter 2, "'The Fiends Will Dance After Him in High Glee': Becoming Confederates," argues that before Sherman's men arrived at their homes, white women in Georgia and the Carolinas recognized that they had become domestic enemies and targets of Union hostility. Union actions—especially the imprisonment of "Rebel" women in Washington, Benjamin "Beast" Butler's Woman Order, Philip Sheridan's Shenandoah campaign, and the early reports of Sherman's March—demonstrated to white Southern women that they would no longer be shielded from the horrors of war by their gender or

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class. As the line between homefront and warfront disappeared, and Sherman’s men approached, Confederate women readied to battle Union troops. The anticipation of imminent confrontations with Sherman’s troops provoked Southern women’s consciousness as Confederates to grow stronger.

White Southern women did not confine their support for their nation to words or individual actions. Chapter 3, "'With Hearts Nerved by the Necessity for Prompt Action': Confederate Women," demonstrates that Confederate women in Georgia and the Carolinas displayed their regional loyalty through increased work for their nation as Sherman’s troops approached. From the outset of the Civil War, white women actively supported the Confederacy as they raised money, encouraged enlistment, sewed uniforms, rolled bandages, nursed wounded, and performed many other tasks to contribute to the war effort. These wartime roles both reflected their dedication to their nation and further promoted a strengthening of Confederate womanhood through the development of a shared sense of identity with others across the South. Consequently, women’s roles in the Confederacy did not force them to choose between their femininity and regional identities. Instead, these actions demonstrated that slaveholding women’s intrinsic Southernness required them to move into roles that emphasized their loyalty to their nation through their work as Confederate women.

In addition, Chapter 3 treats the Columbia Bazaar of early 1865 as the quintessential display of Confederate womanhood. As Sherman and his soldiers closed in on the capital of South Carolina, the Confederate women there flaunted their loyalty with
an elaborate fundraising bazaar for Southern soldiers. In particular, the bazaar demonstrated to the invading soldiers that Confederate women would not easily be subdued. The imminent approach of Union troops made it difficult to organize and stock a fundraising bazaar, but instead of dampening women’s enthusiasm, it inspired them to redouble their efforts. Sherman’s March gave Confederate women a sense of immediacy that motivated them to increase their work for Southern soldiers. Their knowledge of the impending attack allowed white women to support the war effort as the Union invasion directly threatened their homes and personal safety.

When confronted with Union troops in their homes and neighborhoods, Confederate women discovered that their gender and class provided even less protection than they had anticipated. Chapter 4, “‘No Place, No Person is Sacred From Their Profanation’: Sherman’s March,” asserts that Northern soldiers routinely and purposefully violated the traditional norms that gave white women a protected status in nineteenth-century America. This unprecedented attack on Southern domesticity and homes forced white women to defend both their regional and gender identities. Successfully adapting their femininity to one that included a defense of their homes and their nation, Confederate women made clear their belief that Sherman and his troops were inhuman, uncivilized, and capable of anything. These female Rebels responded to the assault on domesticity and femininity by using it as an opportunity to intensify their fight for their nation, their homes, and their loved ones. In doing this, they proudly
asserted their Confederate patriotism as they confronted the enemy soldiers invading their domestic sphere.

Not only did Sherman and his men leave physical destruction and ruin in their path, but they also left bitterness, hatred, and Confederate patriotism in their wake. Chapter 5, “‘A Rebel as Long as I Live’: The Intensity of Confederate Womanhood,” argues that white women’s persistent belief in the Confederacy and continued animosity toward the enemy resulted directly from their experiences as civilian targets during Sherman’s March. The invasion of the domestic sphere during Sherman’s campaign failed to force Georgia and Carolina women to yield. It also had some unanticipated consequences; the march magnified women’s Confederate patriotism while it reinvigorated their sense of the irreconcilable differences between Confederates and Northerners. The march created in Confederate women “a hatred that knows no change, and [a people who] can never forget what they have done, even to the tenth generation.”16 Sherman’s March helped ensure Union victory, but it could not “break the pride of the [women of the] South.”17

16 Loula Kendall Rogers, 11 May 1865, Loula Kendall Rogers Papers, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

17 William T. Sherman to Ellen Sherman, 23 March 1865, Home Letters of General Sherman, 334-335.
Sherman’s March may not have destroyed women’s war efforts or Confederate patriotism, but it had far-reaching and ruinous effects on the South. The epilogue, "‘Between Death and Dishonor’: Shaming Southern Soldiers” explores the consequences of Sherman’s March on white Southern men. The results of the campaign, specifically designed to emasculate men and demoralize women, suggest that it may have been more successful in its indirect attack on Confederate soldiers than it was in its direct assault on the nation’s women. Although physically removed from the violence on the homefront, soldiers from Georgia and the Carolinas felt the psychological brunt of the attack. In short, the campaign destroyed Southern men’s confidence in their ability to protect their homes and families. It consequently forced Confederate soldiers to come to grips with the fact that they could not protect Southern womanhood from the onslaughts of war.

* * *

American Civil War historians have often depicted Southern white women in the latter war years as a battered lot. Exhausted from wartime realities and their own sacrifices, the argument runs, Southern women had decided that the costs of the conflict were too high. Whatever pro-Confederate sympathies that may have remained by late 1864 should have quickly dissipated with the threat of a personal attack by Union troops. However, as “To ‘Cure Her of Her Pride and Boasting’” argues, by directly threatening the feminine sphere, Sherman’s March had the opposite effect on its targets. Rather than crushing Southern women into demoralized submission, the march reinforced the Rebel loyalty of its victims and provoked their persistent hatred of the Northern
invaders. As word of Sherman’s devastation became known, the march confirmed long-held prejudices against Yankees and resulted in a renewed and strengthened belief in the Confederate cause.

Tom Taylor, a Union soldier who “witnessed a scene of destruction and woe,” assessed Sherman’s March as “a black page for American history!” Sherman’s March, he believed, would long be understood as he saw it, as an attack on helpless civilian women and children. This assessment proved accurate. Since 1865, most scholars of the Civil War, and of Sherman’s March in particular, have glossed over Confederate women’s experiences and active participation in the war. Assuming that Southern women passively suffered through a horrible ordeal over which they had little control, scholars have spent little time on female Rebels. However, a closer look at Sherman’s March reveals white Southern women as ardent and active Confederates. Their place at the heart of the campaign allowed them to understand its implications in ways that most historians have not. One woman noted the significance early in the campaign. “How that march

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18 Thomas T. Taylor, 23 November 1864, Diary, Thomas T. Taylor Collection, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. Taylor made this comments after watching foragers “[enter] the premises and after robbing family of every thing to eat, deliberately [proceed] to break jars, dishes, furniture &c. until not more than a dozen half sashes were left and not a single piece of furniture left undamaged.” They “then robbed the beds of their bedding, wardrobes of their clothing and cut open mattrasses even to the one on which the little children slept on their crib. To complete their inhuman and fiendish act [they drove] the lady big with child, her innocent, little children and her aged mother from the house.” They even took “the graduating diploma of Miss Bryan . . . tore the ribbon and seal from it and cast it on the floor.”
through those feminine foes in Georgia will read in History! The cry of those ruined households will sound along the ages." As another Confederate woman noted, female Rebels did not stand quietly by as non-combatants while Union soldiers ransacked their homes. Instead, they began a campaign of their own, vowing that as Confederate women they "[would] never submit to Yankee dominion."20


20 Louisa Jane Harllee Pearce to Ameilia, [March 1865], Benjamin H. Teague Papers, 1846-1921, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.
CHAPTER 1:
“WAR MEANS RUIN AND MISERY”:
PUNISHING SOUTHERN WOMEN

In late 1864, Union General William Tecumseh Sherman, with 60,000 soldiers under his command, set out on one of the most destructive campaigns in American military history up to that point. After capturing and occupying Atlanta, Georgia, in September 1864, the Union troops began marching east to Savannah in November. At the end of the March to the Sea and after a short sojourn in Savannah, they continued their campaign into the Carolinas at the beginning of 1865. By the time the march ended on April 26, 1865, near Durham Station, North Carolina, Sherman had inflicted more than $100,000,000 in physical damage as well as immeasurable psychological scars on the Southern homefront.1 Having secured the surrender of Confederate General Joseph Johnston, the Union proclaimed the march a success. The campaign had fulfilled two

interrelated goals: to break the will of Confederates and to destroy the material and human resources supporting the rebel military.

This chapter, in addition to providing a basic narrative of the march as it relates to civilians, explores the gendered motives and tactics of Sherman and his Union troops. Although they generally avoided physical contact with the elite white women of the South, Union soldiers found and employed countless ways to strike at their enemies’ femininity and livelihoods. This assault went far beyond the foraging and burning on which prior historians have focused their attention. Union soldiers ravaged homes, entered bedrooms, insulted women, threatened rape, destroyed personal items, and otherwise unleashed an unprecedented domestic assault. In most instances, these actions formed part of a premeditated plan that Sherman and his troops articulated prior to, and justified throughout, the campaign.

* * *

Few historians acknowledge the centrality of women to Union tactics in the 1864-1865 campaign. Instead, most focus on the official military objectives of the march to destroy both the Confederacy’s ability to provide supplies to its army and the morale of its supporters. With few exceptions, scholars have conflated the two goals, assuming that Union attempts to destroy material resources constituted the sole means of crushing the spirits of the “rebels” who supported secession and the Confederacy. In addition, their assessments have invariably defined the Confederate supporters in the path of
Sherman with an ungendered definition of “civilian.” As a result, they treat the campaign as a conflict between men on the battlefield, while ignoring the power of the largely female civilian population. Because Union troops faced little sustained resistance from the Confederate army, most analyses of the March focus on the ease with which Sherman progressed through the South and asserted his military advantage.² In addition, these accounts prioritize what happened while the troops were between cities and towns rather than when they were inside them. This approach neglects a discussion of the resistance that the South’s white women exhibited. In all of these ways, scholars have marginalized white Southern women from the conflict and have treated them as passive victims.³

² Although he helped make war on the civilian enemy and faced the female population’s ire, Union officer Henry Hitchcock similarly minimized women’s role as enemy combatants in comparison to male troops. Despite experiences to the contrary, he asserted that during the March to the Sea “we have met as yet no enemy, and no opposition.” Henry Hitchcock, 24 November 1864, Marching With Sherman: Passages from the Letters and Campaign Diaries of Henry Hitchcock, Major Assistant Adjutant General of Volunteers, November 1864-May 1865, ed. M. A. DeWolfe Howe (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 89.

³ Lee B. Kennett explores the first stage of Sherman’s March in his Marching Through Georgia: The Story of Soldiers and Civilians during Sherman’s Campaign (New York: HarperCollins, 1995). Despite its title, Kennett’s book focuses primarily on the military aspects and actions of the campaign. Only Chapter 14 offers a close look at the interactions between soldiers and civilians. By turning women into passive victims, Kennett and other scholars have left the impression that the North actually invaded a quiescent South. In reality, the destruction of lives and property, which Sherman’s March exemplified, profoundly shaped Confederate women’s and men’s experiences. The invasion itself cannot be understood without an understanding of who was invaded, how Yankee soldiers viewed them, and how Confederate soldiers reacted to the despoiling of their homeland. See John Bennett Walters, “General William T. Sherman and Total
Even as they ignore women, however, most studies of Sherman’s March recognize that the campaign had everything to do with power.\(^4\) Sherman, himself, made this

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\(^4\) These explorations of power still emphasize a detached political and military strategy. Historian Mark Grimsley exemplifies this approach as he argues that Sherman’s policy “suggests the continual working of political logic even in a circumstance as volatile as the unleashing of armed men against a hostile population.” To Grimsley, as well as to others, political intentions define the March. Grimsley, The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2. See also Kennett Marching Through Georgia, 1-14; Joseph T.
explicit when he acknowledged that despite the fact that he "[could] not change the hearts of those people of the South," he would "make war so terrible . . . [and] make them so sick of war that generations would pass away before they would again appeal to it." The campaign, designed to "demonstrat[e] to the world . . . that we have . . . power," would, Sherman asserted, be "proof positive that the North can prevail" and would no doubt end the Southern war effort.\(^5\) In their focus on Sherman's March and his intentions, scholars have overlooked the importance that Sherman placed on intimidating all Southerners, male and female, with a forceful display of dominance. As a result, their studies focus on

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In his exploration of Sherman’s destructive policy, Charles Royster asserts that the March was "[effective] in ending defiance." The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 347, also see 79-143, 321-404.

\(^5\) William T. Sherman to Ulysses S. Grant, 6 November 1864, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. 39, Pt. 3: 660. Samuel Augustus Duncan of New Hampshire made the issue of power clear in a letter to his future wife. "This inhuman war will not cease until the arrogant South is brought under the rod, and made to feel that the North is a power, to be respected and feared." Samuel Augustus Duncan to Julia Jones, 15 March, 1865, Yankee Correspondence: Civil War Letters between New England Soldiers and the Home Front, ed. Nina Silber and Mary Beth Sievens (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 51. An aid-de-camp of Sherman shared these sentiments. "If you are defeated," he told a woman, "you will have thoroughly learned what your people have never before the war, in the slightest degree understood--how to respect us." George Ward Nichols, 16 September 1864, The Story of the Great March from the Diary of a Staff Officer (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1865), 23.
political and military strategy and minimize the attack on female civilians and their domestic sphere.

However, the active presence of white Southern women during Sherman’s March must be acknowledged; the Union specifically designed a campaign aimed at female civilians and the trappings of their domestic worlds. As Sherman himself acknowledged, “this movement is not purely military or strategic, but it will illustrate the vulnerability of the South.” In its decision to attack the homefront, the Union could not avoid waging war on white women. For various reasons, the Confederate homefront became women’s domain, both numerically and ideologically. With their husbands, brothers, fathers, and sons away fighting the Yankees, white Southern women assumed most of the roles traditionally assigned to men in the nineteenth century. As a result, during the Civil War women controlled production, supplies, money matters, and day-to-day farm life. In this manner, the entire Southern homefront became women’s sphere. Consequently, any

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6 According to historian Reid Mitchell, ultimately Northern soldiers could not, and did not, see female Confederates as women because “making war on civilians . . . required a shift in attitudes toward women.” Consequently, Union soldiers had to conceive of Southern women solely as enemies, “and thinking of them as enemies transformed them from neutrals to fit objects of war--people to be arrested, executed, burned out.” Further, “the northern soldiers’ acceptance of the guilt of southern women helped to make the transformation to a more destructive war possible.” Reid Mitchell, The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 100-101.

attack on the homefront became by definition an assault on white women. Soldiers took the feminine nature of their enemy into consideration and used it to their advantage.

Union officers and enlisted men alike implemented policies designed to assert their power over Confederate women. Before and during the march, as part of a campaign to destroy female support for the Confederacy, Sherman publicly warned elite white women that they would not be spared the horrors of war. He intended to capitalize on the gender of his female targets, in the hopes of overpowering and subjugating the Southern homefront. Sherman further desired to “make Georgia howl” and show the South its

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powerlessness. This, he assumed, would crush civilian and military confidence in Southern troops and result in the surrender of the Confederacy. Consequently, Sherman’s March launched an attack on Southern domesticity akin to a sexual assault on the South as a whole.

Once it began, Sherman’s campaign specifically targeted the physical and ideological manifestations of domesticity. To show mastery over the South and its female civilians and, thereby “cure her of her pride and boasting,” Union troops stole food, fine clothing, silver, and jewelry, while they destroyed the houses that white women governed. Official orders instructed soldiers to destroy or take only those things that would assist the Confederate war effort, but in his orders to “forage liberally,” Sherman gave his men relatively free rein. As a result of this ambiguity, the indiscriminate ransacking of Southern homes and property went far beyond the dictates of warfare.

9 William T. Sherman to Ulysses S. Grant, 6 November 1864, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. 39, Pt. 3: 660. James Reston, Jr., recognized the gendered meaning of Sherman’s use of the word “howl.” “Sherman expressly set out to make Georgia howl. But neither states nor soldiers howl; civilians do, particularly women. . . . His technique was to demoralize the women back home and let that have its effect on the soldiers at the front.” James Reston, Jr., Sherman’s March and Vietnam (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1984), 93.

10 William T. Sherman to Ellen Sherman, 12 March 1865, Home Letters of General Sherman, ed. M. A. DeWolfe Howe (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909), 332, emphasis added. Sherman required that “the army . . . forage liberally on the country.” However, he ordered “soldiers must not enter the dwellings of the inhabitants, or commit any trespass.” Despite this seeming prohibition against pillage, Sherman gave wide license to his commanders concerning the treatment of the Southern homefront and its
Although reports of physical rape of white women were rare, women across the South feared for their property as well as their personal safety. By invading women’s domain, Sherman and his men crossed a line of propriety held sacred by Southerners.

Unlike some of his men, Sherman did not merely justify his assault on female Confederates as punishment for their ardent support of the war. By aggressively attacking women’s domain, Sherman believed that he could eliminate this group’s participation in the war. Acting within nineteenth-century assumptions that women
civilians. To them he “intrusted the power to destroy mills, houses, cotton-gins &c.” Although Sherman asserted that “in districts and neighborhoods where the army is unmolested no destruction of such property should be permitted,” he gave exceptions to the rules. “Should guerrillas or bushwhackers molest our march, or should the inhabitants burn bridges, obstruct roads, or otherwise manifest local hostility, then army commanders should order and enforce a devastation more or less relentless according to the measure of such hostility.” William T. Sherman, Special Field Orders No. 120, 9 November 1864, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. 39, Pt. 3: 713, emphasis added.

Despite Colonel John Coburn’s assertion to Atlanta officials that the Union “[did] not come to make war upon non-combatants or private property; both shall be protected a respected by us,” the Union would evacuate the city of its civilians and burn many private houses. John Coburn, as quoted in A. A. Hoehling, Last Train From Atlanta (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1958), 417.

Before the campaign for Georgia and the Carolinas began, Sherman acknowledged women and other civilians as vital participants in the Confederate war effort. In his discussion of the treatment of presumed non-combatants in Alabama, Sherman asserted that behavior determined their classification. “A question arises as to [the treatment of] dwellings used by women, children, and non-combatants. So long as non-combatants remain in their houses and keep to their accustomed business their opinions and prejudices can in nowise influence the war, and therefore should not be noticed; but if any one comes out into the public streets and creates disorder, he or she
behaved consistently within the “cult of domesticity,” he assessed that if he brought the war to female civilians, the South would inevitably crumble.\textsuperscript{12} According to such logic, only the strongest of men could endure wartime horrors; women, by their nineteenth-century definition, could not possibly survive them. In addition, an invasion of the homefront would take from Confederate women their ability to exercise power in the domestic sphere. Major Henry Hitchcock articulated this aspect of Sherman’s plan, noting that the march, “the mere fact of it, is bound to have a powerful influence of itself: it shows the real hopelessness of their ‘cause’ first to those who suffer, and to the people of ‘The South,’ and then to all the world.”\textsuperscript{13} The march would demoralize its direct victims, women, as well as the Southern soldiers fighting to protect their homes. Indeed, should be punished, restrained, or banished.” William T. Sherman to R. M. Sawyer, 31 January 1864, \textit{Official Records}, Ser. 1, Vol. 32, Pt. 2: 279


Sherman also viewed his own wife through this lens: “I notice that you propose to take part in a Sanitary Fair at Chicago. I don’t much approve of ladies selling things at a table. So far as superintending the management of such things, I don’t object, but it merely looks unbecoming for a lady to stand behind a table to sell things.” William T. Sherman to Ellen Sherman, 23 March 1865, \textit{Home Letters of General Sherman}, 335.

\textsuperscript{13} Henry Hitchcock, 24 November 1864, \textit{Marching With Sherman}, 89.
Hitchcock explained, “the [march’s] express purpose [is], in fact, of teaching [Southern] people that war means ruin and misery, & that ‘their Government’ cannot protect them.”

Sherman’s offensive against Confederate women began prior to the March to the Sea. After a four month campaign for Atlanta, Georgia, Confederate forces evacuated the city on September 1, 1864. Sherman and his troops took control of it on September 2, allowing the Southern troops to escape. In establishing Atlanta as a command post for Union operations, Sherman issued Special Field Orders No. 67 on September 8, 1864, to “[vacate] all except the armies of the United States.” This order resulted in the forced departure of Atlanta’s more than 1,500 civilians. Despite vehement protests from Confederate officials and civilians, Sherman stressed the necessity of evacuation, insisting that “the use of Atlanta for warlike purposes is inconsistent with its character as a home for families.” Furthermore, Sherman was “not willing to have Atlanta encumbered by

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14 Henry Hitchcock to Francis Lieber, 15 January 1865, Lieber Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California.


16 William T. Sherman to James M. Calhoun, Mayor, E. E. Rawson and S. C. Wells, representing the City Council of Atlanta, 12 September 1864, The Hero’s Own Story: General Sherman’s Official Account of His Great March Through Georgia and the Carolinas. From his Departure from Chattanooga to the Surrender of General Johnston, and the Confederate Forces Under his Command, To Which are Added General Sherman’s Evidence before the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War; The
the families of [his] enemies." A hostile civilian population would not only impede military activities, Sherman asserted, but it would also unnecessarily burden the Union army, who would have to feed and shelter the “helpless” women and children.

Despite widespread agreement with, and support of, Sherman’s evacuation policy in Atlanta, Northern soldiers grappled with the moral implications of a direct assault on white women. Some Union men struggled with ingrained conceptions of gender ideals and the contradictions that arose as so-called necessities of war. For example, Ohio army surgeon J. Dexter Cotton revealed to his wife his somewhat ambivalent support for the order and justified it with out reference to military tactics. “It seems very hard,” he explained, “but serves them right for most of the women of the south are generally stronger secess[ionists] than the men.” In the end, Cotton decided that, despite their class and gender and the protections that normally accompanied them, these Confederate women deserved to be ousted from their homes and stripped of their property because they helped initiate and continued to support the rebellion. A Union chaplain came to a

Animadversions of Secretary Stanton and General Halleck; with a Defence of his Proceedings, &c. (New York: Bunce & Huntington, Publishers, 1865), 60.


18 J. Dexter Cotton to Wife, 17 September 1864, J. Dexter Cotton Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. H. D. Chapman came to a similar conclusion. He “did feel sorry for the women and innocent children. . . . But our army is here and must be
similar conclusion. "The ladies, at some of the houses, are represented as intelligent, beautiful, and rebellious," he wrote. This made no difference to him. "A pretty traitor is no better than an ugly one--male or female. Many of the officers are boiling over with sympathy for those pretty female rebels, but I have none." Female provocation of secession became a justification for the harsh treatment of Southern civilians.

Soldiers may have used the idea of military necessity to justify the evacuation of Atlanta's civilians, but many of them acknowledged that revenge also motivated it. In his response to a letter protesting the order of evacuation, Sherman revealed his intertwined war aims: he wanted to exact vengeance on the South as well as to end the Civil War. Southerners protested that this policy wreaked havoc on families and turned gender ideals upside down. It would not be proper, they insisted, to expel women and children from their homes. Sherman did not agree. "War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it; and those who brought war on the country deserve all the curses and maledictions a people can pour fed."

Horatio Dana Chapman, 20 September 1864, Civil War Diary: Diary of a Forty-Niner (Hartford, Conn.: Allis, 1929), 95.

out.” Sherman wanted female Southern civilians in particular to feel the consequences of secession. He further asserted to the representatives of Atlanta that

you might as well appeal against the thunder-storm as against these terrible hardships of war. They are inevitable, and the only way the people of Atlanta can hope once more to live in peace and quiet at home is to stop this war, which can alone be done by admitting that it began in error and is perpetuated in pride.20

Here and elsewhere, Sherman made clear that his wartime policies would not be adjusted to accommodate contemporary gender prescriptions. Women could expect the harsh treatment that soldiers directed at Southern men as long as they remained hostile to the Union.21

Once he had set up Atlanta as his command post, Sherman attempted to destroy General John Bell Hood’s Confederate forces. When this action proved unsuccessful, he determined to march his troops across Georgia to demonstrate the power of the Federal Army. Sherman further proposed that he cut off his supply and communication lines and live off the countryside as he and his troops marched across the South. This tactic would

20 William T. Sherman to James M. Calhoun, Mayor, E. E. Rawson and S. C. Wells, representing the City Council of Atlanta, 12 September 1864, The Hero’s Own Story, 59-61.

21 Ellen Sherman supported her husband’s actions in Atlanta. “I am charmed with your order expelling the inhabitants of Atlanta as it has always seemed to me preposterous to have our government feeding so many of their people—their insolent women particularly for they are responsible for the war and should be made to feel that it exists in sternest reality.” Ellen Sherman to William T. Sherman, 17 September 1864, as cited in Marszalek, Sherman, 286.
allow him to pursue the devastation of the Southern countryside without having to protect railroads or supply trains. At the same time, it would separate the Confederacy from its own supply lines. Specifically, he “propose[d] to act in such a manner against the material resources of the South as utterly to negat[e] Davis’ boasted threat and promises of protection.”

Before their departure from Atlanta on November 15, 1864, Sherman’s troops burned everything of military importance in the city--depots, shops, factories, foundries, and machine shops. According to Union reports, only war-related businesses and factories were destroyed by fire. However, Southern reports blamed widespread destruction of homes and personal property on Sherman’s troops. Several Union soldiers concurred. “Many houses had been burned & all day long the fires kept increasing in number,” E. P. Burton noted. “The sight was magnificent & melancholy in the extreem, I think by dark all the public buildings & stores with many of the residences must have been destroyed.” Another Union soldier recorded a similar scene. “The work of destroying the city of Atlanta which our Gen has ordered, still continues. Directly North of where we are I see a beautiful residence wrapped in flames.” As the soldiers “advanced


through the City the smouldering ruins of once beautiful homes met our gaze on every hand." The white women of Atlanta, already insulted by their removal, watched their domestic lives go up in smoke.

An aggressive assault on domesticity, similar to what Atlanta had experienced, continued as Union troops made their way through Georgia and the Carolinas. Leaving Union Generals George H. Thomas and John M. Schofield with 60,000 soldiers to deal with Hood’s Confederate troops in Tennessee, Sherman’s men began their March to the Sea on November 15, 1864. To effectively forage, destroy, and demoralize the Georgia countryside, Sherman divided his troops into two wings, a left (northern) wing commanded by Henry W. Slocum and a right (southern) wing under Oliver O. Howard’s command. Although the officers and soldiers began the 285 mile march toward Savannah with little knowledge of the plan or their destination, they confidently moved forward at Sherman’s command. The troops marched from ten to fifteen miles each day, foraging and destroying Confederate property all along the way. Reports describe a forty to sixty mile wide swath of destruction strewn with evidence of their presence—railroad ties twisted around trees in “Sherman neckties,” houses almost entirely razed by fires with only “lone

24 Vail, 15 November 1864, Vail Diary typescript, Bell Irvin Wiley Files, Emory University.

25 For example, Rome, Georgia, suffered because “the soldiers want to see it burn.” E. P. Burton, 10 November 1864, Diary of E. P. Burton, 39.
chimney-stacks, ‘Sherman’s Sentinels,’” left standing, burned crops, and otherwise trampled countryside.26 “The amt of property destroyed by the army is immense,” Union soldier Edward Allen recorded. “Rail roads seemed to be our especial skill and the way we tore up and burned the Georgia Central beats all.” In addition, “Depots, public building[s] and building[s] that were not so public shared the same fate of the RR. Each Corps (4 of them) left a black streak to mark its way over the sacred soil.”27 As this report reveals, although the soldiers had official orders to target and destroy railroads, mills, and other places or items that supported the Confederate war effort, they did not hesitate to extend the assault to private property.

A lack of compassion for the female enemy existed throughout the ranks and throughout the march. As the troops made their way through Georgia, James Leath observed that “the people are left in a very destitute and suffering condition.” The dire


27 Edward W. Allen to Mollie, 17 December 1864, Edward W. Allen Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Similarly, after witnessing the destruction in Rome, Georgia, one soldier recorded that “the country is light with the burning of Rome. . . . It seemed melancholy to see the property being destroyed. It is against orders—but the soldiers want to see it burn.” Another asserted that “we are under command of General Sherman and will destroy all before us.” As quoted in Lee Kennett, Marching Through Georgia, 232. For a good description of the March to the Sea, see Bailey, Chessboard of War.
straits in which he left Confederate civilians did not bother him, however. “If they all starve to death I shall not be surprised, neither will I care.” Leath’s callousness, like that of other Union soldiers, may be attributed to his views on the war. The Confederate civilians, women included, deserved what they got because it was “a horrible state of affairs [that] they had brought upon themselves.”

Union soldier Edward Allen gloried in Sherman’s orders and justifications for the evacuation. He encouraged his parents to “read . . . Sherman’s letters to Hood in reference to the removal of the women & children of Atlanta.” These letters, he boasted, “are so good, just the sentiments of his whole army.” Because Sherman was “not afraid to treat . . . [Confederate women] as they deserve,” the soldiers praised him as “the man we like to fight under.”

Union troops agreed that the attitudes and wartime roles of Confederate women warranted whatever hardships the army brought to them.

Even when Northern men professed some compassion toward their female victims, they rarely changed their destructive behavior. Union soldier Edwin Bowen recorded an encounter with an elderly Southern woman who begged for mercy: “What shall I do with all these girls on my hands to support, when you have taken all my corn?”

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28 James Leath, 23 December 1864, A Journal of Movements & Incidents of the 3rd Brig, 4th Div, 15th A. C. During the March from Rome to Savannah Georgia, Commencing November 10th 1864 and ending December 23 1864, Huntington Library.

Although Bowen claimed to have felt a little pity for the woman’s situation, his response to her did not reflect it. Instead, he “remarked to her, that it was necessary for me to obtain corn for my mules and further that ‘God will not forsake the richeous.’ She must look to him.”30 When recording a confrontation with the wife of a railroad agent in Madison, Georgia, Horatio Chapman similarly noted that although he “almost always [had] sympathy for the women,” this particular one elicited no such response. Not only did she have a “large and elegant mansion,” but also “she was a regular secesh and spit out her spite and venom against the dirty Yanks and mudsills of the north.”31 Union soldiers insisted that Confederate women, as vocal nationalists, deserved punishment for their rebellious, secessionist natures.

The route through a rich agricultural area of Georgia offered fertile opportunity for good eating and high spirits amongst the soldiers. Here, as they did throughout the march, the soldiers “subsist[ed] almost entirely from the enimey’s country.”32 After feasting on “plenty of sweet Potatoes and fresh Pork, Chickens Turkeys &c.,” Delos Van Deusen

30 Edwin Anson Bowen, 2 March 1865, Edwin A. Bowen Diary, Bowen Papers, Huntington Library.

31 Horatio Dana Chapman, 19 November 1864, Civil War Diary . . . of a Forty-Niner, 100-101.

32 R. B. Hoadley to Cousin, 8 April 1865, R. B. Hoadley Papers, Duke University, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Durham, North Carolina.
bragged, “we didn’t leave plenty” for the civilians. Most Northern soldiers simply rejoiced in the bounty shared during the campaign. Throughout the trip from Atlanta, there was a constant influx of “foragers bringing in all manner or stuff and in all Shapes & conditions.” As a result, “all the Boys enjoyed the trip hugely.” Another noted that “we had a very nice time while on the march plenty to eat and did not march very hard.”

As they moved across the Southern countryside, Union soldiers ate what they could and then killed or scattered whatever was left in order to keep excess supplies away from Confederate soldiers and civilians. They gleefully “destroyed all we could not eat, stole their niggers, burned their cotton & Gins, Spilled their Sorghum, Burned and twisted their Rroads and raised Hell generally as you know an army can when ‘turned loose.”

Furthermore, the soldiers “lived on the fat of the land finding endless supplies of Sweet Potatoes, Poultry, Hogs, Sheep, Cattle, Sorghum, Syrup, Honey &c yes and plenty of Peanuts to eat on the way.” Although they “only had 4 days rations issued . . . in the

33 Delos Van Deusen to Henrietta Van Deusen, 28 December 1864, Delos Van Deusen Papers, Huntington Library.

34 Michael Dresbach to Wife, 14 December 1864, Bell Irvin Wiley Files.


36 Devine to Captain J. H. Everett, 19 December 1864, J. H. Everett Papers, Georgia Historical Society. Also see Mrs. E. A. Steele to Tody, 15 February 1865, in Katherine M. Jones, ed., When Sherman Came: Southern Women and the “Great March” (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964), 133; M. C. H. to Lou, 7 December
whole march” many soldiers reported that during the campaign they “lived better than ever before” on “Sweet potatoes chickens, turkeys, fresh port, & beef, and mutton, turnips four meal preserves pickles wines, beer, & evrything that a rich planters place could afford.” The bounty of the land proved plentiful as “in some places as much as 3,000, bushels of sweet potatoes would be consumed in one night.” The constant foraging, “a continuous thanksgiving,” fulfilled more than one of Sherman’s campaign aims. He had succeeded not only in supplying his own troops and limiting what was


37 Even the towns offered good fare. Charles Brown described the meal in Milledgeville, Georgia. The troops “had 5 chickens 1 turkey (the largest I ever saw.) the hind quarter of mutton a ham, about 25 lbs of cap honey 1/2 gal. of Syrum, all the pan cakes we could eat. warm buiscuit & evry thing in proportion.” Charles S. Brown to Mother and Etta, 16 December 1864, Charles S. Brown Papers, Duke University. The soldiers gloried in their foraging efforts. Another described “some of the nice things we had to eat” including “plenty of sweet potatoes, which is very very good you know. the next plenty was plenty of fresh meats that was good also fresh meat and sweet potatoes aint to be laughed at sure well the next lots of Molasses very good the next is Honey very sweet so you see we must be very sweet by this time dont you think so, lastly but not the least, was Chickens.” He then mocked “those Georgians” as “clever people to have so many good things ready for us.” Jo to Linda McNeill, 24 December 1864, Alexander A. Lawrence Papers.

38 George Ward Nichols, 27 November 1864, The Story of the Great March, 66. Another soldier called the March to Sea “one big picnick.” Charles Ewing to Thomas Ewing, 15 December 1864, “Sherman’s March Through Georgia: Letters from Charles Ewing to his Father Thomas Ewing,” ed. George C. Osborn, Georgia Historical Quarterly 42 (September 1958): 326. From Savannah, Sherman noted that because the troops “came right along living on turkeys, chickens, pigs,” not only did he not have to feed them, but “Jeff Davis will now have to feed the people of Georgia instead of collecting
available to Confederate troops, but he had also brought suffering to the civilians in his path.

In another tactical measure, Sherman spread his troops across a forty to sixty mile-wide path to give Confederate soldiers and civilians the sometimes false impression that they were heading for multiple places in Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina. One soldier described the path as a “black streak behind us about 50 miles wide.”

Another asserted that “for forty miles in width, the country throughout our whole line of march is a desert.” This tactic allowed the Union forces to keep the Confederate troops spread thinly as they tried to protect a wide area, and consequently prevented high casualties. It also increased anxiety within Southern homes. Although there were several skirmishes with Confederate troops on the March to the Sea, Union casualties for the entire campaign numbered only 2,200. Union forces easily captured Milledgeville, Georgia’s state capital, on November 23. There, in addition to general looting and destruction, the Union soldiers held a mock legislature to “repeal” the state’s secession

provisions of them to feed his armies.” William T. Sherman to Ellen Sherman, 16 December 1864, Home Letters of General Sherman, 316. See also Thomas W. Osborn, 10 November 1864, The Fiery Trail: A Union Officer’s Account of Sherman’s Last Campaigns, ed. Richard Harwell and Philip N. Racine (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 35.


40 Orlando M. Poe to Nell, 16 December 1864, Alexander A. Lawrence Papers.
ordinance.41 Once again, as part of Sherman’s psychological tactics, they wanted to humiliate Confederates to demonstrate the power of the Union army.

Although Sherman had designated a specific group of men as official foragers for his Army and directed them to gather only food and supplies for the troops, “Sherman’s Bummers” as well as other soldiers often seized personal property as souvenirs of their service.42 Women’s clothes, letters, linens, jewelry, silver, household furnishings, sewing supplies, baby clothes, and dishes often became the spoils of war. None of these items would directly help the Union militarily, but an attack on them struck at the heart of white Southern women’s lives.43 According to some of Sherman’s men, few homes escaped the foraging. “House Robbing has become universal,” Union Chaplain John J. Hight wrote. “I do not mean all of the men rob houses, but all the houses are robbed.”44

Union soldiers seized whatever they could get their hands on from Confederate civilians. “The Boys [took] a great many things of value they went into Private houses


42 For a discussion of foraging and “bumming” during Sherman’s March through Georgia, see Lee Kennett, Marching Through Georgia, 263-287. Also see Marszalek, Sherman, 301-302.

43 Lee Kennett notes Union soldiers’ fascination with women’s “sweet little notes” and letters. Kennett, Marching Through Georgia, 89.

44 John J. Hight, 22 February 1865, History of the Fifty-Eighth Regiment, 487.
and took what they wanted,” Michael Dresbach observed. Edward Allen left a detailed description of the spoils of war after the Union captured Columbia.

Every concurable article that one could imagine, must, was to be found in our camp, clothing, bed clothing, such splendid coverlids, quilts, & sheets, musical instruments violins guitars, music box & had not pianos been quite so heavey you might have seen many of them there. Flour meal sugar, butter, all the yankee notions usually fond in stores. Silver plate, plates knives forks. & spoons.

The soldiers had appropriated so many things that Allen realized “it would take too much time, candle & paper to mention or even try to mention all that was there.”

Some soldiers sent the domestic treasures they confiscated to loved ones in the North. However, they dropped much of the heavy booty along the roadside as the march continued. An Illinois soldier commented on the waste. “Articles of silverware, that have been carried along, are thrown into the road, where the heavy wagons crushed out all semblance of anything useful, and the tired and thirsty soldier, relieved of his burden,

45 Michael Dresbach to Wife, 14 December 1864, Bell Irvin Wiley Files. Dresbach continued with a description of what he had seen. “Some got Silver Pitchers and Plate of considerable value. One of the Boys dug up a Box that was Buried in the field containing $60,000 Confederate money. Another found one containing 2 gold watches and $260 in coin there is a great deal found that we do not hear of.”

46 Edward W. Allen to James and Emily Allen, 17 February 1865, Edward W. Allen Papers. Also see Sylvester Daniels, 17 February 1865, Sylvester Daniels Diary, Huntington Library.
passes on.”

Edward Allen similarly noted that “most all was left—destroyed except small articles of value easily carried by one of the boys. I got a nice vase which I will try & get home.”

Charles Brown alerted his family to the gifts he would be sending home as well as the ones he had lost. As did most of the souvenir hunters, Brown primarily took domestic items. “I have some selections of Rebel music to send,” he wrote to his parents and sister. “I got them from a house about 18 miles above Savannah... there was considerable more but I brought a good selection & [you] shall have the first best lot.” In addition to the music, he took “some jewelery from the house of Reb. Gen. Irwin. [whose] house was plundered from ground to Shingles & burnt.”

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47 Charles F. Hubert, 20 February 1865, History of the Fiftieth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry (Kansas City, Mo.: Western Veteran Publishing Company, 1894), 356. Also see William O. Wettleson to Parents and Sisters, 4 April 1865, Bell Irvin Wiley Files, Emory University; Thomas J. Myers to Wife, 26 February 1865, Thomas J. Myers Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

48 John H. Roberts to Brother, 7 January 1865, as quoted in Glatthaar, March to the Sea and Beyond, 149. Also see Henry Orlando Marcy, 11 February 1865, Henry Orlando Marcy Diary, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.


50 Charles S. Brown to Mother and Etta, 16 December 1864, Charles S. Brown Papers. John Herr planned to send home curiosities as well as treasures. “I will send you a few heads of rice so you can see how it looks in the Straw[, and] I am going to send a vest that I captured.” John Herr to Sister, 18 December 1864, John Herr Papers, Duke
Sherman officially opposed the wholesale plunder of Southern property, he rarely punished offenders and applauded the effects that the looting had on the Southern civilian population.51

The small military opposition faced by the Union troops as they marched through Georgia consisted of approximately 8,000 Confederate soldiers in Joseph Wheeler’s cavalry corps and Gustavus W. Smith’s Georgia militia. William J. Hardee took control of Confederate troops in Georgia on November 17, 1864, but could not stop Sherman’s progress through the state. Acknowledging his powerlessness, Hardee focused his energy and forces on protecting the port of Savannah. He proved unsuccessful in this endeavor as well. After Sherman and his troops cut through most of Georgia by December 10, 1864, the Union general demanded the surrender of Savannah a week later. When Hardee refused, the Union forces began a siege of the city, but left Confederate troops free to evacuate. Hardee and his men abandoned Savannah on December 21, escaping across the

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51 A lieutenant on the march insisted that Sherman intended the widespread devastation. “William T. Sherman is the most relentless enemy the South has in the Union Army, and when a word from his lips would have stopped the universal devastation he would not speak that word, but said simply to the pleading fair ones of Columbia ‘It is your own fault.’” George M. Wise to John Wise, 13 March 1865, “Marching Through South Carolina: Another Civil War Letter of George M. Wise,” ed. Wilfred W. Black, Ohio Historical Quarterly 46 (April 1957): 193-194.
river into South Carolina. Subsequently, Sherman took control of the city and its two hundred artillery pieces, ammunition, and approximately thirty thousand bales of cotton. On December 22, 1864, Sherman sent President Abraham Lincoln a telegram announcing the accomplishment: “I beg to present you as a Christmas Gift the City of Savannah with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition: and also about twenty five thousand bales of cotton.”

The soldiers proudly recalled their triumphant campaign: “36 days ago we were standing near Atlanta Geo watching the angry flames devouring Building after Building[..] [T]o day we stand here at Savannah Master of over a Hundread fields which was bought and Paid with Freemans Blood.” In addition to the immediate consequences, this soldier also reflected on the larger significance of the march. “Here we have ended what I think will go down in History and be told over and over again as one of the greatest acheevements on Record.”

Throughout their homefront attack, Union soldiers targeted wealthy slaveholding families, whom they considered instrumental in Southern secession. Sherman provided justification for this action when he commanded that soldiers should “discriminate between the rich, who are usually hostile, and the poor and industrious, usually neutral or

52 William T. Sherman to Abraham Lincoln, 22 December 1864, Sherman File, Huntington Library.

53 James G. Essington, 22 December 1864, James G. Essington Diary, Alexander A. Lawrence Papers.
friendly." The troops complied with this wish. One Union soldier noted that “the poor people are respected by the soldiers and their property protected.” On the other hand, “the rich are persecuted when caught and their barns, gins & houses fall victims to the invaders match.” Another observed the specific punishment of elite Southerners and wrote during the March that “the Army are renting their spite on everything destructible & our line is marked each day by dense columns of black smoke curling up from the former residences of the ‘chivalry.’” In Georgia, soldiers devastated Howell Cobb’s plantation and did not “feel much troubled about the destruction of H[owell] C[obb]’s property” because he was “one of the head devils.” As a result, the “General told all the darkies to help themselves as well as the soldiers, to the supplies found here, and ordered the balance burned.” Hitchcock justified the attack on Cobb by noting that he “has four

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or five other plantations, and 500 to 600 negroes in all.”

Sherman, too, relished the attack on the elite slaveholding class.

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57 Henry Hitchcock, 22 November 1864, Marching With Sherman, 84-85. As described by Hitchcock, Cobb’s plantation was “about 6000 acres, and worked 100 hands” but was so run-down that Hitchcock proclaimed “No Northern farm owner would allow his agent or farmer to have such. No thrift or neatness about the place: sundry rude log cabins for storehouses, mean rail fences—everything shabby: old negroes wretchedly dressed.”

Union troops attacked elite households throughout the March. For example, in Charleston they went in search of specific secessionists, “asking ‘Is this the home of Mr. Rhett?’ and ‘Is that the dwelling of Mr. Middleton?” In addition, “Charlestonians Arthur P. Hayne and Alfred Huger, were pulled about and struck” by the invading soldiers. They also specifically attacked the homes of Dr. John Cheves, Maxcy Gregg, and Columbia Mayor Thomas Jefferson Goodwyn. See Royster, The Destructive War, 21. Pauline Heyward describes a similar incident. “They said that they had to arrest and shoot every influential citizen in S.C., every mover of secession, & from the accumulation of wealth, the quantities of food, books & clothes in this house, the finest they had seen in these parts, that they knew Father was wealthy, literary, & influential, & they had heard enough of him, to make an example of him & catch him they would.” Pauline DeCaradeuc Heyward, 18 February 1865, A Confederate Lady Comes of Age: The Journal of Pauline DeCaradeuc Heyward, 1863-1888, ed. Mary D. Robertson, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 67. See also E. P. Burton, 27 October 1864, Diary of E. P. Burton, 37; Charles S. Brown to Mother and Etta, 16 December 1864, Charles S. Brown Papers; Thomas T. Taylor, 23 November 1864, Diary, Thomas T. Taylor Collection. See also Bonner, “Sherman at Milledgeville,” 281.

58 Some scholars propose that Sherman designed his campaign with the intention of striking hardest at the Southern elite. For example, Michael Fellman asserts that “Sherman’s men were urged to make class distinctions: Sparing the poor and industrious . . . [and] make a special effort to destroy the grand homes of those rich and therefore especially resented traitors who had made secession.” Fellman, Citizen Sherman, 214-215.
Soldiers left their mark on the South's domestic landscape. After ransacking homes, many defaced the remaining buildings. "Almost every house in town is more or less damaged," Andrew McBride observed. "The walls of most of them completely covered with charcoal autographs of Yankee celebrities such for instance as this on the door of your house ‘Patrick Boyle 90 Ind Vol Infty.'" Other Union soldiers were more personal in their epithets. "Just under Patricks name, I found ‘Miss Ada is tha pritist girl in town.'" Other walls displayed Union insults. The soldiers "volunteered or tendered a good deal of advise to President Davis and Genl Hood and to rebels generally." McBride included examples: "‘Jeff,—relinquish your efforts to establish a new Confederation’ [signed] ‘Abe’" or "‘Genl Hood: you didn't expect us to come in at the back door, did you?’"59

On multiple occasions, Union soldiers took advantage of the domestic luxuries within the homes of the Southern elite. "Some of our soldiers are very reckless and smash everything that comes in their way. One fellow played on the piano while his comrades danced a jog on the top of the instrument and then he drove an axe through it."60 Soldiers engaged in similar celebrations in many parlors of their enemies. When updating his sister


60 Michael Dresbach to Wife, 15 December 1864, as quoted in Glatthaar, March to the Sea and Beyond, 148.
on the state of affairs, Charles Brown highlighted the non-military items that soldiers destroyed. "You might see all sorts of scenes" along the March, including boys pounding Piano keys with their Hatchets to see who could make the most noise or pile up a pile of plates & "order arms" on them to all who could break the most or try & see who could shoot the most cows or hogs. or see who could dress themselves in the best suit of womens clothes & then make the lady of the house play for them to have a cotillion & if the music did not suit slash their hatchet through the top of the piano to improve the time.61

In addition to the physical damage caused by the drunken festivities, the soldiers specifically trampled on the markings of domesticity to strike at women's sphere.62

Once in control of Savannah, Sherman set about demonstrating to the city's residents that a peaceful surrender and return to the Union would protect Southerners from Union wrath. To contrast his treatment of residents in Savannah to that of rebellious Atlantans, Sherman opened his headquarters to whoever wanted to visit. He also allowed the local government to continue functioning and made sure that food came into the city to feed the residents. At the same time, however, Sherman justified the

61 Charles S. Brown to Etta, 26 April 1865, Charles S. Brown Papers.

tactics that he had employed up to this point. "This may seem a hard species of warfare, but it brings the sad realities of war home to those who have been directly or indirectly instrumental in involving us in its attendant calamities." Henry Hitchcock agreed with Sherman's intention to make war "horrible beyond endurance," hoping that an assault of the homefront would subdue Confederate women and men. Both officers believed that only a scorched-earth policy had the power to end the Civil War and bring about peace. This destruction could be inflicted on the Southern homefront because war blurred the gender boundaries. Hitchcock expressed his desire to retaliate against what he saw as the South's intentional provocation of war in a letter to his wife. "Our enemies [male and female] have shown themselves devils in the spirit which ever began this most unprovoked and inexcusable rebellion ... there is nothing for it but 'to fight the devil with fire.'" Consequently, Union soldiers made the "the effects and ravages of war ... noticeable everywhere." In Savannah, John Glidden described, "business is almost entirely suspended and nearly every store is closed." Furthermore, "the houses are ... carefully closed and very few civilians and ladies are to be seen ... and Sherman's dead horses are laying about the streets by the dozen. ... Martial Law is supreme in

63 William T. Sherman to Henry Halleck, 1 January 1865, The Hero's Own Story, 83-84.

64 Henry Hitchcock to Mary Hitchcock, 4 November 1864, Henry Hitchcock Collection, Library of Congress. For examples of white Southern women expressing similar feelings about their Northern invaders, see Chapter 4.
If in 1864 the “devilish” Southerners insisted on continued support of their misguided and malicious cause, Union troops remained equally determined to punish them for their actions.

Sherman’s soldiers freed thousands of the slaves that they encountered on Georgia and Carolina plantations as they destroyed the trappings of slavery, such as cotton fields, gin houses, plantation homes, and agricultural equipment. From Savannah, Sherman issued Special Field Orders, No. 15 on January 16, 1865, granting freedpeople full control of the sea islands as well as coastal land thirty miles inland from Charleston, South Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida. Many Southern blacks followed the Union troops, hoping to gain their freedom in the ranks of the Union. Some served as spies for Sherman’s army. Others cheered as the Union troops passed by. Although some officers were kind to the escaped slaves who followed the army, others allowed racist attitudes to govern their actions.66


As he left Savannah on February 1, 1865, Sherman again spread out his troops to leave the Confederates guessing his destination. The army, still divided into two columns and four corps under Slocum and Howard, spread as wide as forty miles across. Each corps, continued its destructive journey following different routes, giving the impression that the troops were headed toward either Augusta, Georgia or Charleston, South Carolina. Still unsure of their final destination, Union soldiers assumed they headed toward South Carolina and welcomed a sojourn in the Palmetto State. John Herr gloried that “we will Show old South Carolina a trick that She never saw before we will make her suffer wors[e] then she did the time of the Revolusionary war.” Union troops would do this to “let her know that . . . it isened so sweet to secds as she thought it would be.” Other soldiers agreed with Herr, who recorded that “nearly every man in Shermans army say they are in for distroying every thing . . . in South Carolina I dont know but I think Sherman will distroy every thing that is of no value to us.” As a result, he thought that “ere long you will heare of Shermans Army sweeping through S.C. like a hericane.”

O. M. Poe realized that it requires no sage prophet to divine [the campaign’s] direction.

Wo to South Carolina! We are on her borders, ready to carry fire &


67 John Herr to Katy Herr, 5 February 1865, John Herr Papers.
Sword into every part of that State, and there is not one in all the length & breadth of the land to stay our hands.\textsuperscript{68}

Sherman’s men began their assault on South Carolina before they even entered the state.\textsuperscript{69}

Officially ordered or not, Union soldiers all knew that “poor South Carolina must suffer now. None of the soldiers are storing up mercy for her. Her deluded people will not reap the full reward for all their folly and crimes.”\textsuperscript{70} This attack on the Palmetto State


\textsuperscript{69} The soldiers in Sherman’s army and Sherman himself did not hide their desire to wreak vengeance on the state of South Carolina. Sherman reportedly told a woman in Savannah who wanted to return to her native South Carolina of his plans for the Palmetto State. “You will be going, madam, out of the frying pan into the fire. My army is composed of some of the most lawless ruffians upon earth. Here in Georgia, I can with difficulty control them, but when I enter South Carolina I shall neither be able nor desirous to do so. You have heard of the horrors of war; wait until my arm gets into South Carolina and you will see the reality.” As quoted in Hirshson, The White Tecumseh, 275. Prior to his entering South Carolina, Sherman indicated what the Palmetto State would endure. “The truth is, the whole army is burning with an insatiable desire to wreak vengeance upon South Carolina. I almost tremble at her fate, but feel that she deserves all that seems in store for her.” William T. Sherman to Henry W. Halleck, 24 December 1864, Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman, ed. Michael Fellman (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 558.

\textsuperscript{70} John J. Hight, 19 January 1865, History of the Fifty-Eighth Regiment, 416. Edward W. Allen noted that “in the evening orders were read to the Regt, Reminding us that S.C. was the state where the seeds of rebellion were first sown & ripened into feint & giving us to understand that we were not to be so closely restricted as through Ga. ie, allowed more privileges.” Edward W. Allen to James and Emily Allen, 4 February 1865, Edward W. Allen Papers.
would show the South the consequence of her rebellious actions as well as the North’s superior power. The tactics in South Carolina targeted the seedbed of secession “to crush the last particle of wind out of the Confederacy.” Federal soldiers believed that these rabid Rebels in South Carolina, most of them women, deserved whatever hardships they experienced. As a result, as they entered South Carolina, Union troops inflicted even more damage than they had in Georgia. “The well-known site of columns of black smoke meets our gaze again,” Union officer George Ward Nichols observed. “This time houses are burning, and South Carolina has commenced to pay an installment, long overdue, on her debt to justice and humanity.” Sebastian Duncan similarly wrote that it was “almost as though there was a Secret organization among the men to burn Every thing in the State for thus far . . . houses, in Some way, get on fire & nearly all we have passed

Some soldiers believed the same while the army was in Georgia. For example, Joseph Hoffhines reported that “this Government is now Entering upon a new policy. We are ordered to burn Cities and Barns and Houses where Ever we go and lay waste the Entire Country.” Joseph Hoffhines to Wife, 11 November 1864, as quoted in Lee Kennett, Marching Through Georgia, 232.

71 Thomas E. Smith to Brother, 27 December 1864, as quoted in Royster, The Destructive War, 344. Also see William Scofield to Father, 2 February 1865, William Scofield Papers, South Caroliniana Library.

72 George Ward Nichols, 30 January 1865, The Story of the Great March, 131. Other soldiers also felt that justice had been served. “We bade the remains of the City of Columbia the Capitol of S.C. farewell. No which had recd her Just reward for the evil deeds she did in the great rebellion.” Jesse S. Bean, 20 February 1865, Jesse S. Bean Diary, Southern Historical Collection.
thus far are in ashes.”73 As the soldiers made their way northward through South Carolina, they burned at least a dozen towns. Parts of Gillisonville, Grahamville, Hardeeville, McPhersonville, Springfield, Robertsville, Lawtonville, Barnwell, Blackville, Midway, Orangeburg, and Lexington all went up in flames. The soldiers watched “South Carolina . . . getting badly scorched” with satisfaction.74 As men and Northerners, Union troops put Rebels in their place.75

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73 Sebastian Duncan to Mother, 1 February 1865, as cited in Glatthaar, March to the Sea and Beyond, 140.

74 Sylvester Daniels, 18 February 1865, Sylvester Daniels Diary Typescript. The Union desire to wreak vengeance on South Carolina was not a new one. A full year before Sherman’s March began, Isaac Jackson hoped for a chance to punish South Carolina soldiers on the field of battle. “No man ever looked forward to any event with more joy than did our boys to have a chance to meet the sons of the mothers of traitors, ‘South Carolina.’” Isaac Jackson to Moses and Phebe Jackson, 13 July 1863, “Some of the Boys . . .”: The Civil War Letters of Isaac Jackson, 1862-1865, ed. Joseph Orville Jackson (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960), 111.

75 Sherman’s men left countless descriptions of the destruction, especially in South Carolina, the home of secession’s instigators. For examples, see Charles W. Wills, Army Life of an Illinois Soldier Including a Day-by-Day Record of Sherman’s March to the Sea: Letters and Diary of Charles W. Wills, ed. Mary E. Kellogg, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996); C. C. Platter Journal, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, Athens; Charles G. Ward Diary, South Caroliniana Library; Thomas Ford to Mr. William, 28 March 1865, Tho[mas] R. Ford Letter, South Caroliniana Library; David P. Conyngham, Sherman’s March Through the South with Sketches and Incidents of the Campaign (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1865); Samuel Augustus Duncan to Julia Jones, 15 March, 1865, in Yankee Correspondence, 51.
The burning of the outlying areas of South Carolina would pale in significance to what awaited Columbia and Charleston. Intent on destroying what they saw as the “cradle of secession,” the “hotbed of rebellion,” and the home of “the authors of all the calamities that have befallen this nation,” Union soldiers displayed little mercy when they entered the two cities on February 17 and 18, 1865. Sherman’s troops let loose their anger toward the Confederacy and Confederates, but believed that “their punishment is light when compared with what justice demanded.”76 A group of soldiers foreshadowed the fate of South Carolina’s capital as they entered the city singing, “Hail Columbia, happy land;/ If I don’t burn you, I’ll be damned.”77 These soldiers were not disappointed. By the time the Union troops left Columbia, “the Capital, where treason was cradled and reared a mighty raving monster, [was] a blackened ruin.”78 Another noted


78 E. H. King, 18 February 1865, as cited in Glatthaar, March to the Sea and Beyond, 146. According to some observers, even Union soldiers who were stationed outside of the city helped plunder the city. Allen Morgan Geer was camped in the “suburbs of Columbia” the night Columbia burned. “The troops . . . break ranks and make for the city. the most for forage many for plunders, some for whiskey &
that although "Columbia was once a beautiful & wealthy city--the pride of the South... when our army left it there was little left to mark the site except a blackened map of smoking ruins." Many other reports mirrored this description. The troops left "nothing but a pile of ruins, a warning to future generations to beware of treason." In the end, fire destroyed approximately one third of Columbia.

excitement, a few to burn and destroy. & I & Capt. King for curiosity[,] As the flames spread from street to street, soldiers running wild noisy and intoxicated[.] Citizens hurrying to and fro[,] Women & children frightened and often weeping, the crash of falling buildings all presented a grand but sad seen of desolating ruin." Allen Morgan Geer, 17 February 1865, The Civil War Diary of Allen Morgan Geer, Twentieth Regiment, Illinois Volunteers, ed. Mary Ann Anderson (Bloomington: Robert C. Appleman, 1977), 197.

79 Robert Stuart Finley to Mary A. Cabeen, 30 March 1865, Robert Stuart Finley Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

80 Anthony J. Baurdick, 19 February 1865, Diary, Anthony J. Baurdick Papers, Emory University.

81 Nearly a century and a half later, scholars continue to debate whether Union or Confederate troops initiated the blaze. The details of this debate have not changed much since the controversy began immediately after the war. Although Sherman held that his men had no role in the burning of the city, he acknowledged that "others [Union soldiers] not on duty, including the officers who had long been imprisoned there, rescued by us, may have assisted in spreading the fire after it had once begun, and may have indulged in unconcealed joy to see the ruin of the capital of South Carolina." William T. Sherman to Henry W. Halleck, 4 April 1865, The Hero's Own Story, 96. Union Colonel Oscar L. Jackson recorded "I believe it was not done by order by there seems to be a general acquiescence in the work as a fit example to be made of the capital of the State that boasts of being the cradle of secession and starting the war." Oscar L. Jackson, February 18, 1865, The Colonel's Diary (Sharon, Penn.: n.p., 1922), 184. For a discussion of the controversy, see Marion B. Lucas, Sherman and the Burning of Columbia (1976; reprint, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000).
While in Columbia, Sherman and his troops recognized that they had unleashed an unprecedented assault on its white civilians. Women, the soldiers reasoned, deserved harsh treatment because of their culpability for the war. For example, Charles S. Brown described an incident in which an individual soldier asserted his power by forcing Southern women to beg. "We have men in our own Regt & in all others that would stand & have a woman kneel to them & beg for Gods sake to leave enough for her children in the house." Even women’s humiliating entreaties, however, did not insure that the soldiers would comply with their requests. After forcing the women to kneel, Brown remarked, the soldiers would “turn from them with oaths & take the last morsel of food.”

Northern soldiers wanted to make Confederate women pay for their role in the Confederate war effort. In Columbia, Union Lieutenant Colonel Jeremiah W. Jenkins, provost marshall of the invaded city, declared “the women of the South kept the war alive--and it is only by making them suffer that we can subdue the men.” Jenkins saw the utility in attacking Southern domesticity as a way to punish both contemptuous civilians and soldiers. A Union army chaplain who marched with Sherman similarly justified the assault on women.

82 Charles S. Brown to Etta, 26 April, 1865, Charles S. Brown Papers.
83 Lieutenant Colonel Jeremiah W. Jenkins as cited in Royster, The Destructive War, 20.
So far as the **women** are concerned, we might as well spare our pity, for they are the worst secessionists, and why should **they** not suffer? . . . Would you now spare them a proper amount of suffering? We say no. Let them understand that secession means something more than a holiday parade.\(^8^4\)

The chaplain’s statement reveals not only an animosity toward Southern women as secessionists, but also as frivolous girls who, he assumed, saw secession and war as nothing more than spectacle. Soldiers extended their hostility to white Southern children. Men, who during peacetime served as fatherly protectors of all youngsters, considered them enemies during the Civil War. As he took blankets away from children in Columbia, one Union soldier said “let the d--d little rebels suffer as we have had to do for the past four years.”\(^8^5\)

\(^8^4\) Reverend G. S. Bradley, 28 December 1864, in *The Star Corps; or, Notes of an Army Chaplain, During Sherman’s Famous ‘March to the Sea’* (Milwaukee: Jermain & Brightman, Book & Job Printers, 1865), 225.

\(^8^5\) Lieutenant Colonel Jeremiah W. Jenkins as cited in Royster, *The Destructive War*, 23. Also see William O. Wettleson to Father and Sisters, 27 November 1864, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers; Harvey Reid to Homefolk, 14 December 1864, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers; Samuel B. Crew to Brother and Sister, 15 December 1864, Bell Irvin Wiley Papers; Mary Sharpe Jones and Mary Jones Mallard, 16 December 1864, *Yankees a’Coming: One Month’s Experience during the Invasion of Liberty County, Georgia, 1864-1865*, ed. Haskell Monroe (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Confederate Publishing Company, Inc., 1959); Mary Bull Maxcy Leverett to Caroline Pinckney Seabrook, 18 March 1865, Mary Maxcy Leverett Letter, South Caroliniana Library.

Southerners denounced this policy. For example, Mollie Cunningham wrote from Georgia, “I know our brave men could whip any fair fight but they are overwhelming us with numbers and waging war upon the defenseless women and children, by marching through our unprotected county destroying and taking every means of subsistence from
Charleston fared no better than Columbia, perhaps because of the concentration of
elite slaveholding families there. When Confederate General William J. Hardee
surrendered the city on February 18, he had already evacuated 10,000 soldiers from the
city and destroyed the military equipment. The removal of the military and its
equipment did not protect the city or its civilian population from a full-scale Union
assault. With the military provisions already destroyed, the soldiers focused their
vengeance on domestic targets. They ransacked homes, terrorized women, and otherwise
made their presence and power known. This assault fulfilled the long-standing wishes of
Union soldiers. Sherman, for example, had already received word from Halleck expressing
his hope that if Charleston were captured “by some accident the place may be destroyed,
and if a little salt should be sown upon its site it may prevent the growth of future crops
of nullification and secession.”86 Sherman and his troops had no problem complying. As
one man noted, “the army burned everything it came near in the State of South Carolina”
because “the men ‘had it in’ for the State.” As a result, the army’s “track through the

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State is a desert waste." Edward Allen showed no surprise or remorse for his
countrymen’s treatment of the two cities. "The soldiers have had such a hatred for
Columbia & Charleston that it is no wonder they burned it."  

After leaving Charleston, Union soldiers burned Camden, Winnsboro, Lancaster, Chesterfield, and Cheraw, "[leaving behind] . . . a howling wilderness, an utter
desolation." They hoped this destruction would prevent South Carolina from "ever
[wanting] to seceed again." James Stillwell noted that "there is scarcely anything left in
our rear or trac[k]s except pine forests and naked lands and Starving inhabitants. A
majority of the Cities, towns, villages and country houses have been burnt to the
ground." As they entered North Carolina, many Union troops rejoiced in their
accomplishments. One soldier, Jesse Bean of Minnesota, wrote a commemorative poem
as "we bid adieu to S. Carolina leaving our Marks of revenge behind us to Show the
Generations to come."

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87 James A. Connolly to Wife, 12 March 1865, Three Years in the Army of the
Cumberland: The Letters and Diary of Major James A. Connolly (Bloomington: Indiana
University Press, 1959), 384.

88 Edward Allen to James and Emily Allen, 18 February 1865, Edward W. Allen
Papers.

89 J. Taylor Holmes, 10 February 1865, 52d Ohio Volunteer Infantry, Then and
Now (Columbus, Ohio: Berlin Print, 1898), 20. See also Thomas J. Myers to Wife, 26
February 1865, Thomas J. Myers Papers.
What was the fate
Of the first Rebel State
That Seceded from the Union.
And what was the desier
When we set Columbia on fier
And all that was consumed with it--
Far as we went we taken all the fenze--
The Sheep. hogs. and. Cattle for the rent--
To let them know where we went--
For this campain as we had plenty of rain
And plenty to eat on the Journey.
Was all for the benefit of South Carolina--"91

Just after Union troops entered North Carolina on March 8, Sherman thought it best to shape his military tactics to account for a civilian population that was poorer than that in South Carolina and rumored to have Unionist tendencies. Acknowledging his troops' wanton destruction in South Carolina, Sherman directed his officers to "instruct your brigade commanders that we are now out of South Carolina and that a little moderation may be of political consequence to us in North Carolina." Union soldiers should now "deal as moderately and fairly by the North Carolinians as possible."92 Although most historical accounts hold that Sherman softened his tactics in the Tarheel

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90 James Stillwell to Wife, 12 March 1865, as quoted in Grimsley, Hard Hand of War, 202.

91 Jesse S. Bean, 8 March 1865, Jesse S. Bean Diary.

State, his troops continued in their course of widespread destruction, despite claims that “since entering North Carolina the wanton destruction has stopped.” Their vandalism began almost immediately upon the troops’ entrance in to the state when soldiers began to set fire to North Carolina’s pine forests by lighting patches of congealed sap. They also torched the turpentine, tar, and rosin factories that they encountered along the state’s streams. One Union soldier observed that North Carolina’s pine forests “certainly made the handsomest fire [he] ever saw, especially the smoke as it rolled up in huge back volumes was splendid.” As Union soldiers “blazed their way through” the state, North Carolina stank of burning turpentine.

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93 James A. Connolly to Wife, 12 March 1865, Three Years in the Army of the Cumberland, 384. John Marszalek argues that when Sherman’s troops entered North Carolina “the wholesale destruction they had practiced in South Carolina ceased.” However, he admits that “the soldiers did not stop all pillaging; they simply toned it down.” Marszalek, Sherman, 327. Mark Grimsley asserts that “the Tarheel State received much the same treatment as Georgia-- possibly even a bit milder, since North Carolina was not part of the Deep South, was known to harbor significant Unionist sentiment, and had been one of the last states to secede.” Grimsley, The Hard Hand of War, 202. Also see John G. Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 291-300, 311-317, 328-349; James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 826. However, Michael Fellman acknowledges that “the men still stripped the countryside of food and livestock and burned public facilities. Some soldiers noted little difference between the overall results in the two Carolinas.” Fellman, Citizen Sherman, 235.

Confederate troops, a makeshift force of approximately 21,000 soldiers, could do little to impede Sherman’s “hard war” policy in North Carolina. They were outnumbered by Sherman’s 60,000 battle-hardened veterans who would soon be joined by 30,000 reinforcements. In North Carolina, Sherman continued his tactic of misleading the enemy with his troops’ movements. On March 9, Washington S. Chaffin, a Methodist minister in Lumberton, anxiously noted that “the Yankees are said to be in two different places near here. I am incredulous.” Little did Chaffin know that minutes later the elusive enemy would fill Lumberton’s streets.95 Apparently, Sherman’s orders to moderate the destruction proved little solace to the citizens of North Carolina. When Union troops captured Fayetteville on March 11, Sherman ordered the destruction of the local arsenal and mills. In addition, his soldiers continued to tear up railroads and “forage liberally.” They also terrorized the civilian population and destroyed much personal property, perhaps because they found “the city of Fayetteville . . . offensively

95 Washington S. Chaffin, 9 March 1865, Washington S. Chaffin Diary, Duke University. For examples of other Southerners expressing anxiety over Sherman’s uncertain path, see Mary Gayle Aiken, 10 February 1865, Aiken Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Lucy Barrow Cobb to Mary McKinley, 1 December 1864, Cobb-Erwin-Lamar Collection, University of Georgia; Edward McCrady to Wife, 9 December 1864, McCrady Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Cornelius Burckmyer to Charlotte Burckmyer, 15 December 1864, The Burckmyer Letters, March, 1865 - June, 1865 (Columbia, S.C.: The State Company, 1926), 448. George W. Nichols, aid-de-camp of Sherman, believed “it is useless conjecture what will be the next move.” George W. Nichols, 10 February 1865, The Story of the Great March, 147.
After recounting all of her material losses, one woman in Fayetteville complained that the Union soldiers “spared nothing but our lives.”97 Several Union officers had similar observations. From Fayetteville, Dexter Horton noted that “our march over the country has been like the blighting pestilence, for we have taken or turned upside down everything before us.”98 Despite reports in several newspapers, “that our treatment of citizens is good,” one soldier warned “don’t believe a word of it.”99 Even Sherman acknowledged the level of destruction in the Tarheel State. “Poor North Carolina will have a hard time for we sweep the country like a swarm of locusts.” His troops’ desolation of North Carolina did not trouble Sherman for a moment. Although “thousands of people may perish,” he believed that his march would succeed because

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97 Anonymous Woman [Fayetteville, N.C.], 22 March 1865, Emma Mordecai Diary, Mordecai Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection. This woman gives a lengthy description of her losses to Sherman’s troops: “At our house they killed every chicken, goose, turkey, cow, calf and every living thing, even to our pet dog. They carried off our wagons, carriage and horses, and broke up our buggy, wheelbarrow, garden implements, axes, hatchets, hammers, saws, &c., and burned the fences. Our smokehouse and pantry that a few days ago were well stored with bacon, lard, flour, dried fruit, meal, pickles, preserves, etc., now contain nothing whatever except a few pounds of meal and flour and five pounds of bacon. They took from old men, women and children alike.”


“they now realise that war means something else than vain glory and boasting. If Peace ever falls to their lot [Southerners] will never again invite War.”

Sherman ordered the left wing under Slocum’s command to leave Fayetteville on March 15, 1865. Soon after, Union troops drove Hardy’s Confederates back in a small confrontation. Fighting continued in Averasboro on March 16 between Slocum and 11,000 Confederates, and again at Bentonville on March 19. Two days later, on March 21, a defeated Johnston ordered a retreat of his Confederate forces. In the absence of military opposition, Sherman’s troops continued to march and forage as they had in the previous months. Within two weeks of Sherman’s April 13 entrance into Raleigh, Joseph Johnston surrendered his Confederate troops at Durham Station, North Carolina. The assault on the southern homefront had come to an end. Sherman’s men returned to what Illinois soldier Charles W. Wills described as “our good behavior. . . . No foraging, no bumming rails, or houses, and nothing naughty whatever.” Indeed, once orders to cease

100 William T. Sherman to Ellen Sherman, 9 April 1865, Home Letters of General Sherman, 342.

101 Charles W. Wills, 29 April 1865, Army Life of an Illinois Soldier, 373. Such an immediate change in behavior illuminates the ability of Sherman and his fellow officers to govern their troops. This betrays many of the explanations historians have offered for the non-essential items destroyed on the march. Southerners, perhaps not surprisingly, believed that the widespread destruction was either a direct result of official directives or an unofficial policy to turn a blind eye. For example, the morning after the burning of Columbia, Mrs. E. L. L. watched as “the order to cease the terrible carnival was given, and the immediate quiet which followed was passing strange, yet it showed the thorough discipline of the mighty army; besides it proved most clearly that permission, if not
foraging were given, Sherman’s troops immediately complied. One of the men on the march, Allen Morgan Geer, observed the remarkable change after Johnston’s surrender. “Very striking is the difference between this march and all others previous. The people remain contentedly at home, men are plenty, a safety guard is at each house and our soldiers make no effort to forage or destroy.”

Sherman designed and pursued his March through Georgia and the Carolinas as a comprehensive assault on Southern domesticity. Intending to break the will of the Confederacy by destroying it on both the psychological and physical levels, Union soldiers ransacked Southern homes, paying special attention to the markers of domestic life and femininity. They looted and burned homes, tore apart bedrooms, scattered private letters across fields, danced on pianos, and destroyed women’s fancy dresses and undergarments. They also stole jewelry, china, silver, and candlesticks. Elite slaveholding families, considered instrumental in Southern secession and the coming of war by their enemies, bore the brunt of the attack. Those soldiers who felt initial twinges of pity for their civilian targets, soon learned to downplay these feelings and concentrate on women expressed command, had been given to burn and sack the town.” Mrs. E. L. L., in Charleston Weekly Courier, “Our Women in the War”: The Lives they Lived, The Deaths they Died (Charleston: The News and Courier Book Presses, 1885), 255.

102 Allen Morgan Geer, 29 April 1865, Civil War Diary of Allen Morgan Geer, 217.
as the “strongest rebels.” This adjusted mindset, as well as the tacit consent of their officers, allowed Union soldiers license to ransack the homefront as they terrorized and taunted their female targets.

Sherman and his soldiers assumed that their campaign against Southern women would prove an easy success; surely, “the weaker sex” would quickly surrender to the power of an invading army. Much to their surprise, an easy victory would not prove to be the case. As later chapters demonstrate, many elite Southern women refused to take the invasion of their domestic sphere quietly. Acknowledging that Northern troops had adjusted their policies to allow for an attack on femininity, Confederate women responded with a new mindset of their own. As rumors spread of the impending invasion, Confederate women prepared themselves and their homes to weather the storm. Having found a way to merge their gender and regional identities in ways that allowed them to fight for their nation, they refused to submit. Sherman would not so easily “cure [Confederate women] of [their] pride and boasting.”
CHAPTER 2:
“THE FIENDS WILL DANCE AFTER HIM IN HIGH GLEE”:
BECOMING CONFEDERATES

Most antebellum Southerners and Northerners would have agreed with Margaret Mitchell’s narrator in Gone With the Wind who asserted that war “is men’s business, not ladies.”¹ War, they assumed, took place on the battlefield, far from the security of the feminine domestic sphere. Men willingly went off to battle to protect their wives, mothers, and sisters, and the glory earned on the battlefield became mythic on the homefront. Death, the most common consequence of war to affect women and children, became an honor instead of merely a hardship.² Similarly, antebellum Americans often

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considered it worse to experience the shame of a relative who avoided military service than the grief resulting from one who died in war. At the same time, the violence and gore of war traditionally remained on the battlefront and did not often interrupt the peace of the domestic household. During the Civil War, however, women’s increasing participation in the Confederate effort, in addition to the progression of Union military policies, turned the idea of a separate homefront on its head and redefined the nineteenth-century concept of warfare.³

White Southern women’s domesticity did not prevent their active participation in the secession crisis of 1860 and the ensuing war. As their states seceded, prepared for war, and sent men off to fight the Yankees, many white women made the Civil War their business. Their developing identities as Confederate women grew stronger when Union

³ Steven Cushman argues that there was no homefront during the American Civil War in Bloody Promenade: Reflections on a Civil War Battle (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999). Others have shown the interconnections between homefront and warfront. See James L. Roark, Slaves Without Masters: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977); Clarence L. Mohr, On the Threshold of Freedom: Masters and Slaves in Civil War Georgia (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986).
General William Tecumseh Sherman’s troops approached their homes and farms in 1864 and 1865. As white Southern women prepared for the homefront attack, they recognized that they had become military targets and adapted themselves to deal with the enemy’s assault on domesticity and femininity. Although shocking, the Union advance on women and the homefront did not come as a complete surprise. Through the progression of Union policies over the past three years as well as Sherman’s recent actions, white Southern women anticipated that Federal troops would have little regard for the distinctions between civilians and soldiers. Events leading up to the Georgia and Carolinas campaign clearly demonstrated that the Civil War had eased and erased most of the prohibitions that previously separated women and domestic life from the harshest realities of battle. In addition, Confederate women realized that their participation in the war as proponents of secession, suppliers of food and clothing, and defenders of the homefront had made them enemies in their own rights in the eyes of Union soldiers. This chapter explores the ways in which Confederate women, who were cognizant of the ways in which Sherman’s troops treated their domestic enemies, readied for a battle of their own.

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War was not the only activity considered “men’s business” in antebellum America. Most economic, political, and public endeavors fell under this heading. During the nineteenth century, women’s lives grew more and more focused around and circumscribed by the home. Within this context, women used assumptions about
femininity to their advantage in order to participate in the public domain. In the North, the rise of the middle class and the separation of the workplace from the home gendered people's conceptions of place and role. Women, who had previously taken an active, if

unrecognized, role in the support of their families, became relegated to the home and its
domestic chores as their husbands went off to work. As a result the “domestic” and
“public” spheres became increasingly separate and gendered. This separation of the sexes
fueled the ideals of “true womanhood” which stressed piety, purity, submissiveness, and
domesticity. Although the idea of separate spheres excluded women from “public”

5 Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New
York, 1790-1865 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Nancy F. Cott, The
Bonds of Womanhood: “Woman’s Sphere” in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven,
Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977); Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, Disorderly Conduct:
Visions of Gender in Victorian America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985); Linda K.
Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Women’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s

For an exploration of the relationship between masculinity and domesticity in
Victorian England, see John Tosh, A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class

6 On nineteenth-century expectations of women’s character and behavior, see
Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860,” in Dimity Convictions:
The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century (Athens: Ohio University Press,
1976), 21-41. Scholars used Welter’s ideal of “true womanhood” to discuss social
relations in the antebellum South. The first, Anne Firor Scott, highlighted the myth of
“true womanhood” and Southern women’s attempt to achieve this unattainable ideal.
Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago: University of
Chicago Press, 1970), esp. 3-102. Catherine Clinton argued that not only was the ideal of
the Southern lady a “fantasy,” but it was also “a powerful coercive force within
plantation society” that reinforced women’s inferior status. Clinton, The Plantation
Mistress: Woman’s World in the Old South (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982),
quotation, 87. In addition, Joan Cashin argued that white women shared a “culture of
resignation” in the Old South. Cashin, Our Common Affairs (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins
University Press, 1996), 1-41. See also Jane Turner Censer, North Carolina Planters and
Their Children, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987);
Steven M. Stowe, Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the
Planters (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); Stephanie McCurry,
activities, it gave women control over the domestic aspects of their lives. They gained the power to run the household and raise their children as they saw fit. This proved especially true in the South. As the holders of the keys to all rooms, stores, pantries, and bureaus, Southern women controlled the domestic activities of their households. Further, scholars have shown that the so-called “separate spheres” were not always rigidly defined. Men and women moved between both, often defining the arena by the work


Other scholars see women’s roles as less constrained than traditionally portrayed. For example, Victoria E. Bynum and Suzanne Lebsock explore women who eschewed gender boundaries and took matters into their own hands. Bynum illuminates North Carolina lower-class women’s violation of gender norms in Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992). Lebsock shows how women’s focus on “personalism” allowed them to exert their will in Petersburg, Virginia in The Free Women of Petersburg.

7 Southern social relations were based on the status gained by race. White women had power in their households over their slaves and children. In her study of plantation women and their household relationships, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese showed that slave-holding women were not necessarily subjugated by the ideals of the Southern lady. Instead, they benefited from their roles as the heads of the domestic activities in the household. Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). Others also discuss white women’s limited power in the Southern household. For examples, see Brenda E. Stevenson, Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Weiner, Mistresses and Slaves; McCurry, Masters of Small Worlds; Stephanie McCurry, “The Politics of Yeoman Households in South Carolina,” in Divided Houses, ed. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 22-38; Cynthia A. Kierner, Beyond the Household: Women’s Place in the Early South, 1700-1835 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Laura F. Edwards, Scarlett Doesn’t Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 15-31.
being done there at a specific time. Although not always in the public eye, white women constantly participated in public life.8

The Civil War forced everyone to reevaluate white women’s visible place in society.9 As the war increasingly affected their lives through shortages and deaths,

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women reshaped their roles in the South. They became active participants in the battle for Southern nationhood and, as such, targets for enemy armies. As the war lengthened, Southern women lost their protective status of civilians and increasingly became seen by the Union as active rebels. This progression from civilian to combatant grew out of the realities of life during the Civil War; Southern women could not avoid participation when soldiers fought battles their backyards and even the wealthiest families faced shortages. From the outset of the fighting Confederate women refused to accept a passive role, and they demonstrated their political awareness through their words and actions. As they personally encountered the hardships of wartime life, Southern women shouldered more active roles in the fight for independence. As such, the Union increasingly engaged them as enemy combatants throughout the Civil War.  

10 Women helped develop and sustain Confederate nationalism. The most prominent example of this is Augusta Jane Evans’s novel Macaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice, which offered Southern women two ideals to follow in their support of the Confederacy. Evans’ two main characters demonstrate how white women of privileged and poor backgrounds could make the sacrifices necessary to support the Confederacy. Evans, Macaria; or, Altars of Sacrifice (1864; reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992).  

Few scholars acknowledge women’s role in the creation and sustenance of Confederate nationalism. Those who note women’s role, tend to dismiss it as temporary. Even historian Drew Gilpin Faust, who edited the most recent edition of Macaria,
White Southern women’s active participation in the public sphere pre-dated the war. Many women initially drew attention to themselves as “rebels” and Confederates when they voiced their opinions on sectional issues and then on secession. Far from the sheltered, politically ignorant ladies they have often been portrayed as, many Southern women paid close attention to the events around them.\textsuperscript{11} They read the news and


In addition, many scholars argue that Confederate nationalism was either nonexistent, or too weak to have any effect. For examples, see Drew Gilpin Faust, The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); Paul D. Escott, After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1978), esp. 19-53; Richard E. Beringer, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, William N. Still, Jr., “Southern Nationalism” and “Why the South Lost” in Why the South Lost the Civil War (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 64-81, 424-442; Paul D. Escott, “The Failure of Confederate Nationalism: The Old South’s Class System in the Crucible of War,” in The Old South in the Crucible of War, ed. Harry P. Owens and James J. Cooke (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1983), 16, 20; Lawrence N. Powell and Michael S. Wayne, “Self-Interest and the Decline of Confederate Nationalism,” in The Old South in the Crucible of War, 32-33.

\textsuperscript{11} Women’s close attention to political events around them can be seen most clearly by the self-conscious desire of so many to begin keeping journals in the 1850s and 1860s. Almost all of these women comment on their desire to keep a record of the
discussed it in depth with friends and family of both sexes. When the secession crisis came to a head in 1860, white Southern women had much to say on the issue. They especially paid close attention to the contentious presidential election facing the nation.


For example, Dolly Lunt Burge assumed that the 1860 election "may be the last presidential Election Our United Country will ever see." 12 Leora Sims rejoiced that she lived in Columbia because she could "go to the Legislature and hear all the speeches." Sims, who hoped that her friend Harriet Palmer's "southern blood is as fiery as mine," professed herself a "regular fire eater." 13 As self-proclaimed patriotic Southerners, many pushed their husbands toward secession after Lincoln won the electoral college. By appealing to their husbands' sense of familial duty, elite Southern women encouraged men to echo their political sentiments and vote for secession. 14

After Southern legislatures voted for secession, many white women applauded their states' decisions to leave the Union. For example, as other states began to follow South Carolina's lead, Emma Holmes wrote that she was "doubly proud . . . of [her] native state, that she should be the first to arise and shake off the hated chain which


14 Stephen A. Channing, Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974), 178, 287. Eugene Genovese notes the influence and role of what he labels "extremist" women in antebellum and Civil War times. He stresses that in recognizing these Southern women, "the numbers do not matter"; the importance lies in the reality of their existence. Genovese, "Toward a Kinder and Gentler America," 133. Not all Southern women supported secession. For examples, see Thomas G. Dyer, Secret Yankees: The Union Circle in Confederate Atlanta (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Pease and Pease, A Family of Women, esp. 1-6, 140-141.
linked us with Black Republicans and Abolitionists." Holmes was not alone in her anti-Union sentiments. Women across the South longed to join South Carolina and break free from the United States. On January 3, 1861 Anna Maria Cook wrote, "I hope before long Georgia will be with South Carolina seceded from the Union." When Georgia finally seceded, another rejoiced: "the very name of Georgian is of itself a heritage to boast of. I have always been proud of my native state but never more so than now. Nobly has she responded to the call for troops." Although the horrors of war would dampen some of these women's initial enthusiasm, many took an active and educated part in the movement to separate South from North. White women's political awareness gave them the confidence to voice their opinions to the men of their family and the knowledge that their husbands, fathers, and brothers would listen to these ideas.

15 Emma Holmes, 13 February 1861, The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 1.

16 Anna Maria Cook Green, 3 January 1861, The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 9.

17 Gertrude Thomas, 13 July 1861, The Secret Eye, 184.

18 Emma Mordecai wrote, "Our dear mother . . . is satisfied that her anxious wish for Virginia to secede has be gratified." Emma Mordecai to Alfred Mordecai, 21 April 1861, Alfred Mordecai Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Mary Boykin Chesnut expressed her support of secession with a justification of it. "My father was a South Carolina Nullifier . . . . So I was of necessity a rebel born." Mary Boykin Chesnut, 18 February 1861, The Private Mary Chesnut: The Unpublished Civil War Diaries, ed. C. Vann Woodward and Elisabeth Muhlenfeld, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 4. Judith McGuire longed for her state to separate from the Union: "I . . . now most earnestly hope that the voice of Virginia may give no uncertain sound; that she may leave [the Union] with a shout." Judith White McGuire, 21 May 1861, Diary of a
Women’s participation in secession may have been restricted to words and symbolic acts, such as donating jewelry, but their roles in the public realm grew with the onset of war. When the hostilities began, white Southern women made themselves essential to the Confederate war effort by encouraging men to enlist. They appealed to the manhood and honor of men and urged them to fill the ranks of the military. Men who refused often found themselves snubbed by the ladies. Emma Edmonds, a Union spy born in Canada, agreed with a soldier who told her that Southern women were “the best recruiting officers,” refusing “to tolerate, or admit to their society any young man who refuses to enlist.”

Across the newly-formed Confederacy, Southern women’s actions confirmed this observation. A woman in Selma, Alabama, broke off her engagement to a man who did not enlist. She sent him a petticoat, a skirt, and a note reading “wear these, or volunteer.” Those with family members on the front lines often supported the war

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19 S. Emma E. Edmonds, Nurse and Spy in the Union Army: Comprising the Adventures and Experiences of a Woman in Hospitals, Camps, and Battle-Fields (Hartford: W. S. Williams & Co., 1865), 332; S. Emma E. Edmonds, Unsexed; or, The Female Soldier: The Thrilling Adventures, Experiences and Escapes of a Woman, as Nurse, Spy and Scout, in Hospitals, Camp and Battlefields (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Publishing, 1864). During the Civil War, Edmonds served as a field nurse and a spy. She also disguised herself as a man to enlist in the Union army. As Edmonds and other female Union spies reveal, Northern women also found ways to take an active part in war and other activities usually reserved for men. Leonard, All the Daring of the Soldier, 170.

20 William Stevenson, Thirteen Months in the Rebel Army: Being a Narrative of Personal Adventures in the Infantry, Ordnance, Cavalry, Courier, and Hospital Services;
against the North. Georgian mother of three, Charlotte Branch, wrote a poem to her sons urging them to fight:

 Strike for the mother that gave you birth  
 Your native home and fires  
 Think of their watchword who assail  
 Press hard the savage foe  
 Nor pause until, its stars grow pale,  
 Their treacherous flag lies low.  


Women taunted, cajoled, and shamed men into eventually joining the Confederate forces. A published poem entitled “If You Love Me” created a conversation in which a woman encouraged her sweetheart to enlist: “If you love me, do not ponder... Join your country in the fray. Go! your aid and right hand lend her./ Breast the tyrant’s angry blast;/ Be her own and my defender—/ Strike for freedom to the last” J. Augustine Signaigo, “If You Love Me,” reprinted in William Gilmore Simms, War Poetry of the South (1866; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1972), 312.

In June 1861, Virginian Judith McGuire confided to her journal that “we could not bear that one of them [the men of her family] should hesitate to give his life’s blood to his country.” Judith White McGuire, 18 June 1861, Diary of a Southern Refugee, 33. Similarly, Mrs. Allen S. Izard of South Carolina asserted that “I sh[ou]ld hate a man who w[ou]ld flinch, even f[ro]m martyrdom for his Country.” Mrs. Allen S. Izard to Mrs. William Mason Smith, 21 July 1864, Mason Smith Family Letters, 1860-1868, ed. Daniel E. Huger Smith, Alice R. Huger Smith, and Arney R. Childs (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1950), 116. Other women made their support for the Confederacy known through their rejoicing in Southern successes. For example, Drucilla Wray celebrated the capture of Ft. Sumter. “I have just heard that Fort Sumpter is in possession of the Confederate States, Hurrah for Carolina!!! and her noble sons.” Henry and Drucilla Wray to Sister, 17 April 1861, Henry and Drucilla Wray Paper, Georgia Historical Society.

Charlotte S. Branch, 1861, Margaret Branch Sexton Collection, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, Athens.
Protecting Branch’s “native home” ultimately demanded that she sacrifice two of her sons at the First Battle of Manassas in 1861, and that she write letters of support to her only surviving son as he continued to fight the “savage foe.” The deaths of her sons’ did not discourage Branch from her dream of Southern independence.22

White women’s wartime involvement resulted from an intense patriotism as well as a sense of difference between themselves and Northern “Yankees.” Early in the war, Confederate women recognized the antagonism of their Union foes and rumors of exaggerated horrors spread throughout the region. “Every day,” Emma Holmes wrote, “brings fresh accounts of the demonic fury & hatred of the Northerners toward the Southerners & South Carolinians especially... Men even suspected of sympathy with the South are murdered in cold blood.”23 Nothing seemed too horrible to attribute to the North, especially since many Southerners increasingly saw themselves as racially, ideologically, and culturally separate from the North. Southern women saw Union soldiers as “Sumner-like reptiles of the North” and celebrated the complete separation of North and South. These staunch female Confederates wanted no connection with the

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22 Charlotte Branch continued to write to her remaining son throughout the war. See Mauriel Phillips Joslyn, ed., Charlotte’s Boys: Civil War Letters of the Branch Family of Savannah (Berryville, Va.: Rockbridge Publishers, 1996).

23 Emma Holmes, 1 May 1861, The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 40.
“miserable fanatic set” of Yankees. As the war lengthened, this sense of difference and celebration of Southern independence only strengthened.

The progression of Union tactics from a focus on the battlefield to direct assaults on Southern civilians combined with unruly conduct toward white women led Southerners increasingly to view Northern soldiers as “demons.” The enemy presence in militarily occupied areas could be tolerated as the consequences of war, but Southern women frequently concluded that Union soldiers took things too far. When, in 1861, the Union


25 A detailed study of the progression of Union tactics toward the Southern homefront is Mark Grimsley, The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Grimsley argues that Union policies went through roughly three stages: conciliation, pragmatism, and hard war. Also see Charles Royster, The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans (New York: Random House 1993). Reid Mitchell asserts that Northern soldiers considered Confederate women to be “she-devils” and enemies. “And thinking of them as enemies transformed them from neutrals to fit objects of war--people to be arrested, executed, burned out. In broader terms, they became the people whose will to make war had to be broken.” Mitchell, The Vacant Chair, 100.

imprisoned a group of Southern women and their young daughters in Washington, D.C., men and women across the Confederate states voiced their outrage. In November 1861, Rose O’Neal Greenhow, a Southern spy and one of the arrested women, proclaimed in the Richmond Whig that Union actions illuminated “the cruel and dastardly tyranny which the Yankee government has established at Washington.” Greenhow hoped that “the incarceration and torture of helpless women, and the outrages heaped upon them . . . will shock manly natures and stamp the Lincoln dynasty everywhere with undying infamy.” Enraged by their arrest, but confident of their place in history, the women in custody saw themselves as martyrs to the Confederate cause. As she prepared for her internment, Eugenia Yates Levy Phillips wrote “this day has ushered in a new era in the History of the Country, one which marks the arrest and imprisonment of women, for


Mary Elizabeth Massey notes that “Rose Greenhow’s arrest was the first to attract widespread attention.” Massey, Women in the Civil War, 90.

Richmond Whig, November 1861, Leila [Elliott] Habersham Paper 1861-2, Georgia Historical Society. In this “Letter From a Southern Lady in Prison to Seward--The Cowardly Atrocities of the Washington Government,” Rose O’Neal Greenhow records her story because “my sufferings will afford a significant lesson to the women of the South, that sex or condition is no bulwark against the surging billows of the ‘irrepressible conflict.’” Also see Rose O’Neal Greenhow, My Imprisonment and the First Year of Abolition Rule in Washington (London: Richard Bentley, 1863). Both Greenhow and Eugenia Yates Levy Phillips demonstrate that despite their actions, women assumed that their sex placed them beyond the scope of punishment. They ascribed to the belief that women should always be protected.
political opinions!” The women’s bravery and sacrifice became clearer, she continued, as they “immediately prepared with courageous hearts, inspired with the thought that we were suffering in a noble cause, and determined so to bear ourselves, as not to shame our southern countrywomen.” Union actions crossed over gender boundaries, and the arrested women used this to their advantage. They played upon their imprisonment to inflame further Southern patriotism and demonstrate the necessity of war and total separation from the North.

Elite women in Georgia and the Carolinas confirmed Phillips’ assessment of female imprisonment and rallied against Federal tyranny. For Mary Boykin Chesnut, wife of South Carolinian Confederate Senator James Chesnut, the incident clearly demonstrated the inhumanity of Union soldiers. In her estimation, white Southern women had been unfairly singled out by Northern men as easy victims. “I think these times make all women feel their humiliation in the affairs of the world.” This resulted from the fact that “women can only stay at home, and every paper reminds us that women are to be violated, ravished, and all manner of humiliation.” Chesnut recognized that women’s vulnerability allowed them to be attacked in many ways. They could be


30 Mary Boykin Chesnut, 29 August 1861, Mary Chesnut’s Civil War, 172. Also see Anna E. Kirtland to Harriet R. Palmer, 13 October 1861, A World Turned Upside Down, 314.
“ravished,” even without physical rape. Accustomed to protection as a result of their femininity and white privilege, slaveholding women across the Confederacy realized that the change in military tactics increased their likelihood of being attacked. With their husbands, brothers, and fathers at the battlefront, these women would have to protect their purity through their own ingenuity. As the war progressed, they found more reasons to fear for their safety as well as new ways to protect themselves and their nation.

The imprisonment of Southern women in 1861 foreshadowed what women across the South could expect in the future. In May 1862, reports of Major General Benjamin Butler’s actions in occupied New Orleans further excited Confederate tempers. After the women of the city repeatedly avoided and attacked the Union soldiers there, Butler issued his infamous General Order 28. Butler’s attempt to subdue and control the Confederate women in New Orleans, the “Woman Order” laid out the situation and the punishment:

As the officers and soldiers of the United States have been subject to repeated insults from the women (calling themselves ladies) of New Orleans . . . it is ordered that hereafter when any female shall, by word, gesture, or movement, insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, she shall be regarded and

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31 Throughout the Civil War, Southern women referred to Union attacks using the rhetoric of rape. These women understood that they could be violated without physical rape. They also feared that the change in Union tactics would ultimately result in physical rape. See Chapter 4.
held liable to be treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation.32


Southerners used Butler’s General Order 28 to unite the Confederacy against a common enemy. General P. G. T. Beauregard, for example, addressed a letter to the “men of the South” calling on them to retaliate: “Shall our mothers, our wives, our daughters, and our sisters be thus outraged by the ruffianly soldiers of the North, to whom is given the right to treat at their pleasure the ladies of the South as common harlots? Arouse, friends, and drive back from our soil those infamous invaders of our homes and disturbers of our family ties.” General Orders No. 44, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. 10, Pt. 2: 531. Similarly, Louisiana Governor Thomas O. Moore, proclaimed that “the annals of warfare between civilized nations afford no similar instance of infamy” to Butler’s Woman Order. He hoped that the unforgivable order would steel the men of Louisiana to drive the Northern troops out of the state. Proclaiming “to the world that the exhibition of any disgust or repulsiveness by the women of New Orleans to the hated invaders of their home and the slayers of their fathers, brothers, and husbands shall constitute a justification to a brutal soldiery of the indulgence of their lust,” Moore justified women’s actions and called for Confederate men to support them. Butler’s order, he continued could not end female defiance in New Orleans because “what else than contempt and abhorrence can the women of New Orleans feel or exhibit for these officers and soldiers of the United States?” Further, “the spontaneous impulse of their hearts must appear involuntary upon their countenances and thus constitute the crime for which the general of those soldiers adjudges the punishment of rape and brutalized passion.” Moore called upon all Louisianians to fight for their women. They “must arm and strike, or the insolent victors will offer this outrage to your wives, your sisters, and your daughters. . . . It is your homes that you have to defend. It is the jewel of your hearths--the chastity of your women--you have to guard.” Proclamation, 24 May 1862, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. 15: 743-744. See also, Bell Wiley, The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldiers of the Confederacy (1943; reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 312.
News of the order spread quickly across the South. White women and men denounced it. For example, Mary Boykin Chesnut condemned Butler for “turning over the women of New Orleans to his soldiers! . . . This hideous cross-eyed beast orders his men to treat the ladies of New Orleans as women of the town. To punish them, he says, for their insolence.”33 Butler’s unforgivable actions, she later wrote, were uncivilized. “We hardly expected from Massachusetts behavior to shame a Comanche.”34 After reading Butler’s order, North Carolinian Catherine Edmondston similarly decried his actions. Although she “cannot find words to express [her] horror and indignation,” Edmondston adamantly denounced Butler, and by association, all Northerners. “Was such cold blooded barbarity ever before conceived?” Butler’s actions were so horrible, she raged, that “we no longer will hold any intercourse with you, ye puritanical, deceitful race, ye descendants of the Pilgrims, of the hypocrites who came over in the Mayflower.” Although Northerners might “plume yourselves on your piety, your civilization. Wrap yourselves in your own fancied superiority,” Edmondston insisted that “we are none of you, desire naught from you. We detest you!”35 Georgian Gertrude Thomas likewise denounced Butler as

33 Mary Boykin Chesnut, 21 May 1862, Mary Chesnut’s Civil War, 343.
34 Mary Boykin Chesnut, 12 June 1862, Mary Chesnut’s Civil War, 379.
35 Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 22 May 1862, “Journal of a Secesh Lady”: The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866, ed. Beth G. Crabtree and James W. Patton (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1979), 180-182. Still fuming a month later, Edmondston wrote “The condition of N Orleans is terrible. No people ever were more oppressed or insulted. . . . Humanity
someone whose name “th[r]ough all coming ages will be branded with the reputation of being the most vile loathsome of all God’s creation.” She also remarked on the insulting order’s galvanizing effect on Confederate soldiers. “Had our brave men required an additional incentive for valour they have it furnished in the appeal to protect the honour of their women.”36 The “Woman Order” produced shock and disapproval across the South. Confederates viewed “Beast” Butler’s improper treatment of white women as both unforgivable and inexcusable.37

sickens at the thought of the barbarity, the groveling cowardly cruelty of the wretch Butler!” Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 6 June 1862, “Journal of a Secesh Lady”, 188.

36 Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 2 June 1862, The Secret Eye, 206-207. In this same entry, Thomas also voiced her personal outrage. “Ye Gods shall this man live... Is there not spirit enough left to the men of New Orleans to strike the dastard ‘to the vile dust from which he sprang?’”

37 Even during wartime, women expected that men, including the enemy, would treat them with respect and protect them. White Southern women demonstrated their assumption of protection in their appeals to the enemy for personal guards for their homes during Sherman’s march. For examples, see Minerva Leah Rowles McClatchey, 3 November 1864, McClatchey Family Papers, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta; Dolly Lunt Burge, 19 November 1864, The Diary of Dolly Lunt Burge, 159; Peggy Mira Cox Berry to Amanda Berry Markham and William Markham, 14 December 1864, Confederate Miscellany I, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia; Sarah Jane Sams to Randolph Sams, 13 February 1865, Sarah Jane Sams Letter, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia; E. V. Ravenel to Allan Macfarlan, 21 March 1865, Allan Macfarlan Papers, South Caroliniana Library; “Extract from an old Letter, Found Among the Papers of My Grandmother, Mrs. N. A. Bishop of Darlington, S.C.,” United Daughters of the Confederacy, South Carolina Division, Edgefield Chapter Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North
In 1864, Union policy shifted to one directly aimed at the Confederate homefront and its civilian population as enemies of war. In September, United States General Ulysses S. Grant ordered General Philip H. Sheridan to “do all the damage . . . you can” to turn “the Shenandoah Valley [into] a barren waste.”38 In addition, Grant hoped that the soldiers on this campaign would “eat out Virginia clear and clean as far as they go, so that crows flying over it for the balance of this season will have to carry their provender with them.”39 Sheridan and his men took these orders to heart, seizing or destroying all flour, grains, and livestock as well as burning civilians out of their homes. While carrying out these orders, few soldiers sympathized with the plight of their female victims. “I do not believe war to be simply that lines should engage each other in battle, and therefore do

Carolina; Marrie to Sallie Lawton, 15 April 1865, Willingham and Lawton Families Papers, South Caroliniana Library.


not regret the system of living on the enemy’s country,” Sheridan remarked. Confederate
“women did not care how many were killed, or maimed, so long as war did not come to
their doors, but as soon as it did come in the shape of loss of property, they earnestly
prayed for its termination.” Sheridan pointed directly to Confederate women as military
enemies when justifying his advance on the homefront. “As war is a punishment, if we
can, by reducing its advocates to poverty, end it quicker, we are on the side of
humanity.” Like Sherman, Sheridan believed in the utility of bringing war to the
Confederate homefront and the slaveholding women who occupied it. To help bring the
war to an end, both men denied elite Southern women their protected status, and instead

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Women despised these new tactics and wanted to take action against them. Twenty-eight women in Harrisonburg, Virginia, wrote to Secretary of War James A. Seddon in December 1864, offering their plan. “With the permission of the War Department we will raise a full regiment of ladies--between the ages of 16 and 40--armed and equipped to perform regular service.” These women were further willing “to endure any sacrifice--any privation for the ultimate success of our Holy Cause.” Irene Bell, Annie Samuels, and others to Secretary of War James A Seddon, 2 December 1864, as cited in Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War: How Popular Will, Nationalism, and Military Strategy Could Not Stave Off Defeat* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 77.
engaged them as enemies in their own rights. This method of “hard war” guided Union actions throughout the South beginning in 1864.41

The Union’s shift to direct attacks on the Confederate homefront brought white women, who clearly recognized their new situation, to center stage of the Civil War. No longer protected by their gender, class, or the presence of their men, elite women learned to adapt to battle-like conditions. Forced to prepare to engage the enemy face to face, they became active participants on the warfront. Southern women paid close attention to the progression of Union tactics as they changed in Washington, D.C., New Orleans, and Virginia. Their awareness of what was happening across the Confederacy, especially in the Shenandoah Valley, led Confederate women to a clear understanding of the Union’s crossing of gender boundaries. Consequently, white Southern women had learned what to expect from Union soldiers by the time Sherman’s troops began their campaign in Georgia

41 Mark Grimsley distinguishes “hard war” from “total war” by pointing to the restraint of Union Soldiers. See Grimsley, The Hard Hand of War, 4-5. For a discussion of the restraint of Union soldiers, see Michael Fellman, Citizen Sherman: A Life of William Tecumseh Sherman (New York: Random House, 1995), 225-226. For a critical treatment of “restraint” see Chapters 1 and 4 of this dissertation.

and the Carolinas. This knowledge allowed Confederate women to prepare for a direct assault on Southern domesticity and domestic space in Georgia and the Carolinas.

Recognizing the implications and severity of Union intentions, North Carolinian Catherine Edmondston despised the new tactics. “Grant has issued an order which, for barbarity, equals anything yet done in this most barbarous of all wars.” In particular, “he directs the Valley of Va to be laid entirely waste, everything which can support life to be destroyed and all the stock of any kind to be driven off or killed.” Edmondston’s initial disbelief of Grant’s “barbarous” orders changed as she observed the policy in action. She continued her journal entry with horror.

His Lieutenants are carrying it out to the letter! In one day Sheridan reports he burned [---] Mills, [---] Barns filled to the roof with wheat, oats, & corn enough to maintain Early for three months, all the farming implements, the seed wheat.

In addition, Sheridan “has fed 3000 sheep to his army & driven off stock & horses in such quantity that there has been as yet no account taken of them!” As she reflected on Union activities across the South, Edmondston saw that Grant’s policy extended beyond the Shenandoah Valley. Lumping together the Union generals who worked to carry out Grant’s hard war policy, Edmondston despised them all. “Grant tells [Sheridan] ‘to leave the Valley such a waste that next year a crow flying across will have to carry his own rations with him,’” she fumed. “What a monster! Fit associate for Butler and Sherman! He is a disgrace to humanity!” She was shocked that “such conduct is tolerated by a
nation who calls itself Christian." Edmondston's fury at Sheridan's attack on domesticity clearly comes across in her journal. In the Shenandoah Valley Sheridan "destroyed everything before him. Blood & carnage, smoking ruins, the cries of houseless women & children alone mark his track." Sheridan's destruction of civilian property, especially the homes, took the Civil War to a new level. However, the loss of property paled in comparison to the Union disregard for gender boundaries. The attack on civilian women was the most troubling aspect of the new warfare for all Southerners.

Despite the news out of the Shenandoah Valley, white women in Atlanta, the first to face Sherman and his troops on their new "hard war" campaign, underestimated what was in store for them. Women understood from previous Union actions that they would not be ignored or protected as civilians, but they did not anticipate the new level to which Sherman would take the war. As a result, the forced evacuation of women and children from the captured and occupied city shocked those who encountered it. Not only did

42 Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 18 October 1864, "Journal of a Secesh Lady", 624.

43 Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 29 October 1864, "Journal of a Secesh Lady", 627. Sheridan reported that he "destroyed over 2,000 barns filled with wheat, hay and farming implements; over 70 mills, filled with flour and wheat; [drove] in front of the army over 4,000 head of stock, and have killed and issued to the troops not less than 3,000 sheep." Philip Sheridan to Ulysses S. Grant, 7 October 1864, Official Records, Ser. 1, Vol. 43, Pt. 2: 307-308.

44 For descriptions of Sheridan's campaign, see McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 778-779, 784-815; Mark Grimsley, The Hard Hand of War, 167-168.
they consider Sherman’s orders inhumane, but they also objected to the timing. From Ravenswood, Georgia, one woman denounced the evacuation of Atlanta. “How dreadful for women and children to be turned out of doors homeless, just at the beginning of winter.” Such tactics shocked her. In the “darkened annals of history we do not read of any enemy like ours who wage[s] war upon helpless women and children.”45 For Gertrude Thomas, Sherman’s evacuation of Atlanta demonstrated her own precarious situation. “I had decided that in case of the Yankees taking possession of Augusta I would remain there if I could, but the exiles of Atlanta has taught me that a different destiny awaits me if Sherman reaches here.” On the possibility of Sherman’s troops arriving in Augusta, Thomas noted “that he will do so I firmly believe to be only a matter of time.”46 North Carolinian Catherine Edmondston despised such conduct. In Atlanta “[Sherman] promulgated an Order so infamous that a Russian example must be sought if we would find a parallel among civilized nations.” She fumed that “he finds it for the interest of the U S that every inhabitant should be banished from Atlanta & its vicinity.” Instead of subduing the Confederates, Edmondston expected Sherman’s evacuation of Atlanta to strengthen the Southern cause. “What can he expect but

45 Sarah Elizabeth Wilson to J. H. Wilkes, 19 November 1864, Edward Marvin Steel Papers, Collection of Heiskell, McCampbell, Wilkes, and Steel Family Materials, Wilkes Family Correspondence, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

46 Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 23 September 1864, The Secret Eye, 238.
resistance to the death from every Southern man, woman, & child in the future?”47 Many of her fellow Confederates shared Edmondston’s shock and disdain at the evacuation of Atlanta. Until this point in the Civil War, neither army had forced out residents in the cities that they occupied. This departure from military standards emphasized to many white women the lengths to which the Union would go to win the war and further demonstrated the differences between the two regions.48

Sherman recognized the disgust of Confederates concerning his evacuation of the fallen city and gloried in the reaction. “The people of the South have made a big howl at my moving the families of Atlanta.”49 However, the Southern reaction did not soften him to the plight of Confederate women and children. Sherman responded to complaints from the Atlanta city council, showing no sympathy for those who faced the brunt of his orders. Instead he blamed the Confederates for bringing war to the domestic sphere.

47 Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 16 September 1864, “Journal of a Secesh Lady”, 615.

48 For an example of the relatively peaceful relationships between Union soldiers and Southerners in parts of the occupied South, see Ash, When the Yankees Came. Some Northern soldiers felt uncomfortable about the fairness of the evacuation of Atlanta. See Chapter 1.

“Now I know the vindictive nature of our enemy. . . . The use of Atlanta for warlike purposes is inconsistent with its character as a home for families.”

Sherman’s assessment of Atlanta women as a powerful enemy heralded things to come. No longer could the privileges of race and gender keep female civilians out of the direct path of war, but they instead made them targets. White women in Georgia and the Carolinas learned from the Atlanta experience and increasingly prepared themselves for the worst as the troops approached. Sherman’s activities in Georgia combined with previous Union actions toward Southern women gave Confederate women a clear understanding of Union intentions toward them as the enemy. These civilians subsequently readied themselves for the horrors of battle.

After watching Union attacks on civilians increase in intensity, Confederate women prepared themselves for a direct assault on domesticity. As Sherman and his troops moved across Georgia in the Autumn of 1864, white women recognized the danger of their position as female civilians. The presumed weakness of the female sex became a

50 William T. Sherman to James M. Calhoun, Mayor, E. E. Rawson and S. C. Wells, representing the City Council of Atlanta, 12 September 1864, The Hero’s Own Story: General Sherman’s Official Account of His Great March Through Georgia and the Carolinas, From his Departure from Chattanooga to the Surrender of General Johnston, and the Confederate Forces Under his Command, To Which are Added General Sherman’s Evidence before the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War; the Animadversions of Secretary Stanton and General Halleck; with a Defence of his Proceedings, &c. (New York: Bunce & Huntington, Publishers, 1865), 60. For a description of what the evacuation experience was like for white women, see Diary of Mary Rawson, Rawson-Collier-Harris Papers, Atlanta History Center, Georgia.
constantly discussed topic as Confederate women realized that they were left to defend themselves against an enemy who knew no boundaries. However, this knowledge did not discourage them. In a letter to her husband, one Georgia woman explained, “we were all a set of helpless females without a man even to go to for advice. so we had to think & act for ourselves & we had no time to be afraid.”51 Women took up the challenge of fending for themselves and worked to protect their homes and families. Another Georgian, Loula Kendall Rogers, similarly acknowledged the path of destruction sure to follow Sherman’s capture of Atlanta and the precarious position of female civilians. “We have been very much troubled about what to do if the Yankees should get any nearer.” This became particularly troubling because “Atlanta, ‘that great city’ with all its might ‘bulwarks and towers’ has fallen! ... I do so dread to leave the beloved home of my childhood, to be plundered and burnt by the hated race.” Rogers, like other white women, recognized both her powerlessness and power. Although she felt a sense of personal danger as a woman in the path of Union soldiers, she also realized that her presence in some ways protected her property.52

51 Julia Stanley to Marcellus Stanley, 1 August 1864, Stanley Letters (Reproductions), University of Georgia.

52 Loula Kendall Rogers, 13 September 1864, Loula Kendall Rogers Papers, Emory University. Also see Louisa Warren Patch Fletcher, 20 November 1864, Louisa Warren Patch Fletcher (Mrs. Dix) Journal, Georgia Department of Archives and History. Also see Mrs. E. A. Steele to Tody, 15 February 1865, in Katherine M. Jones, ed., When Sherman Came: Southern Women and the “Great March” (New York: Bobbs-Merrill
Knowledge of Atlanta’s fall and Union power did not guarantee that white women would give in to their fears by leaving their homes or becoming submissive to Northern troops. Although thousands of women fled their homes in favor of other places, many, like Rogers, understood the protection that they could ensure their homes by their presence.53 Others refused to give in to the dreaded enemy at any cost. Assuming that Sherman would head her way, Minerva McClatchey defiantly declared her intentions to stay. “Atlanta has at last fallen into the hands of the Federals. . . . They say that we must go.” The enemy’s demands had little effect on McClatchey who, true to her warlike name, “told them I should not leave my house while there was a roof over my head unless Genl Sherman ‘ordered me personally and preemptorily to do so.”’ She remained


53 Union soldiers acknowledged that they often did not burn occupied houses. G. W. Hanger noted that “where ever we came to a house where the people were gone they most always were burnt.” G. W. Hanger to Parents and Sisters, 14 December 1864, “With Sherman in Georgia--A Letter from the Coast,” ed. F. B. Joyner, Georgia Historical Quarterly 42 (December 1958): 440. See also George Ward Nichols, 5 February 1865, The Story of the Great March from the Diary of a Staff Officer (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1865). 140. Confederate Mary Maxcy Leverett noted that “They burned every house that no one was in on every road leading from Columbia toward N. Carolina.” Mary Bull Maxcy Leverett to Caroline Pinckney Seabrook, 18 March, 1865, Mary Maxcy Leverett Letter, South Caroliniana Library. See also Ephraim L. Girdner to Mollie, 23 December 1864, Bell Irvin Wiley Files, Emory University; Harriet R. Palmer, 7 March 1865 and 19 March 1865, A World Turned Upside Down, 436, 444.

On Southern women as refugees during the Civil War, see Mary Elizabeth Massey, Refugee Life in the Confederacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964).
adamant, declaring “this is my home[,] I have a right to stay at it[,] God has given me that right. If Genl Sherman chooses to order me away, I shall obey—that is his lookout—not mine.” McClatchey wanted to expose Sherman’s actions as inhumane and uncivilized. Warfare, she assumed, should not preclude the proper treatment of women and children. McClatchey was not alone in this belief. As she worried about a Union attack on her town of Augusta, Catherine Rowland harshly denounced Sherman’s actions. The destruction of civilian property, she asserted was “stronger evidence than ever of the vile, mean, treacherous, black hearts of our enemies” who showed no shame as they “destroy women’s wardrobes and . . . tear their clothes to pieces.” These men had gone far beyond the confines of “civilized warfare” as nineteenth-century women conceived of it.

The expectation of a Union attack haunted many Southern women after Atlanta’s fall; they feared not only for their own safety, but also for that of their families. In October, a woman near Athens, Georgia “dreamed last night for the third time lately that the Yankees had come here again and thought last night that they took father pris[o]ner I

54 Minerva McClatchey, 19 September 1864, Diary of Minerva Leah Rowles McClatchey, 1864-1866, McClatchey Family Papers.

55 Catherine Barnes Rowland, 24 August 1864 and 12 October 1864, as quoted in Whites, The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 101.
[was] very glad it was only a dream & hope it will never happen.”\textsuperscript{56} Widespread uncertainty of Sherman’s intended path combined with the knowledge of the destruction and terror his troops brought understandably rattled many Confederate women. In Augusta, one commented on the terror facing her countrywomen. “Sherman has burned Atlanta, Jonesboro, and every place through which he passes. . . . In the darkened annals of history we do not read of any enemy like ours who wage war upon helpless women and children.”\textsuperscript{57}

In preparation for Union attacks, women worked to get their valuables out of the projected path of enemy soldiers. They knew that if Sherman’s troops arrived in their towns, the men would burn their homes and ransack their possessions. M. A. Lark asked her mother to take care of her valuables:

I am fearful I hear the yankeys are about to take Macon and it may be they will come to Augusta. . . . if their is any danger of them coming there . . . do if you please go down and get my best things . . . get all you can if their should be any danger . . . I do

\textsuperscript{56} Evelyn Harden Jackson, 31 October 1864, Harden Family Papers, Duke University.

\textsuperscript{57} Sarah Elizabeth “Bessie” Wilson to J. H. Wilkes, 19 November 1864, Wilkes Family Correspondence, Steel, Edward Marvin Papers, Collection of Heiskell, McCampbell, Wilkes, and Steel Family Materials. Some women considered sending their children elsewhere to get them out of the path of the invading army. For examples, see Liz LaRoche to Carrie Jenkins, 14 January 1865, Micah Jenkins Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Ellen Devereux Hinsdale to Daughter, 6 March 1865, Hinsdale Family Papers, Duke University; Louisa Warren Patch Fletcher, 20 November [1864], Louisa Warren Patch (Mrs. Dix) Fletcher Journal; Mary Bull Maxcy Leverett to Caroline Pinckney Seabrook, 18 March 1865, Mary Maxcy Leverett Letter.
hope you may not have to trouble with my things but we cant tell what change may be and I had a chance to write to you by hand and I thought I had best express myself as we may be cut off so we cant write to each other.  

Other women who believed themselves to be in Sherman’s projected path similarly worked to protect their property from Union hands. Some buried their clothes with the more valuable items such as silver and jewelry. Not only did they want to protect their possessions for their own use and survival, but they also saw the Northern soldiers as undeserving of such treasures.

Southern white women’s fears for the safety of their domestic possessions extended not only to those of monetary value, but also to those of sentimental worth. Consequently, they looked for ways to conceal their letters and diaries. Georgian Loula Kendall Rogers not only feared the loss of her journals, but that the enemy would get a

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58 M. A. Lark to Mother, 19 November 1864, J[ames] D. Padgett Papers, South Caroliniana Library.

59 For examples of white Southern women burying their clothes, see Sue to Jane Ann Smythe, 16 April 1865, Adger, Smythe, Flynn Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel to Meta Heyward, 17 February [1865], Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel Diary, Ravenel Family Papers, 1838-1937, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston; A. C. Cooper, [1864], in Richard Wheeler, Sherman’s March (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Publishers, 1978), 77.

60 Also see Mary Gayle Aiken, 5 January [1865] and 11 February [1865], Aiken Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Ellen Devereux Hinsdale to Son, 25 February 1865, Hinsdale Family Papers; Fannie to Addie Worth, 25 February 1865, Jonathan Worth Papers, Southern Historical Collection; Lucy Capehart to [?], 23 March 1865, Capehart Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection; Amanda to Mrs. John Bryce, [20 February 1865], Bryce Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library.
glimpse at her sacred inner thoughts. However, if they did succeed in seizing her journals, she asserted, she wanted them to know her “honest sentiments toward Yankees.” Any soldier who intruded on her domesticity and read her private thoughts, would be treated to Rogers’ fiery opinions. “One thing certain is if this book should ever fall in their hands,” she wrote, “I want them to know that I hate, loathe and abhor the very scent, sight & name of a Yankee with all my heart, soul, mind, and body.” Rogers further asserted that this these were no shallow boasts of patriotism but that “this assertion I would stick to if they were to point a thousand bayonets at me at once.”

In North Carolina, Catherine Edmondston had similar fears. “And now, old friend, you my Journal, for a time good bye! You are too bulky to be kept out, exposed to prying Yankee eyes and theivish Yankee fingers.” To prevent her story from being exposed, her journal would “go for a season to darkness & solitude” and her “record must henceforth be kept on scraps of paper, backs of letters, or old memorandum books which I can secrete.” Edmondston knew that the “bumming officers would seize upon the ‘Journal of a Secesh Lady--a complete record of a daily life spent in the Southern Confederacy from July 1860 to April 65.’” If that happened, she realized she would feel horrible “thus

61 Loula Kendall Rogers, 17 November 1864, Loula Kendall Rogers Papers.
dragged from the recesses of private life & for aught I know published for the amusement of a censorious, curious, and critical public.”

Other Confederate women had similar concerns for the fate of their correspondence. In Georgia, one woman worried about the approach of Union troops and what to do with her personal papers. “I dont know what to do with my letters when the Yanks come I hate to burn them & would not have them get hold of some of them for the whole Confederacy.” Similarly, Emma LeConte wrote that “I have destroyed most of my papers but have a lot of letters still that I do not wish to burn.” She knew she would have to do something, however, because “I do not care to have them share the fate of Aunt Jane’s and Cousin A’s in Liberty Co which men read and scattered along the roads.” To avoid this, LeConte resolved to “try to hide them.” Through hiding their journals and letters, Southern women hoped to find protection for their private records of their lives in the Confederacy.


63 Mary Lizzie to Friend, 8 February 1865, Joseph Belknap Smith Papers, Duke University.

64 Emma LeConte, 15 February 1865, Emma LeConte Diary, Southern Historical Collection. Also see Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel to Meta Heyward, [16 February] 1865, Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel Diary.

65 Women were justified in their fear of the consequences of allowing their diaries and letters to get in to enemy hands. Union soldiers scattered women’s letters across the landscape and often sent them North for the amusement of family members.
Knowledge of destructive Union practices did not paralyze Confederate women with fear. Instead, many prepared to defend their homes and families as best they could. Using whatever means available, Confederate women determined to prevent the Northern army from desolating the Southern homefront and terrorizing civilians. As Sherman and his troops neared the coast of Georgia, the white women of Savannah banded together to protect their city. Left to their fate by departing Confederate soldiers, these women took matters in to their own hands by creating the “Lawton Protectors.” They justified their actions with specific references to their situation. They would create their own military regiment because

the coast of Georgia is about to be invaded by the Ruthless hoards of the North, and . . . we have not men enough to defend our shores without aid from the interior of the state, and . . . Genl Lawton seems determined to leave us to our fate, refusing as he has done from time to time when appealed to, by gentlemen from our midst, to make proper requisition for men and munitions.67

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66 On women’s reaction to the knowledge that Southern men could no longer protect them in New Orleans, see George Rable, “Missing in Action,” in Divided Houses, 134-146. Rable argues that women’s hostile words toward Union soldiers further revealed their helplessness and frustration with Southern men. This dissertation instead argues that this assumed helplessness did not preclude Confederate women from taking an active role in the protection of their homes and families. Many women confidently participated in the war to establish Southern independence. In addition, as the residents of an occupied city, those women examined by Rable were forced to come to terms with the enemy in order to survive. Those along Sherman’s path through Georgia and the Carolinas, however, had little sustained contact with the enemy and therefore did not have to opportunity to develop relationships that would allow them to see the enemy as human.

67 Lawton Protectors Paper, 1864, Georgia Historical Society.
After establishing their position and the perceived danger, this group of women determined not to stand by quietly as Yankees destroyed their homeland. Without enough white men to protect them, they resolved to do whatever it took to avert their destruction. They clearly laid out their plan as well as their motivations for undertaking such an unusual action.

Be it Resolved that we the Ladies McIntosh have determined like the Spartan women of old, to form our-selves into a military coraps and to die upon our thresh holds, Rather than yeald to the damned invaders one inch of Georgia’s soil and that we render to the Governor of the state our services and demand arms &c Pledging ourselves to protect the person of our gallant at all hazards.

In this declaration, these Savannah women illuminated their hatred for the enemy and willingness to die, like men, for their nation. Like “the Spartan women of old,” they would bravely endure whatever came their way and take up arms against the enemy.

Faced with the reality of a direct assault by troops, this group of women stepped outside of gender conventions to respond to Sherman’s attack on domesticity. Left to fend for themselves, they rallied and created their own military defense for their homes and

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68 The near absence of white men on the Southern homefront due to army service was exacerbated as Union troops approached by the widespread flight of those remaining. Young boys, old men, and other white males feared capture by invading Union troops. For example, see Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel to Meta Heyward, [16 February] 1865, Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel Diary; Emma LeConte, 14 February 1865 and 16 February 1865, Emma LeConte Diary; Catherine Edmondston, 21 March 1865, "Journal of a Secesh Lady", 682; Sarah Jane Sams to Randolph Sams, 4 February 1865, Sarah Jane Sams Letter; Sarah Lawton to Sister, 7 September 1864, Alexander Letters, 269.
families. The creation of the “Lawton Protectors” exemplifies Confederate women’s willingness to take extreme measures against the war on the Southern homefront.69

After reading voluminous reports of Union destruction in Georgia, the women of South Carolina knew what was in store for them and prepared for the brunt of Union fury. Through letters, newspapers and word of mouth, white women closely followed reports of Sherman troops’ burning and evacuation of Atlanta as well as their subsequent march through Georgia and the Carolinas. Made anxious by the news of the soldiers’ destruction of homes and personal property in Georgia, and fearful of personal attacks, women in the Carolinas prepared for a direct assault as best they could. No longer protected by the virtue of her sex or race, Eliza Josephine Trescot acknowledged “I fully appreciate the danger that threatens us; and at this time, I think the feeling of safety would be the sweetest in the world. My heart sickens at the thought of the Yankees.” Furthermore, her confinement to the homefront because of her sex made the situation all the more frustrating.

If it was to go into battle and be shot I could stand the idea for there is a better world than this one; but the expectation of all the humiliations and insults and barbarities that have been heaped upon the unfortunate women, in the power of the Yankees seems too

69 Lawton Protectors Paper, 1864. In a letter to the Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, another white woman echoed these sentiments, asserting that the women of Augusta should be armed to defend their homes. “Let each one put her mark on one at least of the foe, as they put their brutal feet on our streets or with doors defended by faithful servants, from the windows make her feeble arm felt.” Augusta Daily Constitutionalist, 27 January 1865.
dreadful ever to be realized, yet we have no reason to believe ourselves more worthy of being exempted from these calamities than others.\textsuperscript{70}

Trescot, like other South Carolinians suspected that not only would her state not escape Union destruction, but also that as the “seedbed of secession” South Carolina would face the brunt of Union vengeance. Confident that she would face the fury of Northern soldiers, but not exactly sure how far the enemy men would go in its treatment of women, Trescot prepared for the worst.\textsuperscript{71}

White South Carolinians, male and female, interpreted the motives of Sherman’s troops as a matter of revenge. A Northern soldier, Edward Allen, recorded his interaction with a Confederate “soldier in the trenches at Petersburg. . . . [who] deplores the idea of letting Sherman pass through Ga and enter S.C.” The Southern soldier, according to

\textsuperscript{70} Eliza Josephine Trescot to Eldred J. Simkins, 20 September 1864, Eldred J. Simkins Collection, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California.

\textsuperscript{71} Many women assumed Sherman and his troops would head to South Carolina from Georgia. “Savannah is taken by Sherman and it can’t be long now ere our state is overrun by the enemy.” Pauline DeCaradeuc Heyward, 26 December 1864, \textit{A Confederate Lady Comes of Age: The Journal of Pauline DeCaradeuc Heyward, 1863-1888}, ed. Mary D. Robertson (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992). One South Carolinian women revealed her concerns to her aunt, “we have already been told what treatment we are to expect at his hands, even worse than Georgia, No mercy is to be showed us at all--” Sarah to Hattie Taylor Tennent, 8 January 1865, Edward Smith Tennent Papers, South Caroliniana Library. Also see Emily Carolina Ellis, 11 February [1865], Miss Emily Caroline Ellis Diary, South Caroliniana Library; E. B. Fuller to Mrs. W. H. Barnwell, 13 February 1864, Barnwell Family Papers, South Carolina Historical Society.
Allen, condemned Sherman’s imminent entry into the Palmetto State. He asserted that “[Sherman] ought not by any means be allowed to enter for says he: ‘they have a grudge against our state.’” Allen confirmed Southern fears. “Never spoke rebel truer! they have got a grudge, and S Carolinians will all know it before long.”

Female South Carolinians also knew that the Union soldiers aimed their campaign at white women and the trappings of domesticity in the first state to secede. In January 1865, as Sherman approached Charleston, one woman feared that if we “remain where we are, a parish of helpless women all alone, we would be subjected to the cruelties, and insults of lawless raiding parties.” Even so, “we have all determined to remain where we are for the present and if it must be so that our dear City shall fall, then we will all go there and meet our fate.” This decision, she insisted, “it is not the hasty conclusion of a few, but nearly every one... All in our neighbourhood intend doing the same.” This group of women would willingly remain in the path of danger to show their loyalty to the Confederacy. During wartime, she explained “we all have to make sacrifices, the time is near at hand, when we too, are to suffer as our sister States have done.” Although she knew from newspapers and letters that women had faced the brunt of Sherman’s destruction in Georgia, this

72 Edward W. Allen to James and Emily Allen, 4 February 1865, Edward W. Allen Papers Southern Historical Collection.

73 Sarah to Hattie Taylor Tennent, 9 January 1865, Edward Smith Tennent Papers. Also see Edmondston, 31 March 1865, “Journal of a Secesh Lady”, 386.
Confederate patriot readied herself to confront Union troops even though she was convinced that the experiences in the seedbed of secession, would prove even worse.

Other white South Carolina women similarly acknowledged both their vulnerability on the homefront and their continued confidence in their nation. Louisa Pearce recognized that “we poor females must await the issue be what it may: whether our portion of the State will be overrun by these Vandals who have no limit to their depredations, their outrages and insults.” In Melrose, South Carolina, the civilians “[were] left, a community of females, of old men and children—to be invaded by those hateful Yankees, and not a soldier to raise an arm to defend us!” Despite this, she reassured her friend, “you must not imagine there is any fear or panic among us.” Instead, “every face is as quiet and every duty as energetically performed, as though there was not a Yankee in a thousand miles of us.” None of the residents had evacuated in the face of invasion, but instead the “country is filled with refugees from the lower part of the state.” Pearce asserted that “there is a cheerfulness that can only belong to a people who have confidence in the protection of God to our just cause, and to the bravery of a people who will never submit to Yankee dominion.” As for herself, she “would rather be a subject [of] England, of France—even of Russia, than a free (?) citizen of their vile government!”

74 Louisa Jane Harllee Pearce to Amelia, [1865], Louisa Jane Harllee Pearce Letter, Benjamin H. Teague Papers, 1846-1921, South Carolina Historical Society. A Union officer on the march recorded a conversation with a Georgia woman who said something quite similar. “If you whip us... we will throw ourselves into the arms of France, which
Anticipation of Sherman’s invasion and a knowledge of his desire for vengeance often pushed white South Carolinian women toward a more vehement patriotism. Many commented fearlessly on the inevitable destruction and horrors heading toward their state. Mary Gayle Aiken recognized “that the Yankees will not show much mercy to S. Carolinians,” but she did not abandon her nation.\textsuperscript{75} Kate Crosland, like many of her neighbors, anticipated that Sherman would head his troops into South Carolina once he finished with Georgia. He would then punish the Carolina homefront.

Know that while the great Sherman sits on what he imagines is the dead carcass of Georgia, he vows to spare no age, sex or condition in this noted rebel state where first we breathed the pure free air and saw the sweet light of heaven. . . . If Sherman comes among us . . . it is here their malice will rage fiercest but [will] not Satan laugh and hurry back to his brimstone quarters to tell what great and wondrous things he has learned from the Yankees? and the fiends will dance after him in high glee.

Crosland still believed Savannah would rise up to defeat the invaders. “Surely Georgia is not dead she must hear the mama’s cry of her fair daughters driven to a mad house by brutal outrage and she will drive the insolent foe from her soil or perish all in the conflict.”\textsuperscript{76} Crosland could not believe that the people of Savannah would give up the

\textsuperscript{75} Mary Gayle Aiken, 20 January 1865, Aiken Family Papers.

\textsuperscript{76} Kate Crosland to Bea and Nellie, 28 December 1864, Thomas M. McIntosh Papers, Duke University.
fight for their state and the Confederacy. As a proud South Carolinian and Confederate, she could not foresee giving up on her nation or her state. Aiken and Crosland, like many of their fellow countrywomen, condemned Northern behavior and prepared to withstand the Union attack. Unlike the men of Savannah, these women refused to surrender to the Union or its "uncivilized" tactics.

Other South Carolinians did not have confidence in Georgia's ability to drive out the invader and feverishly prepared for what they perceived to be Sherman's inevitable arrival. The invasion, which had earlier seemed unthinkable, became something expected by all. S. C. Goodwyn revealed her fears to her husband. "I have just heard the news that Savannah is evacuated... it seems dreadful news to us... if Sherman gets on this soil the outrages in Georgia will be nothing to what they will do here."77 Others saw more clearly the consequences of the loss of Savannah, especially without a fight. "With the fall of Savannah," Grace Brown Elmore realized "all our hopes of escape from the horrors of war have vanished, we feel almost as sure of Sherman's reaching Columbia before long as if he were already here." Consequently, "every one is preparing for his reception, all valuables are being removed or hidden." As she readied for the Union raiders, Elmore emphasized what she assumed were Sherman's intentions towards South Carolina.

Sherman, according to one account, told a woman that "hitherto I have endeavored to

77 S. C. Goodwyn to Husband, 23 December 1864, Artemus Darby Goodwyn Papers, South Caroliniana Library.
restrain my men, but when I pass to Carolina my orders shall be every man for himself.” 78

A recognition of these intentions did not dissuade Elmore from her staunch loyalty to the Confederacy. South Carolinians had no illusions about the Union troops’ desire for vengeance. “Oh the terrible wrath that is to be expended on us. We are Carolinians that is our crime, what will be our doom.” 79 Despite her certainty of the horrors that would arrive with Union troops, Elmore remained at home. Knowledge of Union retaliation for secession did not surprise or discourage Confederate women. It instead emboldened them to fight to protect their country and their families.

In addition, Sherman’s approach did not keep many white women from expressing an undaunted loyalty for Confederate South Carolina and the expectation that their state would behave honorably in the face of the enemy. In her wartime diary, Emma Holmes explicitly asserted her allegiance to her nation and her pride in her native state. Disdaining Savannah’s surrender to Sherman, she expected better from her home state. “I trust Charleston will become one grand sacrificial altar & funeral pyre before her soil is polluted by Yankee tread,” Holmes exclaimed. “I shall blush for Charleston, were it left standing. Every spire & housetop should lift its flaming finger to Heaven in supplication to its high


tribunal, as well as to proclaim to the world that death is preferable to dishonor.” More than fear or femininity, honor and patriotism governed Confederate women’s responses to the imminent arrival of Union soldiers. Writing to her aunt, South Carolinian Sarah Tennent lambasted Savannah for her weakness. “Has not the conduct of Savannah been most disgraceful, and shameful?” Tennent refused to believe that the same dishonorable fate might befall her state. “I hope and trust that Charleston may not follow her example,” she continued, “how humiliating for Charleston the hot bed of Secession, the first to take up arms in defense of her rights how humiliating for her to go quietly back into the detested Union.” She did not believe that this would come to pass. “Oh! no, no, it cannot be--Savannah might but Charleston never.” Furthermore, Tennent could not reconcile the sacrifices of war with the possibility of defeat and reunion.

It seems folly to entertain for one moment the idea of going quietly and submissively back into the Union; after so much blood shed, after holding out so bravely for four weary years. Think of the thousands of precious lives that have been laid willing sacrifices on their Country’s altar, the many desolated homes, the sufferings, hardships, and privations we have all undergone for our Country’s cause, the horrible manner in which we have ever been treated by our diabolical foe think of all this, and then think of once again being subject to their rule the thought is too humiliating it cannot be so.

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Expecting harsh treatment by Union troops, many Confederate women refused to submit to Northern power.

Confederate women did not confine their expressions of patriotism to private correspondence or journals. A group of Charleston women made their Confederate loyalty known through a letter to the Mercury. In this public format, they disdained rumors that the city would be given up to the enemy after four years of fighting. “We have listened with grief and horror inexpressible to the hints of abandoning to our foes, without a struggle. . . . We implore . . . fight for Charleston!” Although they knew the human costs, these women urged the leaders of Charleston to “fight for every inch, and if our men must die, let them die amid the blazing ruins of our homes; their souls rising upwards on the flames which save our city from the pollution of our enemy.” The dishonor of surrender, they asserted, was not an option. Instead, “if Charleston, defended to the hour, must . . . fall, let the Governor and her homes--to sound of the guns of our forts, as they send out their last defiance to the baffled foe.”

Confederate women also expressed their patriotism and reiterated their expectation of protection to their government officials. One woman, in December 1864, addressed her concerns about the advance of Sherman’s troops toward South Carolina to

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Confederate President Jefferson Davis. “We are throughout this state very anxious respecting Sherman’s advance, . . . should he get into South Carolina our fate will be most deplorable.” Like other South Carolinians, this woman understood that the Union military would show no compassion for the residents in the “seedbed of secession.” She especially feared Sherman’s troops because of her vulnerability as a woman. “[Sherman] has treated the ladies of Geo. most shamefully[,] and if possible will treat us worse in Carolina.” Despite the costs, this woman and other like her proclaimed that they could “bear up under it all could we only have a hope that Sherman will be stopped in his wicked course.” She made one last plea to Davis on behalf of her loyalty to the Confederacy. “I therefore hope you will do for us what you can in this sad dilemma and stop the advance of our vile enemy. in behalf of my native State I entreat you to think of us.”

Confederate women’s loyalty, she assumed, should assure them the respect and protection of the nation.

Throughout the Southern homefront, the dread of sexual assault was a common factor in white women’s experience. Some Confederate women feared that they would become targets for Union attacks in part because their sex made them all the more vulnerable to the ravages of Yankee retaliation. Catherine Edmondston hoped that there

83 “A South Carolinian” to Jefferson Davis, 22 December 1864, Jefferson Davis Papers, Duke University. Also see Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, His Letters, Papers and Speeches, 10 volumes, ed. Dunbar Rowland (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1923), 7: 4.
would be some salvation for the targets of Union aggression. "God help the poor women & children, for it is on them that the magnanimous Yankee nation makes war." Even as they asserted their dedication to the Confederacy, many slaveholding women feared the possibility of sexual assault by the male invaders. Although in the opening months of the Civil War many would have scoffed at the possibility of soldiers raping white women, by the time Sherman's troops reached South Carolina in 1865 elite Southern women believed the enemy troops capable of anything. After all, the escalation in tactics had shown that Union soldiers often ignored gender conventions in favor of a full attack on the domestic enemy. As Grace Brown Elmore bemoaned, "have not this people taught us how impotent is the weakness and helplessness of women, have they not made us know that upon us will they wreak their vengeance by the most frightful and wicked of crimes.” Elmore especially pointed to the actions of the men who had clearly violated gender boundaries in their campaigns. "Have not their Butlers, their Rosecranz, their Burnsides and their Shermans appeared but as arch fiends.” These men, Elmore lamented, eagerly "let loose upon us the all passions & wickedness of man. Oh well they know how to avenge themselves, on women, what she values more than all things, the loss of which

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84 Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 12 March 1865, "Journal of a Secesh Lady", 676.
would be living death.\textsuperscript{85} Elmore believed that the escalating war against white Southern women would eventually result in the worst attack of all—rape.\textsuperscript{86}

Other white Southern women remained confident that Union soldiers would not completely disregard gender norms and saw their sexuality as a weapon of resistance. They therefore planned to use their femininity to their advantage. Using their sex as protection, some white women prepared to hide valuables on their person, hopeful that the crossing of gender boundaries by Union soldiers would not extend to disrespect for women’s bodies. These Confederates believed that Union men would respect the sanctity of Southern womanhood and made plans to take advantage of it. Emma LeConte confidently remarked in her journal, “I have been hastily making large pockets to wear under my hoop skirt—for they will hardly search our persons.”\textsuperscript{87} Another woman

\textsuperscript{85} Grace Brown Elmore, 26 November 1864, \textit{A Heritage of Woe}, 81-82.

\textsuperscript{86} These fears were not always unfounded. See Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{87} Emma LeConte, 14 February 1865, Emma LeConte Diary. The use of skirts as a hiding place was common during the Civil War. See also Anna Maria Green Cook, 25 November 1864, \textit{Journal of a Milledgeville Girl}, 62; Mrs. W. K. Bachman to Kate Bachman, 27 March 1865, Mrs. W. K. Bachman Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Mrs. E. A. Steele to Tody, 15 February 1865, in Jones, \textit{When Sherman Came}, 134; Mary Elinor Bouknight Poppenheim, 27 February 1965, in Jones, \textit{When Sherman Came}, 245. Several female spies utilized this method for hiding money, communications, and weapons as they crossed enemy lines. For example, see Belle Boyd, \textit{Belle Boyd in Camp and Prison, Written by Herself}, ed. Curtis Carroll Davis (1865; reprint, New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1968); Greenhow, \textit{My Imprisonment}; Oscar Kinchen, \textit{Women Who Spied for the Blue and the Gray} (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Company, 1972); Massey, \textit{Women in the Civil War}. 
revealed similar precautions in a letter to her husband. “I woke the children and put on
them two suits of underclothing and their dresses and wore the same quantity myself,
besides three small bags containing needles, cotton and flax thread, tape and buttons.”
Although Confederate women understood the destruction Sherman’s troops would bring
to their state, they still hoped that polite behavior might prevent the enemy soldiers from
completely violating them.

Knowing that Union troops would destroy all personal items they found in
Southern homes, Confederate women scrambled to find hiding places for their valuables as
Northern troops neared. They often chose secret spots with the assumption that certain
private areas would be safe from plundering troops. These “safe” places focused around
the assumed inviolability of a lady’s private chambers and person. In many cases,

88 Sarah Jane Sams to Randolph Sams, 5 February 1865, Sarah Jane Sams Letter. Also see Pauline DeCaradeuc Heyward, 18 February 1864, A Confederate Lady Comes of Age, 97; Nancy Armstrong Furman to Mary Furman, 8 March 1865, in Jones, When Sherman Came, 218; Maria L. Haynsworth to Ma, 28 April 1865, Maria L. Haynsworth Letter, Southern Historical Collection.

89 As Union soldiers approached, some women slept in their clothes to protect
both their property and their virtue. For examples, see Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel, 26
February 1865, Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel Diary; Dolly Lunt Burge, 19 November
1864, The Diary of Dolly Lunt Burge, 159; Mary Rowe, 17 February 1865, “A Southern
Girl’s Diary,” Confederate Veteran, 40 (July 1932): 264-265; Pauline DeCaradeuc, 18
February 1865, A Confederate Lady Comes of Age, 69; Emma LeConte, 19 February
1865, Emma LeConte Diary; Caroline Lamar to Charles Augustus Layfayette Lamar, 23
December 1864, Charles Augustus Layfayette Lamar Family Papers, Georgia Department
of Archives and History; Mrs. W. K. Bachman to Kate Bachman, 27 March 1865, Mrs.
W. K. Bachman Papers. See Chapter 4 for a description of women’s behavior during their
confrontations with Sherman’s troops.
women hid their food, silver, personal correspondence, and other treasures in bedrooms. Sarah Jane Sams heard that “a rumor is rife this morning that the Yankees are but six miles from here but few seem to believe it . . . reports are so contradictory that they may come upon the town before we are aware of it.” She immediately began looking for ways to protect her property. To prepare for the anticipated invasion, “Bet, Ma and myself have been busy all day removing our provisions from the cellar and the pantry into our bedrooms hoping they may be more secure.” In defense of their domestic items, these women “emptied the cotton out of one of our mattresses and filled it very nicely with all of our cloth, blankets, sheets and gentlemen’s clothing, sewed it up like a mattress and put under the rest.” She recognized that these precautions might prove useless, and Union soldiers might violate her private space. “Whether they discover it will be proved by tomorrow I fear.”90 They still assumed that the invading armies would follow the conventions of peacetime society and not breach the privacy of a woman’s bedroom. Others used similar tactics. Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel described her attempt to protect her property from the Union invaders. “Pennie and myself sat up until two oclock putting a way things in a mattrys we opened the cotton and put the things between.”91

90 Sarah Jane Sams to Randolph Sams, 4 February 1865, Sarah Jane Sams Letter.

91 Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel to Meta Heyward, 25 February 1865, Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel Diary. See also Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel to Meta Heyward, 26 February 1865, Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel Diary, Mary Maxcy Leverett to Milton Leverett, 24 February 1865, The Leverett Letters: Correspondence of a South Carolina
Despite what she had heard about the Union attack on women, Ravenel still believed some gender boundaries would not be crossed. Another woman took similar precautions and wrote her husband that “my jewelry is concealed, also your important papers. My room looks more like a commissary room than a bed room.”

Antebellum gender conventions, which allowed white Southern women to assume that their bodies and bedrooms were inviolable, also led them to understand an invasion of their home as a violation. Consequently, they often used the rhetoric of rape when describing the horrors that they expected to face upon Sherman’s arrival in their towns. Columbian Emma LeConte described her interpretation of Union actions in her diary.

“[Union troops] are preparing to hurl destruction upon the State they hate most of all.” Furthermore, “Sherman the brute avows his intention of converting South Carolina into a wilderness. Not one house he says shall be left standing and his licentious troops whites and negroes shall be turned loose to ravage and violate.” Some white Southern women were not surprised by what they saw as depraved behavior from the Yankees. Georgia Matilda Champion acknowledged the inappropriate words and behavior of the approaching Union soldiers, while asserting the failure of such tactics. “I am not

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92 Sarah Jane Sams to Randolph Sams, 5 February 1865, Sarah Jane Sams Letter.

93 Emma LeConte, 31 December 1864, Emma LeConte Diary, emphasis added.
astonished to hear of Gen. Sherman saying he could buy the chastity of any Southern woman with a few pounds of coffee. He would find himself woefully mistaken if he were to try that."94

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The progression of Union tactics in the first four years of the Civil War destroyed Confederate women’s assumptions that the homefront and gender prescriptions would protect them no matter how they supported their nation. The 1861 imprisonment of women, “Beast” Butler’s Woman Order, Sheridan’s Shenandoah campaign, and the early reports of Sherman’s March demonstrated that white women no longer occupied a privileged status as protected non-combatants. The line between homefront and warfront disappeared and, out of necessity, Confederate women prepared for the impending confrontation with Union troops. However, the realization that they were military targets did not subdue Southern women’s patriotism. Instead, Sherman’s imminent approach reinvigorated elite white women’s Confederate nationalism and further emphasized their view of the North as diametrically opposed to the South.

Faced with imminent invasion, Confederate women understood that war was no longer “men’s business,” and that it required an unprecedented amount of women’s work and sacrifice. A realization of the vital necessity of female roles in the Southern nation

94 Matilda Montgomery Champion to Sidney S. Champion, 14 June 1864, Sidney S. Champion Papers, Emory University.
did not dissuade elite white women from their tasks. Instead, to demonstrate their dedication to the Confederacy and help fight for independence, Southern women redoubled their efforts to support their nation materially in the face of Sherman’s March. Their fundraising efforts for their nation, epitomized by a widely attended bazaar just days before Sherman’s arrival in Columbia, reflected their confidence in the success of the Confederate cause. As Union troops headed toward them, Confederate women also displayed their patriotism through increased participation in aid societies and hospital work. Through these efforts, Southern women proudly asserted their Confederate womanhood.
CHAPTER 3:
"WITH HEARTS NERVED BY THE NECESSITY FOR PROMPT ACTION":
CONFEDERATE WOMEN

The white women who confronted Sherman in late 1864 and early 1865 played an active role in the Confederate war effort long before he and his enemy troops physically entered their lives. The slaveholding women of Georgia and the Carolinas, who had supported secession in 1860 and 1861, made the Confederacy a central part of their lives and duties for the next four years. Believing that fighting for independence was the only honorable path, these women urged their husbands, sons, brothers, and countrymen into battle against the Yankees. With the men focused on their military obligations, Confederate women faced several daunting tasks of their own. White women fulfilled many traditionally male tasks, including managing plantations, working for the government, and overseeing slaves. In addition, they coped with the war-related demands on the homefront as they became nurses, ran hospitals, provided clothing, prepared food, and sent letters of moral support to the battlefront to support their soldiers. Although these tasks forced white Southern women to redefine themselves and their place in society, they willingly engaged in these efforts in order to show their support for the
Confederacy. Wartime tasks allowed elite women of the South to create and promote a sense of Confederate identity and nationalism.

This chapter argues that as the Civil War lengthened and the enemy threatened their domestic sphere, many white Southern women bolstered their regional loyalty through increased work for their nation. Southern women willingly and, sometimes eagerly, took on previously male responsibilities in the name of their newly developed sense of Confederate womanhood. Their increased roles in the nation allowed white women to develop a shared sense of Confederate identity and camaraderie with others across the South. As a result of these opportunities, women did not, for the most part, lose heart or their feminine identity. Instead, their deep-seated Southernness prepared them to move into new roles that emphasized their loyalty to the Confederacy. An investigation of Southern women’s wartime actions discloses an enthusiasm for the Confederacy and a willingness to merge regional and gender roles to serve as nurses, work as unofficial recruitment officers, feed hungry soldiers, and make countless other sacrifices for their nation.

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Needless to say, Sherman’s March scarcely marked the beginning of wartime hardships for white women in Georgia and the Carolinas. As Mary Elizabeth Massey, Drew Gilpin Faust, and George C. Rable have already demonstrated, white Southern women assumed various duties to meet wartime needs at the outset of the Civil War. They took on the increased responsibilities as plantation mistresses, slave overseers,
nurses, seamstresses, teachers, fundraisers, spies, soldiers, and writers. They helped raise military regiments, worked on farms, took over businesses, worked for the government, formed female home guards, and lobbied politicians. Women provided much of the clothing, food, supplies, and medical care that their men on the battlefield required for survival. In addition, many willingly sacrificed luxury items and turned to home manufacture. When necessary, white Southern women did whatever was needed to support the Confederate war effort, whether or not it conformed to traditional gender norms.\(^1\)

Although scholars acknowledge that the white women of the South took an active role in the Confederate war effort at the outset of the conflict, most tend to minimize

these roles as both temporary and conditional. Rable and Faust, for example, admit that white Southern women initially helped recruit soldiers, sew battle flags and uniforms, and prepare men for battle.\(^2\) Faust, however, emphasizes the bitterness and "emotional difficulties" women felt when they sent loved ones to battle, joined sewing societies, and lived in a society filled with white women and black slaves.\(^3\) Rable similarly explains that women expected that the "wartime arrangements would be temporary." After "periods of hesitation and uncertainty," Rable asserts, white women eventually chose not to support a war that forced their gender roles "out of joint." As a result, Rable, like Faust, concludes that women "lost their faith in the Confederate crusade," and eventually refused to support it.\(^4\)

In short, Rable and Faust assert that Southern women could not sustain support for the Confederacy because to do so required them to suppress their "feminine natures" and embrace masculine jobs and traits. No nineteenth-century Southern lady, they conclude, would willingly do such a thing for an extended period of time. Those who did so, they consider aberrations who abandoned their femininity. In making this argument,

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\(^3\) Faust, Mothers of Invention, 17, also see 15-33.

\(^4\) Rable, Civil Wars, 112, 113, 119, 120.
Faust and Rable marginalize Confederate women’s contributions to the war effort, not only by restricting it to the beginning of the conflict, but also by assuming that women resented these activities. Such an interpretation does not take account of how women might redefine their understanding of womanhood.5

Elite Southern women did not have to cast off the trappings of femininity to support a long-term war effort. Instead they found ways to adapt their roles as ladies into those as Confederates. When the war broke out, for example, white women throughout Georgia and the Carolinas began working to equip the military. Catherine Edmondston of North Carolina explained that “the Cloth for . . . Uniforms & Tents is purchased by individual subscription, not waiting for the State to equip its men, & this thing is going on all over the whole South.” Such an operation required “thousands of Ladies who never worked before [to be] hard at work on coarse sewing all over our whole

country.”6 These elite women, like Edmondston, willingly toiled for their nation.

Subsequently, as historian Jim Cullen notes, their work for the soldiers and other wartime activities “do not constitute an abrogation of Southern ladyhood; rather, they fall under the dicta of a new ladyhood whereby duty and sacrifice are enlisted in the service of the Confederate war effort.”7 Women considered their activities during the Civil War as adaptations of their antebellum roles that included a wider conception of their pre-war identities. Working for Southern independence did not require a suppression of femininity but rather a development of Confederate womanhood.8

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6 Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 3 May 1861, “Journal of a Secesh Lady”: The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866, ed. Beth G. Crabtree and James W. Patton (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1979), 60. Also see Caroline Gilman to Children, 16 April 1861, “Letters of a Confederate Mother: Charleston in the Sixties,” Atlantic Monthly 137 (April 1926): 507. Similar efforts began in the North. “Teresa as well as most of the young and some of the married Ladies are very busy making red & gray flannel shirts for the Soldiers - they meet and sew at the City Hall - they had a Ball on Friday night for the benefit of the soldiers. . . . Teresa will write you a long letter she says as soon as the flannel shirts are done.” Maria Ewing to Ellen Sherman, 2 May 1861, Ellen Boyle Ewing Sherman Collection, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California.


8 Faust and Rable both conclude that Confederate womanhood, as a new gender ideology, could not be accepted. Faust states that it was primarily a creation of the male press unsuccessfully imposed on women. The wartime stress on female sacrifice “promoted the notion of an archetypal ‘Confederate woman’ as a form of false consciousness.” Faust, “Altars of Sacrifice,” 114; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 17-19; Rable, Civil Wars, 113.
The Civil War provoked both Northern and Southern white women, as it did men, to subsume their personal interests in favor of a national cause. Through work in aid societies, factories, and farms, white women became major suppliers of food, uniforms, and other goods. Within weeks of the war's outset, white women had established at least one thousand aid societies throughout the Confederacy. Most Southern towns had their

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9 Faust, Mothers of Invention, 24. Southern Ladies’ Aid Societies laid out their goals to help the Confederacy in many ways. For examples of membership lists, constitutions, meeting announcements, and executive boards of societies formed in areas that Sherman would later invade, see Ladies’ Association of Columbia for the Relief and Comfort of the Families of Absent Soldiers in this City & its Vicinity, Bryce Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia; Minutes of the Proceedings of the “Greenville Ladies’ Association in aid of the Volunteers of the Confederate Army,” Greenville Ladies’ Association in Aid of the Volunteers of the Confederate Army, South Caroliniana Library; Proceedings of Soldiers’ Relief Association [Charleston], 24 July 1861, Charleston Mercury; Ladies’ Auxiliary Christian Association [Charleston], 26 July 1861, Charleston Mercury; Ladies’ Clothing Association [Charleston], 7 August 1861, Charleston Mercury; Organization of Georgetown Relief Association, 30 August 1861, Charleston Mercury; Minutes of the Ladies’ Relief Association of Fairfield, in South Carolina Women in the Confederacy, 1: 36-53; Rules of the Eutawville Aid Association, in South Carolina Women in the Confederacy, 1: 59-63; Kershaw Ladies’ Aid Association, in South Carolina Women in the Confederacy, 1: 66; Minutes of the Young Ladies’ Hospital Association of Columbia, South Carolina Women in the Confederacy, 1: 88-93; Ladies’ Aid Society (Columbia, S.C.) Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Ladies’ Benevolent Society (Charleston) Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Ladies’ Relief Association of Plantersville Papers, James Ritchie Sparkman Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Ladies’ Relief Association (Spartanburg) Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Ladies’ Volunteer Aid Association Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Minutes of Greenville, Georgia Soldiers’ Aid Society, United Daughters of the Confederacy, LaGrange Chapter, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta; John G. Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 260-261. A postwar list of the “Women’s Associations in South Carolina for the Relief of Soldiers,” contains one hundred aid societies in the state. See South Carolina Women in the Confederacy, 1: 21-25.
own female aid societies that provided soldiers countless socks, undergarments, shirts, gloves, blankets, shoes, comforters, handkerchiefs, scarves, bandages, and food.  

Southern poet Caroline Howard Gilman gloried in the new tasks.

And now the clarion war cry note, [floats] o'er our Southern Land, While rushing to the bloody field, march forth our Soldiers band 
. . . Come, useful, homely knitting work, to woman doubly dear, We will not let thy needles rust, though falls the anxious tear; The Soldier needs thy busy love, thy fond and thoughtful care, And we will breathe at every round, for him a silent prayer.  

Some women did not stop at sewing, cooking, nursing, or fundraising for their nation. A few served as spies, using their status as women as well as their clothing and looks to smuggle information and supplies across enemy lines.

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10 Some Southern women recorded the formation of the aid societies in their diaries. For example, see Margaret Dailey, [April 1861], Confederate Miscellany I, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.  

11 Caroline Howard Gilman, January 1863, Caroline Howard Gilman Collection, South Caroliniana Library.  

To ensure that the Confederacy had troops for its civilian population to support, Southern women worked as unofficial enlistment officers. They fervently encouraged the men of their families and communities to join the Confederate army and destroy the enemy. In this way, Southern women further struggled to make the Civil War their war, and to put their imprint on the course of action that the South would take.¹³ Their vocal roles at the outbreak of war, later developed into material and moral support for the soldiers on the battlefield. Women often used the power of the pen to bolster the Confederate army. In the midst of the war, for example, Mary E. Tucker wrote a poem to stimulate enlistment, support her nation, and show confidence in the South’s military leaders. She wanted her fellow “gallant Georgians” to “unfurl your proud banners, [and] beat loudly the drum” as they headed to the battlefield. Tucker urged action because “upon our fair borders the ruthless foe stands./ Already has wasted our homes, and our lands.” Consequently, she bid “sons of Georgia to arms! Let no stain of dishonor/ Attaint her fair name.”¹⁴ Other women used similar measures to urge the men of their communities to do the honorable thing and fight for their nation. In some cases, newspapers published the patriotic poetry. A poem published by the Charleston

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¹⁴ Mary E. Tucker, [1864], Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard Papers, Emory University.
Mercury, by a woman only known as C. M. C., alerted the readers that “the writer has a husband, three sons, two nephews, other relatives and friends in the companies mentioned, to whom these lines are most respectfully inscribed.” C. M. C. hoped to invigorate the troops. “March, march on brave ‘Palmetto’ boys,” she exhorted, “all the base Yankees are crossing the border.” The South Carolina men should redouble their efforts for the Confederacy especially because “young wives and sisters have buckled your armor on,/ Maidens ye love bid ye go to the battlefield.” The love and confidence of the women at home should inspire them to “let fear and unmanliness vanish before ye,” and secure battlefield victories.15 Although most antebellum white women rarely wrote their poetry for public consumption, they realized that the Civil War required public action.16

In addition to becoming wordsmiths for the Confederacy, white Southern women also became major fundraisers for their nation, planning and attending countless bazaars,


16 Prior to and during the Civil War, many Southern female writers used pseudonyms to protect their identity in the public sphere. This allowed them to remain anonymous while airing their opinions. William Gilmore Simms’ collection of wartime poetry offers examples of women’s use of words to encourage enlistment and demonstrate their continued dedication to the Confederacy. See William Gilmore Simms, ed., War Poetry of the South (1866; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1972). Simms dedicated this collection to “the women of the South” who “have shown themselves worthy of any manhood... [and] of the best womanhood.” See also Gerald F. Linderman, Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 88-89.
fairs, concerts, raffles, and dances to raise money for army supplies. They not only supplied their kinsmen and other loved ones with clothes, medical supplies, and food, but they also sent these items to unknown Confederate soldiers as a way of supporting the nation as a whole. In this way, these Confederate women successfully subsumed their personal loyalties and obligations to the greater good of their nation. In some instances, women used the deaths of their loved ones in Confederate service as an impetus to increased sacrifice for their nation. For example, after her brother died on the battlefield in the “noble cause,” Maria L. Garlington of Laurens, South Carolina, hoped to organize a fundraising drive with the support of her school friends: “I think we should all send money to the hospitals. . . . I think we might deprive ourselves to help the poor


For example, South Carolinian Esther B. Cheesborough organized her own Confederate aid efforts and played a role in the larger community efforts. Cheesborough kept a log of the various items and multiple shipments she sent to the “Southern Prisoners” at Fort Delaware. In addition, she preserved their notes of thanks. See J. A. Crocheron to Esther B. Cheesborough, 20 November 1862, Esther B. Cheesborough Notebook, South Caroliniana Library; H. S. Bantor to Esther B. Cheesborough, 23 April 1863, Esther B. Cheesborough Notebook, University of South Carolina, Columbia; H. K. Gregg to Esther B. Cheesborough, 15 November 1862, Esther B. Cheesborough Notebook; [ ] to Esther B. Cheesborough, 21 September 1862, Esther B. Cheesborough Notebook; J. J. Gaines to Esther B. Cheesborough, 10 April 1863, Esther B. Cheesborough Notebook. Also see Bryce Family Papers.
soldiers." Garlington realized that the support of other unknown Confederate women had most likely aided her brother and the other soldiers in his unit. She wanted to do the same for others. In addition, for Garlington, the only appropriate memorial to her brother would be an independent Confederacy.  

Although the South had no overarching medical organizations, like the Union’s Women’s Central Relief Association (WCRA) and the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), thousands of Confederate women nursed the wounded and dying in their homes as well as in makeshift hospitals around the South.  

Soldiers and civilians


20 This attitude continued in the later years of the war when many Confederate women urged their nation to continue the war so that their men would not have died in vain. See Chapter 5.

alike applauded women’s work for the Confederacy. Confederate volunteer Rufus Cater revealed to his cousin in 1861 his “glowing admiration [of] the patriotism manifested by the Ladies of the South.” He proudly recorded that “everywhere they have been engaged heart and hand in providing for the necessities of the volunteers and in inspiring them with heroic courage.” Cater also commended Confederate women for “hav[ing] sent forth their husbands[,] their sons[,] and their brothers to the tented field with their blessings and their prayers admonishing them to deeds of valor and telling them if they must die to die the soldier’s death.”

Cater recognized women’s importance in both recruiting and sustaining Confederate troops.

In addition to new roles, war brought other problems to the Southern homefront. Army impressment, the Union blockade, unstable currencies, and haphazard supply lines


all contributed to dwindling supplies and inflation. Women throughout the Confederacy struggled to feed their families. In 1863, women in North Carolina and Georgia, as well as some in Alabama and Virginia, instigated and participated in bread riots. They used these actions to voice their displeasure with the lack of government assistance. The riots in North Carolina made quite an impression on one woman there, who told of a “raid made on Jonesville” by “a band of women, armed with axes.” The protesters “came down on the place, to press the tithe corn & c. brought wagons along to carry it off. . . . You know women generally want to carry their point,” In addition, she described “a similar attack . . . made on Hamptonville a few days ago. and with more success too. They took as much as they wanted without meeting with any resistance.”

23 During the Richmond bread riot, over one thousand women looted shops for bacon, flour, sugar, coffee, candles, cloth, and shoes, among other things. On women’s adaptation to wartime shortages, see Mary Elizabeth Massey, Ersatz in the Confederacy: Shortages and Substitution on the Southern Homefront (1952; reprint, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993); Mary Elizabeth Massey, “The Food and Drink Shortage on the Confederate Homefront,” North Carolina Historical Review 26 (July 1949): 306-334.

24 [?] to Sarah “Sade” Jones Lenoir, 22 January 1865, Lenoir Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

For other descriptions of food riots, see “Agnes” to Mrs. Pryor, 4 April 1863, Ladies of Richmond: Confederate Capital, ed. Katherine M. Jones, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1962), 155; Mary Waring, 12 April 1865, Miss Waring’s Journal, 1863 and 1865: Being the Diary of Miss Mary Waring of Mobile, during the final days of the War Between the States, ed. Thad Holt, Jr. (Chicago: The Wyvern Press of S. F. E., 1964), 15.
By actively participating in the public realm through protests, white Southern women visibly stepped outside the boundaries of the home and took their traditional focus on family and household into the public. In this way, they adapted their conceptions of gender to deal with wartime problems. Although the female participants asserted a traditional view of gender roles—that they had a right to protection by virtue of their femininity—the bread riots revealed Southern women's willingness to move outside of the traditional confines of womanhood during wartime to look after their own interests.25 Unwilling to credit women for their definitive stand and fearful of class uprisings, however, many established Southerners comforted themselves with the belief that the female rioters were merely prostitutes and thieves, not those truly in need of food.26 In contrast to those who participated in the 1863 bread riots, many other women, especially wealthy ones, gave up portions of their family's food to send to the soldiers on the battlefield later in the war.27 Rioting and sacrifice both revealed ways in which Confederate women deftly adapted to the realities of wartime life through what were, in some ways, feminine outlets. Their ability to survive a personal confrontation with the

25 On the boundaries circumscribing the lives of Southern ladies, see Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Faust, Mothers of Invention, 245.

26 See Rable, Civil Wars, 110.

27 For example, late in the war as Sherman and his troops headed her way, North Carolinian Catherine Edmondston described a community food drive for the soldiers.
enemy later in the War may have resulted from women’s early experiences and sacrifices.28

By 1864, the white women of Georgia and the Carolinas faced the likelihood of even greater hardships than shortages. The approach of Sherman’s Union troops waging war on the homefront forced Southern women to confront and adapt to an unanticipated reality of wartime. No longer protected by the men of their families or communities, women personally faced a belligerent enemy who acknowledged few boundaries.29 Confederate women recognized the dangers of approaching troops. They feared, sometimes with justification, that they would be “subjected to the cruelties, and insults of lawless raiding parties” who would ignore those constraints which were deemed the marks of civilized behavior.30 The household, a nineteenth-century haven, would not protect them from the onslaught of what Rebels were quick to label Sherman’s “hellish crew.”31


28 A good discussion of women’s dexterity in dealing with homefront shortages is Massey, *Ersatz in the Confederacy.*


30 Sarah to Hattie Taylor Tennent, 9 January 1865, Edward Smith Tennent Papers, South Caroliniana Library.

31 Mother to Daughters, 8 March 1865, Mrs. Albert Rhett (Sallie Coles Green) Heyward Papers, South Caroliniana Library. Other women used similarly damning terms when describing the Union invaders. For examples of individuals who used these terms
Initial reports of Sherman’s wide swath of destruction from Atlanta to Savannah alerted white women to the coming perils. Stories of the Union plunder of food stores, burning of houses, as well as destruction of clothes, housewares, and furniture made clear the domestic purposes of the march. Sherman, they realized, would not spare women or households, but had instead targeted them as he struck at the heart of Southern domesticity. In addition, the women of Georgia and the Carolinas understood that they would not emerge from the war unscathed. Grace Brown Elmore of South Carolina noted that “with the fall of Savannah all our hopes of escape from the horrors of war have vanished, we feel almost as sure of Sherman’s reaching Columbia before long as if he were already here.” Consequently, “every one is preparing for his reception.”

By “preparing,” however, Elmore did not mean fleeing. Instead of retreating, many

repeatedly, see Sarah Jane Sams Letter, South Caroliniana Library; Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, “Journal of a Secesh Lady”; Emma LeConte Diary, Southern Historical Collection; Minerva Leah Rowles McClatchey, McClatchey Family Papers, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta; Kate Crosland to Bea and Nellie, Thomas M. McIntosh Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; Sarah to Hattie Taylor Tennent, Edward Smith Tennent Papers; Fannie to Addie Worth, Jonathan Worth Papers, Southern Historical Collection; Louisa Jane Harllee Pearce to Amelia, Louisa Jane Harllee Pearce Letter, Benjamin H. Teague Papers, 1846-1921, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston; Susan and Harriott Middleton Correspondence, Cheves-Middleton Papers, South Carolina Historical Society; Susan Bowen Lining to Sister, 16 March 1865, Susan Bowen Lining Letter, South Carolina Historical Society; Hinsdale Family Papers, Duke University.

Confederate women responded to the Union attack on the domestic front by doing as much as possible to retaliate against the foe. This effort to fight for their nation in some ways forced a redefinition of Southern femininity.

In particular, Confederate women transferred their domestic routines to sites outside the customary household to deal with the crisis.\textsuperscript{33} Their roles as Confederate seamstresses, fundraisers, recruitment officers, and nurses merged the long-standing ideal of female sacrifice with a defiant, even warrior-like, defense of the homeland. Working within this new identity, late in the war many elite white women, for the most part, continued to support the Confederacy through any means available. Their “public domesticity,” reflected through their continued work in hospitals, ladies’ aid societies, and fundraising efforts throughout 1864 and 1865, illuminates Southern women’s intense Confederate patriotism despite increasing war depredations and shortages.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{33} LeeAnn Whites terms the movement of women’s domestic labor outside of the household as “public domesticity.” Whites, The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 50.

\textsuperscript{34} The women of South Carolina, headed by Mary Snowden, received many thank-you letters from soldiers for clothes and other needs that the women supplied. They also received some requests for specific items. For examples, see P. G. T. Beauregard to [W. D. Porter], 25 July 1864, Mary Amarinthia Snowden Papers, South Carolinian Library; A. G. Lane to Mary Amarinthia Snowden, 12 October 1864, Mary Amarinthia Snowden Papers; Thomas Y. Simons to Mary Snowden, 12 November 1864, Mary Amarinthia Snowden Papers; Robert E. Lee to Flora Matheson, Mary Snowden, Amy Burgess, Clara Cheesborough, Annie Mordacre, Gilbert Tennant, L. M. Stoney, C. P. Matheson, W. Coles Fisher, J. Gates Snowden, 25 November 1864, Mary Amarinthia Snowden Papers; Wm. C. Ravenel to Mary Snowden, 6 December 1864, Mary Amarinthia Snowden Papers; E. M. Seabrook to Mary Snowden, 14 December 1864, Mary Amarinthia Snowden Papers; Jas. H. Ri[on] to Mary Snowden, 25 January 1865,
Confederate women’s efforts for the nation gained them high praise from contemporaries, who recognized the importance of that work. Soon after the fall of Atlanta, Confederate President Jefferson Davis toured several of the cities that he assumed Sherman would invade. In each one, he praised the elite women of the South for their active support of the Confederacy. He also complimented them on their abilities to act as ladies in the performance of these vital duties. A “peculiar claim of gratitude,” Davis asserted in South Carolina “is due to the fair country-wom[e]n of the Palmetto State” who “have gone to the hospital to watch by the side of the sick--those who throng your wayside homes.” Davis revealed the gender and class conventions of the time when he praised the women “who have nursed as if nursing was a profession--who have used their needle with the industry of sewing-women.” In addition, these women “have born privation without a murmur, and . . . have given up fathers, sons, and husbands with more than Spartan virtue.”35 Davis acknowledged and appreciated the fact that many white

Mary Amarithia Snowden Papers; S. C. [Cory] to Mary Snowden, 25 January 1865, Mary Amarithia Snowden Papers; Thomas Y. Simons to Mary Snowden, 25 January 1865, Mary Amarithia Snowden Papers; [G. B. Lartegue] to Mary Snowden, 26 January 1865, Mary Amarithia Snowden Papers; Joseph Blyth Allston to Mary Snowden, 14 February 1865, Mary Amarithia Snowden Papers.

35 Speech of President Davis in Columbia, 4 October 1864, Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, His Letters, Papers and Speeches, ed. Dunbar Rowland, 10 volumes (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1923), 6: 354. See also Speech of President Davis at Macon, Georgia, September 28, 1864, Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, 6: 341-343; Speech of President Davis at Augusta, October 5, 1864, Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, 6: 359-360
women had stepped outside of the boundaries of antebellum womanhood, but had successfully retained their femininity. Confederate womanhood gave them an avenue through which they could fulfill both needs.

As Sherman’s men approached their towns, Confederate women continued to sew for their soldiers. Three years of war, inflation, and the scarcity of raw materials made women’s tasks increasingly difficult, but did not deter them. Instead of giving up, they produced and relied on homespun for their own clothes and those they made for their families and soldiers. More concerned about the condition of Southern soldiers on the battlefield than about the presence of Union troops in her town in December 1864, one Georgia woman wrote, “we are all here at work, carding, spinning, and weaving. Denise and [Di] have . . . wove nearly seventy four yds, since the Yankees went out on their last foraging trip which was five weeks ago.” Firsthand experience of invasion did not stop the labors of these Georgia women. They continued in their efforts to supply the Southern troops with much needed blankets, coats, shirts, socks, shoes, and other

36 On the use of and pride in homespun, see Massey, Ersatz in the Confederacy, 85-89.

37 A. E. D. to Brother, 6 December 1864, Confederate Miscellany I, Emory University. Other women were similarly engaged in sewing constantly. For example, see Carrie Fries Shaffner, 3 November 1864, Fries and Shaffner Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection; Anna Maria Cain to Harriet R. Palmer, 6 November 1864, A World Turned Upside Down, 412.
necessaries. As a result of this dedication to their soldiers, many white Southern women prioritized saving needles and thread over other valuables when Union troops arrived in their areas.

Their continued participation in soldiers’ aid societies also highlights white women’s dedication to the Confederacy on the eve of invasion. Despite the advance of Union troops, the Soldiers Relief Association of Charleston, as well as the Greenville Ladies’ Association in Aid of the Volunteers of the Confederate Army, continued to hold meetings days before Sherman’s arrival in February 1865. After four years of war, the female membership continued to collect donations as well as make and distribute supplies to soldiers. One week in early February, with Sherman’s men already in the Palmetto State, the Charleston association distributed shirts, socks, blankets, pants, drawers, and shoes to Confederate troops. Also in February, these women sent supplies to hospitals

38 Acknowledging the important contribution of Confederate women through sewing, countless Union soldiers confiscated or destroyed needles, thread, and cloth from the homes that they entered. For examples, see Mary F. Grest to Sallie Kottman Stark, n.d., Georgia Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Confederate Reminiscences and Letters, 1861-1865, 7 Vols. (Atlanta: Georgia Division United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1997), 223; Sue to Jane Ann Smythe, 16 April 1865, Adger, Smythe, Flynn Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Eliza Tillinghast to David R. Tillinghast, 3 May 1865, Tillinghast Family Papers, Duke University.

39 For example, Sarah Jane Sams hid her sewing supplies at the first hint of Union invasion. “I woke the children and put on them two suits of underclothing and their dresses and wore the same quantity myself, besides three small bags containing needles, cotton and flax thread, tape and buttons.” Sarah Jane Sams to Randolph Sams, 5 February 1865, Sarah Jane Sams Letter.
and brigades across South Carolina. The Charleston Courier recognized the group’s contributions, noting that a hospital in Summerville received items from a dozen women including over eighty pairs of socks and $920.40 As Sherman’s troops approached the city, another Charleston aid society offered the Southern troops “a total of 519 shirts, 267 pairs of drawers, 189 pairs of socks, 179 pairs of pants, 23 pairs of shoes, 37 blankets and comforters, handkerchiefs and scarves.”41 Instead of convincing Confederate women that the South’s bid for independence was over, Sherman’s approach inspired them to continue, if not increase, their soldiers’ aid efforts.

Confederate women, even as they anxiously awaited the approach of Union troops, also worked as individuals to provide for Southern soldiers. For example, many South Carolinians spent their time, often with family members, sewing and weaving for the Confederacy. With the knowledge that Sherman and his men would soon arrive, Mary Gayle Aiken remarked, “I find all my alarm about Sherman has returned, it seems to me we have much to fear, & that the Yankees will not show much mercy to S. Carolinians.” The actions of Union soldiers in Georgia, she accurately predicted, would

40 Charleston Courier, 2 February 1865. Also see Greenville Ladies’ Association in Aid of the Volunteers of the Confederate Army Papers; Minutes of the Ladies’ Relief Association of Fairfield, in South Carolina Women in the Confederacy, 1: 44; Minutes of the Young Ladies’ Hospital Association of Columbia, in South Carolina Women in the Confederacy, 1: 93.

pale in comparison to their treatment of women in the seedbed of secession. In spite of this fear, Aiken’s loyalty to her nation remained strong. “My eyes trouble me much, but I continue to sew, from morning ‘til night.”  

Aiken’s willingness to ignore her personal discomfort as she sewed for the Confederacy demonstrated her intense dedication to her nation and the men fighting for its independence.

By 1864, it became more difficult for women to find their own cloth, thread, and other sewing materials. As a result, women, traditionally excluded from most money matters, canvassed for contributions for the soldiers. By drawing upon Southern society’s ideas about sacrifice and honor, they effectively raised money and materials for the Confederacy. For example, North Carolinian Mollie Davis discussed how she and another woman “begged money enough to buy severel bolts of domestic. . . . fifteen hundred dollars.” She explained the necessity of raising such a large sum. “Sallie and I are making up a box for the Hospital in Salisbury.” With an enormous and seemingly endless task in front of her, Mollie told her friend, “I wish you were here to help us sew We are going to make shirts and drawers &c. . . . I will be very busy sewing for the Hospital this next week.”

As long as women’s forays into the public sphere were for the common good of the Confederacy, they did not overturn society’s notions about femininity. The

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42 Mary Gayle Aiken, 20 January 1865, Aiken Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library.

43 Mary Hanes Davis to Catherine E. Hanes, 27 March 1865, Catherine E. Hanes Papers, Southern Historical Collection.
Civil War allowed them to step outside of the confines of peacetime propriety for the good of their nation.

Women in the path of Sherman’s March further demonstrated their dedication to the Confederacy through their work in hospitals. In antebellum years, women cared for the sick within their own households, but the diseases and casualties of war required a different kind of nursing. The Civil War called upon men, the traditional nineteenth-century professional nurses, to fight on the battlefield, so the responsibility for tending to the sick and wounded soldiers frequently fell to women. As the war lengthened, women’s roles as both nurses in and suppliers to hospitals became increasingly important. Southern men and women proudly acknowledged women’s roles in the hospitals. As Sherman and his troops fought to gain control of Atlanta, Confederate soldier Douglas J. Cater marveled at the dedication of the dislocated women in the area. Cater noted that “the ladies of Georgia and other states many of whom are denominated refugees, having been driven from their homes by the invaders, are doing all in their power to relieve the sufferings of the wounded.” The women poured in to the town, “having with them every thing that a wounded soldier could wish, (even were he at home) on their

44 Not all Confederate women were anxious to work in hospitals. For example, North Carolinian Lucy Capehart wrote “I never in my life could go to one [hospital], & never expect to unless I am compelled. not that I am not willing to do everything I can for the Soldiers, but simply because I dont like so much mess, & so many different odours--it makes me sick to smell soldiers anyway.” Lucy Capehart to [? ], 23 March 1865, Capehart Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection.
way to the hospitals.” As a result, “that poor boy separated from mother and sisters by the waters of the Mississippi, lacerating wounds almost depriving him of life, for a time forgets his sufferings by the presence of one of the ministering angels.” The soldier especially appreciated the nurse “with her own fair hands bathing his fevered temples, brushing back the unshorn locks from his forehead and bidding him be of good cheer, that he will be cared for.” Cater took such actions as a sign of ultimate Confederate success.

“Can such acts of Kindness go unrewarded? Impossible Peace, liberty and independence ... will be given to the people of this Confederacy as a reward for their great sacrifices.”

A Confederate soldier from Tennessee made similar observations.

“Our wounded who write or have returned all speak in the most glowing terms of praise of the ladies of Georgia and Alabama as also the refugee ladies of Tenn. and other states.” These women, he continued “are unremitting in their attentions and ministrations to the wounded and sick at the Hospitals [and] take them to their homes when they can be moved and there nurse them.” As a result of such dedication, “too much praise cannot be lavished upon the ladies of the South. They are devoted heart and soul to the cause and do much to cheer the spirits and keep up the determination of the troops.”

In their nursing efforts Confederate women promoted and supported loyalty to their nation.

45 Douglas J. Cater to Fannie Cater, 1 June 1864, Douglas J. and Rufus W. Cater Papers.

46 John Peter Kendall to Sarah and D. J. Kendall, 18 July 1864, William Devereux Kendall Papers, Huntington Library.
The Civil War forced many Confederate women unwittingly to become front-line nurses as the war moved through their homes and towns. Out of necessity, they set up hospitals where space was available--houses, churches, town halls, schools, train depots, and even streets. Women then served as nurses in these makeshift hospitals throughout the Confederacy. In August 1864, Mary Boykin Chesnut, “began [her] regular attendance in the Wayside Hospital, which was gotten up and is carried on by that good woman Jane Coles Fisher.” The Columbia women involved fed wounded men, helped dress their wounds, and did “not for any cause [miss] one day’s attendance at the Wayside Hospital.” Women in Augusta proudly told of their work for the Confederate soldiers. “Carrie and I have been much interested in the sick and wounded in the hospitals here, and went to them near two months--as long as our supplies lasted.” The experience made quite an impression on Mary Jones, who one morning “observed a poor soldier . . . evidently near his end” and offered him some wine. When she returned later in the day, “only the narrow, naked pine bedstead remained,” but she would “long remember

47 For example, see Lee Kennett, Marching Through Georgia: The Story of Soldiers and Civilians During Sherman’s Campaign (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 88, 90.

48 Mary Boykin Chesnut, 19 August 1864 and 28 October 1864, Mary Chesnut’s Civil War, ed. C. Vann Woodward (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 637, 656. Also see Mary Boykin Chesnut, 29 August 1864, 21 September 1864, 6 November 1864, 25 November 1864, 7 January 1865, Mary Chesnut’s Civil War, 641, 644, 667-668, 677, 700.
the expression of his dying eyes."49 Other women in Georgia and the Carolinas did what Frances Thomas Howard casually noted and "went to the hospital as usual."50

Their control over household matters allowed white women in Georgia and the Carolinas to allot their time and space as they saw fit. Consequently, when the occasion arose, many turned their homes into hospitals and wayside homes. Although "expecting the Yankees here daily," one North Carolina woman was "almost constantly engaged at the hospitals attending to the wants of the sick & wounded. . . . There are several hundred of them. . . . They seem very grateful to us for our attentions."51 A month later she provided a description of a hospital established in Mrs. John Smith's house. Despite the lack of space, injured men continued to be brought there. "Her house is full of wounded Confederate soldiers. . . . lying on the bare floor." This daunting task did not demoralize the volunteers, but the lack of official support made it an unwinnable fight. "Some of our ladies have gone there as nurses" but still could not completely handle the increasing number of patients. "Mrs Smith wrote word yesterday if [more] assistance


50 Frances Thomas Howard, 25 December 1864, In and Out of the Lines: An Accurate Account of the Incidents During the Occupation of Georgia by Federal Troops in 1864-65 (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1905), 185. Howard's actions seem remarkable, considering that Savannah was under Union control as she made her regular visit to the Confederate hospital.

51 Ellen Devereux Hinsdale to Son, 25 February 1865, Hinsdale Family Papers.
was not sent immediately they would all perish together."52 Smith did not abandon her efforts as a result of this fear for her patients and herself, but instead continued to enlist the help of more Confederate women.

Southern soldiers recognized the importance of women’s roles as nurses, cooks, and suppliers. While in North Carolina, one man described a meeting with Miss Brice, who, as Sherman made his way through South Carolina, “from all accounts has cert[aj]inly done a great deal for the solgiers, she commenced the plan in Wilmington of having a table set at the Depot for the solgiers passing through to eat at[.] the ladies attend themselves daily.”53 The soldier praised the Wilmington’s Ladies’ Soldiers’ Aid Society for taking care of wounded soldiers who constantly passed by rail through the city. In addition to working as nurses, the community also provided “tables of food” for the soldiers. Letters of thanks, praising female sacrifices, poured in for the women of aid societies in Georgia and the Carolinas.54

In their efforts to relieve the sufferings of the soldiers, Confederate women willingly stepped outside the boundaries of peacetime behavior. North Carolinian Louise

52 Ellen Devereux Hinsdale to Child, 23 March 1865, Hinsdale Family Papers.

53 George G. Young to Sister, 13 February 1865, Young Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library. Also see Barrett, The Civil War in North Carolina, 260; J. Wilkinson, Narrative of a Blockade Runner (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1877), 200-201.

54 For examples, see Esther B. Cheesborough Notebook; Mary Amarithia Snowden Papers.
Medway appealed to President Jefferson Davis for assistance. Medway represented “a number of Ladies here [who] have established a Soldiers’s Aid Society for the purpose of ministering to the wants of the sick & wounded en route” because the government provisions neglected this group of soldiers by only “providing for them when on duty or in Hospital.” Since their inception the Society had “been very successful & have fed & sometimes partially clothed from 6 to 8,000 per month besides having wounds dressed &c.” The problem arose from the delivery of the donations sent to this Soldier’s Aid Society. Medway wanted help from Davis because the Custom House would not release to her several packages of donations to the Society because of her sex and lack of official appointment. “Today several parcels--solely for soldiers use--are detained because the collector cannot (in accordance with his instructions) give a permit unless signed by the Surgeon of the Hospital for which the articles are intended,” Medway explained. “Now, as they are not designed for any Hospital but for the wounded & sick arriving at the depot, a difficulty presents itself.” Medway did not want these impediments to interfere with her efforts, so she requested “a permit for all articles coming to me for use of our Soldiers.” This permit, she hoped would allow those abroad with more means and opportunities to help the Confederacy, whose “means are so small & the wants of our soldiers so many.” Recognizing the importance of women’s work in this regard, Davis approved Medway’s request.

55 Louise Medway to Jefferson Davis, 13 September 1864, Jefferson Davis
Women further expanded their domestic duties by cooking for and feeding soldiers. In addition to the time and effort involved, their work as food suppliers required Southern civilians to share their own meager foodstuffs. In early February 1865, with Sherman and his troops marching towards her state, one South Carolina woman spent her entire morning and most of her supplies feeding hundreds of Confederate soldiers near her town. "The Regt. arrived from Virginia this morning, we prepared breakfast for some of the officers, but only Maj Furgeson came, [so we] sent Noah with everything we could prepare in a hurry to the camp." As Confederate soldiers moved through Southern cities and towns, women provided them with the necessary sustenance to continue their battlefield duties. Soldiers in Southern hospitals benefited from women’s green thumbs. "From their gardens large quantities of vegetables are sent to us," John Peter Kendall wrote. He was particularly impressed because he thought it “quite a luxury to get

Papers, Duke University.

56 Mary Gayle Aiken, 7 February 1865, Aiken Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library. Women’s roles as the preparers of food for the Confederacy began early in the war. For example, from a Georgia hospital, one Confederate soldier bragged “we have plenty to eat at this hopitile and the cleverist ladies round hear you ever saw[.] you can go to thare houess and get milk butter coffey buisquit potatoes pyes cus法【ors and all kinds of goo[d] meates that you can call for and surrups of ever[y] kind ask one what thay charge a thare reply is that you must come back a gain and get more oh they are so very good to me I will hate very much to leave them for I dont know when I will meat with a nother chance like this for good eating.” William C. Honnoll to Decater Honnoll, 11 December 1863, Honnoll Family Correspondence, Emory University.
Sherman’s imminent approach did not deter women’s culinary efforts for the troops.

Confederate women across Georgia and the Carolinas similarly used their own rations to feed the troops. In March 1865, as North Carolina prepared to face the brunt of invasion, Catherine Edmondston described a community food drive for the soldiers. In this instance, the governor asked all North Carolina civilians to sacrifice “meat, meal, & flour for the army.” More specifically she noted, “these supplies are to be over and above every man’s surplus that the Government already has. It must be from his own stock of provisions, what he denies himself for the sake of the army.” Despite women’s numerical dominance in the white homefront population, Edmondston tellingly referred to the sacrifice of food as a “man’s” duty. In using this language, she revealed a change in women’s conception of their role on the homefront. As the wartime heads of household, women had taken over male responsibilities and, in many ways, the male vocabulary.

When discussing the shortages in more detail, she acknowledged her personal role in the sacrifice. As a family, the Edmondstons had determined last week to deprive ourselves of meat at one meal per diem & to give what we thus save to the army, but so pressing is the need that we go beyond that & give 500 lbs of meat which we had intended for our own table & will live on bread & vegetables instead.

\footnote{57 John Peter Kendall to Sarah and D. J. Kendall, 18 July 1864, William Devereux Kendall Papers.}
To make up for what would be donated to the troops, Catherine Edmondston vowed to "make every inch of my garden do its whole duty." Although she saw a long war ahead of her, she deemed the sacrifice necessary and deserved. "There will be many days this summer when we cannot taste meat, but what of that if our army is fed." Edmondston clearly spoke from a privileged condition. Unlike most of her fellow countrywomen, after four years of war she and her family had a large surplus of food to donate to the troops. War and shortage did not destroy Confederate women's sense of charity.

In late 1864, the women of South Carolina extended their nationalistic work overseas, arranging and supporting a fundraising bazaar in Liverpool, England. They sent handmade items through the blockade to offer for sale. They hoped their efforts would be matched by "friends of the Confederacy" in England, and that British generosity would help further supply Southern soldiers with food and clothing. One of the Gregg women diligently collected items from her friends and family for the Liverpool bazaar. Outlining the contributions in a letter to the bazaar's South Carolina coordinator, Mary Snowden, Gregg praised the talents of various contributors. "I have had several articles promised me," she explained. "Amongst them a beautiful little Palmetto hat by a niece of mine. . . . Another niece, who makes all the shoes for herself & five children . . . has promised me a pair. and Mrs Chappell . . . a pair of home made silk gloves." Referring to her own

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efforts, Gregg wrote "I expect you will laugh at my donation-- a Confederate lady dressed all in homespun, and made of homespun." This "Confederate lady" demonstrated Gregg's pride in herself and her use of homespun. It also revealed her resourcefulness; Confederate women used various means to raise money for their soldiers.

The most celebrated display of Southern women's patriotism, the Columbia Bazaar, occurred at the South Carolina State House in January 1865, a month before Sherman and his men reached the capital. The Palmetto State's men and women supported this venture, as did Confederates around the South. In December, 1864, as the women prepared for the fundraising effort, the state legislature passed a resolution "that the ladies engaged in preparation for a bazaar sale in aid of the hospitals and homes for soldiers, be permitted to use the Legislative Halls, and such other portions of the State House as may not be in use for the public service." The motion passed "the Senate unanimously, & the House with only one dissenting voice have granted the use of the


60 Excerpt from Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina, 8 December 1864, Mary Amarithia Snowden Papers.
Confederate women had successfully entered the political arena as actors in their own rights as they worked to raise funds for their nation.

Official sanction did not guarantee success, but Sherman’s men may have unwittingly done so. Knowing that “the enemy are knocking at our doors,” Columbia women still insisted on holding the large bazaar to raise money for their soldiers. They hoped that the close proximity of Union troops might inspire Confederate women, who “with hearts nerved by the necessity for prompt action ... [would] be stimulated to redoubled efforts, and the sum realized [would] exceed [the committee’s] most sanguine expectations.”

Women planned all aspects of the Bazaar and, through various avenues, supplied all of the items sold there. Despite shortages, women found ways to offer items for sale. A South Carolina woman, who had diligently supported the Liverpool bazaar, promised that “we will try to do something for the Fair—tho’ I cannot promise

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61 William E. Martin to Mary Snowden, [8 December 1864], Mary Amarithia Snowden Papers.

62 Sallie E. White to Mary Snowden, 17 January 1865, Mary Amarithia Snowden Papers.

63 Throughout the Civil War, Confederate women, like their Northern counterparts, held bazaars, concerts, and other fundraisers for the benefit of the Confederacy. Judging Southern fairs as only “emotionally and symbolically significant,” Beverly Gordon minimizes the practical importance of what she labels Southern “ladies’ fairs.” Beverly Gordon, Bazaars and Fair Ladies: The History of the American Fundraising Fair (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 96-99.
much, for the lack of materials for fancy work."64 Other women raised money from communities around the Confederacy to support their efforts. For example, South Carolinian Sallie White sent what she must have considered an appropriate amount—$1865—that she had collected from "a few patriotic citizens of this place for the benefit of the Bazaar." In addition, White and her sisters sent "a box of fancy articles" to be sold. White’s contribution joined those provided by other women in her state. "You will have a nice contribution from this section of the State, for I hear that everybody has been working for the Bazaar."65 As a result of the active recruitment of donations, items for the Bazaar poured in from men and women around South Carolina. One businessman sent a "R[ail]R[oad] receipt for a bale of Factory domestics, Shipped to your address, being a donation from the Batesville Manufacturing Co, to the Ladies Baazar in Columbia."66

The Columbia Bazaar attracted more than local attention. To ensure the Bazaar’s success, its coordinators enlisted the help of their countrywomen throughout the Confederacy. The Bazaar’s planners sent out an appeal to "the Friends of the Southern

64 M Gregg to Mary Snowden, 8 November 1864, Mary Amarinthia Snowden Papers.

65 Sallie E. White to Mary Snowden, 17 January 1865, Mary Amarinthia Snowden Papers.

66 James Montgomery to Mary Snowden, 10 January 1865, Mary Amarinthia Snowden Papers. See also Annie B. Fuller to Catharine O. Barnwell, 2 February 1864, Barnwell Family Papers, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston.
Cause at Home” to collect donations for sale at the event. They hoped that the people of the South would offer “that generous support to which [the Bazaar] is so well entitled from every motive of humanity and patriotism.”67 In addition, Columbia’s women sent personal pleas of help. In a letter to a friend outside of South Carolina one woman “write[s] & beg[s]—Delia, Patti, yourself—Mrs Brown & all interested in the soldiers to make some little fancy articles for our Table, & send them to me either by express, or some one coming to this place.” The efforts of all of these women were necessary not only to raise money, but also because the letter’s writer “would be very much mortified if the table over which we preside, is anything but a success.” In closing, the woman pleaded with her friends to “exert yourselves & comply with my request.”68

To honor participants throughout the South, the organizers of the Bazaar played up state and Confederate pride in its displays. The flags of each of the eleven Confederate States flew above tables highlighting the contributions from their respective states in the House and the Senate.69 Grace Brown Elmore commented on the symbolism

67 “To the Friends of the Southern Cause at Home,” 5 November 1864, Mary Amarithia Snowden Collection. The organizers had previously sent a broadside overseas to enlist the help of Confederate sympathizers. See “To the Friends of the Cause of the Confederate States,” 31 May 1864, Mary Amarithia Snowden Collection.

68 Adelaide L. Stuart to [?]te, 7 November 1864, John B. S. Dimitry Papers, Duke University.

69 Emma LeConte, 18 January 1865, Emma LeConte Diary. Also see Mary Boykin Chesnut, 17 January 1865, Mary Chesnut’s Civil War, 705.
of the set-up. “The shield of each state that the table represents” hung in the room and allowed all to see that the states were “standing alone and entire but yet working for a common end.” S. C. Goodwyn described the Bazaar in glowing terms. “The old State House presented a most magnificent appearance,” she wrote. “Each table was covered with a canopy of laced & crimson trimmed beautifully with evergreens and [surrounded] with the shield of each state and a large flag drooping over the whole canopy.” The sight had been so impressive, she asserted to her husband, that “I wish very much you could have been here it really was worth seeing.” Grace Brown Elmore gave a similar report. “On each side of the hall he could have seen booths, draped in the gayest colors red and white or blue, garlanded with evergreens, and filled with all sorts of nick nacks.” As a result, the Bazaar presented a shared sense of Confederate identity both within Columbia and throughout the Confederacy.

The Columbia Bazaar offered attendees their choice of a wide variety of items. “The tables are loaded with fancy articles–brought through the blockade or manufactured by the ladies–Every thing to eat can be had if one can pay the prices–Cakes jellies creams

70 Grace Brown Elmore, 7 February 1865, A Heritage of Woe, 93.

71 S. C. Goodwyn to Artemus Darby Goodwyn, 22 January 1865, Artemus Darby Goodwyn Papers, South Caroliniana Library.

72 Grace Brown Elmore, 7 February 1865, A Heritage of Woe, 93.
candies—every kind of sweets abounds.”73 These delicacies, however, did not come with a small price tag. As a result of wartime shortages, inflation, and the Bazaar’s purpose as a fundraiser, prices ran extremely high. “A small slice of cake is two dollars—a spoonful of Charlotte Russe [dessert] five dollars.” Even at these prices, Emma LeConte reported, food was not the most expensive category of goods. “Some beautiful imported wax dolls not more than 12 inches high raffle for more $500—and one very large doll I heard was to raffle for $2000.” The high prices did not go unnoticed. In reference to the $2000 doll, LeConte remarked “one could buy a live negro baby for that!”74 This comment revealed not only the ineffectiveness of Sherman’s March as a tactic to demoralize and financially ruin Confederate civilians, but also the intensity to which Southerners clung to the ideals of the patriarchal antebellum slave South in 1865.75

Enthusiasm for the Bazaar belied the idea that Sherman’s rapid approach dampened women’s Confederate efforts. Sherman’s proximity, instead of shocking Confederate women into submission, provoked them to an intense patriotism. White Southerners flocked to the Columbia Bazaar. As she fled with her family from the path of Sherman’s troops, one woman described the event. “Just before we left, the great

73 Emma LeConte, 18 January 1865, Emma LeConte Diary. Also see Grace Brown Elmore, 7 February 1865, A Heritage of Woe, 94.

74 Emma LeConte, 18 January 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.

75 Faust, Mothers of Invention, 3-8.
Bazaar opened, [you] ought to have seen the crowd, it was indeed a sight... you would never imagine there was a war in our land, could you have seen, the delicacies of every description.” Prices were high, “but the people did not seem to regard the prices in the least, & they are coming thousands every day... I am glad to see they are making so much, for... the sick, & wounded soldiers.” Mary Gayle Aiken celebrated that “the [world] & his wife [had] gone to Columbia to the Bazaar.”

Although not overshadowed by approaching Union troops, the Bazaar had to be adjusted to the realities of impending Union invasion. Emma LeConte revealed that “the Bazaar will continue until Saturday.” Although the organizers “had intended holding it for two weeks... Sherman’s proximity forces them to hurry up. I heard... that the afore said individual had announced his intention of attending the Ladies Bazaar in person before it closes.” S. C. Goodwyn emphasized her relief that the soldiers had not arrived in time to destroy the bazaar. “I am truly glad Sherman did not interrupt us. I have not

76 Sallie Lawton to Johnnie, 22 January 1865, Willingham and Lawton Families Papers, South Carolinianiana Library.

77 Mary Gayle Aiken, 17 January 1865, Aiken Family Papers. Emma LeConte similarly noted that “our great Bazaar opened last night and such a jam!” Emma LeConte, 18 January 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.

78 Emma LeConte, 18 January 1865, Emma LeConte Diary. LeConte later recorded that “Columbia is thought in so much danger that the ladies closed the Bazaar on Friday.” LeConte, 21 January 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.
yet heard the amount that has been made but I suppose at the lowest calculation 150 thousand if not $200,000.” In any case, “it certainly has been a complete success.”79

* * *

The “complete success” of the Columbia Bazaar flew in the face of Union expectations of the frailty of Southern women’s patriotism. In addition, it demonstrated to the invading soldiers that Confederate women would not easily be subdued. White women in Georgia and the Carolinas may have faced difficulties obtaining resources for their troops and their fundraising efforts, but these problems did not dampen their resolve to continue supporting their nation. Sherman’s March gave Confederate women a sense of immediacy and inspired them to increase their efforts. Instead of surrendering to their fears about approaching troops, Confederate women redoubled their efforts to feed, nurse, and clothe Southern soldiers. Building on aid efforts begun at the outset of the war, white women effectively combined their Confederate loyalty with a distinctly Southern femininity. This allowed them to support the war effort as the Union invasion threatened their homes and personal safety. Although designed to crush the morale of Southern

79 S. C. Goodwyn to Husband, 22 January 1865, Artemus Darby Goodwyn Papers. The reported success of the Columbia bazaar led Confederate women elsewhere to consider similar efforts. See Annie B. Fuller to Catharine O. Barnwell, 2 February 1864, Barnwell Family Papers.
women and "take some conceit out of them," the prospect of Sherman's March led Southern women to intensify their support of the Confederacy.80

Confederate women's patriotic zeal shaped the way in which they confronted Union troops. White women's defiance further intensified when they came face to face with Union troops who burned and plundered their homes while attempting to personally humiliate them. The assault on Southern domesticity introduced Confederate women to a first-hand understanding of "hard war." Union soldiers, unfettered by the boundaries of polite society, destroyed Southern homes and the domestic accouterments they contained. As a result, Confederate women reasserted their regional identities as they simultaneously demanded the protections guaranteed to ladies during peacetime.

CHAPTER 4:  
"NO PLACE, NO PERSON IS SACRED FROM THEIR PROFANATION":  
SHERMAN’S MARCH

Beginning in late 1864, thousands of white women in Georgia and the Carolinas experienced first hand the terrors of a Civil War campaign. The invasion by 60,000 Union men revealed to them a harsher, more intense, and more personal side of war than they had experienced up to this point. Four years of hunger, shortages, and the deaths of family members did not completely prepare white Southern women for the Union’s assault on domesticity. These civilians found themselves face to face with an enemy who acknowledged few of the boundaries of polite antebellum society, and who directly assaulted the accouterments of femininity and the domestic sphere. To women’s chagrin, Northern soldiers willingly pillaged homes, clothing, china, trinkets, personal letters, and journals. As a result, Southern women discovered that many of their worst fears in anticipation of the invasion had not been unfounded. General William T. Sherman and his men, denounced during their approach as “savages,” “fiends,” and “devils,” lived up to their infamy as they ravaged Southern towns and homes.

During their attack on Southern domesticity, Northern soldiers specifically violated the traditional norms that gave women a protected status. Despite their own
classification of Confederate women as enemies, Union soldiers assumed the female civilians would act as “ladies” when their homes were attacked. Much to the soldiers’ surprise, however, their unprecedented attack on Southern domesticity forced white women to redefine their femininity in ways that encompassed both regional and gender identities. As this chapter argues, instead of surrendering, Confederate women used the assault on the homefront as an impetus to fight for their nation, as well as for their homes and loved ones. White women’s realization that nothing was safe from the prying hands and eyes of Union troops provoked them to assert their Southern loyalty and patriotism in face-to-face confrontations with enemy soldiers. Successfully adapting their femininity to one that included a defense of their homes and their nation, Confederate women made clear their belief that Sherman and his troops were inhuman, uncivilized, and capable of anything.

* * *

Union soldiers may have been the first to expect white Southern women to act in traditionally feminine ways during the Civil War, but they were not the last. Postbellum laudatory and scholarly works on the subject have perpetuated similar expectations of female behavior. Soon after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox, many celebratory accounts of Confederate women highlighted women’s feminine sacrifices and ladylike
actions throughout the war. Later academic works similarly portrayed white Southern women as acting within the confines of nineteenth-century womanhood. Scholars who have acknowledged cases of female defiance to Union soldiers, often cast it in terms of female hotheadedness instead of conscious decisions to defy the invaders. Consequently, understandings of female responses to enemy attacks have been subordinated to a myth of “southern ladyhood” that confirms women’s traditional role in the nineteenth-century South. These assumptions have prevented many from delving beneath the surface of women’s wartime actions to discover the complexities of Confederate women’s identities and actions.

Directly following the Civil War, former Confederates published hundreds of volumes that created what historian Drew Gilpin Faust labeled the “century-old legend of female sacrifice.” These collections, often published by chapters of the United


Daughters of the Confederacy as part of commemorations, highlighted Southern women’s roles in the Confederacy and paid special attention to those actions that further perpetuated the myth of the Southern lady. These volumes praised women as paragons of female virtue who willingly and unselfishly sacrificed their own comfort and peace of mind for the good of their nation. In addition, these memorials paid special attention to how these self-sacrificing women served their country through traditionally feminine outlets— they sewed uniforms, prepared food for the troops, donated their time and valuables to the Confederacy, and lovingly nursed the wounded soldiers.

For example, Reverend J. L. Underwood, a captain and chaplain in the Confederate Army, dedicated *The Women of the Confederacy* to a Georgia woman “who cheerfully gave every available member of her own family to the Confederate Cause, and with her own hands made their embellishment of women’s role within wartime” as “The Cult of Sacrifice.” See Catherine Clinton, *Tara Revisited: Women, War, and the Plantation Legend* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1995), quotation 139, 139-159.

Jefferson Davis similarly emphasized women’s roles as well as their traditional femininity in 1864. “Among those to who we are indebted in South Carolina I have not yet alluded to that peculiar claim of gratitude which is due to the fair country-woman of the Palmetto State—they who have gone to the hospital to watch by the side of the sick—those who throng your wayside homes—who have nursed as if nursing was a profession—who have used their needle with the industry of sewing-women—who have born privation without a murmur, and who have given up fathers, sons, and husbands, with more that Spartan virtue, because they called no one to witness and record the deed. Silently, with all dignity and grandeur of patriotism, they have made their sacrifices—sacrifices which if written, would be surpassed by nothing in history.” “Speech of President Davis in Columbia” 4 October 1864, *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, His Letters, Papers, and Speeches*, ed. Dunbar Rowland, 10 volumes (Jackson: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1923), 6: 354.
gray jackets.” Underwood used selections from memoirs, tributes, and newspaper accounts to tell the story of “the best part of the South, her women” Other post-war publications similarly memorialized and lauded the wartime actions of Southern women, highlighting those that served as extensions of traditional female behavior. In addition,

4 J. L. Underwood, The Women of the Confederacy: In which is presented the heroism of the women of the Confederacy with accounts of their trials during the War and the period of Reconstruction, with their ultimate triumph over adversity. Their motives and their achievements as told by writers and orators now preserved in permanent form (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1906), frontispiece, xv.


Northerners did similar work to praise the work of Union women during the Civil War. For examples, see Frank Moore, Women of the War: Their Heroism and Self-Sacrifice (Hartford, Conn.: S. S. Scranton, 1866); L. P. Brockett and Mary C. Vaughan, Women’s Work in the Civil War: A Record of Heroism, Patriotism, and Patience (Philadelphia: Zeigler, McCurdy, 1867); Sylvia Dannett, Noble Women of the North (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959).
these accounts almost always cast women's wartime behavior as an extension of antebellum activities instead of as a break from tradition. Nursing exemplified this approach, as these books asserted that caring for the Confederate wounded became a natural extension of women's nurturing nature. Similarly, the authors maintained that the clothing of the troops and preparation of food reflected a continuation of the nineteenth-century woman's role in her household. Consequently, all female Confederates' activities became ways of further advancing the myth of the Southern lady, who gladly submerged her own wants for those of her husband, her nation, and her household. In this way, Southern authors recast women's wartime roles with rhetoric that emphasized stability instead of change and allowed Southerners to hold on to a glorified, untarnished, and conservative past.6

Although often belittling the celebratory nature of postwar discussions of Confederate women, the works of twentieth-century scholars confirmed the image of

6 Elizabeth D. Leonard notes that discussions of women's wartime actions written in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tended “to confirm . . . the image projected . . . of women's perfect self-sacrifice for the cause, their splendid cooperation with men I the Union effort, and their uncontested return to their place in the prewar gender system.” Leonard, Yankee Women: Gender Battles in the Civil War (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), 277.

Drew Gilpin Faust argues that Southern women wanted a return to traditional gender roles by the end of the Civil War. “Many women of the wartime South invented new selves in large measure to resist change, to fashion the new out of as much of the old as could survive in the altered postwar world.” See Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 8.
white women adhering to traditional ideals of female behavior. Academic explorations of the women of the Confederacy dismissed the myths and commemorations of women's unselfish sacrifice and instead portrayed their subjects as active players in the war effort. According to these studies, the behaviors previously seen as extensions of women's domestic roles in the antebellum South, such as nursing, overseeing plantations, and fundraising, instead foreshadowed women's growing importance in the postwar South. These new behaviors also validated what feminist scholars saw as a move toward a late-arriving Southern woman's movement. This important shift, however, did not free scholars from long-standing assumptions about women and womanhood. Still highlighting their subjects' traditional roles, historians such as Mary Elizabeth Massey and Anne Firor Scott examined the Civil War as a transformative period in women's lives.\(^7\) In their studies, the women that emerged from the war were no longer helpless belles—Scott argued that they never had been--but instead nurturing "new women" who used their


For a more extensive overview of the historiography of Civil War women, see Chapter 5. Also see Drew Gilpin Faust, "'Ours as Well as that of the Men': Women and Gender in the Civil War," in Writing the Civil War: The Quest to Understand, ed. James M. McPherson and William J. Cooper, Jr. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 228-240.
growing status to help their region and families. These "new women" led the anti-lynching campaigns, worked for social reform, and became the suffragists of the New South, while still working within traditionally feminine fields. Similarly, although Massey recognized that "in Union and Confederacy alike the very finest and the very worst traits of American womanhood came to the surface," she asserted that her subjects "reacted as would women of any age."8

The most recent scholars give Southern women not only a voice, but also power over what happened to them and the Civil War as a whole. Historians George C. Rable, Drew Gilpin Faust, and Laura F. Edwards, to name a few, all portray elite Southern women as central participants in and shapers of the Confederacy. Nevertheless, these scholars do not allow wartime women to step outside of the nineteenth-century expectations of femininity and "proper" behavior of their own volition. The elite white Southern civilians portrayed by Rable and Faust, in particular, actively supported the Confederacy at the outset of war but soon grew tired of and resented the traditionally masculine duties they had to assume during wartime.9 Rable asserts that despite their

8 Massey, Women in the Civil War, ix, x. Massey also contends that white women supported secession out of "emotions, not reason" and would not have supported it if they knew it meant war. Massey, Women in the Civil War, 27.

9 George C. Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 113-140; Drew Gilpin Faust, "'Trying to Do a Man's Business': Gender, Violence, and Slave Management in Civil War Texas," in Southern Stories, 174-192; Faust, Mothers of
initial support for the Confederacy, Southern women ultimately contributed to the downfall of the nation. According to him, women could not continue to support a war that required continued sacrifice.  

Faust agrees. Her works particularly stress the desire of white Southern women to return to their antebellum status as protected dependents. They longed for a life without the stresses of farm and slave management, budget concerns, and self protection. Furthermore, these elite women resented their wartime duties and their “inability” to fulfill them successfully. Faust and Rable discount those women who behaved otherwise as aberrations. Consequently, scholars’ new stress on women’s conditional support of the Confederacy in a significant way mirrors the tone of the celebratory volumes; both conclude that white Southern women necessarily behaved in stereotypically feminine ways.

The tendency to view Confederate women’s loyalty to their nation as unfeminine has its roots in the reactions that Northern soldiers had to those they chastised as “she-

Invention. Also see Laura F. Edwards, Scarlett Doesn’t Live Here Anymore (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

Rable, Civil Wars. Rable in some ways reflects the conclusions of Francis Butler Simkins and James Welch Patton who earlier asserted that “the fact that the Confederacy . . . was able to continue its struggle for four long years was in a sense as much due to the courage of its women as it was to the skill and valor of its men; and the fact that the Confederacy collapsed at the end of this period was due to the collapse of the morale of its women as well as to the defeat of its armies.” Simkins and Patton, The Women of the Confederacy, vii.

Faust, “Altars of Sacrifice,” 113-140, esp. 118-119, 121-123, 130-131; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 220-254.
Devils.” Despite their own blurring of gender boundaries through a prolonged campaign against women, Union soldiers expected Confederate women’s actions to remain consistent with the traditional prescriptions of womanhood. As a result, they expressed surprise when “secesh” women virulently proclaimed their Confederate loyalty in the face of the enemy. Much to the shock of the Northern invaders, elite Southern women turned to what nineteenth-century Americans generally considered masculine qualities, such as anger and defiance, to protect their homes and nation. Consequently, as Union men interpreted it, Southern women abandoned femininity to become vocally bitter and hateful toward the invaders.\textsuperscript{12}

In particular, Northern soldiers disdained their female targets’ use of “unladylike” language in reference to the “sneaking Yankee.” Union officer James Edmonds, for example, contemptuously observed that the ladies at the Sparks home, Shady Dale, in Georgia “insulted both the Gen’l and myself by language which no well bred ladies would

\textsuperscript{12} For a discussion of Union expectations of the behavior of their female targets, see Chapter 1. Also see Reid Mitchell, \textit{The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 89-113. When they confronted Union soldiers verbally, Confederate women understood their actions as being within the confines of the female domain. For a discussion of women’s traditional use of gossip and language as a form of power within the household and community, see Kathleen M. Brown, \textit{Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 99-100; Jane Kamensky, \textit{Governing the Tongue: The Politics of Speech in Early New England} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Bertram Wyatt-Brown, \textit{Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 52, 347-348.
use.” Other women startled Union men by calling them “Lincoln’s hirelings, Yankee scum, and bluebellied sons of b--s,” among others. Such use of profane language, as well as women’s willingness to stand up to the invaders, surprised and appalled Union soldiers. Not knowing how to interpret Confederate women’s defiant words within their understanding of gender, Northern men decided that this behavior was unfeminine, and that these white Southern women were, in fact, not ladies.

As Sherman’s men traveled through the South, a small number of Confederate women confronted the enemy troops with more than words. These physically combative exchanges with Sherman’s soldiers demonstrated both the changing nature of female


14 Robert Hale Strong, A Yankee Private’s Civil War, ed. Ashley Halsey, Jr. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1961), 45. Strong found Confederate women’s use of language so shocking that he recalled the confrontations vividly years later. Also see Edward W. Benham to Jennie, 19 February 1865, Edward W. Benham Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

15 Jacqueline Glass Campbell notes that Northern soldiers “[defined] southern women who eschewed the role of passive victim as aberrant.” Campbell, “‘Terrible has been the Storm’: Sherman, the South and the Cultural Politics of Invasion,” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2000), 111. Historian Reid Mitchell argues that Southern “she-devils’ failed to meet the demands of true womanhood . . . [and] their passion and demonstrativeness in an era that valued passionlessness made them like prostitutes in northern eyes.” In addition, “Confederate women should not be regarded as exemplars of domesticity an feminized virtue. Instead, they were she-devils. . . [whose] misuses of paramount feminine influence parodied the notion of woman’s sphere.” Mitchell, The Vacant Chair, 91, 100.
behavior in the final years of the Confederacy, as well as the lengths to which elite women would go to protect themselves and their domestic domain. In rare cases, female Confederates physically retaliated against the enemy. One soldier reported that when the troops marched through Rome, Georgia, “women on the balcony of ‘a young lady’s seminary’ poured kitchen slops and ‘the contents of chamber pots’ on their heads.”

Similar things happened elsewhere. In Milledgeville, Georgia, one woman threw a large stone out of her second-story window at the Union troops below. In South Carolina, another tried to deter Union foragers by throwing scalding water in their faces. These ardent Confederates attacked the soldiers personally, often hoping that nineteenth-century gender ideals would prevent the men from responding in the same way.

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16 In the antebellum South, poor white women routinely used violence to protect themselves. See Laura F. Edwards, “Law, Domestic Violence, and the Limits of Patriarchal Authority in the Antebellum South,” Journal of Southern History 65 (November 1999): esp., 742-753.

17 See Mitchell, The Vacant Chair, 102; Robert Hale Strong, A Yankee Private’s Civil War, 45; Joseph T. Glatthaar, The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman’s Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaigns (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 71. Also see John J. Hight, 18 November 1864, History of the Fifty-Eighth Regiment of Indiana Volunteer Infantry: Its Organization, Campaigns and Battles from 1861 to 1865. From the Manuscript Prepared by the Late Chaplain John J. Hight During His Service with the Regiment in the Field, ed. Gilbert R. Stormont (Princeton, N.J.: Press of the Clarion, 1895), 416. Confederate President Jefferson Davis, for one, recognized this change in female behavior. “Their [white women’s] gallantry is only different from that of her sons in this, that they deem it unfeminine to strike; and yet such is the heroism displayed—such the noble demeanor they have exhibited—that at the last moment when trampled upon and it became a necessity, they would not hesitate to strike the invader a corpse at their feet.” “Speech of President Davis in Columbia,” 4 October 1864, Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist, 6: 355. As
Whether through words or actions, Confederate women defiantly asserted their nationalism to the invaders in ways Southerners accepted as both feminine and necessary. As a result, Sherman, who had designed his campaign to “take some conceit out of [Southerners],” found this to be no easy task. In Savannah, he noted, “although I have come right through the heart of Georgia [the women] talk as defiantly as ever.” Sherman expressed astonishment that Savannah’s female citizens “remain, bright and haughty and proud as ever. There seems no end but utter annihilation that will satisfy their hate of the ‘sneaking Yankee’ and ‘ruthless invader.’” Much to his surprise, Sherman faced intensely nationalistic Confederate women who refused to submit.

Bertram Wyatt-Brown argues “Women’s expression of valor . . . was to be in the form of stoical acceptance of fate or, if their protectors were unavailable, fierce defense of hearth.” Southern Honor, 234.

Similar problems occurred in other invaded areas, especially in New Orleans where women avoided Union soldiers on the streets, spit at the occupiers, mooned them from balconies, wore pins to support the Confederacy, and hung Rebel flags out of their windows. Taking this further, one Confederate woman in the occupied city dumped the contents of her chamber pot over the head of Union Admiral David Farragut. Such incidents provoked Benjamin Butler’s infamous “Woman’s Order,” General Order No. 28, which he used to try to bring the women in control. For a discussion of this, see George Rable, “‘Missing in Action’: Women of the Confederacy,” In Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War, ed. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press), 139-144; Chester G. Hearn, When the Devil Came Down to Dixie: Ben Butler in New Orleans (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 101-109. For a discussion of Butler’s “Woman Order” in the context of the progression of Union tactics, see Chapter 2.

Union soldiers, one outraged woman fumed, were “a hellish crew . . . no place, no person is sacred from their profanation.” Their refusal to uphold the rules of peacetime propriety infuriated many female Rebels. In particular, they resented the soldiers’ entrance into their bedrooms. This behavior, unacceptable during peacetime, became routine during Sherman’s March. “They are so low down,” Loula of North Carolina raged, “and had no respect whatever for a lady’s private room.” Another complained that “there was no place, no chamber, trunk, drawer, desk, garret, closet, or cellar that was private to their unholy eyes.” To emphasize the men’s lack of propriety, many

19 Mother to Daughters, 8 March 1865, Mrs. Albert Rhett (Sallie Coles Green) Heyward Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina.

20 Loula to Poss, 22 May 1865, Graves Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Michael Fellman recognizes that the invasion of a woman’s bedroom is a “symbolic rape.” See Fellman, Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri During the American Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press), 207-208.

21 Anonymous Woman [Fayetteville], 22 March 1865, Emma Mordecai Diary, Mordecai Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection. Furious over her treatment by the Union soldiers, a Columbia woman described the scene to her daughter. “You say you heard that the yanks were treating us kindly [--] yes if going in to houses and holding loaded pistols to ladies heads to make them tell where there gold and silver was and pouring turpentine over the flour and over the beds and put[t]ing a match to them and not letting them have so much as a change of clothes” can be considered kind treatment. S. McCain to Daughter, 5 March 1865, Mary Amarinthia Snowden Papers, South Caroliniana Library. See also Elizabeth Collier, 20 April 1865, Elizabeth Collier Diary, Southern Historical Collection; [Laura?] to [ ? ], 6 January 1865, Ferebee, Gregory, and McPherson Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection.
Confederate women gave vivid descriptions of their mistreatment by Union soldiers and proudly related their defiant responses to it. These written missives warned others in Sherman’s path, stimulated Southern anger against the Northern troops, and highlighted women’s roles as protectors of Southern honor.  

When Sherman and his men reached her family’s home in Aiken, South Carolina, Pauline DeCaradeuc recorded the assault on her domestic sphere in great detail. The first group of soldiers arrived at their gate in early February shouting “Here come the Yankees, look out now you d----d rebels.” Hundreds of others soon joined this dozen, and together

Another South Carolina woman indignantly described her bedrooms after the Union soldiers left. “In one of the bed-rooms the mattress was gone, the feather-bed cut open and the feathers left piled on the floor, the mirror smashed and the door broken from its hinges. In another the bedstead was destroyed, and some of the furniture cut into by axes, completely ruining it, of course.” Mrs. E. A. Steele to Tody, 15 February 1865, in Katherine M. Jones, When Sherman Came: Southern Women and the “Great March” (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964), 135. Also see E. N. B. to Kate Taylor, 1 April 1865, Edward Smith Tennant Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Elizabeth Palmer Porcher to Philip E. Porcher, 23 March 1865, A World Turned Upside Down: The Palmers of South Santee, 1818-1881, ed. Louis P. Towles (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 450; Sue Sample, 29 November 1864, in Jones, When Sherman Came, 47.

22 Eliza Tillinghast hoped her tale of hardships would motivate her brother in his fight against the Union. “Think of having 500 men running wild over your defenceless sisters—taking the last crumb— . . . of meat, flour, -in fact every-things needful[,] cut up the carriage- carried off the wagon— . . . [the neighbors] suffered hunger while the fiends were here. . . . we saved about 20 lbs of flour by putting in . . . a bucket and sitting upon it all the time. [A]nd three families subsisted for two days on that.” Eliza Tillinghast to David R. Tillinghast, 3 May 1865, Tillinghast Family Papers, Duke University. See also Caroline Gilman to Eliza, [1865], “Letters of a Confederate Mother: Charleston in the Sixties,” Atlantic Monthly 137 (April 1926): 511.
they swarmed "in the house, upstairs, in the garret, in every chamber, under the house, in
the yard, garden, &c., &c." They made their presence known "some singing, shouting,
whistling, and Oh, my God, such cursing. Both pianos were going at the same time." The
soldiers' noise and use of profanity proved to be their least intrusive acts.

With axes they broke open every door, drawer, trunk that was
locked, smashed a large French mirror, broke pieces of furniture,
and flung every piece of clothing that they didn't carry off, all over
the floors, they got some of Fa[ther]'s prettiest paintings and
broke bottles of catsup over them, they carried off every piece of
silver, every knife, jewel, & particle of possessions in the house &
eg negro houses, every paper, letter, receipt, &c., they flung to the
winds, all the roads are strewn with them.

Nothing the women of the house did could stop the wanton destruction. DeCaradeuc
particularly resented the soldiers defacing of the domestic trappings of the household.
Not only had the men taken "every blanket & pillow case & towel . . . they even made
the servants get our chemises & tear them up into pocket handkerchiefs." The
destruction of her lingerie, items never shown to strange men in peacetime, symbolized
the violation of women's private sphere. However, the soldiers did not stop with this
insult. When raids resumed the next day, the soldiers "said this house was the root of the
rebellion & burn it they would." Although stopping short of torching the house, the
Northern men continued to threaten its inhabitants, proclaiming "that they had to arrest
and shoot every influential citizen in S.C., every mover of secession." The household,
which held the possessions of five other families and plenty of supplies, lost a great
amount. Out of the "7 barrels of fine flour, 300 bushels of corn, 1 barrel & 1 box of nice
sugar, &c., &c.” that they began with, they were left with only “15 bushels corn, 1 bag flour, 3 hams, they took all the wine & brandy.” Each day the “Yankees came here in a body & dispersed over the house & place, carrying off everything they could.” When Sherman’s men finally left, DeCaradeuc vented her anger recounting the numerous violations she had endured, but remained a Confederate woman.23

Confederate women drew sharp distinctions between the everyday hardships of war and the violation of their homes. As a result, their hostility became particularly pointed when Union soldiers physically attacked Southern homes. When looking back on Sherman’s March, Union soldier Robert Hale Strong observed that “some [women] were rabid rebels and took no pains to conceal it, but all were polite to us except when we were searching their houses.”24 The reaction to the invasion of houses demonstrated women’s


24 Robert Hale Strong, A Yankee Private’s Civil War, 62-63.
view of the invasion of domestic space as both unprovoked and unforgivable. 25 North Carolinian Eliza Tillinghast summed her reactions up by noting that “a visit from the Yankee Army is not calculated to make us love the hated race any more” because “to have our private apartments at the mercy of rabble soldiery is not particularly pleasant, Every box, drawer, trunk, closet, . . . and cranny in this house was turned inside out and thoroughly search[ed] by Sherman’s men.”26 Other women came to similar assessments. This breach of civility made Union soldiers seem hardly human to the Confederate women who confronted them. From Georgia, Dolly Lunt Burge described her chaotic experiences in terms similar to those found throughout women’s letters and diaries. “Like Demons they rush in. My yards are full. To my smoke house, my Dairy, Pantry, kitchen & cellar like famished wolves they come, breaking locks & whatever is in their way.”27 The inhumanity of the invading soldiers, portrayed by many as vicious animals, “demons,” “devils,” “fiends incarnate,” “Vandals,” and “Goths,” confirmed Confederate

25 Southern women’s responses to the invasion of domestic space demonstrates the nineteenth-century belief in the home as women’s domain. Although some modern scholars often see women as confined in the domestic sphere, contemporary women saw this as their place of power. They controlled all that happened in the home and therefore fought to protect this realm. The women of the South refused to take the Union invasion of their homes and domestic domain without a fight.

26 Eliza Tillinghast to David R. Tillinghast, 3 May 1865, Tillinghast Family Papers.

women’s belief that the two regions were irreconcilable and magnified their desire for vengeance.  

See also Mary Noble to Lelia Montan, 20 November 1864, Mary Noble Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

28 Many women referred to Sherman’s troops as “demons” and “devils.” Emma LeConte dubbed them “fiends incarnate” in her diary. Emma LeConte, 31 December 1864, Emma LeConte Diary, Southern Historical Collection. For other examples, see Mary Jones Mallard, 21 December 1864 and 4 January 1865, Mary Sharpe Jones and Mary Jones Mallard, Yankees a’Coming, 53, 66; Loula Kendall Rogers, 30 April 1865, Loula Kendall Rogers Papers, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia; Sarah Jane Sams to Randolph Sams, 6 and 13 February 1865, Sarah Jane Sams Letter, South Caroliniana Library; Sarah to Hattie Taylor Tennent, 9 January 1865, Edward Smith Tennent Papers; Ellen Devereux Hinsdale to Child, 23 March 1865, Hinsdale Family Papers, Duke University; Kate Crosland to Bea and Nellie, 28 December 1864, Thomas M. McIntosh Papers, Duke University; Louisa Jane Harllee to Amelia, ca. 1865, Benjamin H. Teague Papers, 1846-1921, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston; Susan Bowen Lining to Sister, 16 March 1865, Susan Bowen Lining Letter, South Carolina Historical Society; Emily Caroline Ellis, 15 February 1865, Mrs. Emily Caroline Ellis Diary, South Caroliniana Library; Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 14 March 1865, “Journal of a Secesh Lady”: The Diary of Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 1860-1866, ed. Beth G. Crabtree and James W. Patton (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1979), 677; Grace Brown Elmore, 26 November 1864, A Heritage of Woe: The Civil War Diary of Grace Brown Elmore, 1861-1868, ed. Marli F. Weiner (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 81; Fanny Yates Cohen, 25 December 1864, “Fanny Cohen’s Journal of Sherman’s Occupation of Savannah,” ed. Spencer B. King, Georgia Historical Quarterly 41:4 (December 1957): 413; Mother to Daughters, 8 March 1865, Mrs. Albert Rhett Heyward (Sallie Coles Green) Papers; Mary Rowe, 17 February 1865, in Jones, When Sherman Came, 166; Mrs. W. K. Bachman to Kate Bachman, 27 March 1865, Mrs. W. K. Bachman Papers, South Caroliniana Library.

A few white women expressed outrage when their heard rumors that Union soldiers found their fiery resistance appealing. “We have heard since the yankees left that they were very much pleased with their treatment up here, they say the ladies treated them very kind, and made their brags that they intended to come back here where the women were so spunky and get Wives. If they call the treatment they recieved while here
The unprecedented destruction visited on the homefront not only aroused the Confederate patriotism of its victims, but also brought them a sense of camaraderie with other white women in Sherman's path. The resulting shared experience promoted a heightened sense of Confederate identity. After all, those who had lived through a kind treatment it is very evident they dont know what kind treatment is, and they have said the very thing we would not have them say for the world, that is they were treated kindly, we ladies are so mad because the yanks say they were kindly treated that if they ever show their old blue backs here again they will fair badly.” [Dorrie] Davis to Brother, 31 December 1865, Confederate Miscellany I, Emory University.

29 White Southern women's knowledge that others had shared similar experiences at the hands of Sherman's troops allowed them to create a community united against such outrages. On "imagined communities" built from shared experiences, see Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, Revised Edition, (New York: Verso, 1991).

Drew Gilpin Faust belittles "the notion of an archetypal 'Confederate woman' as a form of false consciousness obscuring social and economic differences among the new nation's female citizens." She asserts that such a sense of Confederate patriotism and sacrifice would ultimately "alienate many women from that rendition of their interests, from the war, and in many cases, from the Confederacy itself." Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," 114. Although not acknowledged by scholars as a primary force in the creation and preservation of Confederate nationalism, elite white Southern women played an integral part in both forming and upholding it. On the growth of Confederate nationalism without women, see Drew Gilpin Faust, The Creation of Southern Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); John McCordell, The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism, 1830-1860 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979); David Potter, "The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa," in The South and the Sectional Conflict (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 34-83. Other scholars minimize the importance of Southern nationalism to the Confederacy, or stress its weaknesses. For example, George C. Rable takes nationalism out of the picture in his discussion of Confederate politics. Rable, The Confederate Republic: A Revolution Against Politics (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 1. Clement Eaton ignores Confederate nationalism entirely. Eaton, A History of the
Union raid knew the toll its horrors could take. One woman, for example, could not sleep after Sherman and his troops ransacked her Georgia home but instead “sat up all night watching every moment for the flames to burst out from some of my buildings.” In addition, she wrote, “I could not close my eyes but kept walking to & fro watching the fires in the distance & dreading the approaching day which I feared as they had not all passed would be a continuation of horrors.” Such scenes of destruction and fear recurred throughout the campaign. As a result, Georgian Minerva Leah Rowles McClatchey sympathized with those in her situation. “Oh how my heart goes after Sherman’s host--of unfeeling soldiers--I know terror and dismay destruction will follow--and accompany

Southern Confederacy (New York: The Free Press, 1954). Others acknowledge, but minimize the importance of nationalism in their interpretations. For example, Emory M. Thomas wrote that Southern nationalism was the result of “a unique social economy combined with a distinctive ‘mind,’ religious spirit, life style, and culture to produce a nascent nationalism.” However, he also argued that Southern nationalism existed in the antebellum era despite the fact that “Southerners remained Americans as long as it was politically possible.” Thomas, The Confederate Nation: 1861-1865 (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1979), 28. An older interpretation of Confederate nationalism stressed that the idea of Southern nationalism developed and matured solely in South Carolina. Rollin G. Osterweis, Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949).

30 Dolly Lunt Burge, 19 November 1864, The Diary of Dolly Lunt Burge, 161-162. Earlier in this entry, Burge described the horrors of the raid. “All day as its sad moments rolled on were they passing, not only in front of my house, but they came up behind tore down my garden palings, made a road through my back yard & lot field, driving their Stock & riding through, tearing down my fences & desolating my home. Wantonly doing it when there was no necessity for it. Such a day if I live to the age of Methuselah may God spare me from ever seeing again--Such were some of the scenes of this sad day & as night drew its sable curtains around us, the heavens from every point were lit up with flames from burning buildings!”
their march—and pity the luckless citizens they may meet & pass on their route.”

Acknowledging the power and vindictiveness of the Union troops, McClatchey continued. “They have made great threats of what they will do and their hands seldom hesitate to execute the wicked thoughts of their hearts.” 31 Although, these women realized that Sherman’s March was directed at them, they refused to renounce their nation. 32

Despite their outrage at the behavior of Union soldiers, many Confederate women resolved to hide their fury from enemy eyes. Instead, they tried to remain calm and avoid further harassment. Some elite Southern women proudly described their calm demeanor as Union soldiers ransacked their property. Despite the fact that “every trunk, Bureau, Box, room, [and] closet has been opened or broken open . . . & whatever was wanted of provisions, clothing, jewelry, Knives, forks, spoons, cups, Kettles, cooking utensils, towels, bags, &c, &c, from this taken,” and “the whole house [was] turned topsy-turvey,” Mary Sharpe Jones refused to budge. She and the white women of her household remained composed and unruffled as they faced the vandals.

31 Minerva Leah Rowles McClatchey, 15 November 1864, Diary of Minerva Leah Rowles McClatchey, 1864-1866, McClatchey Family Papers, 71-601, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

32 Sherman’s March also inspired Southern women to help each other as best they could. For example, in March 1865 the Greenville Ladies Association in South Carolina raised over one thousand dollars to aid the people in Columbia after Sherman and his troops had destroyed the city and much personal property. See Minutes of the Proceedings of the Greenville Ladies Association, Duke University. See also Chapter 3.
God alone has enabled us to speak with the enemy in the Gates, and calmly without a tear to see my house broken open, entered with false keys, threatened to be burned to ashes, refused food & ordered to be starved to death, told that I had no right even to wood or water, that I should be ‘humbled in the very dust I walked upon,’ a pistol and carbine presented to my breast, cursed & reviled as a Rebel, a hypocrite, a devil.33

South Carolinian Emily Caroline Ellis had a similar experience. Ellis related that when “the ‘vile wretches’ arrived . . . They commenced drinking, breaking the houses, stores, and robbing generally.” Throughout her confrontation, Ellis proudly “met all of them with independence on my countenance.”34 In the streets of Milledgeville, Georgia, one woman “passed ten thousand [Yankees]” as she headed to the capital building. Even in this circumstance, she exclaimed, “as for feeling afraid it was not there in me. I closed my lips & clenched my fists, & boiling over to give them a piece of my mind.” Although she remained quiet, this woman clearly made her dislike of the enemy known by her refusal to walk on the same side of the street with them.35

33 Mary Sharpe Jones, 7 January 1865, Yankees a’Coming, 73.

34 Emily Caroline Ellis, 24 February 1865, Mrs. Emily Caroline Ellis Diary.

35 Sister R. to Iverson Louis Harris, [30 November 1864], Iverson L. Harris Papers, Duke University. Jane E. Schultz asserts that the white women who confronted Sherman refrained from verbal confrontations, but found outlets for their anger. “Mute Fury: Southern Women’s Diaries of Sherman’s March to the Sea, 1864-1865,” in Arms and the Woman: War, Gender, and Literary Representation, ed. Helen M. Cooper, Adrienne Auslander Munich, and Susan Merrill Squier (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 59-79. Perhaps this bias results from her selection of memoirs, reminiscences, and letters published many years after the march.
Confederate women had good reason to avoid contact and verbal confrontations with the invading soldiers. A fear of sexual assault haunted many, and they did whatever they could to protect themselves. For example, before Sherman and his troops reached her area, Grace Brown Elmore contemplated what she would do in the event of rape.

“I... thought long and intently upon the righteousness of suicide should that worst of all horrors happen.” Caught between her religious beliefs and her sense of virtue, Elmore reasoned “that God would justify the self destroying hand, when life had become a burden and a shame through the wickedness of man.” At the same time, she recognized rape as a deliberate strategy. The soldiers, she believed, “well... know how to avenge themselves, on women, what she values more than all things, the loss of which would be living death.” Elmore reconciled her conflicts concluding “if I had to choose between death and dishonor, I could not live--Life is sweet, but it would have lost it’s savor. That which was taken could never be restored. God will, God must justify the deed.” To her relief, Elmore never had to make this decision.36

Other Confederate women took active precautions against sexual assault. A Georgian described to her brother her attempts to avoid harassment by invading Union

36 Grace Brown Elmore, 26 November 1864, A Heritage of Woe, 81-82. For examples of other women’s fear of rape and threats of rape, see Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 11 July 1864, “Journal of a Secesh Lady”, 587; Emma LeConte, 10 March 1865, Emma LeConte Diary; Sister A. to Willie, 11 April 1865, Southall and Bowen Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection; Mrs. W. K. Bachman to Kate Bachman, 27 March 1865, Mrs. W. K. Bachman Papers.
men. As the enemy approached, one of the slaves “tried to get me not to show myself, for she [said] many were asking her if there [were any] young ladies in the house.” She found what she considered a simple solution. “I tried to look as ugly as possible” so that “none were they to see me would take me for any thing but an old married woman.”

Appearing ugly, she assumed, would shield her from the leering eyes of enemy men. Other women took similar precautions. Pauline DeCaradeuc heard that the soldiers had “asked the servants if there were any young ladies in the house, how old they were & where they slept.” Although frightened by these inquiries, DeCaradeuc felt that she and her friend had some protection because “during all this I had on blue spectacles & my face muffled up. Carrie too.” Despite her assumed safety, the hint of a sexual assault made her realize “that burning the house was nothing.” For the rest of the night, she remained “almost frantic [and] sat up in a corner, without moving or closing my eyes once the whole night.” Although DeCaradeuc “suffered agony [and] trembled unceasingly till

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37 Sister R. to Iverson Louis Harris, [30 November 1864], Iverson L. Harris Papers.

Slave women took similar precautions to avoid molestation by Union troops. For example, Mary Jones Mallard describes how her cook hid herself during a Union raid on the house. “From being a young girl she had assumed the attitude and appearance of a sick old woman with a blanket thrown over her head & shoulders & scarcely able to move.” Mary Jones Mallard, 29 December 1864, Yankees a’Coming, 63.
morning,” the experience put the physical destruction around her into perspective. Some things were more valuable than property.\(^{38}\)

Other white women had less success avoiding contact with the soldiers. Mary Maxcy Leverett wrote in shock about events that occurred in Columbia. The destruction of her property was “a trifle to what was done in Col[umbia] on some houses.” In these horrible instances, “ladies had their dresses violently torn open and were searched for their gold [and the] ladies rushed frantically away from these insults.” Even though “as far as [she] could learn, no actual personal insult was inflicted on any lady,” she considered these “rude & violent attempts to search them for gold” to be unforgivable. “Can meanness go farther?”\(^{39}\) Louise Caroline Reese Cornwell told a similar story. When Union soldiers entered one woman’s house, “they compelled her to unfasten her dress and they examined her person until they were satisfied.” This horrified Cornwell, who realized the implications of this type of attack. “How humiliating.”\(^{40}\) In both of these instances, ideals of white womanhood held strong and prevented the soldiers from raping

\(^{38}\) Pauline DeCaradeuc Heyward, 18 February 1865, *A Confederate Lady Comes of Age*, 69.

\(^{39}\) Mary Bull Maxcy Leverett to Caroline Pinckney Seabrook, 18 March 1865, Mary Maxcy Leverett Letter, South Caroliniana Library. In this long letter, Leverett’s gave an extensive and full description of the process by which the soldiers stole and destroyed her silver, jewelry, clothes, food, bags, and sewing supplies, among other things.

\(^{40}\) Louise Caroline Reese Cornwell Diary, [November 1864], in Jones, *When Sherman Came*, 22.
the white women. Although in their attack of the homefront Union soldiers pushed aside some of their ideas about women as a protected group, they usually held onto ideas that prohibited sexual assault of elite white women. This allowed some protection from the invaders, but was not necessarily a guarantee.41

Less fortunate Confederate women discovered that their fears of sexual assault and rape had not been unfounded. Although the Civil War and Sherman’s March have both been seen as “low-rape” experiences for white women, incidences of sexual assault did occur.42 In Chester, South Carolina, Julia Gott revealed her shock that “they stripped old

41 This was not the case for African-American women in Sherman’s path. Racial stereotypes that categorized black women as hypersexual often led to rape by the invading soldiers. Dolly Lunt Burge acknowledged the threat that Union soldiers posed to the slave women of her household and the fear that they had of rape. During a raid, her “room was full nearly with the bedding of & with the negroes. They were afraid to go out for my women could not step outside of the door without an insult from them.” Dolly Lunt Burge, 19 November 1864, The Diary of Dolly Lunt Burge, 162. In addition, because of their race and status, slave women were not protected by the same mores as were white women. See Catherine Clinton, “‘Southern Dishonor’: Flesh, Blood, Race, and Bondage,” in In Joy and In Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South, ed. Carol Bleser (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 52-68; Brenda E. Stevenson, Life In Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 138, 236-238; Leslie A. Schwalm, A Hard Fight For We: Women’s Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 44-45. When Union soldiers approached her about a ball, a Confederate woman made this distinction clear. “Some of the miserable creatures [came] to see some of the girls & asked them to attend a large Ball they intended giving. One lady told an officer she did not suppose a white lady would go. that maybe some of the negro wench would grace the occasion. but she felt sure no white one would.” Sister R. to Iverson Louis Harris, [30 November 1864], Iverson L. Harris Papers.

42 Susan Brownmiller has called that American Civil War “a low-rape war by those few historians who have thought about it.” Brownmiller, Against Our Will: Men.
Mrs. R., Kate’s mother, and whipped her.”43 However, worse could happen. In a letter between two women, the writer revealed one instance of rape of which she knew. “The most horrible thing the Yankees did in our neighborhood . . . was to dishonor a young lady up about the Rock.” The writer would not reveal the girl’s identity except to say that “she was very respectable & well off.” As a result of the attack, the fifteen-year-old girl “has been dangerously ill since.”44 In Milledgeville, “the incarnate devils ravished some of the nicest ladies.”45 As one woman reported, “the enemy . . . committed outrages on ladies, tho’ I only know of Mrs. James Nickels.” Although other sexual assaults occurred in Milledgeville, the soldiers’ rape of Kate Latimer Nichols, wife of a Confederate captain, became well publicized around Georgia.46 Anna Maria Green’s reaction to the incident reflected that of her countrywomen. “The worst of their acts was committed to poor Mrs. Nichols.” Green assumed that the “violence done, and atrocity committed” would


43 Julia Frances Gott to Sister, 27 February 1865, in Jones, *When Sherman Came*, 229.

44 Loula to Poss, 22 May 1865, Graves Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

45 Savannah Daily Morning News, 6 December 1864.

“make her husband an enemy unto death.”47 This nightmarish experience surely sickened more than just the direct victim, who ended up in an asylum. The possibility of rape by the “fiends incarnate” haunted many Confederate women.48

Although pillage and destruction formed the backbone of Sherman’s assault on Southern domesticity, the rape of white women was not an accepted part of the march or its strategy. Commanding officers immediately court-martialed the few men caught

47 Anna Maria Green, 17 November 1864, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 1861-1867, ed. James C. Bonner (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1964), 63. The editor noted an “attempt has been made to obliterate this name.”

48 Early in the war, Mary Boykin Chesnut acknowledged her belief that Union soldiers would do anything. “Women can only stay at home, and every paper reminds us that women are to be violated, ravished, and all manner of humiliation.” Mary Boykin Chesnut, 29 August 1861, Mary Chesnut’s Civil War, ed. C. Vann Woodward (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 172. See also Lavender R. Ray to Brother, 9 March 1865, Letters and Diary of Lieut. Lavender R. Ray 1861-1865, Typescript, Georgia Department of Archives and History.

The rape and attempted rape of slave women frequently occurred during Sherman’s March. For example, from South Carolina, one woman described this phenomenon. “Every night they are after the young girls & they are obliged to take to the woods, to save themselves from being ravished.” S. McCain described a similar incident to her daughter. As she told it, during a raid “one [Yankee] wretch had a mulatto wench in Elizas room.” Sue to Jane Ann Smythe, 14 April 1865, Adger, Smythe, Flynn Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library; O. O. Howard to E. P. Blair, Jr., 10 January 1865, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 130 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1881-1902), Ser. 1, Vol. 47, Pt 2: 256 [hereafter cited as Official Records]. S. McCain to Daughter, 7 March 1865, Mary Amarinthia Snowden Papers. Also see Anne J. Bailey, The Chessboard of War: Sherman and Hood in the Autumn Campaigns of 1864 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 64; Marli Weiner, Mistresses and Slaves: Plantation Women in South Carolina, 1830-1880 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 186.
attempting to rape or raping white Southern women. The offenders faced hanging or dishonorable discharges. For example, Union soldier Charles Brown Tomkins discussed the consequences and occurrences of rape. "There was an execution in the 14th A. C. . . . of a soldier for committing a rape on an 'old lady.' I did not hear the particulars." Later in the day, in Tomkins' division, another "man was 'drummed out' by the whole Div. for attempting to commit a rape on a young woman, I did not hear any particulars of this case."49 Similarly, Union chaplain John J. Hight, wrote that while in Conyers, Georgia "our men helped themselves to anything they desired to eat. No effort was made by the officers to restrain them. Rumor says that one of the soldiers was shot by a woman, whom he was attempting to outrage."50 In protecting herself from rape, this woman likely saved the soldier's company from executing him.

The Union's discipline of suspected rapists did little to allay the fears of Confederate women. With dread of physical attack governing her actions, Charlotte St.

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49 Charles Brown Tomkins to Mollie Tomkins, 2 April 1865, Charles Brown Tomkins Papers, Duke University. John "General Jack" Casement told a similar story. "One poor fellow was Shot the day I arrived here for Committing a Rape." John "General Jack" Casement to Francis Marion Jennings Casement, 2 April 1865, Casement Collection, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California. Also see Esther Hill Hawks, [February 1864], A Woman Doctor's Civil War: Esther Hill Hawks' Diary, ed. Gerald Schwartz (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1989), 61. Also see Glatthaar, The March to the Sea and Beyond, 73.

50 John J. Hight, 17 November 1864, History of the Fifty-Eighth Regiment of Indiana, 416. In another case, one woman threatened to use a revolver to keep an threatening soldier away. See Bailey, The Chessboard of War, 65.
Julien Ravenel described her interaction with Union troops as one that would, she hoped, maintain peace and distance. As the enemy soldiers filled her house, she remained “in the hall to see what they would take from there and to keep a watch,” but she did not try to stop the pillaging. Despite her initial intention to remain quiet, the soldiers soon forced her to engage them in conversation. They bombarded her with questions that she hesitantly, yet often defiantly, answered. “The first one that come into the room asked for fire arms, I told him they had all been taken,” she wrote. “The next one asked for silver, I had no idea of showing him, so said I was not the lady of the house, he made no reply but went on looking.” The soldiers ultimately found and took the silver as well as the food, horses, and other valuables. As they left, Ravenel comforted herself with the satisfaction that she had not made it easy for the vandals.51

In the interest of personal safety, other Confederate women similarly held their tongues in the presence of the enemy. Mary Sharpe Jones of Georgia noted that “in all my intercourse with the enemy, I have avoided conversation or any aggravating remarks.” Remaining quiet became difficult, but she tried to do so “even when I felt a sword pierced through my soul.” The soldiers especially tried her patience when they “taunted me with the want of courage on the part of my Countrymen--Charges, which I knew to be bare & false as the lips that uttered them.” Jones, the head of a household that she shared with

51 Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel to Meta Heyward, 8 April 1865, Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel Diary, Ravenel Family Papers, 1838-1937, South Carolina Historical Society.
her pregnant daughter, knew that silence offered her some protection from the vengeance of the soldiers. Despite her composure, however, Jones asserted that "every development of the enemy but confirms my desire for a separate and distinct nationality."52

In Columbia, Mary Maxcy Leverett demonstrated her loyalty to the Confederacy through a similar show of bravery. She spoke to Union soldiers, and although she "trembled from head to foot," she

was so determined that they should see no sight of fear that to stop the tremor and prevent a tear being seen or a sob escaping I had sometimes to compress my lips & bite them in the midst of a sentence, until I shrugged off the emotion.

Leverett willingly "shrugged off the emotion" because she "hated so to let an enemy see he had it in his power to make me shed a tear." Her sense of Confederate womanhood required her to present a facade of fearlessness in the face of what she saw as an unforgiving enemy. Despite her silence, she hoped "that some one could write with a pen of fire and tell the world, the history of the sufferings & agonies of those three days of Yankee rule." She resented the horrors of Union occupation which "was like 'hell let loose' in some parts of Columbia."53 Confederate women's outward acceptance of Union power often hid deep-seated hatred of the enemy and patriotism for the Southern nation.

52 Mary Sharpe Jones, 17 January 1865, Yankees a'Coming, 81-82.

53 Mary Bull Maxcy Leverett to Caroline Pinckney Seabrook, 18 March 1865, Mary Maxcy Leverett Letter. See also Esther Alden [Elizabeth Allston], 1 March 1865,
Other women chose to be more daring in their quiet defiance toward the enemy. When Union soldiers invaded her home and demanded her liquor, gold, and silver, Pauline DeCaradeuc worried because she “had a belt on under my dress, with my revolver, and a bag of bullets, caps & powder in my pocket.” This ammunition both offered protection and invited danger. When the soldiers demanded all the weapons in the house, DeCaradeuc defiantly went upstairs and “threw the revolver between [the bed] sheets,” hoping that it would be safe there and that she would not be punished for concealing it. After disposing of her weapon, she still worried that the soldiers would find it, and they almost did. “Hardly I had finished [hiding the revolver] when the door burst open & the room was filled with them, they pulled the bed to pieces, of course.” A few moments later, when “a horrid looking ruffian came into the parlor, [and] seeing only women there . . . entered [and] shut both doors,” DeCaradeuc again feared for her safety. The “ruffian . . . said in an undertone, ‘You cursed rebels, now empty your pockets.’” During this incident, DeCaradeuc was concerned, not for her vulnerability as a woman, but instead for the contents of her pocket—she had hidden a bag of ammunition on her person.

“Our Women in the War”, 359; Mother to Gracia, 3 March 1865, Anonymous Mother to Daughter, Mrs. Albert Rhett Heyward, (Sallie Coles Green) Papers. Union soldiers noted the stoicism of Confederate women. Major Henry Hitchcock wrote that he was “Sorry enough . . . for the women here and their anxiety and terror—though I must say they show very little fear of us.” Henry Hitchcock, 17 November 1864, Marching With Sherman: Passages from the Letters and Campaign Diaries of Henry Hitchcock, Major Assistant Adjutant General of Volunteers, November 1864-May 1865, ed. M. A. DeWolfe Howe (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 67.
While the Yankee focused his attention on the purse of another woman in the room, DeCaradeuc “dropped [her] bag in a corner & flung an old bonnet over it.” She became overtly hostile only after the “ruffian” found her watch and tried to get more from her. When “the villain put his hand on my shoulder, I rose & stood before him, with all possible dignity & he turned away.” This show of defiance protected her from the male invader and demonstrated to him her lack of fear. She successfully saved herself and her weaponry. To her relief, after the enemy had left for the day DeCaradeuc found her revolver tangled in the stripped bedsheets. DeCaradeuc’s use of traditionally male power as well as her sacrifice of feminine trappings, such as her jewelry, in favor of her weapons demonstrated her attachment to her Confederate identity.

All of the women in DeCaradeuc’s household made efforts to thwart the ambitions of the Union soldiers. As the soldiers ransacked the house, she recorded, “Mother and G[rand]M[a] went among them like brave women, trying to save some few things in vain.” The soldier who pressed DeCaradeuc’s mother for gold and silver, could not get her to reveal anything, despite his threats. Even when he warned, “I’ll burn your house this minute, if you don’t tell me,” she refused to speak. Frustrated with the

54 Pauline DeCaradeuc Heyward, 18 February 1865, A Confederate Lady Comes of Age, 66. Other women also demanded that Union soldiers follow their wishes. In Georgia, a Confederate woman forced a Northern soldier to remove a Union flag from her house. He “had the impudence to hang out with his colors at her window but she soon made him take it down.” Sister R. to Iverson Louis Harris, [30 November 1864], Iverson L. Harris Papers.
woman’s resolve, the soldier “walked up & down the room cursing, swearing, threatening, & spitting on every side,” but did not set the house on fire. Union soldiers ultimately uncovered the silver and other valuables hidden on the property by “sticking the ground with their swords and . . . wherever the ground was soft they dug.” Despite the final result, the women of the house proudly recounted their role in making things difficult for raiding Union soldiers.

Despite assertions by Union soldiers about the “unfeminine” nature of Southern females and their behavior, “rebel” women prided themselves on their strong Confederate patriotism. In addition, they asserted that this intense loyalty further evidenced their “true Southern womanhood.” When involved in face-to-face encounters with the invaders, many made declarations of their Confederate patriotism and dared the enemy to challenge them on their patriotic femininity. These women also considered Union disdain for strong Southern sentiments as an impetus to further declarations of pride. In a confrontation with a soldier who “tried to make me say if I was a ‘Secesh,’” one Milledgeville, Georgia resident proudly responded “I am a southern woman.” She maintained this position because he “said so impertinently, say ‘are you Secesh’ that [she] determined not to answer him” directly and instead reasserted “I am a Southern woman.” Even while defiantly dodging the question, this woman’s answer demonstrated

55 Pauline DeCaradeuc Heyward, 18 February 1865, A Confederate Lady Comes of Age, 66-67.
her belief that all Southern women were “secesh” and proudly supported their region’s values. This woman also rejoiced in the response of another woman to the same question. “One [of the soldiers] asked Sal & she said yes, to the hearts core.” Although the Union soldiers disdained women’s impertinence and continued loyalty, they did not punish either woman for her answer.56

Throughout Sherman’s March, Northern soldiers faced defiant white Southern women. In a letter to a female friend, a North Carolina woman named Loula described her bravery after the Yankees “tore up the whole house and stole whatever they wanted.” The destruction of her home infuriated Loula, especially because the “house was searched eight times by the impudent scamps and each one took off something.”57 At first, she obediently complied with requests for her property, giving her “beautiful ring” and other jewelry to “a great drunken fellow” because she feared “he might attempt to take them by force.” She had her limits, however, and refused to part with her diamond ring which, she proclaimed, she “would have swallowed . . . before a Yankee should have it.” In the end, the enemy found and stole other valuables as well as burnt both her gin house and her cotton. Loula found this experience heartwrenching. “You don’t] know how awful we

56 Sister R. to Iverson Louis Harris, [30 November 1864], Iverson L. Harris Papers.

57 In this letter, Loula details the items stolen, including horses, mules, silver, jewelry, cloth, and “even . . . the baby’s napkins.” Loula to Poss, 22 May 1865, Graves Family Papers.
felt when the wretches were prying into every sacred thing in the house, even into . . . relics of the dead we never dreamed of concealing.” Despite, and perhaps as a result of, the attack of her sentimental items, she “talked to them all pretty plainly, & let them know at once I was not afraid of them, nor afraid to reveal my real sentiments & contempt for their Government.” She proudly related the soldiers’ response to her attitude. When “one of them told me I was a brave little woman.” she declared “yes I would always acknowledge with pride that I was a rebel and gloried in being a secessionist long before the war commenced.”

Even with the enemy still in her home, Loula focused her anger on those responsible for the assault on her domestic space.

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58 Loula to Poss, 22 May 1865, Graves Family Papers.

59 See also Raleigh Spinks Camp to Sister, 10 October 1864, Camp Family Papers, Emory University. The attack on the “relics of the dead” proved particularly painful to Southern women because mourning was considered one of women’s domestic responsibilities. For a discussion of mourning as female ritual see Patricia R. Loughridge and Edward D. C. Campbell, Jr., Women and Mourning (Richmond: Museum of the Confederacy, 1985); Mary Louise Kete, Sentimental Collaborations: Mourning and Middle-Class Identity in Nineteenth-Century America (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000); Ann Masson and Bryce Reveley, “When Life’s Brief Sun Was Set: Portraits of Southern Women in Mourning, 1830-1860,” Southern Quarterly 2 (1988): 32-56. In addition to destroying the property of the dead, Union soldiers also despoiled cemeteries along the March. For example, Frances Thomas Howard described one instance where the “cemetery is desecrated with their fortifications. The Yankees have broken open the doors of vaults, and in one instance that I know of, the coffin of a lady was opened and a cross and chain stolen from her body. Surely such men are not human.” Frances Thomas Howard, 21 January 1865, In and Out of the Lines: An Accurate Account of the Incidents During the Occupation of Georgia by Federal Troops in 1864-65 (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1905), 196.
Loula’s pride in her Confederate patriotism mirrored that of many other Southern women. After initially restraining herself to a quiet opposition to the Union soldiers in her home, Georgian Mary Sharpe Jones eventually displayed her patriotism. The invaders, she exulted, “always redressed me as an uncompromising rebel,” and she proudly concurred. “I never failed to let them know that before High Heaven, I believed our cause was just & right.”60 Other Confederate women also made their love of their nation and hatred for the enemy clear to the invading troops.61 From South Carolina, Emma Holmes proudly recounted a confrontation with a Union soldier. “I hurled so many keen sarcasms, such home thrusts, that [he] said ‘I was the best rebel he had met.’” The soldier also acknowledged the powerful role that Confederate women played in their region’s bid for independence, explaining “that it was such women as I who kept up this war by urging on our brothers and friends.” Holmes responded, telling “him I considered

60 Mary Sharpe Jones, 17 January 1865, Yankees a’Coming, 81.

61 George Ward Nichols, a Union soldier on Sherman’s March, recounted a conversation with a “rebel lady” who told him that she and the other women of Atlanta “would much rather give up our homes than live near the Yankees” because “we hate you.” George Ward Nichols, The Story of the Great March, from the Diary of a Staff Officer (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1865), 21-22. Frances Thomas Howard recorded an incident in which Miss Moodie insulted Sherman while he was within earshot. When visiting the owner of Sherman’s headquarters in Savannah, she let it be known that she “wish[ed] a thousand papers of pins were stuck in [Sherman’s] bed and he was strapped down on them.” Frances Thomas Howard, 27 December 1864, Frances Thomas Howard, 25 December 1864, In and Out of the Lines, 191. See also Catherine (Kate) Douglas DeRossett Meares to Mother, 28 March, 1865, DeRossett Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection; Bailey, Chessboard of War, 64,
it a high compliment, that I was delighted to find I was able to do so much for my country."62 Harriott Middleton received a similar compliment. In her description of the destruction of Columbia, she recorded a comment by the Union soldiers. "As for the women, [the Union soldiers] said the women in Carolina were the pluckiest, the bravest, the most outspoken they had met in the South and they said, 'We admire it so much.'"63 Although some of his soldiers praised Confederate women, Sherman was not so complimentary in his assessment of them. In his mind, their patriotism had led to no good. Ellen Devereux Hinsdale related a story of one woman's confrontation with Sherman. According to the story, "he cursed the women called us d--d rebels, & the cause of the trouble in the country."


63 Harriott Middleton to Susan Middleton, 2 March 1865, "Middleton Correspondence, 1861-1865," ed. Isabella Middleton Leland, South Carolina Historical Magazine 65 (April 1964), 103. Also see Marrie to Sallie Lawton, 15 April 1865, Willingham and Lawton Families Papers, South Caroliniana Library.

64 Ellen Devereux Hinsdale to Child, 23 March 1865, Hinsdale Family Papers. Hinsdale also notes that in this confrontation Sherman threatened "that the next time he comes here he will treat us as the Indians would." Also see Sue Sample, 29 November 1864, in When Sherman Came, 48.

Union Major Henry Hitchcock also judged Southern women's role in the rebellion as a vital one. He questioned one young woman with her role in the war. "'You have or had influence with [Southern men]—did you ever use it to keep them at home?' She admitted she had not, and that if they hadn't gone to the war, women would have called them cowards, etc., etc." As a result, Hitchcock blamed her, in part, for the start and continuation of the war: 'you have done all you could to help the war, and have not done
Despite such “compliments” and complaints about women’s power in the continuation of the Confederate war effort, Northern soldiers naturally assumed that Confederate women would eventually grow tired of war and call for a return to traditional gender relations. When a Union soldier confidently asserted that “the war would soon be over, and, in a few months, we would all be in the Union,” Emma Holmes challenged him. She refused to give up on Southern independence even when things looked bleak. In response to the soldier, she asserted “never [will the South surrender], the war may last three or four years longer, & we would then stand equal with the United States.” Harriott Middleton and the women of her household likewise challenged the soldiers’ assumptions that the war would end with a Union victory and peaceful reunification. When one soldier “said that they meant to kill out all our men and then, the war being over . . . that the Southern women would then have to marry them,” the women laughed. They made their contempt of the ridiculous idea clear to the soldier, who “looked angry, or rather fiery when informed that no South Carolina woman would demean herself by marrying a Northern man.” Refusing to believe that Southern women could survive on their own, he taunted “What will become of you then?” In defense of her region and

what you could to prevent it.” Henry Hitchcock, 25 November 1864, Marching With Sherman, 92.

65 Emma Holmes, 4 March 1865, The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 402.
family, one woman defiantly retorted "We will die ... or form an army of women." 66

The Middleton women would not surrender to Union power. Even after Union soldiers had wreaked their vengeance on South Carolina, and their family estate in particular, they threatened to "form an army of women" to continue the fight and protect their nation.

Not only did Confederate women pride themselves on their strong opposition to the Union troops and the United States, but they also ridiculed the tactics of the invading armies. They concluded that the Union strategy clearly demonstrated the depravity of the North and the moral superiority of the South. Appealing to traditional notions of feminine dependence and helplessness, despite behavior to the contrary, Confederate women denounced the "powerful" North for resorting to a war on traditionally unprotected groups such as women, children, and African Americans. To Southern women, such tactics revealed the ultimate weakness of the Union. Still supporting the paternalistic logic of slavery, Dolly Lunt Burge criticized the North for making "the poor cowardly negro fight," especially considering that "the all powerful Yankee Nation [had] the whole world to back them. Their ports open, their armies filled with soldiers from all nations." Why, she questioned, should they "take the poor negro to help them out, against this 'little Confederacy' which was," she laughed, "to be brought back into the

66 Harriott Middleton to Susan Middleton, 2 March 1865, "Middleton Correspondence," 103-104.
Union in sixty days time?\textsuperscript{67} From these actions, Burge concluded that the “little Confederacy” must have proved more powerful than the North had expected. In addition, these measures proved to her that the Union was not as strong as it had boasted. This gave her more confidence in her nation’s ability to ultimately secure success and independence.

The criticism of Northern tactics in regard to African-Americans also extended to the Union soldiers’ treatment of slaves during the March. Burge, like many others, particularly condemned the North for claiming to fight for the slaves, while at the same time ransacking their meager homes and property. “Their [slave] cabins are rifled of every valuable.” This made the slaves fear the Yankees, Burge observed. As a result, “they all, poor things, huddled together in my room fearing every moment that the house would be burned.”\textsuperscript{68} In this situation, Burge saw herself as the protector of her slave “family,” a role normally accorded to the patriarch.\textsuperscript{69} Burge may have overestimated her

\textsuperscript{67}This 60 day reference echoes the early boasts of Union supporters that they would subdue the South quickly. James M. McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era} (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 274-275, 333.

\textsuperscript{68}Dolly Lunt Burge, 19 November 1864, \textit{The Diary of Dolly Lunt Burge}, 160-161. Other Southerners similarly criticized the Union as hypocritical in its treatment of slaves. For examples, see Mary Jones Mallard, 19 December 1864, Mary Sharpe Jones, 3 January 1865 and 5 January 1865, \textit{Yankees a’Coming}, 52, 65, 68; Martha Battey to Robert Battey, 17 November 1865, Robert Battey Papers, Emory University; Sue to Jane Ann Smythe, 14 April 1865, Adger, Smythe, Flynn Family Papers.

\textsuperscript{69}On the Southern patriarchy, women, and slaves, see Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, \textit{Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South} (Chapel
slaves’ loyalty to her, but she perceptively noted the damage done to African American property. After the war, many former slaves appealed to the United States government for restitution for property destroyed and stolen by Union troops on Sherman’s March.

Staunch Confederate Emma LeConte decried the Union’s attack on civilians and appealed to antebellum ideals about womanhood. Women, she deduced, were unfairly targeted as helpless victims. In addition, as far as she could tell, the Union had no tactical reasons for such an assault, but pursued this course to torment the civilians. “From what I hear their chief aim while taunting helpless women has been to ‘humble their pride’—‘Southern pride’” To this end, she noted, they would ridicule the women: “Where now they would hiss—‘is all your pride’... ‘this is what you get for setting you selves up as better than other folks.’” Despite such taunts, LeConte reported, “the women acted with quiet dignity and refused to lower themselves by any retort.” However, LeConte recognized that not everyone remained silent in the face of ridicule; some women

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challenged the enemy and refused to be threatened in to submission. While "soldiers were pillaging the house of a lady-- One asked her if they had not humbled her pride now. 'No indeed' she said 'nor can you ever.' 'You fear us any way'-- 'No' she said. 'By G-- but you shall fear me.'" The soldier then "cocked his pistol and put it to her head," asking "Are you afraid now?" LeConte proudly reported that when the woman "folded her arms and looking him steadily in the eye, said contemptuously, 'No.' He dropped his pistol and with an exclamation of admiration left her."71 This anecdote not only shows women’s disdain for the enemy, but also highlights one way in which Confederate women fought for their nation and their homes.72

71 Emma LeConte, 18 February 1865, Emma LeConte Diary. For a similar episode, see Nellie Worth to Cousin, 21 March 1865, North Carolina Collection, Southern Historical Collection. Another woman recorded a Union soldier's taunts. "The Yankees [told] Mrs Notts that their present treatment of the rebels, entitled them to a seat in Heaven, & that each rebels killed was a sure passport thither." Marrie to Sallie Lawton, 15 April 1865, Willingham and Lawton Families Papers, South Caroliniana Library. Union Major Henry Hitchcock recorded a similar plea against war on "helpless women." When he confronted a Confederate woman of "eighteen or nineteen, [and a] good rebel, [she] was quite sharp on us." This woman criticized Union tactics, asserting that they "had no right to punish helpless women who had never done anything, etc., etc." Henry Hitchcock, 25 November 1864, Marching With Sherman, 92.

72 Confederate women maintained their belief that the Union soldiers would not shoot a woman. Before the soldiers arrived Carolina Ravenel told a friend that such tactics "'tis only done to alarm." Caroline R. Ravenel to Isabell Middleton Smith, 31 March 1865, in Mason Smith Family Letters, 1860-1868, ed. Smith, Daniel E. Huger, Alice R. Huger Smith, and Arney R. Childs (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1950), 187.
Like the woman in LeConte’s story, Mary Maxcy Leverett refused to back down from her confidence in herself and her nation. Leverett not only showed no fear, but scorned Union tactics directly to the soldiers. In Columbia, she challenged the Yankee men who came to ransack her home. Leverett “pointed to the ruined town . . . and asked if this was what they styled ‘civilized warfare’?” She took her criticism a step further, telling “them not a nation in Europe in the nineteenth century would be guilty of such an outrage.” Despite this verbal challenge, and although her family was “considered such notorious rebels that there was no end to the officers who came to argue, to persuade or to literally ask ‘if we had had enough?’” Leverett remained unharmed and unperturbed. She maintained her Confederate loyalty, despite numerous raids and taunting from the soldiers. As the “great army of ruffians” left town on the road by her house, they “[fired] a parting shot at the house.” Instead of displaying her fear, Leverett “went quickly out into the piazza and showed myself to them, to let them see I did not flinch, and stood some minutes looking at them.” Even though she “expected every moment to have a ball put thro’ me,” Leverett remained on the piazza until she saw the “last stragglers” leave.\(^73\)

\(^{73}\) Mary Bull Maxcy Leverett to Caroline Pinckney Seabrook, 18 March 1865, Mary Maxcy Leverett Letter. In a letter to her son, Leverett described another confrontation with Union soldiers. “[They] asked . . . whether we had not been beaten enough to want peace, see their force how immense, see how they had destroyed our resources, railroads &c. I told them ‘we did want peace, but would agree to none but an honorable peace.’ Their countenances fell. They pointed to Columbia & referred to the wholesale destruction going on over the State, & asked if we were not ready to give up. I
The white women who confronted Sherman in North Carolina also remained steadfast in their support for the Confederacy. One anonymous woman, for example, acknowledged the horrors of Union invasion while reasserting her Confederate patriotism. “Terrible has been the storm that has swept over us,” she wrote, listing her losses and the horrors of the invasion. The Union’s demonstration of its power, however, did not dampen her spirit. In fact, their taunts to her after ransacking her home made her even more determined than before to remain a steadfast Confederate. “After destroying everything we had . . . one of these barbarians had to add insult to injury by asking me ‘what I would live upon now?’” Undaunted by events, she quickly responded “upon patriotism: I will exist upon the love of my country as long as it will last, and then I will die as firm in that love as the everlasting hills.” The soldier did not agree: “we shall soon subjugate the rebellion, and you will then have no country to love.” The woman refused to budge:

Never! . . . never! you and your blood-handed countrymen may make the whole of this beautiful land one vast graveyard but its people will never be subjugated. Every man, woman and child of

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said ‘No! It would make us more determined & drive every man into the field with feelings more embittered & intense than ever. It was a good thing for us.’ Again they were disconcerted. Then said ‘the men would have to come home to take care of their families.’ I said ‘No, we would take care of ourselves, that I had suffered (pointing to our sacked house) but was willing to suffer. I could bear calamity. They referred to Georgia, how they had ruined her! ‘I said Georgia was recovering already, like an India rubber ball, and so would we.’” Mary Maxcy Leverett to Milton Leverett, 24 February [1865], The Leverett Letters, 387.
us will keep quietly in honourable graves, but we will never live dishonourable lives.  

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Although Sherman had hoped to subdue and eliminate elite women’s efforts in support of the Southern war effort, his march through Georgia and the Carolinas served as a motivator to increase Confederate patriotism. Shocked by the lengths to which the Northern enemy would go during wartime, Southern women adapted their behavior to fight for the Confederacy. They refused to surrender to an enemy that would stoop to the level of making war on women, an enemy that they considered inhuman, savage, and heartless. Instead, the attack on the homefront demonstrated to Southern women that North and South were irreconcilable. These assessments allowed them to defiantly assert themselves as Confederate women who would do anything to protect their homes, families, and nation. By successfully adapting their behavior to deal with a direct attack on their homes and personal belongings, many Confederate women found ways to support ardently their nation while retaining their femininity. In doing this, they demonstrated that their regional identity and concern for the Confederacy played as large a role in their lives as did their gender and that they could successfully combine the interests of both.

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74 Anonymous woman [Fayetteville, N.C.], 22 March 1865, Emma Mordecai Diary, Mordecai Family Papers.
Despite women’s continued support of the Confederacy, the South’s bid for independence did not prove successful. However, after Sherman’s men left their towns, and even after General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox, many Confederate women remained dedicated to their now-defunct nation. As the next chapter demonstrates, Sherman’s campaign on domesticity left behind a female population who refused to submit. The destruction of Southern homes, property, and countryside, combined with a direct attack on femininity, inspired elite women to a continued and heightened support of the Confederacy and all it represented. Sherman had mistakenly assumed that he could make white Southern women “howl,” and, therefore, eliminate their loyalty to the war and the Confederate nation.
CHAPTER 5:
“A REBEL AS LONG AS I LIVE”:
THE INTENSITY OF CONFEDERATE WOMANHOOD

Sherman’s March shattered the material basis of Confederate support in Georgia and the Carolinas by destroying homes, farms, food supplies, agricultural products, railroads, and raw materials. As Northern soldiers left their ravaged towns and homes, however, Confederate women demonstrated that Union men had underestimated their powerful regional identity; Sherman had failed to break the will of Confederate women and end their support for war. The bitterness, determination, and patriotism with which Confederate women responded to the attack of their homefront, as well as their methods of defending themselves and their families, revealed that they valued their nation as much as their femininity. Instead of dissolving Confederate women’s patriotism, Sherman’s attack on domesticity intensified it. It also drove his female enemies to draw even sharper distinctions between themselves and Yankees and to urge their husbands to fight. As they reluctantly recognized the probability of Southern defeat, many Confederate women vowed not to abandon their nation. Although the South was ultimately “obliged to
submit” to the Union as a result of military defeats, Confederate women vehemently vowed that “never could [the Union] subdue us.”

This chapter argues that the invasion of the domestic sphere during Sherman’s campaign not only failed to bring Southern women to their knees, but it also magnified the patriotism of Confederate women and increased their hatred of Yankees after the soldiers departed. Sherman’s March ultimately strengthened elite women’s long-standing connections to kin and place, as well as their identification with Southern values, by giving them a common enemy and experiences around which they could unite. After

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William Blair found similar reactions to confrontations with Union soldiers by Virginia women. “Violations of women, whether symbolically or physically, sparked the strongest reactions over treatment of civilians.” Blair also cites one woman who was so outraged by rumors of offenses against women by Northern soldiers that she wrote her husband, “Shoot them, dear husband, every chance you get. Hold no conference with them. They are devil furies who thirst for your blood and who will revenge themselves upon your helpless wife and children. It is God’s will and wish for you to destroy them. You are his instrument and it is your Christian duty.” William Blair, Virginia’s Private War: Feeding Body and Soul in the Confederacy, 1861-1865 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 143-144, 56, 78.

years of sacrifice and dedication to regional concerns, most of the white women who
directly faced the homefront campaign emerged with a reinvigorated sense of the
irreconcilable differences between Confederates and Northerners. Confederate women
could not forgive the assault on domesticity, or Sherman’s pursuit of it. As a result, in
the months and years after Sherman’s March, the elite women targeted in the campaign
became “the best patriots among us.”

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Although early examinations into the outcome of the Civil War focused on the
male-dominated aspects of war, the advent of social and women’s history has allowed for
new interpretations of both war and those who lived it. As a result, previously
marginalized or neglected subjects in Civil War history came to the forefront of academic

Strong,’” *Journal of Southern History* 56 (February 1990): 55-70.

3 Like their male counterparts, few Southern women had a unified conception of
the South when the war began. Instead, most saw their state as one of their defining
markers of identity before nation or region. However, as the secession crisis intensified
and regional issues came to the forefront, Southerners began to rally together against what
they saw as Northern colonialism. For example, see Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederate
Nation: 1861-1865* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1979), 19; Cecilia Elizabeth
Press, 1999), 11.

4 Early studies of the Civil War focused primarily on military movements,
political leadership, and strategy. In such interpretations, what took place on the
battlefield defined war; the homefront, when it was mentioned, was only incorporated to
show how the war affected it. For example, see David Donald, ed., *Why the North Won
studies, and historians inserted non-combatants into their assessments of the war’s ultimate outcome. They have examined the Southern homefront, the political weaknesses of the Confederate States of America, the difficulty of maintaining slavery during wartime, the flagging morale of soldiers, the ineffective creation of nationalism, internal divisions between rich and poor Southerners, and other topics that eschew the traditional focus on military leadership and tactics. In this vein, Drew Gilpin Faust, George C.

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Rable, and others placed the morale of white women at the center of their explorations of the Confederacy’s defeat. The Confederacy failed, Faust and Rable argue, primarily


*Drew Gilpin Faust and George C. Rable both address the issue of Southern women’s loyalty to the Confederate nation and conclude that not only did white women support the Confederacy conditionally, but that this group’s reluctance to make sacrifices that threatened their femininity led to the downfall of their nation. See Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Faust, “Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War,” in Southern Stories (Columbia: University of Missouri, 1992), 113-140; Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989). Also see Victoria E. Bynum, Unruly Women: The Politics of Social & Sexual Control in the Old South (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Laura F. Edwards, Scarlett Doesn’t Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 80; Jean V. Berlin, “Did Confederate Women Lose the War?: Deprivation, Destruction, and Despair on the Homefront,” in The Collapse of the Confederacy, 168-193. Most recent military historians do not accept the idea that women lost the war for the Confederacy. For example, see Gallagher, The Confederate War, esp. 24.

because white Southern women from all walks of life intentionally chose to withdraw their support for the war. Their reactions to the war, they argue, demonstrated that women were uncomfortable acting outside of traditional nineteenth century gender roles. In the process, Faust and Rabie both over-emphasize the essentialist gender ideals which require women to nurture and protect. Women, they assume, could not support war because it was antithetical to their nature.  

Despite their dreary assessment of women’s morale in 1864 and 1865, most historians of the period concede that white Southern women enthusiastically supported and believed in the Confederate war effort at the outset. Despite this acknowledgment of women’s early efforts, Faust explicitly argues that white women eventually sabotaged the Confederate war effort. “Southern women undermined both objective and ideological foundations for the Confederate effort; they directly subverted the South’s military and

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8 See Chapter 3.
economic effectiveness as well as civilian morale.” Highlighting the military defeats and homefront shortages in the relation to the decline of homefront morale, Faust stresses women’s role in the downfall of the Confederacy. “Historians,” she writes “have wondered in recent years why the Confederacy did not endure longer. In considerable measure . . . it was because so many women did not want it to.”9 Similarly, Rable asserts that “by the end of the war, many women wavered in their support for the Southern cause,” and understandably demanded an end to the hostilities that had taken the lives of so many of their men.10

Both Faust and Rable agree that as women realized the ghastly realities of war, they consciously withdrew their support. Supporting the war required women to suppress their female nature and, they argue, the strains of constant death and destruction made this ultimately unbearable. Women who had earlier ignored their female inclinations to nurture and protect their families by encouraging enlistment, they claim, later begged their sons and husbands to return from battle. Faust suggests that this reaction resulted from a feminine aversion to war, asserting that “the erosion of women’s patriotism simply represented a reversion to conventional female concerns, an almost reactionary

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9 Faust, “Altars of Sacrifice,” 139-140.

10 Rable, Civil Wars, x.
reassertion of the private and domestic and a rejection of the more public and political burdens women had been urged to assume.”\(^{11}\)

An examination of the women who personally confronted the soldiers on Sherman’s March, reveals experiences not accounted for in the interpretations of Faust and Rable. The differences in interpretations can be explained, at least in part, by the women Faust and Rable studied. Perhaps those who had no personal confrontations with the enemy had no reason to continue supporting the Confederate war effort. However, for those who directly faced the aggressive assaults of Union troops, the war became more personal.\(^{12}\) Most of these white women emerged from their confrontations

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\(^{11}\) Faust, Mothers of Invention, 242. In many ways Faust’s conclusions seem to be a backlash against feminist scholars, such as Anne Firor Scott, who painted women’s roles in the Civil War as a liberating step towards the feminist movement. Instead Faust emphasizes Southern women’s desires—during and after the Civil War—to return to the traditionally female domestic sphere. Faust emphasizes how women’s difficulties in carrying out men’s roles inspired in them a longing for a world of the past. For the classic study of the Civil War as a revolutionary experience for Southern women, see Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

\(^{12}\) The editor of the Georgia \textit{Countryman} came to this conclusion in January 1865. “Those of us who have suffered can hardly be expected to love our tormentors, and persecutors, and we can hardly be expected to look with much favor upon anything that has the remotest resemblance to reunion with the Yankees.” Joseph Addison Turner, 10 January 1865, as quoted in Lawrence Huff, “A Bitter Draught We Had to Quaff” Sherman’s March Through the Eyes of Joseph Addison Turner,” \textit{Georgia Historical Quarterly} 72 (Summer 1988): 326. A Confederate soldier asserted that “the people who have suffered are very patriotic, but those who were not molested are badly whipt.” Elliot Welch to Mother, 20 March 1865, Elliot Stephen Welch Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. A similar idea has been asserted by historians. For examples, see Blair, \textit{Virginia’s Private War}, 6, 143;
reinvigorated with a patriotic virulence recognized by Union soldiers and glorified by Southerners in the postwar era. For example, as Union troops surrounded and fought to gain control of Atlanta in the summer of 1864, Mary Ann Cobb relayed her observations to her husband: "those who have suffered the most in blood and treasure are the best patriots among us." Cobb could not realize how prophetic her words would become. Throughout the South, women who confronted Union troops confirmed this assessment.


13 See Chapters 1 and 4. Confederate women gloried in the knowledge that their actions and loyalty garnished respect from Union soldiers. For example, Emma LeConte recounted two incidences of this. "The Yankee officers while here paid the tribute to the women of this state of say they were the most firm, obstinate and ultra rebel set of women they had encountered." Emma LeConte, 26 February 1865, Emma LeConte Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She later records a similar story. "Mr Pope says all the Yankees he talked with concurred in unqualified admiration for the pluck and dignity of the Columbia women. Through all the frightful night they did not see a tear or hear one complaint and they did not think they could ever conquer the South if the men were animated by the same spirit as the women of South Carolina." Emma LeConte, 18 March 1865, Emma LeConte Diary. Another woman told a Union chaplain, that even if the Confederate soldiers were "whipped," the women at home were "not subdued in spirit." G. S. Bradley, The Star Corps: or Notes of an Army Chaplain During Sherman's Famous "March to the Sea" (Milwaukee: Jermain & Brightman, 1865), 186.

The targets of the Union’s assault on domesticity rededicated their energy and resources to fighting the enemy, both during and after the Civil War.\textsuperscript{15}

The assault on the Confederate homefront by Union soldiers appalled the white women of the region, who immediately filled letters and journals with descriptions of their experiences. The vivid accounts of Union soldiers allowed the women to air their disdain of the “fiends” and further fuel the anti-Northern hatred of other Confederates--male and female. For example, after enemy troops left her home, North Carolinian Ellen Devereux Hinsdale described the encounter. “The fiends have killed every hog, chicken, taken all the cattle they could & killed the rest,” she lamented. “With few exceptions they have burnt the dwellings in the country, taken all the provisions every where, torn to pieces all the clothing of women & children they could find.” As if the destruction of property was not enough, the enemy also actively worked to humiliate the residents. “Some of our girls . . . they compelled to play all night on the Piano.” The invasion terrified the civilians, so as Union troops burned the local Arsenal, Hinsdale’s “house was filled with the women & children of the neighborhood children screaming & everyone frightened almost to death” of “the devils.” Instead of surrendering, Hinsdale wished that she could take a more active role in the ongoing struggle against the Union. “If I was a

\textsuperscript{15} In a recent dissertation, Jacqueline Glass Campbell comes to a similar conclusion, arguing that Sherman’s March provoked in Southern women a “rededication to Confederate rebellion.” See Campbell, “‘Terrible has Been the Storm’”: Sherman, the South and the Cultural Politics of Invasion,” (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 2000), 129.
man I should go in the army at once." Despite the rampant destruction, loss of property, and degrading insults, Hinsdale was not ready to give up on Southern independence, but instead looked for new ways to support her nation.

Sherman’s earlier visit to Savannah similarly galvanized white Southern women, and unintentionally intensified their hatred for him and the Union. His decision to hold court at his headquarters, in order to demonstrate his good intentions toward acquiescent “rebels,” did not sit well with most of Savannah’s white women. The housing of Sherman’s officers in Confederate homes equally fostered animosity toward the enemy.

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16 Ellen Devereux Hinsdale to Child, 23 March 1865, Hinsdale Family Papers, Duke University. After a lengthy description of the destruction by the Union soldiers and her reactions to it, Hinsdale feels she has not done the events justice. The litany of destruction could continue indefinitely, but Hinsdale had more pressing issues to attend to. “I could fill many sheets with their doings but have not time.”

Many Confederate women voiced a frustration with their status as females. A large number of them wrote of their desire to be men so that they could fight. Others disguised themselves as men and enlisted. For examples of women wishing to be men, see Emma Holmes, 21 November 1864, The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 323; Grace Brown Elmore, 21 February 1865, A Heritage of Woe: The Civil War Diary of Grace Brown Elmore, 1861-1868, ed. Marli F. Weiner (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 102; Sarah Morgan, 23 January 1863, Sarah Morgan: The Civil War Diary of a Southern Woman, ed. Charles East (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 411; Alice Ready, 13 April 1862 and 19 April 1862, Alice Ready Diary, Southern Historical Collection; Catherine Barnes Rowland, 3 January 1865, as quoted in Whites, The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 106.

Fanny Yates Cohen, for example, became enraged when she was forced to provide lodging for one of Sherman’s officers. She categorically refused to welcome the man into her house, entertain, or befriend him. “If we are conquered I see no reason why we should receive our enemies as our friends and I never shall do it, as long as I live.” Like many others in the same situation, she voiced her displeasure about the decision to surrender Savannah without a fight. Cohen’s father feared that Fanny would “compromise him by my too open avowal of hatred,” but that did not change her view of the enemy. She tried to remain civil to the occupiers but could not mask her disgust; surrender did not mean peaceful reunification. Many other Confederate women in occupied areas shared Cohen’s “open avowal of hatred” and proudly voiced their resentment of Northern troops.¹⁸ One woman walking in Savannah “notic[ed] the United States flag stretched above the sidewalk, [and] she stepped down into the sand to avoid passing under it.” When reprimanded by the guard “to walk under the flag, she refused to obey him.” For this insolence, the woman was taken to Sherman who asserted that he would “make [her] walk under it.” The woman remained defiant, “you cannot make me . . . . You may have me carried under it, but then it will be your act--not mine.”¹⁹ The continued patriotism and


overt defiance in Savannah did not escape Sherman's notice. He reluctantly admitted that "the girls remain, bright and haughty and proud as ever. There seems no end but utter annihilation that will satisfy their hate of the 'sneaking Yankee' and 'ruthless invader.'" In addition, "although I have come right through the heart of Georgia they talk as defiantly as ever." Sherman discovered that Confederate loyalties were not as easily broken as he had assumed.

Those in the state targeted by Sherman as the "hotbed of secession," in particular, demonstrated that they could not easily be subdued by destruction. Instead, South Carolina's women used the march's attack on domesticity as a stimulus to intensify their loyalty to the Confederacy. After hearing of an explosion near the river, Emma LeConte of Columbia "[rejoiced] to think of any [Union soldiers] being killed" and mourned that the explosion had not been more deadly: "If only the whole [United States] army could have been roasted alive." In addition, she resented "their horrid old gridiron of a flag . . . flaunting its bars in our faces all day" and hated the results of the Yankee invasion. She could not "picture [Columbia] . . . as it now is" but instead imagined it as it had been before the invasion because it seemed inconceivable to her that "the ruins and ashes" were her beloved home town. This unwelcome change provoked her to a pass judgment on the

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Union. "How I hate the people who have done this!" This spite did not come from her personal experiences and losses alone; LeConte and others focused on the larger troubles facing their nation. Ellen Mordecai, for example, agreed with a friend who asserted "it is the country, not the individual adversity that she mourns."

Contact with Sherman's troops frequently magnified white Southern women's antipathy for the Union and love for the Confederacy. The havoc wreaked upon the Confederate homefront served, for many, as an impetus to increased hatred of the Union and a subsequent rededication to the Southern Cause. Dolly Lunt Burge, for example, directly connected Sherman's March with her increased devotion to her nation. Writing from Madison, Georgia, a town relatively untouched by the full wrath of Union soldiers, Burge recorded "the passing of Sherman's army by my place," which left her "poorer by thirty thousand dollars than I was yesterday morning. And a much stronger rebel." After seeing the "Blue Coats" for the first time, Georgian Margaret Dailey exclaimed, "I do not admire nor love them much." The Union men's presence in her town seemed

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21 Emma LeConte, 19 February 1865, Emma LeConte Diary. LeConte also resented "the U.S. flag run up over the State House." It was "a degradation--to see it over the capital of South Carolina" especially "after four long years of bitter bloodshed and hatred." She considered the flag a "hateful symbol of despotism!" Emma LeConte, 17 February 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.

22 Ellen Mordecai to Emma Mordecai, [1865], Mordecai Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

particularly hateful to Dailey because “our country is over-run by the impudent race, going where they please and doing as they please.”24 Because of the freedom of action displayed by Yankee soldiers, some Confederate women regretted their composure during the invasion. “When I think of those insolent wretches,” one woman wrote, and “how they threatened to burn us out & how they took every thing they could lay hands on[,] I wonder [how] I did not jump upon one & tear him to pieces.”25 The crossing of boundaries by Northern troops incensed many other women as well.26

Like other white women in Sherman’s path, Emma LeConte particularly resented the invasion of her domestic sphere and found that it increased her animosity toward the enemy. LeConte recorded her shift in attitudes, noting that “before they came here, I thought I hated [the Yankees] as much as was possible--now I know there are no limits to

24 Margaret Dailey, 12 January 1865, Confederate Miscellany I, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

25 Sister R to Iverson Louis Harris, Jr., 1 December 1864, Iverson L. Harris Collection, Duke University. For a similar statement made by a Confederate man, see Melvin Dwinell to Albert Dwinell, 30 September 1865, in “Vermonter in Gray: The Story of Melvin Dwinell,” ed. Harold A. Dwinell, Vermont History 30 (July 1962): 229.

26 Jill Lepore states that during warfare, “the fundamental differences [between warring societies] are brought into sharp relief. Waring societies may even exaggerate their differences to make the killing easier; the more foreign the enemy, the better.” By creating these differences, Confederate women may have found it easier to hate the enemy. Lepore, The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 113-114. Women’s outrage at an enemy that did not respect the boundaries of domesticity and “polite” warfare is discussed in greater length in Chapter 2.
the feeling of hatred.” Grace Brown Elmore agreed: “wicked as we knew the Yankee to be, we never could realize the extent of their malice until their occupying of Columbia.”

The incidents surrounding the destruction and burning of Columbia provoked LeConte to conclude that “the more we suffer, the more we should be willing to undergo rather than submit. Somehow I can not feel we can be conquered.” Echoing the sentiments of other Confederate women LeConte continued: “we have lost everything,” but “if everything . . . could be given back a hundred fold I would not be willing to go back to them.” Instead she “would rather endure any poverty than live under Yankee rule. . . . Anything but live as one nation with Yankees—that word in my mind is a synonym with all that is mean despicable and abhorrent.” Grace Brown Elmore’s experience in Columbia resulted in a similar hostility toward the Yankees. “The very devils from hell could not rouse greater feelings of disgust and abhorrence than those cowardly wretches did in us.” LeConte confidently asserted that despite the destruction and horrors of invasion, “the people are undemoralized and more determined than ever.”

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27 Emma LeConte, 21 February 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.
29 Emma LeConte, 23 February 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.
31 Emma LeConte, 26 February 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.
could not imagine other white Southern women responding to the assault on domesticity any differently.

After her prominent South Carolina family lost most of its property to the Union campaign, Harriott Middleton aired views similar in meaning and intensity to LeConte’s. Middleton’s face-to-face confrontations with Union soldiers left her no option but to view them as less than human and wholly undeserving of sympathy or decorum. “Never hesitate again in using bad language about the Yankies. Nothing can be bad enough.” In Middleton’s mind, as well as that of other Confederate women, the attack on the civilian sphere excluded Union troops from civilized society. Middleton fumed that “this defenseless town was given up to the soldiery all that first long night.” The result was so horrifying that “the sights and Sounds beggar description.” Even so, she and others struggled to describe the events to friends and relatives across the Confederacy.32

Georgian Eliza Frances Andrews wondered in April 1865 “what is it . . . that makes [Yankees] so different from us.” Although she “used to have some Christian feeling towards Yankees,” her experience as a refugee, who returned home to find all of her possessions destroyed, changed her opinion. “Now that they have invaded our country and killed so many of our men and desecrated so many homes, I can’t believe that when

32 Harriott Middleton to Susan Middleton, 10 March 1865, Susan and Harriott Middleton Correspondence, Cheves-Middleton Papers, South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston. See Chapters 1 and 2 for discussions of the progression of Union tactics to include an assault of the homefront, domesticity, and the Southern civilian population.
Christ said ‘Love your enemies,’ he meant Yankees.”\textsuperscript{33} She was not alone in this conviction. From South Carolina, Harriott Middleton echoed these sentiments after Sherman’s troops vacated her home. “I know now what it is to hate! \ldots I would like to see the Yankees lying in their blood.”\textsuperscript{34} Similarly, after Union troops left her North Carolina home, Nellie Worth proclaimed, “Oh how I do hate the very name of Yankie!”\textsuperscript{35} Rather than forcing their surrender, Sherman’s March provoked Confederate patriotism from many of the white women it targeted.

Others took their desire for vengeance even further, combining it with a determination to refuse reconciliation with the Union. Grace Brown Elmore, for example, described her reaction to Union soldiers who were passing through Columbia after destroying it the night before: “How my whole soul rose against them as they passed, a band of highway robbers, the slayers of women and children,” she wrote. She acknowledged how the march had affected her psychologically. “My whole nature is changed, I feel so hard so pitiless, gladly would I witness the death of each of those wretches.” She demanded vengeance on all who supported the Union, regardless of age or


\textsuperscript{34} Harriott Middleton to Susan Middleton, 21 March 1865, Susan and Harriott Middleton Correspondence, Cheves-Middleton Papers.

\textsuperscript{35} Nellie Worth to Cousin, 21 March 1865, North Carolina Collection, Southern Historical Collection.
sex. "God hear the curses poured upon their heads, God grant they may suffer in their homes, their wives their children as they have made us suffer."36 Justice, Elmore asserted, required that traditionally protected groups in the North experience the same horrors that she had. She doubted that the North could withstand such an assault.

In many cases, elite Southern women's sacrifices required their undying support for their nation. They could not abandon a cause that they had dedicated so much time, energy, and lives to supporting. Catherine Rowland, whose Augusta, Georgia, plantation had been destroyed by Union soldiers, and whose brother had died on the battlefield, affirmed that Confederate women had "suffered too much to think of giving up now & it is a sacrilege to the dead to speak of such a thing." In addition, "reunion with such a foe can never be, there is a great gulf between us; the blood of our noble dead & my noble brother cries out for vengeance & we ought to fight on as long as we have a man left."37

36 Grace Brown Elmore, 21 February 1865, A Heritage of Woe, 103. Other elite women made similar statements. "When our army invade[s] the north, I want them to carry the torch in one hand and the sword in the other. I want dissolution carried to the heart of their country, the widows and orphans left naked and starving just as ours were left. I know you will think this is a very unbecoming sentiment, but I believe it is our only policy now." Janie Smith to Janie Robeson, 12 April, 1865, Lenoir Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection. Emma LeConte voiced a similar demand for vengeance. "I wonder if the vengeance of heaven will not pursue such fiends! Before they came here, I thought I hated them as much as was possible--now I know there are no limits to the feeling of hatred." LeConte Diary, 21 February, 1865. See also Martha Caroline Marshal to Brother, 6 December 1864, Walraven Family Papers, Atlanta History Center, Georgia.

37 Catherine Barnes Rowland, 3 January 1865, as quoted in Whites, The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 105-106.
Eliza Frances Andrews asserted “I am more of a rebel to-day than ever I was when things looked brightest for the Confederacy.” Similarly, after the Union soldiers ransacked her Georgia house, burned her outhouses, and stole most of her valuables and food, another white woman pronounced “I thought my hatred was deep enough before, but now I am a hotter rebel than ever, and never will be resigned to going back into the Union with such a corrupt people.” Her May 1865, letter decried Union tactics, especially those that targeted her domesticity. “They are so low down, and had no respect whatever for a lady’s private room, tore up the whole house and stole whatever they wanted.” After the enemy repeatedly “[pried] into every sacred thing in the house” she vowed to never forgive. “If I live a thousand years I shall never forget the enemies of our country.” She would never “[regard] them as brothers & friends, I think it a contamination to be compelled to breathe the same air, much less tolerate their society among us.”

The animosity towards Union troops and recognition of their military successes and actions did not preclude women’s unflagging confidence in the Southern soldiers in the months that preceded Jefferson Davis’ official surrender. From Indian Springs, a town east of Milledgeville, Joe Varner recorded her impressions of and reactions to the March to the Sea. In late November 1864, she expressed her surprise that “the Yankees

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39 Loula to Poss, 22 May 1865, Graves Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection.
have made rather more progress through our dear old State than we ever dreamed they would," but maintained "we are hopeful & have no idea of being subjugated." Taking this a step further, Varner vowed that "they may burn, destroy & do every other h---ish deed (such only as they can do) yet thee noble spirit of our brave Southern people can never be fettered." Elizabeth Allston agreed. "I had rather do anything, suffer anything, than submit. But to think of the noble, glorious men we lose by the hands of such wretches! Though everything looks black around I feel that we must succeed." Although the confidence of these women may have been misplaced, they and many others refused to see Sherman’s March and the destruction that it caused as signifiers of Confederate defeat.

In Georgia’s state capital, Milledgeville, invading Union soldiers discovered that their display of power did not crush the Confederate loyalties of its white women. Writing on November 19, 1864, Anna Maria Green Cook acknowledged that when Sherman’s troops first captured the town, “we were despondent our heads bowed and our hearts crushed.” Despite the discouraging turn of events, and although “our degradation was bitter,” she continued, “we knew it could not be long, and we never

40 Joe Varner, 24 November 1864, Birdie Varner Sanders Collection, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

desponded, our trust was still strong.” Cook further proclaimed her Confederate patriotism and taunted the Union ignorance of such loyalty. “How can they hope to subjugate the South. The people are firmer than ever before.” To prove their confidence, perhaps to themselves, she and her family “went through the house singing, ‘We live and die with [Jefferson] Davis.’”42 Even after four long years of loss and sacrifice, Cook and other Confederate women believed in the Southern Cause and people. Grace Brown Elmore of Columbia, South Carolina had a similar reaction to the Union. “They think we are subdued, they think we are done! So long as life lasts, so long we must struggle.” After all, she concluded, “there are many high hearts who will strike till freedom comes.”43 Another woman refused to accept capitulation to the Union troops. “We don’t and won’t believe it,” she wrote. We “pray that our brave men will hold out even til the bitter end, rather than submit to such a race, who feel so impudently, that all our’s is theirs, and we have no rights.”44

For some women, confidence in the Confederacy came from a belief in divine retribution for the inhumane acts performed by Union soldiers on the campaign through Georgia and the Carolinas. After describing the scene of destruction to her brother, a


43 Grace Brown Elmore, 21 February 1865, A Heritage of Woe, 103.

44 Mrs. W. H. Stiles to William Stiles, 2 March 1865, Mackay-Stiles Papers, Southern Historical Collection.
woman on the outskirts of Atlanta affirmed that they were “doing as well we can--better than we expected we could do, after having been foraged to death by the Blue Devils.” The Union troops had taken the family’s food, clothing, and valuables, but she still remained strong in her support for the Confederacy and hatred for the “Yankee Devils.” After having “been tried in a fiery furnace” near Atlanta, this woman maintained hope that providence would lead to a Confederate victory. “I think I can confidently say that a Just God will never permit such a vile, wicked nation, as the Yankees are ever to conquer a nation that is so far superior to them in every thing except lying and stealing.” This ultimate divine retribution had been unquestionably earned because “I do not think the Demons from the bottomless pit could act much worse than the Yankees.” The women along Sherman’s path maintained their faith in divine intervention. Some women in North Carolina, for example, remained strong because “the general feeling here is that the time is not far off when they will be punished for what they have done & are doing, to us.”

Similarly, Annie Fuller of Greenville, South Carolina regretted that her state, “the pride of our hearts, ‘the land (we thought) of the brave’ & chivalrous,” seemed to have “cower[ed] before the threats of the despised Yankees.” Nevertheless, she remained steadfast in her belief that “men women and children [would] rise equal to any emergency,

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45 A. E. D. to Brother, 6 December 1864, Confederate Miscellany I. Emma LeConte echoed these sentiments. Emma LeConte, 21 February 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.

46 Ellen Devereux Hinsdale to Child, 23 March 1865, Hinsdale Family Papers.
determined amid any endurance, and prove to our enemies, that never! never! never! can we be subdued.”

Women’s dedication to and confidence in their nation required that they continue to support the armies and the Confederacy at times when defeat seemed inevitable. Even after Sherman and his destructive troops had passed through their homes and towns, many white women insisted that their male relatives continue in the service of their nation. Although “sad indeed are the great victories of the Yankees the past week,” especially in her home of South Carolina, Sue Montgomery continued to support the troops. “Think not my dear,” she reassured her cousin, that “I would for one moment by word or deed try to attempt you away from your post of honour & duty--No, far from it.” Mrs. Alston Pringle agreed. “Our son (and friends in the Army) are just where they ought to be. I would not for worlds have my child any where else but with our

47 Annie B. Fuller to Catharine O. Barnwell, 20 February 1865, Barnwell Family Papers, South Carolina Historical Society. Nellie Worth had similar confidence. “May the chilling blight of heaven fall on their dark and doomed souls. May all the powers of earth and heaven combine to destroy them, may their land be one vast scene of ruin and desolation as ours is. This is the blessing of the innocent and injured one, I forgive them? May heaven never.” Nellie Worth to Cousin, 21 March 1865, North Carolina Collection. Also see Mary Noble to Lelia Montan, 20 November 1864, Mary Noble Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

48 Sue Thurmatis Montgomery to Moultrie Reid Wilson, 23 February 1865, Moultrie Reid Wilson Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia.
brave Generals, casting in his all for our freedom & rights.” Lily Logan, after “days of pain and anxiety, and oh, nights of terror” remained steadfast. Writing to her brother, Confederate General Thomas M. Logan, she worked to bolster the soldiers’ morale by revealing her willingness to continue the fight. “I am sure we will be victorious soon, and are ready to bear even more for our glorious cause. . . . Keep up your spirits and let us whip Sherman soon.”

Even in April 1865, after Southern General Robert E. Lee surrendered his Army of Northern Virginia to Union General Ulysses S. Grant, many Confederate women in Georgia and the Carolinas refused to give up on the war effort. The personal horrors of wartime seemed to them justifications to continue the bloody fight, not reasons to

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50 Lily Logan to Thomas M. Logan, 2 March 1865, in My Confederate Girlhood: The Memoirs of Kate Virginia Cox Logan, ed. Lily Logan Morrill (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1932), 80-81. One woman demanded that North Carolina Governor Zebulon Vance treat all Confederate deserters harshly. Harriett McMasters to Marmaduke Robins, 16 February 1865, as cited in Campbell, “Terrible Has Been the Storm,” 182, see also 179-185.

51 The persistence of Confederate womanhood was reflected in fiction by William Faulkner in The Unvanquished. Faulkner’s Bayard Sartoris observes that after the Civil War ended “the men had given in and admitted that they belonged to the United States but the women had never surrendered.” William Faulkner, The Unvanquished (1934; reprint, New York: Vintage International, 1991), 188.
surrender. Women's continued defense of the Confederacy grew not only out of their strong identity to their region, but also from their sense of Southern honor and their fear of having made wartime sacrifices in vain. These women did not want to acknowledge that the men of their worlds had died for a failed cause, so they refused to accept that their fight for Southern independence had failed. Emma LeConte typified the reactions of many of her countrywomen who “cannot believe we are conquered.”52 Like other South Carolina women, Charlstonian Emma Holmes “could not, [and] would not believe it.”53

After describing to her brother the horrors visited upon her and her North Carolina neighbors by Sherman's troops, Eliza Tillinghast reasserted her dedication to the Confederacy in May 1865. “And now I tell you as upon oath, ‘the truth the whole truth, and nothing but the truth’-- The South is not whipped it is overwhelmed and by brute force.”54 She blamed “uncivilized” Union tactics for the defeat of Confederate armies and

52 Emma LeConte, 20 April 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.

53 Emma Holmes, 22 April 1865, The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 436. See also William M. Post to Mary Snowden, 17 June 1865, Mary Amarithia Snowden Papers, South Caroliniana Library; Susan Cornwall, 22 August 1865, Susan Cornwall Journal, Southern Historical Collection.

54 When stating “The South is not whipped,” Tillinghast underlined “not” four times to further emphasize her confidence in the Confederacy and Southern people. Eliza Tillinghast to David R. Tillinghast, 3 May 1865, Tillinghast Family Papers, Duke University.

A woman from Sommerville, South Carolina, living in England, offered similar sentiments to her husband serving in the Confederate Army. Charlotte Burckmyer asserted her confidence in ultimate Confederate success. “Of one thing... I feel sure, the
resented the enemy’s warfare. Elizabeth Collier agreed. Confederate troops had been
“overpowered—outnumbered, but thank God we have not been whipped.”55 In addition,
Tillinghast believed that “had the Yankees carried on the war by the rules of warfare, we
would have been successful our men have never been whipped on a fair field.” However,
the unorthodox Union assault on the homefront led to an unfair advantage. “Our armies
were reduced to starvation by the destruction of mills, the burning of farming utensils, . . .
burning commissary depo[t]s all over our country.” Despite this turn of events,
Tillinghast reaffirmed her faith in the Confederate nation and Southern troops. “We are
not humiliated that our army of N[orthern] V[irginia] had to surrender” because this “little
handful” of men “had been suffering the pangs of hunger and [had] killed thousands of the
hated foe ere they laid down their arms completely overwhelmed by an immense army of
well fed well equipped men.” These Southern soldiers deserved high praise, she
continued, for “resisting to the bitter end the aggression of the tyrant.” As a result of
this, Tillinghast asserted “we are as proudly defiant as ever, we can hate them and we will

Yankees are crowing too soon and too loudly--the end is not yet. I believe the curtain has
fallen upon one phase of the war only to arise upon another.” She trusted that the South
would make another stand to defeat the Union and could not “believe as the Yankee press
and government are giving out that my countrymen who have fought so gallantly, endured
so nobly and sacrificed so freely, will be content to lie down and be bound hand and foot
by the dirty, dastardly nation who are over-running our homes.” Charlotte Burckmyer to
Cornelius Burckmyer, 13 April 1865, The Burckmyer Letters, March, 1863 - June, 1865,

55 Elizabeth Collier, 20 April 1865, Elizabeth Collier Diary, Southern Historical
Collection.
hate them forever.” Her unfailing belief in the South’s right to secede and form an independent nation provoked Tillinghast to an intense Confederate patriotism and a refusal to submit to Union rule after the surrender.56

Disbelief at Lee’s surrender and at the end of the Confederacy grew out of the frustrations that resulted from having made so many sacrifices for the Confederate Cause. Too much effort and too many lives had been invested in the success of Southern independence for women to accept anything but victory. Emma LeConte, perhaps more eloquently than other Confederate women, questioned the war’s outcome: “Have we suffered all--have our brave men fought so desperately and died so nobly for this?” Despite Union assumptions to the contrary, this Confederate woman noted that because the four years of war had brought them “little else than the anguish of anxiety--the misery of sorrow over dear ones sacrificed,” the South could not give up. LeConte stressed her frustration as she continued. “Is all this blood spilled in vain--will it not cry from the

56 Eliza Tillinghast to David R. Tillinghast, 3 May 1865, Tillinghast Family Papers. Georgian Mollie Cunningham, like many other Confederate women, shared Tillinghast’s frustration of Union soldiers not waging a “fair” fight. “I know our brave men could whip any fair fight but they are overwhelming us with numbers and waging war upon the defenceless women and children, by marching through our unprotected country destroying and taking every means of subsistence from the defenceless women and Innocent Children.” Mollie Cunningham to George A. Cunningham, 16 January 1865, Cunningham Family Papers, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, Athens. Mrs. W. H. Stiles of Milledgeville voiced similar frustrations. “Had our army half their implements the tale would be very different.” Mrs. W. H. Stiles to William Stiles, 2 March 1865, Mackay-Stiles Papers.
ground on the day we yield to these Yankees! We give up to the Yankees! How can it be? How can they talk about it?57

As word spread through Georgia and the Carolinas of the surrender, Confederate women expressed disdain for such a future. Emma Holmes, for example, scorned the very notion of a peace with the North. “To go back into the Union!!! No words can describe all the horrors contained in those few words. Our souls recoiled shuddering at the bare idea.” Reconciliation, she continued, was impossible because nothing could “ever bridge over that fearful abyss of blood, suffering, affliction, desolation, and unsummed anguish stretching through these past four years. The blood of our slain heroes cried aloud against such an end—as if end it could be.” Holmes also acknowledged the reinvigoration in the Confederate spirit as a result of Yankee tactics and victories. Upon hearing of Lee’s surrender “our Southern blood rose in stronger rebellion than ever and we all determined that, if obliged to submit, never could they subdue us.”58 Similar declarations of confidence occurred throughout the South. In May 1865, Georgian Loula Kendall Rogers proclaimed that the South was “overpowered but not conquered! No not whipped yet,

57 Emma LeConte, 20 April 1865, Emma LeConte Diary. Also see Pellona Alexander to Manning Alexander, 24 April 1865, Manning P. and Pellona David Alexander Letters, University of Georgia.

58 Emma Holmes, 22 April 1865, The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 436-437. In this journal entry, Holmes also predicted the legacy of reunion with the United States. “Peace on such terms, is war for the rising generation.” On postwar tensions between the North and South, see Nina Silber, The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).
for in spite of this miserable ending of all our brilliant hopes, I believe our enemies may yet be scattered and by some divine interpositions delivered from their hands.”

In North Carolina, Catherine Edmondston refused to accept surrender, instead noting that “what... sustains me... is faith in the country. Faith in the Cause, an earnest beleif that eventually we will yet conquer! We cannot be defeated. This is which I beleive sustains.”

Peace with the Union horrified many Confederate women. North Carolinian Eliza Tillinghast assured her brother that “if [he] knew what we have suffered in the cause of our Precious country [he] would not wonder” at her bitterness toward the enemy. As she portrayed it, “we have lost every thing but our honor.” In addition, because of the “many precious lives... which our family has laid upon the altar of our country,” she explained there is a wall of bones, and a River of blood and it will flow forever between the foe and us, and until they cut a canal to the waters of Oblivion and deluge our land with Forgetfulness we can never consider a yankee any thing but an oppressor and an enemy[.] While I have no personal feeling towards any one of them I hate the nation from the bottom of my soul, Even as I hate Satan, and all things low, mean and hateful.

59 Loula Kendall Rogers, 11 May 1865, Loula Kendall Rogers Papers, Emory University.


61 Eliza Tillinghast to David R. Tillinghast, 3 May 1865, Tillinghast Family Papers.
She blamed the Union as a whole for violating her home and instituting an assault on Southern domesticity. Although she could forgive Northern soldiers’ actions on the battlefield, she could not do the same for the policies that allowed their desecration of Southern home.

In part, Confederate women’s inability to come to grips with surrender resulted from their disdain for an enemy that had invaded the domestic sphere and employed other similarly improper methods. “How humiliating it is to think of our being given up to such a people,” Loula Kendall Rogers lamented. “There is no word in the English language strong enough to express our hatred and contempt for an enemy so degraded—if they were gentlemen we could bear it better.” After four years of struggling and hoping for peace, Emma LeConte agreed. She wanted to continue the fight for the Confederacy because peace with the Union “is cruel—it is unjust.” Furthermore, “this is worse than war-- What is such peace to us!” Despite the horrors she had experienced in wartime South Carolina, LeConte affirmed “I never loved my country as I do now--I feel I could sacrifice everything to it--and when I think of the future--oh God! it is too horrible.”

Sherman’s March had not dampened her patriotism.

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62 Loula Kendall Rogers, 11 May 1865, Loula Kendall Rogers Papers.

63 Emma LeConte, 20 April 1865, Emma LeConte Diary. Women in other parts of the Confederacy had similar reactions to the news of surrender. For example, Louisianian Kate Stone wrote that “most seem to think it useless to struggle longer, now that we are subjugated. I say, ‘Never, never, though we perish in the track of their endeavor!’” Later, she continued in this tone: “it would be better for us to resist as long as
Other white Southern women similarly refused to conceive of a future without an independent Confederacy. The idea of reunification with the Union sickened them. For example, Eliza Tillinghast revealed her hopes and willingness to sacrifice further for her battered nation. “We still look forward to the welfare of the Confederacy.” This confidence, in spite of the surrender, kept her spirits high and her patriotism strong. “Were it not for hope in the future I would rather that the last brother I have in the world was in his grave.” Although death seemed drastic, she “would far prefer seeing the last one buried than to be sure that they were to live victims of Yankee tyranny.” Tillinghast resented the idea of paying taxes to the United States “to pay the debt contracted by Yankeedom in paying men to desolate their country, murder their kindred[,] insult their sisters[,] and exult over them all their lives.”

She did not want to reimburse or honor the men who had defiled her homeland and her home. Defeat of the military did not insure surrender of the populace.

The wrongs done to Southern women by the enemy soldiers inspired many to hope for retaliation weeks after Sherman’s March had ended and Confederate generals had surrendered. Loula Kendall Rogers wrote that she could not “help to save my life from

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64 Eliza Tillinghast to David R. Tillinghast, 3 May 1865, Tillinghast Family Papers.
wishing that the North may feel all the horrors of war as we have done.” She hoped for vengeance, that Northerners would similarly have “their homes desolated, their private property stolen and every depredation they have committed here be measured out to them in their own coin.” Despite her desire for revenge, Rogers realized that she could “never wish that our Southern sons should be guilty of such wickedness.” Instead, she [hoped] and [prayed] that our brothers, husbands and sons may never invade the holy sanctuaries of a private family, insult poor helpless women, and so degrade themselves by every revolting crime that could come under the head of sin, as did the barbarous soldiers of the United States.65

Rogers, like other Confederate women in Georgia and the Carolinas, maintained their belief in the inviolability of the domestic sphere. They hoped for retribution on the Yankee enemy, but they could not sanction a retaliatory assault on the Northern domestic sphere.

Willing to do anything in her power to secure Confederate victory after the invasion of the domestic sphere, Emma Le Conte thought that women should be given the opportunity to chase Union men out of the area. Despite losses on the battlefront, the women of the Confederacy, she asserted, had not been defeated and would gladly mount an attack against the Northern enemy. “Why does not the President call out the women if there are not enough men[?]” she asked. “We would go and fight, too--we would better all die together.--Let us suffer still more--give up yet more--anything anything that will help

65 Loula Kendall Rogers, 11 May 1865, Loula Kendall Rogers Papers.
the cause.” Further, LeConte vowed to do “anything that will give us freedom and not force us to live with such people—to be ruled by such horrible and contemptible creatures—to submit to them when we hate them so bitterly.”  

Anna Maria Green Cook wanted Southern men to continue their battle against the Union. “Oh! that [our soldiers] would never yield while a man lives to fight . . . if need be until our children’s children may hail the glad day of deliverance.” Although not willing to enter the battlefield herself, Eliza Tillinghast also vowed to do all in her power to continue the fight against the Union. “I want to live if for no other reason than to cheer these little ones in my care on to liberate their country from the thralldom of Sarrisons and Yankeedom.” Eventually, though, she hoped that the fight would be won. “God is punishing us now, but as there is justice in Heaven the Yankees will get theirs in due time.” In closing, this “unhappy but hopeful Sister” urged her brother to

Come to us as soon as you can . . . with a heart full of love to your country—your country that your mother’s last efforts, last thoughts and last prayers were for—your country that your father loved honored, and hoped for. Your country! that your kindred have laid down so many lives for; that your sisters have worked and prayed for.

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66 Emma LeConte, [20 April 1865], Emma LeConte Diary.

67 Anna Maria Green Cook, 1 May 1865, Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 74. See also Jorantha Semmes to Benedict J. Semmes, 3 November 1864, Benedict J. Semmes Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

68 Eliza Tillinghast to David R. Tillinghast, 3 May 1865, Tillinghast Family Papers. Anna Maria Green Cook wrote that “our hearts no longer beat lightly in joy and pride for our armies have surrendered and our state is under yankee dominion. . . . We
Confederate military defeats and Lee’s surrender had not discouraged Tillinghast, and she assumed the soldiers had the same convictions in the nation’s ultimate success. If not, she eagerly offered her brother reasons to continue believing in the Southern cause.

Despite the war’s apparent outcome, Elizabeth Collier refused to relinquish her Confederate identity and quietly reunite with the North. “Can we ever live in peace with the desecrators of our homes & the murderers of our Fathers, Brothers & Sons—Never—We are bound to rise again.”69 After experiencing the horror of war first-hand, Collier’s intense Confederate womanhood would not allow her to respect Northern leaders or acknowledge a complete end to Southern independence. North Carolinian Eliza Tillinghast further berated the Union for its post-surrender portrayal of the South, an activity which further incensed her and aroused her patriotism for the South. “They are daily telling scores of falsehoods on us . . . [which] are enough to make Satan grin with

would give up Luxury, if even in homespun garments and with coarse fare we might be free—Our people might be free.” Anna Maria Green Cook, 1 May 1865, The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl, 74. On the disappointment of surrender and the uncertainty that would follow, see also Carrie Fries Shaffner, 17 April [1865], Carrie Shaffner Journal, Fries and Shaffner Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection; Minerva McClatchey, April [1865], Diary of Minerva Leah Rowles McClatchey, McClatchey Family Papers, Georgia Department of Archives and History; Sabina Elliott Wells to Mrs. Thomas L. Wells, 10 April [1865], Mason Smith Family Letters, 194.

69 Elizabeth Collier Diary, 25 April 1865, Elizabeth Collier Papers. Emma LeConte agreed. “What do they expect? They invade our country, murder our people, desolate our homes, conquer us, subject us to every indignity and humiliation.” Emma LeConte, 28 May 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.
delight.” While decrying the descriptions of Confederate President Jefferson Davis and United States President Abraham Lincoln, she was especially outraged at the Union glorification of Sherman. She could hardly believe that the Union was lionizing “Sherman the foul fiend who cursed the women and children of your native place.” She could not understand how Northerners could respect a man who said that “when he ‘came again he would come with the fire brand and leave complete desolation and the third time he would leave the country as if the Indians had passed over it, and the land would have to be repeopled.”

Although a tragic story in the North, news of Lincoln’s assassination in the Southern states was considered “very cheering” by many Confederate women. They

70 Eliza Tillinghast to David R. Tillinghast, 3 May 1865, Tillinghast Family Papers. Southerners did not concoct the stories of Sherman’s threats of further devastation. Union soldiers overhead Sherman declare to a Methodist preacher on the March to the Sea that “There is a class of persons at the South who must be exterminated before there can be peace in the land.” George Ward Nichols, The Story of the Great March from the Diary of a Staff Officer (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1865), 119; Union Lieutenant George Wise reported that in Cheraw Sherman asserted “When the rebels took Sumpter, an army ought to have been sent against Charleston and every building burned & leveled to the ground, more than this I would have killed every man[,] woman & child found it.” In addition, Sherman asserted that “This people [of South Carolina] are possessed with devils & when we fight the devil we must fight him with fire.” George M. Wise, “Marching Through South Carolina: Another Civil War Letter of Lieutenant George M. Wise,” ed. Wilfred W. Black, Ohio Historical Quarterly 46 (April 1957), 194.

71 Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel to Meta Heyward, 22 April 1865, Two Diaries from Middle St. John’s, Berkeley, South Carolina, February-May, 1865. Journals Kept By Miss Susan R. Jervey and Miss Charlotte St. Julien Ravenel, at Northampton and Pooshee Plantations, and Reminiscences of Mrs. Waring Henegan. With Two
jubilantly understood Lincoln’s assassination as a sign of better things to come and the materialization of the divine justice for which they had hoped. Confederate women rejoiced that their “hated enemy has met the just reward of his life. . . . Could there have been a fitter death for such a man?”72 In addition, Loula Kendall Rogers saw “the tyrant Lincoln’s death” as “retribution . . . from the hand of an all powerful God.” She praised Lincoln’s assassin, John Wilkes Booth, at having performed “the boldest [deed] I ever heard of in fact or fiction.”73 Emma LeConte recorded her reaction to the news as “simply gratified revenge--the man we hated has met his proper fate.” She also “thought with exultation of the howl it had by that time sent through the North and how it would cast a damper on their rejoicings over the fall of our noble Lee.”74 Lincoln’s death became

Contemporary Reports from Federal Officials (Pinopolis, S.C.: St. John’s Hunting Club, 1921), 45. Ravenel wrote “today’s news is very cheering; it is that Lincoln and Seward have both been assassinated.” Another South Carolinian, Emma LeConte, also rejoiced: “Hurrah! Old Abe Lincoln has been assassinated! It may be abstractly wrong to be so jubilant but I just can’t help it– After all the heaviness and gloom of yesterday this blow to our enemies comes like a gleam of light.” Emma LeConte, 22 April 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.

72 Emma LeConte, 22 April 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.

73 Loula Kendall Rogers, 30 April 1865, Loula Kendall Rogers Papers. Kate Cumming noted that signs put up for the capture of Booth’s accomplices “were immediately torn down by some of the citizens.” Kate Cumming, 7 May 1865, Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse, ed. Richard Barksdale Harwell (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 283.

74 Emma LeConte, 22 April 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.
not only a rallying point for Confederate patriotsm, but also a blow against the hated Yankees.

White Southern women often felt that their loss to the Union was exacerbated by the “unworthy” leaders in Washington D.C. who would once again rule over them. Just as they had carefully observed and commented on the political events surrounding the secession crisis, elite women in Georgia and the Carolinas voiced their displeasure over the rise of a disloyal Southerner to the White House. Their lack of respect for Lincoln was only exceeded by their opinion of the scalawag who succeeded him in office—Andrew Johnson. As one South Carolina woman disdainfully put it, “the rail-splitter will be succeeded by the drunken ass--such are the successors of Washington and Jefferson--Such are to rule the South!” Emma Holmes thought “Andy Johnson . . . far worse than Lincoln, fiercer and more blood thirsty as renegades always are.” Georgian Loula Kendall Rogers also voiced her disdain for the United States government. “Lincoln is removed, but another unprincipled wretch occupies his seat. How can they respect him as they should a President? Just think of such men presiding where once pure and upright Washington sat!” The transition of power, as she saw it, was an insult to the Revolutionary traditions of the nation. “Who could have dreamed a few years ago that this Republic envied by all the world would ever come to this!” The United States, in her

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75 Emma LeConte, 22 April 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.

76 Emma Holmes, [end of May 1865], Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 443-444.
mind, bore no resemblance to the country her ancestors had fought for. “Anarchy and bloodshed every where, no justice, no law, freedom of the press abolished, and soon we shall be afraid to breathe our sentiments lest what we have may be taken from us.”77 For many others, as well, Johnson’s inauguration as president added insult to injury. A North Carolina woman raged against her circumstances. “It is so humiliating to be under Yankee dominion after all our hard fighting, and under such an unprincipled man as Andy Johnson.”78 Her lack of respect for the new United States president as well as her dissatisfaction with submitting to the rule of a country that had wreaked havoc on her home, family, and country led her to a desire to leave her homeland. “I am nearly crazy to go to Europe, but am not able to get there.”79

Despite unquestionable Union power and victory, many Confederate women in 1865 remained “so bitter at our fate.”80 Catherine Edmondston noted that “No one is well, no one is happy! Anger, indignant anger, fills every heart.” She further recognized

77 Loula Kendall Rogers, 11 May 1865, Loula Kendall Rogers Papers. Other took solace from the revolutionary struggles and believed that the fight could still be won. Writing from “Where Home Use to Be” Janie Smith recognized that “our political sky does seem darkened by a fearful cloud; but when compared with the situation of our forefathers, I can but take courage.” Janie Smith to Janie Robeson, 12 April 1865, Lenoir Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection.

78 Loula to Poss, 22 May 1865, Graves Family Papers.

79 Loula to Poss, 22 May 1865, Graves Family Papers.

the effect of taking the Iron-Clad Oath of Loyalty. This mandatory oath forced upon Southern men "a sense of personal humiliation." As a result, Edmondston asserted, the man who takes it "resents it by infusing a double portion of hate in the sentiment with which he regards those who have degraded him."81 Confederate women understood and shared in these feelings of bitterness. After four years of sacrifice for their nation, they refused to reconcile with the North or accept the reality of defeat. Like Emma Mordecai, some asserted that "no words can ever paint the bitterness, the hatred I feel to our despicable conquerors--ungenerous, low-minded, pitiful wretches."82 Others assumed that the surrender only marked the end of one phase in the war. The South, they confidently asserted, would ultimately emerge victorious. In many instances, women held firmly because "the conviction that the South can not be conquered--that it can never be re-united with the North is so deeply rooted in my heart--[and] since the war began that conviction has never been shaken once."83 Another adamantly asserted that Yankee tactics had guaranteed that the South would ultimately overcome its conquerors. She "cannot

81 Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 26 June 1865, "Journal of a Secesh Lady", 714.
82 Ellen Mordecai to Emma Mordecai, [1865], Mordecai Family Papers.
83 Emma LeConte, 23 April 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.
think the good lord will allow such wickedness to go unpunished, and look forward to the
time when our enemies will be scattered to the four winds”\textsuperscript{84}

Hatred for the Union’s ways of life and war further advanced Confederate
women’s loyalty for the Southern nation. “The way I feel about Yankees,” Eliza Frances
Andrews asserted a month after the surrender, “I would rather be wrong with Lee and his
glorious army than right with a group of fanatics that have come down here to plunder
and oppress us in the name of liberty.”\textsuperscript{85} Loula Kendall Rogers resented that she had to
live side by side with “those who have always been our enemies.”\textsuperscript{86} Another woman,
Sue, also refused to accept the official end to the hostilities. She “thought our cause not
so desperate but that we could still hold out & I still cried for ‘no surrender.’” When her
“Father said I talked like a woman, & did not reason,” she asserted that “I was, & am still
determined, that under Yankee rule, I never will live.” She did in fact, talk “like a
woman,” a Confederate woman who valued her nation above all else. Much to her delight,
Sue was not the only one in her household to adhere to her Confederate womanhood.

“Mother surprised me. I have always thought her so luke warm but she too now says
‘never give up until our independance is achieved.’” In contrast, her father’s defeatist

\textsuperscript{84} Loula to Poss, 22 May 1865, Graves Family Papers.

\textsuperscript{85} Eliza Frances Andrews, 7 May 1865, \textit{The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl},
228.

\textsuperscript{86} Loula Kendall Rogers, 13 May 1865, Loula Kendall Rogers Papers.
attitude upset her. "Father really distressed me & I had to beg him for my sake not to talk before others so discouragingly."

Months and years after the surrender, Confederate women continued to hope for a revival of their nation and its bid for independence. Reflecting women's role in creating and carrying on the Lost Cause ideology, one North Carolina woman affirmed in September 1865 that "Southern spirit can never be entirely conquered--at least Southern women cannot." Another detailed her loyalty and her efforts to ensure a continued love of the Confederacy. "I expect to be a rebel as long as I live & make my children & their children swear eternal enmity to the United States & its dishonoured Flag. I never can be a loyal citizen whatever means they may adopt to make me one." In 1868, Grace

87 Sue to Jane Ann Smythe, 29 April 1865, Adger, Smythe, Flynn Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library. Another woman similarly expressed that "I will lose all we have here; but if I can give up the lives of my Sons in the cause, surely I can stand the rest." Mrs. William Mason Smith to Daughters, [November - December 1864], Mason Smith Family Letters, 150. See also Catherine Ann Devereux Edmondston, 26 June 1865, "Journal of a Secesh Lady", 714.

88 Gaines M. Foster noted that "women who right after the war had displayed greater hatred than men for the Yankees who had exposed their vulnerability and denied them respect apparently not only continued to harbor their resentments but passed them on to their daughters. Especially for them, but for all Daughters, the preservation and promulgation of the southern view of the war became and remained their goal and passion." Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, The Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 172.

89 Julia to Friend, 26 September 1865, Graves Family Papers.

90 Loula to Fannie, 6 June 1865, Graves Family Papers.
Brown Elmore still harbored resentment for the Yankees who had invaded her home. She continued to believe that “death [and] anihilation would be preferable to coalition with the North, and so every woman almost feels.” Consequently, she felt that women should “endeavor to keep pure the fire of patriotism even under the temptations and humiliations inherent to a conquered people.” Furthermore Elmore could not understand why anyone would want to “tak[e] a seat in the Senate cham[b]ers with such compeers as Beast Butler, Sherman, and a host of scoundrels; that a Southern woman would not touch with the tip of her toe.”91

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Women’s persistent belief in the Confederacy and continued hatred of the enemy resulted from their experiences as civilian targets during Sherman’s March. The campaign aimed at Southern domesticity served to increase women’s belief in the irreconcilable cultures of North and South. As a result of their confrontations with invading troops, Confederate women confidently asserted that the Yankee soldiers “know that every true born Southron hates them with a hatred that knows no change, and can never forget what they have done, even to the tenth generation.”92 Certainly, they assumed, any population would react similarly to an attack on domesticity. As a result of surviving four years of shortage and wartime horrors as well as living through Sherman’s destruction of the


92 Loula Kendall Rogers, 11 May 1865, Loula Kendall Rogers Papers.
homefront, Confederate women believed that they had been transformed into a new type of Confederate. Emma LeConte summed it up by noting "we have suffered till we feel savage." 93

Although Sherman’s March ultimately helped secure Confederate defeat, it did not crush female civilian’s support for the Southern nation. Sherman expected his invasion of homes, pillage of feminine property, and humiliation of white women to weaken morale on the Confederate homefront, but slaveholding women in Georgia and the Carolinas refused to surrender their homes or hearts to the Union. The Union assault on domesticity brought the war too close to home for women, and they refused to forgive the transgression. As a result, white Southern women did not abandon their nation or urge an end to the fighting, but instead they used the Union assault on domesticity as further motivation to continue the Civil War at any cost. In the end, Sherman’s March provoked Confederate women to become “much stronger rebel[s]”

93 Emma LeConte, 22 April 1865, Emma LeConte Diary.
Sherman’s March did not, as a whole, dishearten Confederate women. It may have, however, contributed to the demoralization of Southern soldiers. The ease with which “[William Tecumseh] Sherman had marched through Georgia from one end to the other,” and later through the Carolinas, demonstrated that Southern armies could not fulfill their obligation to Rebel women. Newspaper editor, Joseph Addison Turner, publicly noted this reality early in 1865. “This should mantle with the blush of shame the cheek of every Georgian, and every Confederate. We, for one, feel deeply mortified--humbled, chagrined --even degraded. It is a bitter draught we have had to quaff.” ¹ Turner revealed a key component to Sherman’s March. The Union’s direct attack on Confederate women and domesticity threatened the very essence of Southern masculinity by revealing the helplessness of the soldiers on the battlefield to protect the women of the

¹ Joseph Addison Turner, 10 January 1865, in Lawrence Huff, “A Bitter Draught We Had to Quaff: Sherman’s March Through the Eyes of Joseph Addison Turner,” Georgia Historical Quarterly 72 (Summer 1988): 326.
region. Consequently, Sherman’s troops shamed Southern soldiers as they violated their homes, women, and way of life.

Ostensibly on the battlefield in the name of an independent Confederacy and all that it represented, Southern soldiers also fought to uphold their honor by protecting their women and families. As a result, Sherman’s March through Georgia and the Carolinas struck at the heart of elite Southern masculinity.² Confederate soldiers, who as W. J. Cash claimed “went rolling into battle in the misty conviction that it was wholly for [the Southern woman] that they fought,” continued to risk their lives in the name of their women.³ In 1865, after nearly four years of fighting and Sherman’s devastating Georgia

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campaign, one soldier still asserted “For [Southern ladies] I battle till the end,/ To save [them] from shame and thrall.” While Confederate men engaged the enemy on the battlefield, however, they found their honor threatened on a second front. The conduct of Union troops, as they purposefully entered women’s bedrooms, tore apart women’s wardrobes, and otherwise threatened women’s virtue, exposed Southern men’s inability to protect their women. As a result, Confederate soldiers, much like their female counterparts on the homefront, viewed Sherman’s campaign as an unforgivable violation.

When they departed for the battlefield, Southern soldiers recognized that they left their mothers, wives, and sisters to protect themselves. However, at the time, they could not conceive of Union troops directly confronting white Southern women. When this tactic became a reality, Southern soldiers scrambled for news about events on the homefront. Soldiers from Georgia and the Carolinas nervously hoped for any rumors that

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4 Floyd King to Lin Caperton, 21 January 1865, Thomas Butler King Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.
might reveal the condition of their families and homes. "In agony of suspense," they anxiously fretted over the fates of their women. 

Georgian J. M. Sharp showed particular concern for the lack of information coming from the homefront. During the Atlanta campaign, he revealed his exasperation. "What would I give for a letter direct from you to [k]now exactly how you are Situated." 

Five months later, after Sherman's troops had pillaged their way across his home state, he had still heard nothing. "I have wrote you so many letters & have got none from you." He feared the worst, and decided "I will do all I can to get to go home my self & if they fool with me much I will go any how." Similarly, because John Alfred Feister Coleman had "no news from home," he was "in great suspense." Coleman "never wanted to hear so bad before since the war began." He "fear[ed] that my all is destroyed, my wife and children without food or shelter." The lack of reliable information made matters worse. 

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5 Samuel Hoey Walkup, 6 March 1865, Samuel Hoey Walkup Diary, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

6 J. M. Sharp to Eliza Sharp, 16 August 1864, Confederate Miscellany I, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

7 J. M. Sharp to Eliza Sharp, 24 January 1865, Confederate Miscellany I. Also see J. M. Sharp to Eliza Sharp, 9 August 1864 and 11 September 1864, Confederate Miscellany I.

8 John Alfred Feister Coleman, 4 March 1865, Confederate Miscellany I.
fates of family members and loved ones who remained in the path of "the vile invader... with his vandel hordes." 

News from the homefront did not always allay the concerns of Southern soldiers but sometimes made things even more unbearable. The reports given in general accounts of the damage inflicted by Union soldiers did little to soothe John Craig Evans. Instead

9 Tom to Sister, 17 September 1864, Bomar Family Papers, Emory University. Frank Coker worried because "our news from Georgia is megre and entirely unsatisfactory. ... Don't know whether Sherman is marching on Savannah or Columbus and then to Mobile. ... I have been very uneasy about you have hoped and still hope that if Sherman has determined to cut his way to the coast he has taken the nearest rout[e] to Savannah as that would take him away from our part of the state. ... Even now you may be a refugee with our houses and furniture in ashes. What a thought--my Wife and children wanderers and homeless." Frank Coker to Wife, 26 November 1864, "Dear Mother: Don't grieve about me. If I get killed, I'll only be dead": Letters from Georgia Soldiers in the Civil War, ed. Mills Lane (Savannah, Ga.: Beehive Press, 1990), 336-337. For other examples, see Harry Hammond to Emily C. Hammond, 5 August 1864, 8 October 1864, and 27 November 1864, Hammond, Bryan, and Cumming Families Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia; Felix Prior to Nancy Prior, 10 August 1864, Felix W. Prior Civil War Letters, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta; Tom Hightower to Lou, 28 November 1864, "Dear Mother", 337-338; Marion Hill Fitzpatrick to Amanda White Fitzpatrick, 8 December 1864, Letters to Amanda: The Civil War Letters of Marion Hill Fitzpatrick, Army of Northern Virginia, ed. Jeffrey C. Lowe and Sam Hodges (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1998), 187; William M. Murray to Mrs. John Jenkins, 31 December 1864, John Jenkins Papers, South Caroliniana Library; B. F. Mason to Mrs. Turner Mason, 4 January 1865, B. F. Mason Civil War Letter, Georgia Department of Archives and History; Edward McCrady Jr. to Edward McCrady, 5 January 1865, McCrady Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library; W. T. Thompson to Joe, 13 February 1865, Civil War Letters, Atlanta History Center Archives, Atlanta, Georgia; John Alfred Feister Coleman, 28 February 1865, Confederate Miscellany I; W. A. Clarkson to Mrs. Campbell R. Bryce, 18 March 1865, Bryce Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library; John A. Taylor to Kate Taylor, 22 March 1865, Edward Smith Tennent Papers, South Caroliniana Library; [Duncan Alexander Buie] to Kate McGeachy, 9 April 1865, Catherine Jane (McGeachy) Buie Papers, Duke University.
his mind was filled with all the possible horrors that “my dear ones at home” might have experienced. Although few Confederate women expressed fear that Union soldiers would kill them, this confidence apparently did not extend to Southern men. “I pray,” Evans wrote, “that your lives and persons are spared.”¹⁰ William Chunn hoped that his mother had emerged from the trial unscathed. “Since the evacuation of Atlanta I have been very low spirited and my anxiety in relation to you has been intense. . . . The fall of Atlanta . . . has cast a deep gloom upon the people and the army.”¹¹ Georgian H. T. Howard revealed similar concerns for his wife. “I have seen some few letters from home which gave a distressing account of the yankey deprivations in our county but I hope for the best.” He apologized for failing in his manly duty to protect her and assumed that she had been “frightened nearly to death.” He could not forgive himself for not being there to save her. Although he and the other members of the local company had tried to return to help their families, he explained, their “application for furlough to come home . . . was disapproved and we were compelled to remain and leave you in the hands

¹⁰ John Craig Evans to Annie Evans, [6 March 1865], “War Letters of John Craig Evans,” ed. Mrs. H. Malloy Evans and E. McLver Evans, United Daughters of the Confederacy Colquitt Chapter Papers, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. Also see John Craig Evans to Annie Evans, 18 January 1865, 20 January 1865, 5 March 1865, and 7 March 1865, “War Letters of John Craig Evans,” United Daughters of the Confederacy Colquitt Chapter Papers.

¹¹ William Chunn to Mother, 11 September 1864, William Augustus Chunn Letters, Emory University.
of your enemys.”

Howard, like other Confederate soldiers, shuddered at the thought of his wife confronting Union men on her own.

The lack of verified reports or details from home most likely increased the anxiety of the Georgia and Carolina soldiers on the battlefield. The little information they did get often came in the form of sensationalized and exaggerated stories. As Sherman made his way through the lower South, Confederate soldiers heard rumors and occasional reports of rape, starvation, and murder, leaving them little choice but to fear the worst for their families. One soldier wondered on March 16, 1865, “what are my poor dear ones suffering now? I hear that Cheraw has been entirely destroyed.” Loss of property did not concern him. Instead, he hoped his family had survived Union raids with their lives. “If I could only know that you are all alive and suffered no bodily harm, I would be so glad but here I am without one word from you since the 24 Feb.”

Georgian Felix Prior had similar concerns. “I am very uneasy about home as I fear the raiders may have paid a

12 H. T. Howard to Wife, 11 August 1864, Civil War Miscellaneous Correspondence, Georgia Microfilm Record Group 3-2728, Georgia Department of Archives and History. Also see John Bratton to Bettie Bratton, 17 February 1865, Confederate War Letters of Dr. John Bratton, Microfilm, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia; Henry Lea Graves to Sarah Dutton Graves, 5 September 1864, Graves Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection; John H. Boyce to Mother, 4 August 1864, Civil War Miscellaneous Correspondence, Georgia Microfilm Record Group 3-2717; R. L. Burn to Mother, 16 February 1865, Burn Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library.

visit at home[]. I understand they passed through our county in large force."14 Feeling the shame of not protecting their families from raids, Confederate soldiers could only hope that their loved ones had escaped with their lives and their virtue.

The fear of rape filled the minds of many Southern soldiers, and they likely agonized over the possibility that they had abandoned their women to face something worse than death. An Augusta, Georgia, newspaper hoped the Confederacy could benefit from the uncertainty and concern over such possibilities. After reporting the rape of a Milledgeville woman at the hands of Sherman’s soldiers, the Register hoped the incident would spur the troops on to victory. “To our armies we would say—Write on your battle flags, ‘Avenge the Honor Of Our Women!’” Furthermore, the paper’s editors hoped the soldiers would “then thunder it over the land until the rocks shall echo back the sound and the hills reverberate the echo and every heart be filled with vengeance.”15 South Carolina Governor Andrew Gordon Magrath hoped for similar responses to the Union invasion. “The foe now upon the soil of the State is here for rapine and lust: let him meet resistance unto death. That foe devotes us to a doom worse than death: let him receive

14 Felix W. Prior to Nancy Prior, 23 November 1864, Felix W. Prior Civil War Letters.

15 Augusta Register, 6 December 1864.
the fate he designs for us.”\textsuperscript{16} By playing on the honor of Southern soldiers, Magrath assumed he could galvanize the troops.

The tone of the Register's and Magrath’s calls for action may have reflected the feelings of many Georgia and Carolina soldiers. As Southern men, they viewed the assault on the homefront as an affront to their honor. As historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown has noted, in this type of situation, “the intensity of feeling arose from the social fact that a male’s moral bearing resided not in him alone, but also in his women’s standing. To attack his wife, mother, or sister was to assault the man himself.”\textsuperscript{17} Consequently, the attack on women shamed white Southern men on two accounts: not only had Southern women faced insults at the hands of the enemy, but Confederate soldiers realized that they had done little to prevent such an attack. As one soldier explained, “the successful and ... unopposed march of Sherman through Georgia ... [has] changed the whole aspect of affairs.”\textsuperscript{18} Iverson Dutton Graves acknowledged the damage inflicted by Sherman’s March, but felt that “this is the time to put on a cheerful countenance and

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\item[16] Andrew Gordon Magrath, [1865], “The Governor of the State, To the People of South Carolina,” Governor Andrew Magrath Papers, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, emphasis added.


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boldly and contemptuously spurn every advancement to a dishonorable peace." He saw no reunion with an enemy that would disregard women’s protected status. This would only add to the shame of allowing the march. Perhaps the assault on Southern domesticity made repeated Confederate failures on the battlefield pale in comparison to their neglect on the homefront.

The sense of humiliation that resulted from their failure to protect Confederate women from Union rapacity provoked in some Southern soldiers a desire for vengeance. H. L. Bebow, for example, proclaimed “I am an advocate for the last child and the last man.” Although “deeply humiliated and chagrined to think that my own dear Carolina, has been surrendered to an implacable and relentless foe without any seeming effort to defend her,” Bebow could not surrender.

Should I survive this cruel war . . . I can return to Columbia and gaze with pride upon the blackened ruins of my once happy home with the proud consciousness, that I was victimized on account of my devotion to the cause of freedom and independence. Bebow believed that the only honorable choice was to continue to fight for the virtue of Southern womanhood and for Columbia, South Carolina.

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19 Iverson Dutton “Dutt” Graves, to Sarah Dutton Graves, 27 January 1865, Graves Family Papers.

20 H. L. Bebow to Clara Dargan, 3 March 1865, Clara Victoria (Dargan) Maclean Papers, Duke University.
The Union attack on “unprotected” white Southern women demanded a response from the region’s men. “Fierce retaliation,” Bertram Wyatt-Brown writes “was mandatory when a daughter, wife, or mother had been dishonored.”21 However, by March and April 1865, most Southern soldiers glumly realized that physical retribution was out of their power. As battlefield losses mounted, Confederate C. F. Holst acknowledged that “our prospect & affairs are getting darker & darker.” He wryly laughed off the Confederacy’s inability to carry out an appropriate response. Still, he dreamed up a plan. “As we cannot conquer the Yankees or drive them from our soil; our authorities intends to concentrate all our Armies & march them on northern soil to avenge the injury done to us.” They would abandon the South, already “ransasked & ruined . . . to the Yankees,” and go north to “ravage & burn their Towns & Cities in turn.” This fantasy proved little comfort to Holst, who was “filled with anguish & dismay that the Yankees have full sway[.] Of course fire & faggit will be the order of the day, we will be houseles[s], ragged & starve.”22 His dismay increased as he acknowledged the destruction that Confederate troops had allowed.

Other Confederate soldiers could hardly face the shame of defeat. Georgian Raleigh Spinks Camp realized that “a visit to the old settlement would have been one of

21 Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, 53. Also see Wyatt-Brown, The Shaping of Southern Culture, 255-269

pain instead of pleasure.” He knew that he would find his town “in heaps of ruin and piles of devastation, all which mark the path of despoilers and the hearts of the cruel invader.” Camp felt particular outrage at the attack on private homes and citizens which “stamp[ed] our Enemy as the most cruel and heartless set of men.”

As the march reached its conclusion and the Southern armies began to surrender, Georgia and Carolina soldiers had to face the reality that they could not revenge the insults of their women. They would have to live with the shame and unfulfilled desire for vengeance.

Military defeats and the awareness of their inability to protect their region and families struck at the heart of Southern soldiers’ honor. They had failed both as soldiers and as Southern men; they had not fulfilled their obligations to either their nation or their families. Henry Lea Graves reflected on the horrors of evacuating Savannah and leaving it unprotected. “I have no words to picture the gloomy bitterness that filled my breast.” His shame had many facets, including the “feelings, of a soldier turning his back on an enemy, of a Georgian abandoning his native state, of a patriot witnessing a disaster to his country’s cause.” Graves felt most troubled by “thinking of the certain and terrible suffering entailed on thousands in that devoted city... about to be abandoned in their utter helplessness to the power of an Enemy.”

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23 Raleigh Spinks Camp to Sister, 10 October 1864, Camp Family Papers, Emory University.

24 Henry Lea Graves to Sarah Dutton Graves, 28 December 1864, Graves Family Papers.
common in the final months of the Confederacy. Recognizing this, G. Dunbar bemoaned "I feel very little inclined to call myself a Georgian any more."25

By bringing the warfront to the homefront, Sherman and his soldiers demonstrated to their enemies that "war is cruelty."26 During their assault on Southern civilians, Union soldiers disregarded many of the prescriptions that protected women and the domestic sphere from the onslaughts of war. Not only did they burn and pillage the Southern countryside to devastate the Confederacy’s material resources, but they also struck a direct blow at Southern domesticity. Instead of focusing on war related materials in their attack, Union soldiers ransacked bedrooms, tore up women’s clothing, burned homes, and taunted white Southern women. As a result, the Georgia and Carolinas campaign struck not only at the physical manifestations of wartime and domestic life, but also at the psyches of Southern soldiers and Confederate women as it demonstrated that nothing was safe from Union attack. The seemingly easy success of Sherman’s march through Georgia

25 G. Dunbar to Cousin, 14 January 1865, Baber-Blackshear Papers, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia, Athens.

26 William T. Sherman to James M. Calhoun, Mayor, E. E. Rawson and S. C. Wells, 12 September 1865, The Hero’s Own Story: General Sherman’s Official Account of His Great March Through Georgia and the Carolinas, From his Departure from Chattanooga to the Surrender of General Johnston, and the Confederate Forces Under his Command, To Which are Added General Sherman’s Evidence before the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War; the Animadversions of Secretary Stanton and General Halleck; with a Defence of his Proceedings, &c. (New York: Bunce & Huntington, Publishers, 1865), 60.
and the Carolinas, and the wholesale destruction of so many households, both enraged and shamed Southern soldiers. By attacking Southern women, Sherman had directly insulted Southern manhood. His inversion of traditional tactics, did, in the end, make the Confederacy "howl."
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December 2001

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