

1998

On the front lines of freedom: Black and white women shape emancipation in Virginia, 1861-1890

Antoinette G. Van Zelm
College of William & Mary - Arts & Sciences

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd>



Part of the [African History Commons](#), [United States History Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Van Zelm, Antoinette G., "On the front lines of freedom: Black and white women shape emancipation in Virginia, 1861-1890" (1998). *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects*. Paper 1539623923.
<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/s2-dstb-qr75>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

ON THE FRONT LINES OF FREEDOM:
BLACK AND WHITE WOMEN SHAPE
EMANCIPATION IN VIRGINIA, 1861-1890

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by

Antoinette G. van Zelm

1998

UMI Number: 9904267

**Copyright 1998 by
van Zelm, Antoinette G.**

All rights reserved.

**UMI Microform 9904267
Copyright 1998, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.**

**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

UMI
300 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Copyright 1998

by

Antoinette G. van Zelm

All rights reserved

APPROVAL SHEET

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

Doctor of Philosophy

Antoinette G. van Zelm
Antoinette G. van Zelm

Approved, February 1998

H. C. Walker
H. Cam Walker

Cindy Hahamovitch
Cindy Hahamovitch

Melvin P. Ely
Melvin P. Ely

Leisa Meyer
Leisa Meyer

Leslie S. Rowland
Leslie S. Rowland
University of Maryland, College Park

For My Family

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	x
INTRODUCTION	
“The glorious dawn of freedom”: Virginia Women and Emancipation	2
CHAPTER ONE	
“A new order of things”: Wartime Slavery and Slave Management	19
CHAPTER TWO	
“You can go when you want to. You are just as free as she is!”: Wartime Escape and Liberation	61
CHAPTER THREE	
“Liberty and Equal Rights Before the Law”: Freedwomen’s Struggle to Establish Freedom and Claim Justice	120
CHAPTER FOUR	
Cooking, Washing, Ironing, and Feeding the Fowls: Freedwomen and Former Mistresses Renegotiate Domestic Labor	175
CHAPTER FIVE	
Maternalism Versus Mutual Assistance: Intertwined Pasts and the Development of Black Community Life	227
CHAPTER SIX	
“The ladies took a deep interest in the affair”: Emancipation Day Celebrations and Lost Cause Commemorations	276
CONCLUSION	
A “peculiar hopefulness”	319
BIBLIOGRAPHY	325

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to my five dissertation readers for their generous commitment of time and energy. As director, Cam Walker provided expert guidance to me throughout the research and writing stages. My manuscript benefited greatly from her thorough knowledge of Southern women's history and her high standards for historical scholarship. As first reader, Cindy Hahamovitch contributed invaluable intellectual inspiration and support, challenging me to address demanding questions, repeatedly providing me with fruitful research leads, and scrupulously editing my chapters. Melvin Ely went beyond the call of duty in his careful attention to my work. He sharpened many of my points and improved my prose. Leisa Meyer and Leslie Rowland asked thought-provoking questions and made many promising suggestions for future revisions.

I also received inspiration and advice from other individuals who read or listened to earlier drafts of my chapters. These include members of an informal writing group of women graduate students and recent Ph.D.'s from William and Mary; participants in the college's brown-bag seminars in American culture and women's history; colleagues at the Graduate Student Conference on Race and Southern History at the University of Virginia in March 1996; participants in the "Lead, Blood, and Tears" Conference on Women and the Civil War in June 1997; and Cassandra Newby and Jane Dailey, who commented, respectively, on papers that I gave at the Berkshire Conference on the

History of Women in June 1996 and the Southern Association for Women Historians' Fourth Conference on Women's History in June 1997.

I would also like to thank all of the archivists and librarians who facilitated my research. I received gracious assistance from staff members at the National Archives, the Virginia Historical Society, the Special Collections Department of the College of William and Mary, the Library of Virginia, the Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library at the Museum of the Confederacy, the Special Collections Department of the University of Virginia, the Library of Congress, the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina, the Special Collections Library at Duke University, and the Archives and Records Department of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. I would like to express particular gratitude to Margaret Cook, Curator of Manuscripts and Rare Books at William and Mary, who encouraged me as a Master's student to consider the topic of Virginia women's lives after the Civil War and then gave me numerous rewarding research suggestions over the years. In addition, I would like to thank historians Laura Edwards and Leslie Schwalm for providing me with useful advice about researching freedpeople's lives when I was first outlining this study.

For financial and institutional support, I would like to thank the History Department at William and Mary, as well as the Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences. Judy Ewell, John Selby, Sara Gross, Beverley Laws, and Wanda Carter smoothly handled the administrative details that surrounded my progression in the graduate program. I am also grateful for an Andrew W. Mellon Research Fellowship at the Virginia Historical Society, a minor research grant from William and Mary, and two summer research grants

from the college's former Commonwealth Center for the Study of American Culture. In addition, I would like to thank my employers over the last few years for their support of my work and their willingness to provide me with flexible hours so that I could write. I am grateful to J. Jefferson Looney and Brent Tarter at the Library of Virginia, Petra Klemmack and Martha Rush at the Marshall-Wythe Law Library, and Lou Powers and Julie Richter at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Friends near and far supported me throughout this project. For their friendship and generous hospitality during my research trips I want to thank Motoko and Michael Lavalley, Christine Hrycyna, Pam and Paul Hardin, Leslie Kesler, Ellen Fitzgibbons, and Blair Pogue. For their splendid companionship during research trips I want to thank Mary Carroll Johansen, Benjamin Goldberg, and Lynn Nelson.

It would be difficult to overemphasize the remarkable collegiality of William and Mary's graduate program in History. I benefited greatly from the encouragement and example provided by recent graduates of the doctoral program, especially Julie Richter, Gail Terry, and Ann Smart-Martin. Over the last several years, I have been enriched by the intellectual fellowship, friendship, and good humor of my peers at William and Mary, especially Blair Pogue, Mary Carroll Johansen, Sheila Phipps, Benjamin and Amy Goldberg, Jennifer Jones, Emily Mieras, Suzanne Coffman, Andy Schocket, David Rawson, Bob Smith, Todd Pfannestiel, Melanie Perreault, Kelly Gray, and Laura Odendahl.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their love and support. My parents Hugh and Sheila van Zelm instilled in me a love for school that I took far beyond their

expectations, and I truly appreciate their encouragement and patience. My sister Cynthia van Zelm cheered me on throughout, and I am grateful for her faith in me and her enthusiastic interest in my work. Finally, my husband Lynn Nelson served as a lively intellectual inspiration, an excellent editor, and a nice diversion.

ABSTRACT

Black and white women in Virginia were on the front lines of the struggle over emancipation during and after the Civil War. Between 1861 and 1890, both former slave and former slaveholding women shaped black freedom and thereby re-invented themselves as citizens within their local communities.

Focusing on women who lived in the southeastern and south-central regions of Virginia, this study expands the narrative of Southern history to encompass the vigorous contest between black and white women over the meanings of slavery, the war, and freedom. Based on federal records and private papers, this dissertation assesses women's ideas about the end of slavery and the creation of a free society.

Emancipation was revolutionary for black women and profoundly affected the lives of many white women. For freedwomen, it meant greater control over their family and working lives, education, and community organization, as well as new access to public spaces and a sense of themselves as American citizens. For former slaveholding women, emancipation meant financial loss, fewer household workers, and reduced control over those domestic servants, in addition to a re-appraisal of the benefits of slavery and a stark representation of the destruction of the Confederacy.

As workers and employers after the war, Virginia women transformed the white-owned domestic workplace into one of the most significant and highly politicized venues for negotiating freedom. As skilled workers, cooks and washerwomen gained the most independence among servants. While both workers and employers sought to retain some aspects of slavery, employers' maternalism increasingly came into conflict with workers' communal resourcefulness.

While they interacted as workers and employers, black and white women led separate lives in the civic realm. They did, however, take part in some similar activities there. As engaged citizens, both freedwomen and former mistresses contributed to the public creation of communal histories of the war by participating, respectively, in Emancipation Day celebrations and Lost Cause commemorations. In these civic rituals, Virginia women emphasized racial solidarity and affirmed their national and regional allegiances. The orchestrated transition from slavery to freedom within civic spaces paralleled the struggle to define emancipation within individual households.

ON THE FRONT LINES OF FREEDOM:
BLACK AND WHITE WOMEN SHAPE
EMANCIPATION IN VIRGINIA, 1861-1890

Introduction

"The glorious dawn of freedom": Virginia Women and Emancipation

In the summer of 1862, Fannie Clemens married Patrick Cofer on the farm of her owner Benjamin Gwaltney in Isle of Wight County, Virginia. With the Union army advancing up the Peninsula across the James River more than a year into the Civil War, Clemens may well have begun anticipating a life of freedom as she married Cofer under the eyes of her master. Born in neighboring Surry County, she had known her husband since childhood. At the time of their marriage by a Baptist minister in Gwaltney's home, Patrick lived in Isle of Wight as well, where he was the slave of Joseph H.L. Cofer. Fannie and Patrick were soon separated by more than the distance between their owners' plantations. By December of 1863, Patrick had made his way to Norfolk, where he enlisted in Company A of the First United States Colored Cavalry. Shortly thereafter, Fannie gave birth to daughter Angie, possibly the only of her twelve children to enter the world as a slave. Over the next half century, the Cofers farmed at various places in Isle of Wight until Patrick died in 1914. Fannie died less than a year later, just a month after the federal government approved her widow's pension.¹

¹Four of the Cofers' twelve children were still living in 1915. Pension of Patrick Cofer, Case File #990250 (Invalid) and #800028 (Widow), Pension Case Files, Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 15, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter Cofer, #990250/800028, RG 15, NARA). The United States Government first established pensions for the widows and children of black soldiers on 4 July 1864, in a

Although it does not tell us when or how she became free, the bare outlines of Fannie Cofer's application for a widow's pension suggest that black women and men played different roles in bringing about slavery's demise. By its very nature the pension record overemphasizes the contrast between the male soldier and the female wife and mother, but it still reflects real differences based on gender. Married women like Fannie Cofer were more likely than their husbands to break down the bonds of slavery slowly and privately within their own communities, rather than publicly in new locales. Virginia slave women found themselves outnumbering men on the homefront, especially during the last two years of the war as both Union and Confederate armies increased their use of black manpower.

At the same time, slave mistresses increasingly outnumbered slave masters, many of whom had joined one of the armies. As a result, on farms, plantations, and town lots, white women took on added responsibility for slave management and discipline. During the last two years of the war, mistresses and female slaves essentially redefined slavery in Virginia. The wartime struggle over slavery was the beginning of the transition to freedom that took place across the state between 1861 and 1890.

supplementary act to the first Civil War pension law of 14 July 1862. In 1890, a significant liberalization of the pension system took place with the passage of the Dependent Pension Act, which extended pension eligibility to soldiers with non-war-related disabilities and to dependents born after the war. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1880-1901), series 3, vol. 4: 506-507 (hereafter OR); Elizabeth Ann Regosin, "Slave Custom and White Law: Ex-Slave Families and the Civil War Pension System, 1865-1890," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Irvine, 1995), vii, 20, 25-26, 29, 225-228; Theda Skocpol, Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1992), 106-111, 138, 596. On the local nature of the pension application process and the moral overtones of the Civil War pension system, see Skocpol, 120, 148-150.

The renegotiation of slavery within individual households during the war represented an act of citizenship on the homefront.² All Virginians who lived through the Civil War knew that it was more than a fight between opposing armies on the field of battle. Private life took on greater public meaning for women and men of both races, but especially for women. The enhanced politicization of private life was most evident in the struggle over slavery. Some slave women chose to take advantage of the war to push the limits of slavery by refusing to work, confronting their owners over the morality of the institution, or expressing their support for the Union; others maintained the status quo while they waited to see how events would unfold, while still others absconded from the site of their enslavement, usually upon the arrival of Union troops nearby. At the same time, most Virginia slaveholding women had to decide how best to preserve slavery within a Confederacy increasingly strapped for provisions. In hopes of warding off rebelliousness or desertion, mistresses struggled to maintain maternalism, which had long represented their effort to use the products of the domestic work place and

²I am defining citizenship broadly as the effort to influence one's nation, or "imagined political community." Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, rev.ed. (London: Verso, 1992), 6-7. For recent works that review the traditional liberal conception of citizenship and suggest more expansive notions which better incorporate the experiences of women, see Mary Dietz, "Context is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship," in Jill K. Conway, Susan C. Bourque, and Joan W. Scott, eds., Learning About Women: Gender, Politics, and Power (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1989), 1-24, particularly her conception of citizenship as an end rather than a means to an end; Kathleen B. Jones, "Citizenship in a Woman-Friendly Polity," Signs 15 (Fall 1990), 781-812, especially her discussion of the overlap of "public" and "private" in everyday experience; Linda K. Kerber, "A Constitutional Right to be Treated Like American Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship," in Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Kathryn Kish Sklar, eds., U.S. History as Women's History: New Feminist Essays (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1995), 17-35, particularly her claim that women and men have historically had a different relationship to the national state.

participation in life-passage rituals to personalize the relations between themselves and slaves so as to increase slaves' docility and attempt to infuse slavery with Christian mercy.³ Slaveholding women who lived under Union occupation saw their slaves take advantage of the presence of federal officials to break down the bonds of slavery.

Homefront citizenship for black and white Virginia women between 1861 and 1865 also manifested itself through assistance to the Union and Confederate war efforts. Slaveholding women relied on the labor of slave women, particularly domestic workers, in their efforts to contribute tangibly to the Confederate army amidst growing shortages of necessities and increasing inflation. Slaveholding women developed a homefront Confederate culture to which slave women were involuntary and usually unacknowledged contributors. Some slave and free black women, on the other hand, furthered the Union effort behind the scenes as guides, spies, informants, cooks, laundresses, and nurses. In the face of abuse and deprivation at the hands of individual Union soldiers, African-American women remained dedicated to their own vision of the Union cause: the elimination of slavery. The development of opposing wartime allegiances strained relations between black and white women in Virginia and would continue to do so for years to come.

³Marli Frances Weiner defines similar activities by mistresses in South Carolina as the effort to carry out the ideology of paternalism created by men and fulfill the tenets of domesticity; she stresses slaveholding women's genuine concern for their slaves and presents them as men's unwitting deputies. Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves: Gender, Race, and South Carolina Women, 1830-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Rochester, 1986), 98-101, 108-116, 124. For other definitions of maternalism, both of which place greater emphasis than I do on its psychological goals, see Judith Rollins, Between Women: Domesticity and Their Employers (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1985), 173-189, and David M. Katzman, Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), 153-162.

Many Virginia slave women who succeeded in leaving their owners during the war found themselves living under Union military rule in contraband camps. The contraband population, consisting mostly of women, children, and the elderly, suffered terribly from physical want as they slowly began to define freedom. In contraband camps, freedwomen drew on the survival mechanisms of slavery and took advantage of new opportunities for education and civic participation.

The transitional experiences of women in wartime contraband camps were replicated throughout Virginia upon the defeat of the Confederacy in April 1865. Despite apprehension about the future, newly freed women and men joyously celebrated their liberation and gloried in the transformative power of the ideal of freedom. They then got down to the messy business of trying to ensure that their daily lives as free persons differed from their experiences as slaves. Women took advantage of the presence of the Freedmen's Bureau between 1865 and 1868 to demand that their children be liberated by recalcitrant former owners, insist that they be paid for their labor, assert their right to the ownership of property, prosecute violent neighbors and employers, and participate in civic activities that publicly proclaimed the advent of freedom.

While freedwomen began to shape the communities of freedom, former slaveholding women who had supported the Confederacy grappled with defeat and the demise of slavery. The domestic workplace was the primary site for former mistresses' adaptation to emancipation. While most former owners had to make do with fewer household workers after the war, many sought to employ at least a cook and to send out their wash. Between 1865 and 1890, employers and servants constantly renegotiated

labor relations. By working for employers other than their former owners, changing jobs often, living in their own homes, restricting the tasks they would agree to perform, choosing part-time work, pursuing the arbitration of labor disputes at the courthouse during the Bureau's brief existence, and asserting that they were first and foremost members of freed communities, household workers sought to establish their status as free persons. Although satisfied to give up some of the responsibilities of slave management, former slaveholding women did not readily abandon the ideal of domestic labor on demand. They sought to limit the politicization of the domestic workplace by circumscribing access to it by household workers' family and kin.

During the twenty-five years after the war, the personalistic system of domestic labor frequently clashed with the increasing independence of the freed community. Female employers had continued use for maternalism as a way to retain servants they liked and enable themselves to fulfill an ideal of benevolence. With maternalistic gestures such as gift-giving and participation in workers' weddings, they used the domestic environment and their social standing to influence household employees' work and private lives. Maternalism had considerable significance for former mistresses because they had fewer opportunities than men to try to control the social revolution caused by emancipation. Some freedwomen demanded the continuation of maternalistic gestures; others accepted such overtures if the circumstances were right, while still others rejected them completely. With a growing number of community institutions at their disposal, household workers were able to be increasingly independent of maternalistic material assistance.

While they interacted as workers and employers, as well as producers and consumers, black and white women in Virginia led separate lives within the civic realm. They engaged in some parallel activities, however, as both groups of women participated in the public interpretation of the war and emancipation. Former slaves took to the streets for Emancipation Day celebrations, Independence Day holidays, political rallies, and elections. Although they played a secondary role to male participants, they embraced the opportunity to proclaim their liberty publicly and to decry limitations on their freedom. Former slaveholding women who had supported the Confederacy also asserted their right to civic spaces. Raising funds for veterans' relief, memorial activities, and Confederate monuments, women who initiated the cult of the Lost Cause sought to honor male leaders, ennoble defeat, and momentarily erase some of the indignities that they believed had resulted from emancipation.

As much for women as for men, the experiences of Virginians, black and white, between 1861 and 1890 reveal that emancipation was not an event but a process that involved the evolution of political consciousness, the renegotiation of labor relations, and changes in perception about racial and national identities.

This study of the transition from slavery to freedom grew out of the silences of another text. While writing my Master's thesis on the post-Civil War experiences of Chloe Tyler Whittle, a young Norfolk woman from a slaveholding family who had supported the Confederacy to the bitter end, I found very few references in her diaries to emancipation or its aftermath. This made me wonder whether she was an anomaly

among postwar white women, and it also made me want to learn more about the parallel experiences of African-American women in Virginia during the war and Reconstruction. I had focused on how Whittle reconciled herself to the defeat of the Confederacy, and I wanted to explore how black women had reacted to Union victory.

Significantly more scholarship has been produced on white women's experiences during the war than on black women's lives. The investigation of how slaveholding women responded to the Civil War and how it affected their lives and the lives of their daughters has resulted in some of the most influential work on white women's lives in the South, from Anne Firor Scott's provocative The Southern Lady to Drew Faust's monumental Mothers of Invention.⁴ While Scott presents the war as a revolutionary experience for white Southern women because it fostered greater independence among them, Faust argues that the war ultimately demoralized slaveholding women and left them more than willing to support the continuation of a patriarchal social system. While Scott focuses on roles and Faust on ideology, both studies explore female consciousness and identity as affected by war and, to a lesser extent, emancipation.

The dearth of similar studies about slave and freed women results in part from a lack of introspective written accounts by former slave women and a paucity of contemporary commentaries on their ideas about the conflict. It also reflects the reality that consideration of wartime loyalty, political consciousness, and citizenship for

⁴See Chapter One for a full discussion of the literature. Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970); Drew Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). See also the epilogue of Suzanne Lebsock's The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town (N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 1984).

African-Americans during and after the war has usually focused on men and the transformative experiences of military service and voting.⁵ The emphasis on men's experiences has not, however, excluded women. Over the last twenty years, major syntheses of the revolutionary upheaval of emancipation written by Leon Litwack and Eric Foner have incorporated the experiences of women as actors, in part by stressing the communalism of postwar political life. Elsa Barkley Brown's recent study of African-American political activity in Richmond also emphasizes the communal nature of the immediate postwar period but traces the development of divisions according to gender in the 1870s and 1880s.⁶

Added to these landmarks are several important recent works that focus exclusively on women and emancipation: studies by Tera Hunter, Leslie Schwalm, and Tracey Weis have recreated the female emancipation experience and its aftermath in Atlanta, lowcountry South Carolina, and Richmond, with particular attention to changes

⁵On the link between black male military service and citizenship, see W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880 (as Black Reconstruction, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1935; repr., N.Y.: Touchstone by Simon & Schuster, 1995), 102-104. Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland raise the important issue of African-American women's exclusion from the role of armed liberators, in Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, series 2, The Black Military Experience (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982), 30.

⁶Leon F. Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1980); Eric Foner, Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1983); Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877 (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1988); Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," Public Culture 7 (1994): 107-146. On the tendency for historical treatments of African-Americans' shared cultural identity and heritage to obscure differences of gender and class, see Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," Signs 17 (Winter 1992): 266-273.

in women's work lives and family responsibilities.⁷ In part because all three works analyze communities or regions in which numerous slaves had developed a significant degree of autonomy during the late antebellum period and in which freedpeople quickly formed independent institutions, these studies emphasize workplace resistance and racial conflict. My work supplements theirs by defining women's efforts to shape emancipation and labor relations as expressions of citizenship, by incorporating the impact of emancipation on former slaveholding women, and by comparing urban and rural experiences.

Writing a study that focuses on the experiences of white and black women within the white-owned domestic workplace is problematic on several levels. The class differences between the two sets of women were often significant, despite the temporary and partial leveling effect of the war and the popularity of part-time labor among married workers, which enabled additional families to afford servants. At the same time, the degradation of slavery and exploitative postwar labor practices can easily encourage an over-emphasis on resistance. Finally, the fact that there are more introspective written

⁷Tera W. Hunter, "Household Workers in the Making: Afro-American Women in Atlanta and the New South, 1861-1920," (Ph.D. diss, Yale Univ., 1990), recently published as To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1997); Hunter, "Domination and Resistance: The Politics of Wage Household Labor in New South Atlanta," Labor History 34 (Summer 1993): 205-220; Leslie Ann Schwalm, "The Meaning of Freedom: African-American Women and Their Transition from Slavery to Freedom in Lowcountry South Carolina," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, 1991), recently published as A Hard Fight For We: Women's Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Schwalm, "Sweet Dreams of Freedom': Freedwomen's Reconstruction of Life and Labor in Lowcountry South Carolina," Journal of Women's History 9 (Spring 1997): 9-38; Tracey Weis, "Negotiating Freedom: Domestic Service and the Landscape of Labor and Household Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1850-1880," (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers, 1994).

sources by mistresses and employers results in deeper insight into their motivations and opinions. Both Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, in Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South, and Marli Frances Weiner, in Mistresses and Slaves: Plantation Women in South Carolina, 1830-1880, have grappled with these issues and demonstrated how considering both groups of women within the same text best conveys the intimacy and tension of the relationship between supervisors and household workers.⁸ Not surprisingly, both Fox-Genovese and Weiner ultimately offer more insight into the perspectives of white women than black women. By making considerable use of such federal records as Freedmen's Bureau court records, Southern Claims Commission case files, and pension applications, all of which contain testimonies by African-American women, my study seeks to remedy this imbalance.

A sustained discussion of the effect of emancipation on women in Virginia is long overdue.⁹ I argue that former slave and former slaveholding women formulated ideas about the meaning of freedom, acted on these ideas, and used them as a standard to judge the actions of others. I contend that Virginia women, defining a world without slavery through their interactions with each other, related the restructuring of domestic work to conceptions of freedom and national identity. My study reveals the

⁸Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1988); Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves," recently published as Mistresses and Slaves: Plantation Women in South Carolina, 1830-1880 (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1997).

⁹On the general need for more studies of postbellum women, see Deborah Gray White, Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South (N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 1985), 163, and Sandra Gioia Treadway, "New Directions in Virginia Women's History," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 100 (Jan. 1992): 18.

interconnectedness of women's private and public lives, proposes an expanded definition of citizenship, and underscores the complexity of race relations.

As an introduction to the investigation of women and emancipation, Fannie Cofer's pension record reflects the methodological challenges involved in the effort to recreate women's transition from slavery to freedom. Silences are pervasive. Like many of the records that shed light on the lives of former slaves, Fannie Cofer's pension file was created for ends other than to chronicle emancipation and was generated years after the social upheaval had taken place. In addition, many of the records that document the transition to freedom were composed at least in part by individuals whose life experiences differed significantly from those of slaves and freedpeople.

In this study, the actions and perceptions of slave and freed women have been gleaned primarily from materials recorded by Freedmen's Bureau agents and other United States government functionaries, all of whom were men; Virginia slaveholders and post-emancipation employers of black workers, especially women; middle-class black interviewers, female and male, employed by the Virginia Writers' Project (VWP); and middle-class Northern missionaries of both sexes, most of whom were white.¹⁰ Many of

¹⁰Of these materials, the ex-slave interviews have come under the closest scrutiny as sources. The Virginia Writers' Project was part of the Federal Writers' Project established by the Works Progress Administration in 1935. Except in Virginia, Louisiana, and Florida, WPA offices in the South employed almost no African-American interviewers. Of the 159 extant Virginia Writers' Project ex-slave interviews, 100 are known to have been conducted by blacks and nine are known to have been completed by whites. Most of the fifty others are thought to have been done by African-Americans. Comparison of WPA interviews conducted by whites and ex-slave interviews conducted by blacks for the WPA, Fisk University, and Southern University between 1929 and 1938 has demonstrated that those conducted by blacks contain fuller information about family

these interpreters of the experiences of slave and freed women misunderstood or devalued them because of their race, class, or sex. Still, beneath the overlay of translators' perceptions lies an elaborate web of experience and memory which reveals the richness and complexity of the emancipation story.

As the indispensable volumes issued by the Freedmen and Southern Society Project have made clear, United States government records are instrumental in telling the story of emancipation from the perspective of African-Americans.¹¹ While these sources are fullest for the war and immediate postwar periods, the case files kept by the Southern Claims Commission (SCC) and the Pension Office can be used to trace freedpeople's lives during the years after the demise of the Freedmen's Bureau in 1868. Unfortunately, the testimonies contained in SCC and pension records, like the VWP interviews with ex-slaves, tend to focus on the experiences of slavery and war rather than the continued transition to freedom during the 1870s and 1880s. For this reason, and because very few

life, slave resistance, cruelty by owners, and other aspects of slave life. WPA interviewers spoke with only about two percent of the nation's surviving former slaves. Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1976), xxxvi-xlii, 68-70; John W. Blassingame, "Using the Testimony of Ex-Slaves: Approaches and Problems," Journal of Southern History (JSH) 41 (1975): 481, 488-489; Paul D. Escott, "The Context of Freedom: Georgia's Slaves During the Civil War," in Donald G. Nieman, ed., The Day of the Jubilee: The Civil War Experience of Black Southerners (N.Y.: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 92.

¹¹Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Thavolia Glymph, Joseph Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, series 1, vol. 1, The Destruction of Slavery (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985); Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, series 1, vol. 1, The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South (N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993); Berlin, et al., eds., The Black Military Experience.

black newspapers were published during the twenty-five years between the war and 1890, this study emphasizes the period from 1861 to 1868 and relies heavily on writings by white Virginians to get at some of the aspirations and disappointments of freedwomen during the later period.¹²

Because this dissertation seeks to illuminate the intricacies of human relationships and perceptions during a period of profound social upheaval, it is tightly focused geographically and chronologically. Covering the period between 1861 and 1890, it compares and contrasts black and white women's experiences in two regions of Virginia, the southeastern part of the state around Hampton Roads, which I will call the lower Tidewater, and the south-central area close to the North Carolina border, which I will refer to as interior Southside.¹³ Linked by bonds of kinship, and later by rail ties, these two areas had different experiences of slavery, war, and emancipation. In 1861, the lower Tidewater contained more large towns, maintained a diversified economy, and had a larger population of free blacks, while the plantation Southside remained tied to tobacco cultivation; its slaves were more likely than those in the Tidewater to live on

¹²See Bibliographic Checklist of African American Newspapers (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1995), 135-139. Of the two most prominent black newspapers published in Virginia, the Richmond Planet began publication in 1883 and the Norfolk Journal and Guide in 1900.

¹³The lower Tidewater includes the counties of Mathews, Gloucester, New Kent, Charles City, James City, York, Warwick, Elizabeth City, Surry, Isle of Wight, Nansemond, Norfolk, and Princess Anne. The interior Southside comprises the counties of Sussex, Southampton, Greensville, Brunswick, Mecklenburg, Lunenburg, Charlotte, Halifax, Pittsylvania, Henry, and Patrick. Relevant evidence from adjoining counties has been freely used.

middling or large plantations.¹⁴ Union occupation in the Tidewater gradually expanded from its base at Fort Monroe near Hampton throughout the war, while the interior Southside remained relatively isolated from the fighting until 1865.¹⁵ Chapters One and Two focus primarily on the lower Tidewater, which experienced considerably more wartime emancipation than the interior Southside.

After the war, the tenor of the transition to freedom differed in the two regions as well, in part because fewer Northern missionaries and teachers traveled to the Southside.¹⁶ The establishment of Hampton Institute in 1868, as well as the continued federal presence at Fort Monroe and the National Soldiers' Home for Union veterans, linked the lower Tidewater to secondary education and assistance to black Union veterans. While during the 1870s African-Americans in both regions lost political influence because of Conservative ascendancy and a moribund Republican party, residents of the interior Southside in particular benefitted in the early 1880s from gains

¹⁴Lynda Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 1850-1870 (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1992), 20-21. According to the 1860 census, 62,541 whites, 46,768 slaves, and 12,260 free blacks resided in the lower Tidewater. Slaves made up almost forty percent of the population and free blacks about ten percent. The interior Southside was home to 74,073 whites, 90,393 slaves, and 6445 free blacks. Slaves accounted for slightly more than half of the population and free blacks about four percent. Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864), 516-518. Wheat had been established as the primary staple of the mixed agricultural economy that developed in the Tidewater in the early nineteenth century. Berlin, et al., eds., Free Labor, 86-87.

¹⁵In April of that year, Jefferson Davis and members of his cabinet fled to the interior Southside town of Danville, which became known as the last capital of the Confederacy.

¹⁶Morgan, Emancipation in the Tobacco Belt, 178.

made by the Readjuster party.¹⁷

The transition from slavery to freedom challenged black and white women throughout Virginia between 1861 and 1890. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, an African-American writer who grew up free in Baltimore, lectured against slavery in the 1850s, and traveled throughout the South after the Civil War, underscored the momentousness of emancipation for black Americans and for the United States as a nation. In her poem, "President Lincoln's Proclamation of Freedom," Harper described the proclamation as a light which assisted slaves to usher in "the glorious dawn of freedom":

It shall gild the gloomy prison,
Darken'd by the nation's crime,
Where the dumb and patient millions
Wait the better coming time.

By the light that gilds their prison,
They shall seize its mould'ring key,
And the bolts and bars shall vibrate
With the triumphs of the free.¹⁸

Seizing the key to freedom between 1861 and 1865 was only the beginning of a complex

¹⁷James T. Moore, "Black Militancy in Readjuster Virginia, 1879-1883," *JSH* 41 (May 1975): 168-169, 181-182.

¹⁸Complete Poems of Frances E.W. Harper, ed. Maryemma Graham (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 104-105. For a poem which similarly describes emancipation as a light produced by God, but which contains a more passive depiction of slaves, see "Emancipation" in Joseph T. Wilson, Emancipation: Its Course and Progress... (Hampton, Va.: Normal School Steam Power Press Print, 1882), 33-34. Like Harper's poem, "Emancipation" and John Greenleaf Whittier's "The Proclamation" present emancipation as a prelude to national redemption. John Hope Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation (N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1963), 143.

social and political transition that engaged black and white Virginia women for decades to come. Their stories follow.

Chapter One

"A new order of things": Wartime Slavery and Slave Management

One of the legends passed down by former slaves depicted President Lincoln leading Union soldiers into the South during the Civil War. According to the fable, black soldiers who were serving under Lincoln told a slave cook, "You ain't got no more master and no more missus. You don't have to work no more."¹ Yet even before they experienced liberation from their owners, many female slaves in the lower Tidewater and interior Southside regions of Virginia had begun to make the transition to freedom by altering the patterns and attitudes of their work lives. In doing so, they took advantage of the dislocation created by the war, the presence of Union troops, and the economic distress of their owners. Yet they were not alone in redefining slavery during the war. Slave mistresses, increasingly responsible for slave management, had more influence on the institution than they had ever had before. Wartime conflict and compromise between slave women and slaveholding women constituted the first stage in the process of emancipation for many slave women and represented the beginning of slaveholding

¹William H. Wiggins, Jr., O Freedom!: Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1987), 71. Similarly, former Virginia slave Frances Berry, who grew up in Appomattox County and moved to Petersburg during the first year of the war, recalled emancipated slaves singing the verse, "Mammy don't yo' cook no mo', Yo ar' free, yo' ar' free." Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1976), 38-39.

women's adaptation to emancipation.

The highly politicized domestic workplace in Confederate households grew increasingly contentious as the fighting progressed.² In an unsettling atmosphere of human upheaval, slave and slaveholding women confronted each other with different ideas about how to adapt slavery to wartime circumstances. The struggle between mistresses and slaves in the domestic realm represented an emerging female citizenship on the homefront. For many Confederate slaveholding women in Virginia, upholding slavery was a primary element of their defense of hearth and home in the face of Union invasion. They sought to maintain the status quo in labor and race relations, and they drew on the labor of their house slaves to contribute materially to the war effort.

Many slave women also found elements of the status quo preferable to the uncertainty that existed beyond the homeplace. Deemed "faithful" by their owners, most did not remain simply out of attachment to their "white folks." Many loosened the bonds of slavery, taking advantage of the war to build a new way of life for themselves. Scores of women living in or near Union-occupied areas used the presence of military authorities and Northern missionaries to begin to define themselves as members of a free nation.

In the spring of 1861, the mobilization of Confederate troops and the appropriation of slave laborers from throughout the state to work on Confederate

²On the political nature of slave management, see Drew Gilpin Faust, "'Trying to Do a Man's Business': Slavery, Violence and Gender in the American Civil War," Gender and History 4 (Summer 1992): 197-198.

fortifications disrupted countless Virginia households. In the lower Tidewater, the continuous Union presence at Fort Monroe near Hampton and subsequent incursions by the army into nearby Confederate territory caused considerable dislocation, including the escape of slaves to Union lines and the removal of slaves by their owners to the interior, where they had fewer opportunities for escape or liberation. The wartime struggle between slaveholders attempting to perpetuate the system and slaves trying to circumvent it coalesced around the movement of slaves, which in turn affected the lives of those who continued to be enslaved at home.³

Both Virginia slaveholding and slave women were caught up in the whirlwind. The question of removal vexed slaveholding women who were unsure of how best to protect their property, while the prospect of removal intensified slave women's age-old fear of separation from their families. Although slaveowning men made most of the decisions about slave property, wives of slaveholders had a stake, and sometimes a voice, in those choices. Owners viewed removal primarily as a way to protect their most valuable slaves, especially skilled men and young male field hands, but all slaves at the homeplace were vulnerable. By 1865, a majority of the slaves who had lived in the Tidewater region before the war may have been forced to flee the path of Union troops

³Escape and liberation will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two. For evidence of slaves from both Tidewater and interior Southside counties being used as military laborers in the Tidewater in the spring of 1862, see The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1899; repr., Historical Times, Inc., 1985), 1st Series, Vol. 9:49-50, Vol. 11, Part 3:437, 597 (hereafter QR, 1st Series).

by their owners.⁴

On the homefront in the lower Tidewater, the threat of removal hung uncertainly over slave women's heads while their owners deliberated about whether to relocate their entire households, become refugees themselves and leave their slaves behind to cultivate the crops, send off their slaves as a means of protecting their property, or stay put. In the spring of 1862 as the Union army was preparing to launch its Peninsula campaign, Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman of Williamsburg, for example, noted that her husband was contemplating moving some of his mother's slaves, but could not decide on a location. A month later, Coleman revealed that her own mother, Lucy Tucker, had decided to stay in Williamsburg regardless of the results of the Peninsula campaign, hoping "to save, at least, some of her property." In Norfolk County, Elizabeth Wallace and her husband George undertook similar deliberations. As their male slaves escaped in the spring of 1863, the Wallaces considered how best to respond: "We are in a dilemma about taking our remaining negroes the women and children over the lines." The Wallaces decided to remain at Glencoe, their Norfolk County plantation that sat between Union and Confederate lines.⁵

⁴According to Ira Berlin and others at the Freedmen and Southern Society Project, the presence of federal troops in the Tidewater may have affected more slaves by inducing enforced mobility than by providing opportunities for escape. Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Thavolia Glymph, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, series 1, vol. 1, The Destruction of Slavery (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), 69-70, 680-681.

⁵Cynthia [Beverley Tucker Coleman], Williamsburg, to [Lawrence W. Washington], 13 March 1862, [18] April [1862], Louis Malesherbes Goldsborough Papers, Special Collections Library, Duke University (DK), Durham, N.C. Before the war, the Wallaces had eight house slaves (six adult women and two boys), ten to fifteen farm hands, and two or three score men employed to do heavy work such as cutting wood and ditching.

Tidewater slaveholders who determined to move their slaves found the interior Southside counties of Virginia particularly attractive. In August of 1862, slaveholder Leah Seddon Taliaferro wrote that one of her female neighbors in Gloucester County had wisely sent all of her slaves to Danville in Pittsylvania County, where she planned to join them shortly. Similarly, in September 1862, slaveholder Louisiana Hankins of Surry County confided to her daughter Virginia: "I wish your father could rent a place in Mecklenburg Halifax Brunswick or any safe place & send a part of his negros" By the fall of 1863, Cynthia Coleman and her son had relocated with her mother- and sister-in-law to Clarksville, Mecklenburg County, in the interior Southside.⁹

In May 1863, George Wallace was imprisoned and fined for attempting to bribe Union pickets to bring some of his former slaves from Norfolk to work at Glencoe. Eleanor P. Cross and Charles B. Cross, Jr., eds., Glencoe Diary: The War-Time Journal of Elizabeth Curtis Wallace (Chesapeake, Va.: Norfolk County Historical Society, 1968), 18 April 1863, 14 May 1863, 24 June 1863, 17 July 1863, 27, 35, 43, 46-47; Eleanor P. Cross and Charles B. Cross, Jr., eds., Child of Glencoe: Civil War Journal of Katie Darling Wallace (Chesapeake, Va.: Norfolk County Historical Society, 1983), 10; Ferebee Journal [identified by me as a journal kept by Elizabeth Wallace], 12 April 1865, 78, Miscellaneous Southern Women Materials, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Va. (MoC).

⁹Leah Seddon Taliaferro, "Belle Ville," to Sarah Alexander Seddon Bruce, 19 Aug. 1862, Bruce Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond (hereafter VHS); Doris C. Sturzenberger, "The Southern Lady Ideal in the Life of Cynthia Beverley Tucker, 1840-1870," (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1979), 71-73. In 1863, John Henry Hankins reported that eight of his slaves, all young males, had escaped to Union lines. A year later, at least some of the Hankins's slaves remained in Surry, as all but two elderly retainers were whisked off in anticipation of a Union raid. Six months after this, John Hankins planned to send four slave women and two men to Richmond as soon as possible. Louisiana Hankins and John Henry Hankins, Bacon's Castle, to Virginia Wilson Hankins, 29 Sept. 1862, Virginia Hankins, Bacon's Castle, to James DeWitt Hankins, 17 April 1864, Louisiana Hankins, Bacon's Castle, to Virginia Hankins, 6 Oct 1864, Hankins Family Papers, VHS; Reports of Escaped Slaves, 1863, Surry County, Records of the Auditor of Public Accounts, Record Group 48, Library of Virginia, Richmond (hereafter Reports, RG 48, LVA). For examples of slaves sent south, see Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 273-277; Henry L. Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home:

Because of wartime dislocation, many slave women in the Tidewater were separated from family members. When a slave cook named Lucy and her daughters left Elizabeth City County with the West family in May 1861, she brought along her husband's clothes and kept them with her throughout the war in the event that he should find her. The first resident of an orphanage established in 1863 by the American Missionary Association at Ferry Point, Virginia, was an escaped slave girl named Margaret Ann Monday whose father had been put to work by the Confederate army. Some families were broken up forever; a year before her death in 1896, former slave Hannah Simpson of Norfolk had still not been reunited with her siblings who were sold and then sent south during the secession crisis.⁷

Unlike men, slave women rarely faced enforced removal to labor on Confederate fortifications.⁸ Although some slave and free black female convicts were transported for

Letters from Contraband Camps (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1966), 42. Some slaves were sold and then removed by their new owners. For sales occasioned by the war and the response of female slaveholders, see Perdue, *et al.*, eds., Weevils, 134-135; Sturzenberger, "Southern Lady," 75-76; Broun Diary, 25 Dec. 1862, 5, SHC; Cornelia Peake McDonald, A Woman's Civil War: A Diary, with Reminiscences of the War, from March 1862, ed. Minrose C. Gwin (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 82-84.

⁷Joe M. Richardson, Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861-1890 (Athens, Ga.: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1986), 64; Pension of William E. Gordon (alias Edward F. Gordon), #412269/77793 (widow), RG 15, NARA. According to the son of her former owner, Lucy and her daughter Hannah had been given the option to depart with the Wests or stay behind under federal occupation. George B. West, When the Yankees Came: Civil War and Reconstruction on the Virginia Peninsula, ed. Parke Rouse, Jr. (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1977), 56-57.

⁸Two Virginia counties impressed female slaves in response to a 21 September 1864 requisition for slave laborers from the Confederate Bureau of Conscription. The women

service at Virginia ironworks during the war, most slave women sent abroad experienced familiar forms of enforced mobility.⁹ The formal hiring of slaves and the informal

were promptly returned to their owners by Confederate authorities. Ervin L. Jordan, Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1995), 63; see also D.A. Claiborne, Wolf Trap, Halifax, Va., to Governor Smith, 17 March 1865, Letters Received by William Smith, 1864-1865, Records of the Office of the Governor, Record Group 3, LVA (hereafter Executive Papers, RG 3, LVA). The Confederate government and state governments tried to fulfill labor requirements by impressing free blacks before impressing slaves. Berlin, et al., eds., Destruction, 679, 725, 730, 763. For evidence of slaves from interior counties being impressed to work on fortifications at Danville, Virginia, in October 1864, see OR, 1st Series, Vol. 42, Part 3: 1153. For examples of opposition from Tidewater and Southside slaveowners, including widows, to the impressment of slaves and free blacks, see Berlin, et al., eds., Destruction, 762, 764-765, 807-808; E.R. Turnbull, Lawrenceville, Brunswick Co., to Governor Letcher, 6 Jan. 1863, Indiana Stambach, Brunswick Co., to Governor Letcher, Jan. [1863], Judith C. Marr, Aspen Grove, Pittsylvania Co., to Governor Smith, 30 March 1864, "Application of the County Court of the County of Greensville to be relieved from the requisition for slaves to work on fortifications," 7 Jan. 1865, Letters Received by John Letcher, 1860-1864, and Letters Received by William Smith, Executive Papers, RG 3, LVA. Slave and free black men detailed as Confederate laborers did dangerous work under difficult, unhealthy conditions and deserted when they could. Berlin, et al., eds., Destruction, 728-729, and above.

⁹In 1862, at least seven slave and free black female convicts from the state penitentiary were detailed to the Cloverdale and Grace Furnaces in Botetourt County, which supplied pig iron to the Tredegar Iron Works run by Joseph R. Anderson and Company in Richmond. The women included Mary Tines of Norfolk, Ann Weaver of Southampton County, Rose of Campbell County, and Alberta of Madison County. In 1863, Rose and Alberta, along with five other women, were hired by the state to Anderson and Company. The state received \$50 per year for each female convict laborer in 1862 and \$75 per year in 1863. Tines, sentenced in 1857 to five years for grand larceny, was discharged when her term expired on 3 June 1862. Ann Weaver appears to have been returned to the penitentiary in August 1862. Contract between Thomas Steers and Governor John Letcher, 13 Jan. 1862, and "Memo of Hire due for Convicts at Cloverdale Furnace, 1 Jan. 1862 with explanatory remarks;" "List of Free Negro & Slave Convicts Hired to Joseph R. Anderson & Co. by the Governor of Virginia on the 3rd day of Jan. 1863 for the Year 1863," Executive Papers, RG 3, LVA; Kathleen Bruce, Virginia Iron Manufacture in the Slave Era (N.Y.: The Century Co., 1931), 277, 426, 456-57; James H. Brewer, The Confederate Negro: Virginia's Craftsmen and Military Laborers, 1861-1865 (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1969), 54-55, 61, 69. For other references to female convicts in the Letcher correspondence, see W.A. Patteson to Col. George W. Munford, 29 Sept. 1862; P.A. Piercy, Mecklenburg Co., Va., to John Letcher, 21 Oct.

sharing of slaves by owners among their relatives continued throughout the conflict.¹⁰

For slave women sent to distant locations, hiring and sharing had long required a difficult adjustment to separation from family and kin. Yet slave women had also taken advantage of hiring to enhance their opportunities for escape, increase their autonomy, and find diversion in a new, often urban, locality.¹¹ During the war, urban areas like Richmond and Norfolk provided hired slave women with access to information about the war and separated family members. Under Union rule after May 1862, the city of

1862; "List of Free negro Convicts and Transport Convicts in the Penitentiary of Virginia not needed in any of the shops of the institution," 6 May 1862; "List of Prisoners," n.d. None of these documents indicate what kind of work the women performed, but Brewer refers to female slave cooks working at Tredegar furnaces and foundries.

¹⁰See Bonds to Sarah M. Shepherd for the Hire of Slaves, 1842-1862, and Lists of Slaves Owned by Sarah M. Shepherd, 1856-62, Shepherd Family Papers, VHS; Caroline Kean (Hill) Davis Diary, 1860-1865, 1 Jan. 1862, 34, VHS; Catherine Barbara Broun Diary (typescript), 28 Dec. 1864, 41-42, Manuscripts Department, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, N.C. (SHC); Perdue, *et al.*, eds., *Weevils*, 134-135; Mary Poindexter to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 23 April 1862, Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, VHS; Pattie Watkins, Mt. Pleasant, [Prince Edward County], to Nannie Watkins, [Granville County, N.C.], 21 March 1863, Watkins Papers, Manuscripts and Rare Books Dept., Earl Gregg Swem Library, The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va. (W&M); [Phillip Taliaferro?] to William Booth Taliaferro, Burgh Westra, Gloucester, Feb. 1864, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman to "My dear friend," 20 Jan. 1863, Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman to Charles W. Coleman, Clarksville, 10 Nov. 1864, Tucker-Coleman Collection, W&M; Jordan, *Black Confederates*, 45.

¹¹Hired slave women could influence their hiring, recommending potential hirers to their owners or sharing assessments of their employers once hired. Myra, for example, who was owned by Cynthia Coleman of Williamsburg and hired out in Richmond in 1860, remained in the Confederate capital in 1861. She was hired by Coleman's agent to, in his words, "an excellent home,--of which she can speak herself." Alfred L. Holladay, Richmond, to Cynthia Beverley Tucker Washington, 10 Jan. 1861, Alfred L. Holladay, Richmond, to Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman, 27 Jan. 1862, Coleman Family Papers, VHS; Tracey M. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom: Domestic Service and the Landscape of Labor and Household Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1850-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers, 1994), 160-162.

Norfolk increasingly served as a primary site for the reunification of slave families. At the same time, residents of both of these cities had to contend with deteriorating living conditions brought on by overcrowding, disease, and shortages.

The hiring and sharing of slaves took on new meaning during the war for slaveholding women, as they attempted to adjust work routines to the departure of both family members and slave laborers to the front and tried to meet the subsistence needs of those who remained at home in the face of shortages and spiraling inflation. In addition, hiring took on a new political dimension during the war for defenders of slavery who did not want to employ fugitive slaves. In June 1863, Confederate supporter Chloe Tyler Whittle of Norfolk wrote that the family had hired a cook named Priscilla, once they were convinced that she was not an escaped slave.¹²

While mistresses viewed hiring as a way to adapt slavery to trying economic circumstances, slave women saw hiring as a way to bring themselves closer to freedom. Wartime dislocation lessened the control of owners and helped slaves to push the limits of absentee ownership. Nancy, a house slave who belonged to the Hankins family of Surry County, took advantage of the war to increase her autonomy. On 26 August 1864, Louisiana Hankins discussed Nancy in a letter to her daughter Virginia, who was on a visit to Mecklenburg County: "Your father sent Nancy up to Richmond to [your brother] James with Lieut Barham & requested to hire her out to some nice lady--for a lady's maid or nurse." Hankins continued: "We also wrote him word if he thought proper he could

¹²Nannie Watkins, Waterloo, [Granville Co., N.C.], to Nathaniel V. Watkins, 16 Nov. 1863, Watkins Papers, W&M; Emily R. Davies, "'What Sorrows and What Joys:' The Civil War Diaries of Cloe Tyler Whittle, 1861-1866," (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1993), 13 June 1863, 109-110.

carry her to Mecklenburg--Nancy was very willing to go--& said several times she was so sorry you did not carry her with you." Nancy soon exerted control over her situation.

Almost a month later, Hankins wrote: "Nancy your brother [James] says is living with a woman (colored) [once?] belonged to Joe Boykins estate [some?] relation to Nancy."

Hankins expressed her dismay to her daughter: "I wish you would tell your brother what he had best do with her. I wish you could have her with you, & hire her to some good lady in the neighborhood if it was only for her food & clothing." While Hankins sought to perpetuate both slavery and maternalism in the fall of 1864, Nancy found kin to live with in the capital city.¹³

Not all Virginia slave women shared Nancy's opportunity to carve some autonomy out of wartime dislocation, for some owners implemented new restrictions on mobility during the war.¹⁴ As James Willcox wrote to his daughter Susannah in Pittsylvania County in March 1863: "Should you come as far as Richmond besure [sic] and leave Suckey in Pittsylvania." When Susannah planned to visit friends in Petersburg a month later, she left Suckey with one of her female relatives. James Willcox's

¹³Louisiana Hankins, Bacon's Castle, to Virginia and Louis Hankins, 26 Aug. 1864, 18 Sept. 1864, Hankins Family Papers, VHS.

¹⁴In an effort to prevent escape and insurrection among their slaves and to increase agricultural output, plantation slaveowners throughout the Confederacy instituted tighter controls and placed new demands on their laborers after the war began. They sought to limit their slaves' contacts with slaves on neighboring plantations so as to prevent them from sharing information and planning escape to Union lines. Many slaves responded indignantly because they viewed the war as an opportunity for liberation, and married couples who lived apart from each other resented the disruption of family life which resulted from restrictions on movement. Berlin, et al., eds., Destruction, 10; Leon F. Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1980), 23; Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1986), 48-49.

unwillingness to expose his Pittsylvania County slaves to the eastern theater is understandable: at least two of his female domestic servants had already escaped from Charles City County.¹⁵

For female slaves who remained on the homeplace, the wartime mobility of slave men often resulted in new obligations. In the wake of the departure of young slave men, sometimes through impressment or enforced removal, many women had to adjust to increased responsibilities both in their work for their owners and in their family lives within the slave community. They also shouldered the worry associated with the wartime service of their male relatives and kin. Reluctantly performing the work formerly carried out by slave men, many slave women in the Confederacy refused to work at the pace they had before the war.¹⁶

Virginia slaveholding women watched their slaves carefully as the initial disruption of war became a sustained upheaval. Since the secession crisis, mistresses had been concerned about how the emerging conflict would affect the institution of slavery. Like many of her elders, sixteen-year-old Mary Jeffery Galt of Norfolk had initially rejected secession, in part because she believed that it would lead to the demise

¹⁵J.M. Willcox, "Buckland," to Susannah Willcox, 10 March 1863, Eliza [Rives?], Banister, to Susannah Willcox, 23 April 1863, James M. Willcox Papers, DK. In July 1862, Jane, a forty-two-year-old seamstress, and Agnes, a thirty-three-year-old chambermaid, had escaped from Charles City County. Reports of Escaped Slaves, 1863, Charles City County, Public Accounts, RG 48, LVA.

¹⁶Berlin, *et al.*, eds., *Destruction*, 42, 672; Jones, *Labor of Love*, 48-49. Of the seventy slaves left on William Patterson Smith's Gloucester County plantation after a Union raid in April 1863, for example, five were men and the rest women and children. William Patterson Smith, "Glen Roy," to Sarah Bruce Seddon, 24 April 1863, Seddon Family Papers, VHS.

of slavery. Undoubtedly heavily influenced by her parents and possibly by Unionist propaganda as well, on 18 April 1861 she commented on the secession debate in her diary: "I am for the Union from my heart. I want niggers to wait on me but by leaving the Union Virginia will be a free state in 5 years. And what a time we will have in the meantime." In competition with such views, the urgings of devoted secessionists depicted slavery as the basis of a new nation chosen by God to protect and uplift the African race. The secessionist view had gained support in Virginia ever since John Brown's raid and ultimately prevailed after President Abraham Lincoln's call for troops on 15 April 1861.¹⁷

After the state convention voted to secede on 17 April 1861, many Virginia slaveholding women drew their house slaves into the creation of a Confederate nation on the homefront.¹⁸ From Confederate puddings to secession dresses and cockades to

¹⁷By the time of Norfolk's fall to Union forces in May 1862, Galt had become a full-fledged Confederate supporter. She labeled the United States flag newly hoisted over the courthouse "the banner of oppression" and spat in its direction from her window. Earlier that spring, Galt had sketched a design for a Confederate flag, possibly in response to the Confederate Congress's appeal for suggestions. Mary Jeffery Galt Diary (1860-1866), 18 April 1861, 15 Feb. 1862, 11 May 1862 Galt Family Papers III, W&M; Drew Gilpin Faust, The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1988), 6, 59-61. In her analysis of women's diaries and letters on the eve of Virginia's secession convention, Elizabeth Varon found widespread support for moderation and Unionism. Elizabeth Varon, "'We mean to be counted': White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia," (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1993), 415.

¹⁸Confederate nationalism, closely linked to the defense of slavery, had a strong religious aspect which only intensified as the war went on and the Confederacy began to collapse. One of the most visual representations of the confluence of religion, slavery within the lines, and Confederate nationalism can be seen in Virginia artist William D. Washington's 1864 painting "The Burial of Latané." Portraying a group of Tidewater Virginia women and slaves after they have buried a Confederate officer who died in the Peninsula campaign in June 1862, the painting presents white Confederate women as

Christmas trees adorned with Confederate flags and pictures of General Robert E. Lee to observances of days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer called by President Jefferson Davis, many Virginia women used the domestic environment to proclaim their wartime allegiance.¹⁹ Usual expressions of Confederate loyalty involved variations of gender-

Christian upholders of the Confederacy, supporting their men and fulfilling their mandate to uplift the African race. The burial scene reflected the reality that slaveholding women's practical expression of their political loyalties often depended upon slave labor; male slaves dug the grave for Lieutenant Latané, the only Confederate casualty among Jeb Stuart's cavalry during its foray around McClellan's army before the Seven Days' battles. After an anonymous Virginia woman encouraged him to do so, poet John Thompson eulogized Latané in verse. Washington's painting hung in the Capitol of the Confederacy, where visitors demonstrated their support for the war effort by depositing money in a bucket placed under the painting. It was painted on tent cloth because of the scarcity of canvas. Faust, "Race, Gender, and Confederate Nationalism: William D. Washington's Burial of Latané," Southern Review 25 (March 1989): 298-306; Mary Elizabeth Massey, Ersatz in the Confederacy: Shortages and Substitutes on the Confederate Homefront (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1952), 155; "Burial of Latané," undated newspaper clipping, Southern Women's Collection, MoC.

¹⁹Mary Braxton Cocke Diary, 19 Jan. 1865, 9, Cocke Family Papers (Moore Deposit), Special Collections, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville (UVA); Massey, Ersatz, 157; Davis Diary, 26 March 1863, 8 April 1864, 109, 159, VHS; Lizzie Jackson Mann Memoir (typescript), n.d., 1, VHS. During the war, President Davis designated national days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer nine times. Faust, Confederate Nationalism, 24-28. When Chloe Whittle of Norfolk went visiting with her father on 15 April 1861, she wore her "Secession Dress." Whittle, a conservative young woman who nonetheless resented the subordination of women to men, derided her attempt to demonstrate her loyalty: "It shows what women can do, when all that is in their power is to put a few brass buttons up the front of their dresses!" Emily Davies, "'What Sorrows and What Joys,'" 15 April 1861, 25. During the war, women continued to develop special clothing to express their loyalty to the Confederacy. Modeled on a fashion popular abroad during the French Revolution, some wore cockades on their hats, with such emblems as Confederate flags or renditions of their home state or city. Massey, Ersatz, 93. Because of the gender conservatism of such expressions, historian George Rable has dismissed them because they buttressed women's traditional role in society. They should be taken seriously as representations of female citizenship within the domestic environment shared by slaveholding women and slaves. George Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989), 45-46; In another example of the politicization of the domestic workplace, in January 1863, Lucy Cocke endowed domestic production for internal use with political

specific social activity and domestic work. Often these efforts either relied directly on the assistance of female house slaves or depended indirectly on their attendance to the everyday household drudgery.

Benevolent work constituted the major element of slaveholding Confederate women's practical expression of their citizenship during the war.²⁰ Well aware of their inability to take up arms, many women eagerly contributed from the homefront, particularly early in the war before shortages, inflation, and despair mounted.²¹ As

significance when she recorded that some of her slaves were making rope: "Every thing which proves our independance [*sic*] of the Yankees delights me." Lucy Williamson Cocke Diary, 5 Jan. 1863, Cocke Family Papers, UVA.

²⁰Recent explorations of citizenship among elite white Southern women include Cynthia Kierner, "Genteel Balls and Republican Parades: Gender and Early Southern Civic Rituals, 1677-1826," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (VMHB) 104 (Spring 1996), and Elizabeth Varon, "'To Be Counted.'" Kierner describes citizenship as defined in masculine terms in the early national South, when civic virtue was associated with the ownership of property and the right to bear arms. Men contrasted their active, public patriotism with women's passive, apolitical role. Varon contends that Virginia women took advantage of Whig Party overtures to play a public, if limited, political role during the antebellum period.

²¹The phrases "'I wish I was a man'" and "'If only I was not a woman'" recur frequently in the wartime writing of Confederate women. Faust defines this sentiment as conservative because it did not challenge the status quo of gendered responsibilities. Rable, *Civil Wars*, 151; Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996), 20, 231-233. For Virginia examples, see Davies, "'What Sorrows and What Joys,'" 24 Feb. 1865, 224; Antoinette van Zelm, "Chloe Tyler Whittle: Religion, Gender, and Identity in Norfolk, Virginia, 1865-1876," (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1992), 50-51; Broun Diary (typescript), 6 Nov. 1862, [1], SHC; Varon, "'To Be Counted,'" 464-467. Scholars and popular writers have been studying the contributions of Confederate slaveholding women to the war since the late nineteenth century. In addition to Rable and Faust, see Frank Moore, *Women of the War: Their Heroism and Self-Sacrifice* (Hartford: S.S. Scranton & Co., 1867); L.P. Brockett and Mary C. Vaughan, *Women's Work in the Civil War: A Record of Heroism, Patriotism, and Patience* (Phila.: Ziegler, McCurdy & Co., 1867), Francis Simkins and James Patton, *The Women of the Confederacy* (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, Inc., 1936), Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Bonnet*

individuals and through soldiers' aid societies, slaveholding women assisted Confederate soldiers through an expansion of such traditional female occupations as sewing, baking, nursing the sick, and making charitable contributions.²² In performing such work, mistresses attempted to fulfill their appointed role as resourceful inheritors of the patriotic tradition embodied by women of the Revolutionary War period.²³

Brigades (N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966); Anne Firor Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930 (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970); Marilyn Mayer Culpepper, Trials and Triumphs: Women of the American Civil War (East Lansing: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1991).

²²Mary Elizabeth Massey, Women in the Civil War (as Bonnet Brigades, N.Y.: A.A. Knopf, Inc., 1966; repr., Lincoln: Bison Books, Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1994), 52. Nursing the wounded in hospitals was a departure for elite white women during the war. Faust downplays their contributions in comparison to the labor of black Southerners as nurses, laundresses, and cooks in Confederate hospitals. Mothers of Invention, 96, 112. As early as the summer of 1861, Confederate General J.B. Magruder had requested permission from the Secretary of War to hire black women at low wages as laborers in military hospitals in Virginia. Berlin, et al., eds., Destruction, 685. James Brewer's review of staffing in several Confederate hospitals in Richmond shows black men outnumbering black women as nurses by considerable margins. Brewer, The Confederate Negro, 95-98, 104-105, 110, 120-127, 185. In the Virginia interior, slaves and free blacks worked in Confederate hospitals in Lynchburg, Clarksville, Farmville, Liberty, and Charlottesville. Lynda Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 1850-1870 (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1992), 95-96; See also Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, Reminiscences of Peace and War (N.Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1904), 185.

²³Rable, Civil Wars, 44, 56, 143; Varon, "'To Be Counted,'" 448-451; Donna Rebecca Dondes Krug, "The Folks Back Home: The Confederate Homefront During the Civil War," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Irvine, 1990), 26-27; Emory Thomas, The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1971), 1-2; Faust, Confederate Nationalism, 14; Francis Butler Simkins and James Welch Patton, The Women of the Confederacy (Richmond: Garrett & Massie, Inc., 1936), 3. Although part of this tradition involved domestic contributions, another aspect of this role was the willingness to sacrifice their men on the battlefield. Both Varon and Rable point out that Confederate discourse on women's role emphasized their support for men in the field over their homefront relief work; Rable further argues that Confederate women played into this because they viewed themselves more as nineteenth-century ladies than as patriots in the mold of their Revolutionary female ancestors.

Many of the women who supported the Confederacy invested significant time and emotion in their benevolent work on behalf of the cause. Some women, for example, personalized their donations by including their names with boxes of supplies and then corresponding with the recipients. At the same time, assistance to the war effort provided a social outlet and conferred status within communities that were in a state of flux. Early in the war before paper became scarce, most newspapers in the Confederacy printed the names of individuals and soldiers' aid societies who had donated items to the war effort.²⁴

Large numbers of women in both the Tidewater and Southside regions joined soldiers' aid societies, which emphasized the communal aspect of homefront support for the troops. After helping to organize a soldiers' aid society in upper King William County, Caroline Hill declared, "The Ladi[e]s of the south are truly patriotic."²⁵ Soldiers' aid societies combined middle- and upper-class membership with traditional female labor, particularly knitting and sewing, although of a less refined character than the

²⁴Massey, Ersatz, 22-24. The Danville Register of 15 August 1861, for example, included news items about both individual and group contributions made by local women.

²⁵Faust, Mothers of Invention, 24-25; Sally Taliaferro Diary (typescript), 15 Aug. 1861, 23 Sept. 1861, 5 Nov. 1861, LVA; Wallace, Glencoe Diary, [18]; Pattie Watkins, Mt. Pleasant, [Prince Edward County], to Nannie V. Watkins, Sassafras Fork P.O., Granville [County], N.C., 14 April 1862, Watkins Papers, W&M; Lucy Cocke Diary, 1 Feb. 1863, 2 Feb. 1863, Cocke Family Papers, UVA. On 20 August 1861, the King William association sent clothing, linens, mattresses, pillows, pincushions, vegetables, and rope to Yorktown. Caroline Hill Davis Diary, 10 Aug. 1861, 24, VHS; King William [County, Virginia] Soldiers Aid Society: List of Subscribers and Contributions, 1861, Miscellaneous Southern Women Materials, MoC.

handwork usually done by elite women.²⁶ The presence of domestic slave women to perform the menial labor associated with maintaining a household gave many slaveholding women the opportunity to participate in these organizations.

Soldiers' aid societies also organized concerts and other entertainments to raise money for poor and sick soldiers and their families. These events reinforced the status of "ladies" even as they generated financial support for the war effort. In the fall of 1861, Norfolk women engaged musicians from the Third Alabama Regiment to give a benefit concert for the local soldiers' aid society. Held at the Norfolk Opera House, the concert raised more than five hundred dollars.²⁷

In addition to behind-the-scenes organizational work, Confederate women and their daughters sometimes took the stage in fund-raising initiatives. The most financially successful charitable entertainment ventures during the war were tableaux vivants, still representations of scenes accompanied by patriotic music. Participants portrayed such wartime icons as seceding states or Confederate symbols, as well as timeless characters from fiction. In early 1863, refugees and residents of Danville raised five hundred

²⁶In Williamsburg, for example, Cynthia Coleman joined a "Working Society" of women formed to make tents, uniforms, and other materials for the army. Sturzenberger, "Southern Lady Ideal," 62-63.

²⁷The performance included "Dixie," "Old Virginny," and "the well-known negro song 'Alabama.'" The editors suggest that "Alabama" referred to either "Rose of Alabama" or "Alabama Joe." William Stanley Hoole and Addie Shirley Hoole, eds., Confederate Norfolk: The Letters of a Virginia Lady to the Mobile "Register," 1861-1862 (University, Ala.: Confederate Publishing Co., 1984), 27-28, 30-31, 46. See also M.C. Carmichael, Danville, to Lt. Charles C. Carmichael, 25 July 1864, Carmichael Letters, LVA.

dollars through two exhibitions of tableaux.²⁸

In their descriptions of their efforts on behalf of the Confederacy, slaveholding women did not usually acknowledge the participation of slave women whose labor formed the foundation of the domestic workplace, so it is difficult to determine precisely the extent of their involvement.²⁹ Certainly, when slaveholding women ministered to soldiers in their homes, they drew on the labor of house slaves. In Williamsburg, Sallie Galt and her brother John opened their home to refugees from Hampton in 1861 and provided food and shelter to retreating Confederate soldiers after the Battle of Williamsburg in May of 1862. Apparently, the Galts were not unique; Harriette Cary noted on 21 May 1862: "Nearly every family has one or more of the wounded, whom it affords them great pleasure to nurse."³⁰

²⁸M.C. Carmichael, Danville, to Lt. Charles C. Carmichael, 28 Jan. 1863, LVA; Hoole and Hoole, eds., Confederate Norfolk, 37. Women sometimes had to defend tableaux against ministers and others who viewed them as ungodly and wasteful. Rable, Civil Wars, 141-142.

²⁹For similar silences regarding slave women's labor in slaveholding women's antebellum writings, see Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1988), 6-7, 119. In his brief discussion of slaveholder Sally Tompkins, who ran a hospital in Richmond during the war, James Brewer juxtaposes the postwar glorification of Tompkins and the unacknowledged but significant role played by black attendants at her hospital. The Confederate Negro, 117-118. See also the extensive description of a Portsmouth, Virginia, soldiers' aid society in History of Confederated Memorial Associations of the South (Confederated Southern Memorial Association, 1904), 292-294, which refers to slaves only in the context of slave management within a hospital and elides their probable assistance with food preparation. For a passing, negative reference to slaves' assisting their mistresses with the creation of substitutes during the war, see Simkins and Patton, Women of the Confederacy, 138.

³⁰Cary Diary, Tyler's 9 (1927-28): 112, 114; "List of Wounded Confederate Soldiers [le]ft in the Baptist Church Hospital at Williamsburg after the battle of 5th May 1862," Cynthia Beverley Tucker Washington Coleman Papers, Tucker-Coleman Collection,

That the altruism of Williamsburg's Confederate residents increased the daily burdens on their house slaves is clear in a letter written by Sallie Galt in October 1861. Galt informed a cousin, "There are seven hundred & fifty sick soldiers in town so that we are kept very busy sending articles of food suitable for the sick to them[.] Arena takes them something every day." In addition to serving as courier, Arena, who cooked for the Galts, no doubt helped to prepare the jellies and custards that Sally Galt provided for the sick soldiers. Galt later confided to one of her correspondents that she tried to contribute as many delicacies as possible to a makeshift hospital nearby because she did not visit the soldiers as most other townswomen did. Gifts of food, delivered by Arena, enabled Galt to fulfill her role as a benevolent gentlewoman within her community.³¹

When slaveholding women took out old looms and spinning wheels to make clothing for their families and soldiers, they called on the labor of slave women. As

W&M. Sallie Galt stated that by 31 October 1861, seventeen sick soldiers had stayed with her and her brother. She noted that a nurse from the camp had cared for at least some of the men while they lodged with her. Sallie Maria Galt to unidentified cousin, Williamsburg, 31 Oct. 1861, Galt Papers I, W&M; Elizabeth Neal Pitzer, "Sallie and Elizabeth Galt: Compliance and Resistance to the 'Southern Lady' Role in Antebellum Williamsburg," (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1985), 49-53.

³¹Sally Maria Galt to unidentified cousin, Williamsburg, 31 Oct. 1861; Sally Maria Galt to "My darling," Williamsburg, 26 March [c. 1862], Galt Papers I, W&M. Similarly, when Sally Taliaferro brought broiled chickens, butter, bread, pickles, and buttermilk to the Gloucester court house for members of the Confederate cavalry, she was providing them with some of the fruits of her slave women's labor. Sally Taliaferro Diary (typescript), 25 July 1862, LVA. Sally Lyons Taliaferro to William Booth Taliaferro, Dunham Massie, 2 Aug. 1862, Taliaferro Papers, W&M. For evidence that slave women and children in South Carolina assisted with packing boxes of food for soldiers and contributed items to the packages, see Simkins and Patton, Women of the Confederacy, 165, which depicts slave women as eager contributors, and Marli Frances Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves: Gender, Race, and South Carolina Women, 1830-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Rochester, 1986), 219-223, which depicts slave women as reluctant assistants.

former mistress Sarah Pryor recalled, "The door of the loom-house was again opened, and the weaver installed upon her high bench." Yet cloth production was far more difficult than Sarah Pryor's recollection indicates, as weaving had died out in much of the South by the 1860s, and many mistresses and slaves had to learn how to go about making cloth. In late May 1863, Sally Page wrote to her daughter: "We have got the loom at work at last but Nancy is not a very expert weaver." In early 1864, Mary Anne Anderson of Rockbridge County wrote to her daughter Mary Evelyn Bruce: "Write me how much a woman ought to card and spin in a day of cotton? I have set Tabby to spinning and how much tow or Flax can they spin in a day [?]"³²

Similarly, in the spring of 1863, Sally Taliaferro of Gloucester County recorded in her diary: "Mr. Dabney's man, George, spent the day, instructing Katy in the mysteries of the flying shuttle." The next day, she wrote, "Katy makes very little progress with the

³²Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, Reminiscences of Peace and War (N.Y.: MacMillan, 1904), 266; Sally Page to Jennie [Page], Locust Grove, 28 May 1863, Southern Women's Collection, MoC; M.A. Anderson, "Glenwood," to Mary Evelyn Bruce, 18 Jan. 1864, James Bruce Family Papers, UVA; Simkins and Patton, Women of the Confederacy, 149-150. Slaveholding women did not engage in widespread production of cloth, despite the promptings of Confederate propaganda. Still, some women did form societies whose members pledged to wear homespun and only homespun, as had women in some urban areas of Virginia after John Brown's raid. Faust finds claims of cloth production in memoirs written by former Confederate women inflated. Perhaps the widespread claim to cloth production in memoirs was part of the Lost Cause construction of the faithful wartime house slave. Mothers of Invention, 45-51, 270; Massey, Ersatz, 89; Rable, Civil Wars, 94; Varon, "'To Be Counted,'" 397-400. Mistresses with small slaveholdings did some spinning and weaving themselves. Nannie Watkins, Waterloo, to Nathaniel Watkins, 18 Nov. 1862; Pattie Watkins, Mt. Pleasant, to Nathaniel V. Watkins, 12 Feb. 1863, Nannie Watkins, Waterloo, to Nathaniel V. Watkins, 12 Nov. 1863, Watkins Papers, W&M. During the colonial period, Southern women had not received public recognition of their participation in the boycott of British imports, as Northern women occasionally had; Cynthia Kierner speculates that the key role of slave women in domestic cloth production contributed to this neglect. Kierner, "Genteel Balis," 192-193.

flying shuttle." Perhaps Katy resisted the new demands placed on her. Although Katy completed large pieces of cloth in May and June, by August Taliaferro had had the loom dismantled and sent to a neighboring white woman to do the weaving. The following spring, Taliaferro failed to get Katy to take up weaving again and urged her husband, Confederate General William Booth Taliaferro, to send her some "Yankee money" so that she could get some cloth made: "[I] can't get any clothes for the children or servants. Katy will not weave. I have had to cut up my red chamber curtains for the children. . . ." Katy's opposition to weaving stymied Sally Taliaferro's efforts to respond to shortages through plantation self-sufficiency.³³

Slaveholding women found that their slave laborers increasingly rebelled against assisting them in establishing a Confederate nation on the homefront.³⁴ By the time of

³³Sally Taliaferro Diary, 23 April, 24 April, 7 May, 24 June, 6 Aug., 7 Aug, 14 Sept., 30 Sept. 1863, W&M; [Sally Lyons Taliaferro] to William Booth Taliaferro, 3 April [1864?] [incomplete], [Sally Lyons Taliaferro] to William B. Taliaferro, 15 April 1864 [incomplete], W&M. Although Taliaferro made several references to spinning and knitting "for the soldiers," she never indicated whether slave women did any of the work, but they probably did some of it. Taliaferro Diary, 23 Sept. 1861, 9 Feb. 1864, 10 Feb. 1864, 16 Feb. 1864, W&M. Taliaferro's sister Mary suggested that she and a slave woman made two frock coats for a Texas regiment. Mary to Sallie Lyons Taliaferro, Laburnum, 25 [n.m., 1862], W&M. For the work of South Carolina slave women in producing uniforms for soldiers, see Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves," 219-223.

³⁴For an exception to this, see Lizzie Hayden to Nora Davidson, Baltimore, 8 June 1866, 26 July 1866. Hayden fondly recalled her hospital work in Petersburg on behalf of the Confederacy and wrote on 26 July: "All the services that I have done towards the sick & wounde[d] was done cheerfully and were it to go over again I would freely offer my services & do all in my power for our dear homes for the Sunny South is the garden spot of this country & the People are noble generous and brave." Hayden, who signed her 8 June letter "your Friend and Rebel Nigger," worked under Davidson's supervision at the hospital in 1864. The two letters are in different handwriting, suggesting that they were written for Hayden. Miscellaneous African-American Material, MoC.

the Battle of Williamsburg in the spring of 1862, Cynthia Coleman noticed that her mother's slaves had begun to carry out their duties only grudgingly. By November 1864, slave women who worked for Sally Taliaferro were limiting the length of their work day by beginning it when they chose. Taliaferro expressed her frustration to her husband: "I am the first person at the Barn in the morning--& always have to call Sarah & Milly down stairs after I go out. Katy & [Patt?] make their appearance at eight o'clock and very coolly told me they could not go out while the dew was on the grass." In addition to challenging their normal work routines, slave women drew on other forms of resistance developed over the years. Occasionally they lashed out violently against their owners. More often, like Katy and Patt, they resorted to verbal "insolence." Some destroyed their owners' property during the course of the work day.³⁵

As historians of the war and emancipation have made clear, resistance took on new significance during the war, because the work and dedication of slaves were key to the survival of the Confederacy. Slave labor and loyalty became increasingly important as the war went on; at the same time, slaves became less and less dependable as they

³⁵Sturzenberger, "Southern Lady Ideal," 68-69, 108-109; Sally Lyons Taliaferro to William Booth Taliaferro, 1 Nov. 1864, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; Talbot Sweeney, Williamsburg, to Governor John Letcher, 24 Oct. 1862, and W.R.C. Douglass, Eastern Lunatic Asylum, to Governor Letcher, 9 Nov. 1862, in H.W. Flournoy, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts from January 1, 1836, to April 15, 1869; Preserved in the Capitol at Richmond (Richmond: 1893; repr., N.Y.: Kraus Reprint Corp., 1968), 228-233, 237; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 61; Morgan, Emancipation in the Tobacco Belt, 105-106; Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman to Charles W. Coleman, Clarksville, 1 Oct. 1864, 30 Nov. 1864, Tucker-Coleman Collection, W&M. See Tera W. Hunter, "Household Workers in the Making: Afro-American Women in Atlanta and the New South, 1861-1920," (Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ., 1990), 21-22, for similar complaints to Coleman's recorded by Georgia mistresses about female slaves during the war.

became aware of the likelihood of Union victory. Their continued service increasingly became conditional, based on the movements of the armies and the treatment they received from their owners.³⁶

Wartime slave resistance can be attributed in part to the feminization of slave management throughout the Confederacy as a result of the departure of white men to the front. Both female and male slaves took advantage of the absence of white men from households to wring concessions from those mistresses inexperienced with slave management and unable to mask the vulnerability they felt after being left in charge.

Because of mistresses' subordinate position within the white hierarchy, they received less deference than masters from slaves. In May of 1863, for example, Captain Charles B. Wilder, Superintendent of Contrabands at federally-occupied Fort Monroe, described a recent meeting he had held in Suffolk with slaves who had come to see him from Confederate territory: "When I got at the feelings of these people I found they were not afraid of the slaveholders. They said there was nobody on the plantations but women and they were not afraid of them." In late 1864, Lucy Holladay, a mistress in Spotsylvania County in northern Virginia, described her inability to maintain control: "We have a parcel of women & children as helpless as we & they will not work & are unruly I can't make them do any thing." Lamenting her inability to get a slave named Sam to gather oysters for her in the winter of 1864, Sally Taliaferro exclaimed to her

³⁶Emory M. Thomas, The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), 124; Leon Litwack, "Many Thousands Gone: Black Southerners and the Confederacy," in Harry P. Owens and James J. Cooke, eds., The Old South in the Crucible of War (Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1983), 52.

husband, "But of course every body is free now--except white people."³⁷ Unable to instill respect or fear in their slaves, some mistresses had difficulty maintaining discipline among their bondpeople and reacted to their tribulations in an ill-tempered manner.³⁸

Because the war had made the accumulation of necessities, much less luxuries, difficult, mistresses resented slave women's carelessness, whether intentional or not. Just a month before she left for Union lines, a slave named Mahala of Norfolk County raised the ire of her mistress, Elizabeth Wallace: "That nigger Mahala has broke another china plate and saucer. If she would only confine herself to destroying the stone china I could bear it better, but she always breaks my french china. There is I am sure more china and glass destroyed in this house than any other in the Confederate States."³⁹ With sarcasm, Wallace suggested that Mahala's actions were intentional.

³⁷Lucy Holladay to Lucy, n.d. (received 29 Oct. 1864). Executive Papers, RG 3, LVA; Sally Lyons Taliaferro to William Booth Taliaferro, Dunham Massie, 17 Feb. 1864, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; Faust, "'Trying to Do a Man's Business.'" 201. Testifying before the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, Wilder added that his visitors had included a woman who "came through 200 miles in men's clothes." The woman probably dressed in men's clothes for ease of travel, but the group may also have figured that a member recognizable at a distance as a woman might increase the likelihood that they would attract attention. Berlin, et al., eds., Destruction, 88-90, 677-678.

³⁸Litwack, Been in the Storm, 11-13. As a refugee in Mecklenburg County, Cynthia Coleman became exasperated with the three young slaves who worked on the farm. She wanted to whip a slave named Toby, whom she accused of stealing food from her and selling cabbages for his own benefit, but her husband Charles advised against this in a letter to her. Sturzenberger, "Southern Lady Ideal," 75-76. Cynthia Coleman may have been an exception. Although slaveholding women lashed out against slaves, many were uncomfortable with the systematic use of physical force. Faust, Mothers of Invention, 62-70.

³⁹Mahala may also have used illness as a form of resistance. Wallace, Glencoe Diary, 7 April 1863, 12 May 1863, 24, 34.

As a protest against the imposition of unbridled power, slave women's resistance had always had a political dimension. The domestic workplace became politicized in a new way when those who lived in Union-held territory used military authorities as their allies against slaveholders. In late 1862, a slaveholder named Anne Bradford related to her friend Hugh Blair Grigsby an incident which she described as the worst development that had taken place in Norfolk in the period before she left for North Carolina as a refugee. According to Bradford, a Dr. Clemens had punished one of his slave women for "excessive insolence." She responded by throwing a dish of hot hash at the doctor and biting him on the hand. She then filed a complaint with the provost marshal, and Clemens had to pay a \$50 fine and give security for \$500 that he would not mistreat the woman again. Bradford concluded, "This is establishing quite a new order of things between contrabands and their owners." Similarly, on 21 May 1862, Harriette Cary wrote from Union-occupied Williamsburg: "Negroes are presuming very much under the present administration--Campbell, the military governor, lends an ear to the statement of any grievance, which is promptly redressed." In such interactions, slave women and men contributed to the development of the "new order" by using military authorities to challenge their treatment as slaves.⁴⁰

As slaves fled her Gloucester County neighborhood in June 1862, Sally Taliaferro

⁴⁰Anne Elizabeth Tazewell Bradford, Hillsboro, N.C., to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 24 Nov. 1862, Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, VHS; "Diary of Miss Harriette Cary," Tyler's 9 (1927-28): 112; Myrta Lockett Avary, Dixie After the War: An Exposition of Social Conditions Existing in the South, During the Twelve Years Succeeding the Fall of Richmond (N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1906; repr., N.Y.: Da Capo Press, 1970), 191; Stephen V. Ash, When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1995), 162.

informed her husband: "Those who remain think they confer a great favour by doing so, and act accordingly." In areas close to Union outposts, slaves used the proximity of the army to attempt to establish a new order in labor conditions as well as in disciplinary matters. Slaves who stayed with their owners during the war had new leverage in the threat of desertion and used it to gain greater control over their labor and more independence for themselves. By August 1863, 1600 ex-slaves lived on farms run by Union officials in the Tidewater. These freedpeople made up only about six percent of the blacks in the region, but their new situation created opportunities for those still in bondage. Plantation owners had to compete or workers would leave. Under the auspices of military officials, some owners became employers and drew up labor contracts for their former slaves. Many of the approximately 5000 blacks still enslaved in Tidewater Virginia had negotiated new labor arrangements with their owners by the late summer of 1863.⁴¹

In Gloucester County, a house slave named Susan translated her continued service into control over her comings and goings. In November 1863, Susan's mistress, Sally Taliaferro, recorded in her diary: "Susan anxious to go to Yorktown to see her husband, who is very sick. Tried to dissuade her from going. She very resolute and set off at night

⁴¹Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, series 1, vol. 2, The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South (N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 23, 39, 65, 80, 96-97; Sally Lyons Taliaferro to William Booth Taliaferro, Dunham Massie, 27 June 1862, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M. Captain Charles B. Wilder, Superintendent of Contrabands at Fort Monroe, recognized the importance of providing a real alternative. With regard to the army's delinquency in paying military laborers, he stated in May 1863: "There are hundreds of negroes at Williamsburgh with their families working for nothing. They would not get pay here and they had rather stay where they are." Berlin, et al., eds., Destruction, 88-90.

...." Susan, who had a close relationship with Taliaferro, again visited Yorktown in August of 1864 and did not return when her mistress expected her. When Susan did come back, she sought to placate Taliaferro by bringing shoes for Taliaferro's daughter Leah and gloves for both Leah and Sally.⁴² As even favored slaves became more assertive about what they would and would not do, mistresses saw their control slipping away.

Slaves did not necessarily use their increased leverage to make demands for change. For slaves who had placed themselves in a beneficial situation before the conflict, wartime assertiveness could take the form of determination to maintain the status quo, at least until the war was over.⁴³ A slave cook named Fanny, who lived in an urban area, made and sold soap for income. During the war, she insisted on continuing her soapmaking, although her owner tried to convince her to stop temporarily because the wood with which he supplied her had become so expensive. He offered to pay her fifty dollars if she would stop for a year, but she refused, and he continued to provide the wood. Interpreted after the war as an example of the "indulgence" of the family and the "control" wielded by Fanny, the slavery apologist who described this situation failed to note that the family benefitted from Fanny's continued willingness to cook for them. Fanny certainly knew that other domestic slaves had left their owners, and she traded her

⁴²Sally Taliaferro Diary, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M, 17 Nov. 1863, 4 Aug. 1864, 8 Aug. 1864, 9 Aug. 1864.

⁴³During the antebellum period, slave women and men usually used resistance to re-establish work or living conditions that they had negotiated and that their owners had suddenly changed. Deborah Gray White, Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South (N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 1985), 76-77.

willingness to stay for the continuation of her semi-autonomous soap production, which had no doubt become highly lucrative in the wartime economy of shortages.⁴⁴

Especially in the last couple of years of the war, slaves resisted their owners' control because they cut back on provisions in the face of shortages and inflation. As the war progressed, slaveholding women found themselves with fewer and fewer resources with which to feed their families and slaves, much less provide assistance to the war effort. Shortages of luxuries were followed by shortages of some basic necessities as early as the fall of 1861. As prices skyrocketed, yeoman families and residents of increasingly crowded urban areas found it particularly difficult to obtain provisions. The magnitude of homefront suffering in the Confederacy was so great that although government at all levels (and particularly state and local governments) provided assistance as never before, it fell far short of the need. During the last months of the war in Virginia, even some members of the elite feared starvation.⁴⁵

⁴⁴Letitia M. Burwell (Page Thacker, pseud.), Plantation Reminiscences ([Owensboro?, Ky.]: s.n., 1878), 55 (Burwell does not identify the urban area, but she grew up in Bedford County and so may have been referring to Lynchburg); Mary Elizabeth Massey, Women in the Civil War, 212-213.

⁴⁵Widespread shortages joined with battlefield defeats to engender despair and war-weariness among civilians by late 1863. Massey, Ersatz, 7, 28, 33, 171-172; Rable, Civil Wars, 102-106, 209, 316; Krug, "Folks Back Home," 24-74; William Frank Zornow, "Aid for the Indigent Families of Soldiers in Virginia, 1861-1865," VMHB 66 (Oct. 1958): 454-458. For references to wartime shortages and suffering in Virginia, see Sally Taliaferro to William Booth Taliaferro, Dunham Massie, 23 Dec. 1861, 17 Feb. 1864, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; Glencoe Diary, 24 April 1863, 6 Aug. 1864, 29, 121; Authorization to Sell Surplus Provisions for the Use of Indigent Families of Soldiers, 21 Feb. 1865, Samuel Pannill Wilson Papers, UVA; Lucy W. Cocke Diary, Cocke Family Papers, 18 March 1863, 15 April 1863; George Neville to Nellie Newman Neville, Richmond, 25 Feb. 1865, Neville-Newman Collection, UVA; Sarah M. Galt to Mary J. Galt, Williamsburg, 11 April 1865, Galt Family Papers, LVA; J.M. Willcox to Susannah Willcox, 10 March 1863, James Willcox Papers, DK; Lucy A. Cardwell and

Some Virginia slaves reacted to the breakdown in the system by fleeing; others refused to labor except to raise subsistence crops for themselves. Slaveholding women recognized the problem. After paying sixty-six dollars for thirty-three yards of cotton for winter clothes for her slaves in July 1863, Mrs. M.C. Carmichael, a refugee in Danville, wrote to her son, who was in the Confederate army: "I try to be as liberal as I ever was, if not more so, but our expenses are not only very heavy but constantly increasing, and I find the ability falls far short of the desire." By implying that she wished to counter potential wartime discontent among her slaves by providing more for them than she had before the war, Carmichael admitted that slavery was based on a careful balance of give and take which she was having difficulty maintaining. She asked her son to save his old clothes for her so that she could give them to her male slaves. Similarly, by the fall of 1864, Gloucester County's Sally Taliaferro could no longer fulfill her responsibility as provider, much less maternalist, and her slaves responded accordingly: "Servants in a great state of demoralization from having nothing to eat. Can get none."⁴⁶

others, Clarksville, Mecklenburg Co., to Governor Letcher, 13 Jan. 1863, Inda D. Carviles, Campbell Co., to Governor Smith, 13 Sept. 1864, Executive Papers, RG 3, LVA.

⁴⁶Berlin, *et al.*, eds., Destruction, 42; Mrs. M.C. Carmichael, Danville, to Lt. Charles C. Carmichael, 3-4 July 1863, Carmichael Letters, LVA; Rable, Civil Wars, 115-116; Sally Taliaferro Diary and Typescript, William B. Taliaferro Papers, 3 Sept. 1864, W&M; Simkins and Patton, Women of the Confederacy, 172-173; Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, series 2, The Black Military Experience (N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982), 657. See also Taliaferro's expressed fear of a "bread riot" on the plantation, in [Sally Lyons Taliaferro] to William Booth Taliaferro, 15 April 1864, W&M. Berlin *et al.* argue that in Union-occupied areas during the war, planters readily gave up paternalism even as they reluctantly made the transition to free labor. Some evicted the old, disabled, and sick; others discontinued medical care. Eugene Genovese depicts the decline of paternalism in the South after emancipation as more gradual. Neither Berlin *et al.* nor

The war both enhanced slaveholding women's need to exert control through maternalism and limited their ability to do so. For mistresses such as Sally Taliaferro and Elizabeth Wallace of Norfolk County, the ritual of recording slave births and deaths in their diaries must have reassured them of the continuation of the slave system and their role as maternalists within it, even as they worried about the arrival of babies who placed new demands on limited supplies. Some mistresses also continued to minister to their slaves' moral and spiritual lives during the war by teaching Sunday School and taking part in weddings and funerals.⁴⁷

At least one woman addressed the governor of Virginia on behalf of one of her slave women. Writing from Oxford, North Carolina, in January 1863, Mary Butt pleaded with Governor John Letcher to alter the death sentence imposed on a young slave named Margaret, who had been convicted of killing a child. In her appeal that Margaret be transported rather than executed, Butt cited the loyalty of Margaret's mother: "Her mother has been a true and faithful servant to me, and it is for her sake, as well as Margaret's, I have ventured to plead with you, to spare her life if it be possible." Butt

Genovese incorporates a gender analysis in the discussion of paternalism's demise. Berlin, et al., eds., *Free Labor*, 50, 74, 145; Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (N. Y.: Pantheon Books, 1982), 110-112.

⁴⁷Taliaferro, for example, recorded on 29 July 1863 that a slave named Fanny had given birth to "twins." Wallace, *Glencoe Diary*, 10 April 1863, 30 April 1863, 25, 30; Taliaferro Diary and Typescript, 16 June 1861, 26 Nov. 1861, 17 Dec. 1861, 18 June 1862, 28 June 1862, 31 Oct. 1862, 29 July 1863, 22 Oct. 1863, 22 Nov. 1863, LVA, W&M; Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves," 235-236; Simkins and Patton, *Women of the Confederacy*, 171-172; Davies, "'What Sorrows and What Joys,'" 6 Sept. 1863, 118; Pryor, *Reminiscences of Peace and War*, 146-147, 157-158; Emmeline Allmand Crump Lightfoot Memoir (1927), 2-3, VHS; Catherine Barbara Broun Diary, 1862-1868 (typescript), 25 Dec. 1864, 40, Catherine Barbara Broun Papers, SHC.

hoped that Letcher would share her view that fidelity deserved to be rewarded, a classic element of a maternalistic conception of slavery. In a more self-interested letter, Mrs. D.A. Puryear of Mecklenburg County, Virginia, requested in March 1865 that Governor William Smith reverse the county court's decision to requisition her only male field hand for work on the fortifications. She exhibited maternalism in her plea: "My Husband is in the service, & I have a large family of children both white and black to support. . . ." It is highly unlikely that the governor fulfilled Puryear's request.⁴⁸

Mistresses depicted slaves who remained with their owners and took advantage of maternalistic gestures as contented. Mahala, a slave who belonged to the Hill family in King William County, married a little more than two months before Lee's surrender at Appomattox. As fellow slaves Betty and Fanny made a cake for her, the other slaves celebrated the coming nuptials. "All of the servants are full of the frolic," wrote Caroline Hill in her diary.⁴⁹ The aura of constancy with which Hill found in the domestic environment contrasts sharply with the changes taking place within other slaveholding households throughout Virginia.

Slaves had long developed their own world view to counter slaveholders' paternalism, and the war gave them another alternative. Slave women did not often share their feelings about the war with their owners but were vigilant about gleaning information from them, a careful watchfulness which added to mistresses' frustration on

⁴⁸Mary M. Butt to Governor Letcher, Oxford, N.C., 2 Jan. 1863, Mrs. D.A. Puryear to Governor William A. Smith, Mecklenburg County, 6 March 1865, Executive Papers, RG 3, LVA.

⁴⁹Davis Diary, 4 Feb. 1865, 186, VHS.

the homefront. Some slave women nonetheless found ways to demonstrate their views about the war and reject their mistresses' maternalism. In 1863, a slave named Tamar made clear to her owner Elizabeth Wallace that she was contemplating naming her new son after Abraham Lincoln. Other slave women encouraged their mistresses' maternalism during the war but rejected it once freed. In her Civil War memoir, Lizzie Mann of Gloucester County noted that a former slave named Cely had changed the name of her infant under the influence of her Union liberators; as a slave during the war, Cely had requested some members of the Mann family to name the child, and they had chosen "Price" after the Confederate general.⁵⁰

Some slave women directly challenged their mistresses' continued belief in slavery. In Norfolk in July of 1864, a freedwoman related to missionary Lucy Chase a conversation she had had with her mistress before departing. When her mistress had tried to convince her to stay, the freedwoman had argued with her about the legitimacy of slavery. The freedwoman had contended that, if people could own each other, then

⁵⁰Sally Taliaferro Diary, 12 April 1861, LVA; Wallace, Glencoe Diary, 30 April 1863, 30; Lizzie Jackson Mann Memoir, n.d. (typescript), 8-9, VHS (Mann does not indicate the child's new name). After the war, freedpeople would continue to name their children after Lincoln in honor of emancipation. Berlin, *et al.*, eds., Destruction, 10; Complete Poems of Frances E. W. Harper, ed. Maryemma Graham (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 121-122; Peter Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890 (Urbana and Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989; orig. published as Black Labor in the South: Richmond, Virginia, 1865-1890 (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1984)), 22. For an example of a Nelson County slave baby named after Jefferson Davis shortly after the start of the war, see Jordan, Black Confederates, 22. For discussions of slaves' wait-and-see attitude during the war and their efforts to conceal their feelings about the war from their owners, see Thomas, The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience, 124; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 149-163; Ira Berlin, *et al.*, eds., Destruction, 10; Litwack, "Many Thousands Gone," in Owens and Cooke, eds., The Old South in the Crucible of War, 47-63.

parents could own their children. Her mistress had denied this, claiming that ownership was only possible in the context of whites' owning blacks. The slave woman had replied, "Government owns *you* and *everything*." Probably enslaved in occupied Norfolk, this woman pointedly emphasized the restraints under which her mistress lived while ruled by an invading military force. Similarly, in Gloucester County in November 1864, Susan argued with Sally Taliaferro about the meaning of the war. Taliaferro related to her husband: "Think of Susan's telling me this war was sent by God as a punishment to us--I told her a great many more Yankees had been killed than Southerners--she said 'they chose to kill themselves--but that was very different from having a people sent by God to destroy them']"--what next? I wonder--Think of having people about you who hold such views as those." The wartime trials that former mistresses referred to after the war surely included such confrontations in which slave women steadfastly voiced their own opinions. For women on both sides of the racial divide, emancipation was much more of a process than an event.⁵¹

Although throughout the Confederacy there were few orchestrated uprisings among slaves who had remained with their owners during the war, slaves did sometimes band together and refuse to work or grumble to indicate their disquiet. Sally Taliaferro of Gloucester County recorded "more demonstrations among the servants" on 23 June 1862 and a general "commotion among the servants" on 1 May 1863, possibly prompted by the removal of slaves by one of Taliaferro's relatives who lived nearby. Obviously the most common form of collective protest during the war took place when slaves escaped

⁵¹Swint, ed., *Dear Ones at Home*, 127; Sally Lyons Taliaferro to William B. Taliaferro, 1 Nov. 1864, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M.

in groups. In addition, individual resistance, like that demonstrated by Susan on the Taliaferro plantation, was undergirded by a sense of collective redemption. Post-emancipation testimonies by black Virginians and sympathetic Northerners suggest that the war increased group consciousness among black residents and prompted slave women to see themselves as actors in an epic struggle sanctioned by God, a vision similar to the one that Confederate mistresses had of themselves.⁵²

As slaves who remained on plantations and farms became increasingly disaffected from their owners, mistresses functioned within an ever more intense climate of fear generated by Confederate propaganda, their own racial prejudices, and slaves' growing assertiveness. The outbreak of war in Virginia had only exacerbated long-held fears of slave revolts, which focused on images of the violent male slave. Slaves did become bolder in their assaults on slaveholders' property. Slaveholding women such as Mary Poindexter of Norfolk County grew anxious about living alone in isolated areas. After an April 1862 break-in, for which she suspected some of her own slaves acting under the influence of other slaves or poor whites, Poindexter told her brother Hugh Blair Grigsby that she was anxious during the day and frightened at night. She requested that

⁵²Sally Taliaferro Diary (typescript), 23 June 1862, LVA; Sally Taliaferro Diary, 1 May 1863, W&M; Eliza Baker, Memoirs of Williamsburg, Va. (Report taken by Elizabeth Hayes of a conversation between Eliza Baker and the Rev. Wm.A.R. Goodwin, May 4, 1933), Archives and Records Dept., Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Va., 1. See also Harper, Poems, and the Southern Claims Commission testimonies discussed in Chapter Two. White Virginians may well have reinforced the group identity that they perceived, and feared, among black Virginians. Missionary Lewis Lockwood reported in September of 1861 that before the Union army arrived in Hampton, slaveholders and their supporters had threatened to burn down the black church, claiming that blacks' prayers had brought on the war. American Missionary (hereafter AM) 5 (Oct. 1861), 243, 245, 248; AM 7 (Dec. 1863), 279.

he allow her to move into his house in Norfolk, for she had not been successful in hiring a white man with a family to live at the place with her.⁵³

Confederate slaveholding women expressed particular resentment toward black soldiers stationed near their homes. The role reversal represented by former slaves in uniform rankled women living under Union rule. Chloe Whittle of Norfolk recorded in July 1863 that a regiment of black soldiers had arrived "to pollute Norfolk with their detested presence." In December of 1863, various Union regiments of black soldiers conducted raids in southside Virginia and northeastern North Carolina. From Union-occupied Norfolk County, Elizabeth Wallace responded angrily to the presence of a black cavalry force in the area: "I chafe more and more under the nigger government and if I had never before been a Secessionist I should certainly be one now."⁵⁴

Sometimes, mistresses living in the Confederacy required their female slaves to live in the main house so as to provide a buffer between themselves and slave men supposedly intent on raping or otherwise harming them. In other cases, slave women voluntarily moved into their owners' houses to protect mistresses left behind after their

⁵³Jordan, Black Confederates, 177; Mary Poindexter to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 23 April 1862, Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, VHS. Residents of interior areas of the Confederacy, in which the racial balance had been altered by the transfer of slaves for safeguarding and the departure of able-bodied white men for fighting, were particularly susceptible to fears that blacks would take over. Berlin, et al., eds., Destruction, 677-678.

⁵⁴Davies, "'What Sorrows and What Joys,'" 12 July 1863, 116; Jordan, Black Confederates, 269-270; Berlin, et al., Destruction, 94; Wallace, Glencoe Diary, 5 March 1864, 9 March 1864, 98-99; Faust, Mothers of Invention, 58-60. In the spring of 1864, Cyrus Branch of James City County reported to Governor William Smith an alleged rape of a white woman by black soldiers. Cyrus A. Branch, James City County, to Governor William Smith, 15 May 1864, Executive Papers, RG 3, LVA.

husbands, sons, and brothers joined the Confederate forces.⁵⁵ Such slaves, the cause of intense gratification on the part of mistresses during the war, became the subject of glorification by slavery apologists after the war. Certainly, some of these slaves were loyal both to their owners and to the Confederacy. Others were simply doing their owners' bidding until the outcome of the war became known; when these supposedly loyal slaves eventually embraced freedom, their former owners were befuddled and angry.⁵⁶

In their descriptions of slave "faithfulness" during the war, slaveholding women emphasized the protection of persons and property.⁵⁷ In the spring of 1863, Caroline Hill recorded in her diary the faithfulness of slaves Mary and Julia. When Union soldiers visited her cousin Garlick's house at Yoar, he hid over the kitchen and Mary and Julia

⁵⁵Schwalm, "The Meaning of Freedom," 202-202; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 110.

⁵⁶Schwalm, "The Meaning of Freedom," 203; Litwack, "Many Thousands Gone," in Owens and Cooke, eds., Old South, 47-63. According to Drew Faust, Confederate ideology presented slaves as constant in their devotion to their owners, to slavery, and to the new nation. In her penetrating analysis of Confederate ideology, Faust argues that by presenting the slave's response to emancipation time and again, Confederate ideology implied that slaves' views were important, that slavery rested in part on their continued willingness to be enslaved. Without meaning to, Confederate ideology acknowledged that the institution had begun to crumble; proslavery discourse in the Confederacy gave slaves "a symbolic voice." Faust, Confederate Nationalism, 71-72, 81. Confederate propagandists reached out to slaves and free blacks. In August of 1861, for example, the Rev. William A. Smith, president of Randolph Macon College and a staunch defender of slavery, talked with blacks in and around Norfolk about the war. Hoole and Hoole, eds., Confederate Norfolk, 14-15. Slaves and free blacks loyal to the Confederacy demonstrated their support through continued personal service to whites, military service, plantation management for absentee owners, and gifts of cash and land. Jordan, Black Confederates, 229.

⁵⁷Eugene Genovese has succinctly defined slaveholders' conception of faithfulness as "obedience internalized as duty, respect, and love." Roll, Jordan, Roll, 97.

"were so faithful, they would not leave their home nor expose the 'white folks.'" A month later, Union soldiers again came to Yoar; before they arrived, Mary and Julia, "faithful in every emergency," assisted Caroline and her cousin Lucy in hiding all of the valuables. Such examples of continued service became particularly important to slave mistresses, because they recognized that slavery was falling apart around them.⁵⁸ Slave women like Mary and Julia no doubt expected gratitude and protection in return.⁵⁹

When owners entrusted silver and other valuables to slaves as Union troops approached, they placed their faith in their slaves' ability to hide the goods and remain quiet about it. Many "faithful" slaves recognized this and no doubt derived satisfaction from their enhanced status as protectors of property. They knew the premium that their owners placed on valuables like silver, which were often stored under lock and key and which became more valuable during the war as the value of paper currency declined dramatically. Julia Jordan, a young slave woman in Mecklenburg County during the war, recalled years later that, as Union soldiers came into the area, her mistress asked her to hide the slaveholding family's silver and money in her cabin. Jordan hid the valuables under her mattress and placed her baby on top. After she became free, Jordan received a silver mug from her former mistress in thanks. Jordan later gave the mug to her

⁵⁸Davis Diary, 5 May 1863, 5 June 1863, 123, 129-130, VHS; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 149-163. For other descriptions of faithfulness, see William Patterson Smith, "Glen Roy," to Sarah Bruce Seddon, 24 April 1863, Seddon Family Papers, VHS; Mann Memoir (typescript), 7, VHS; Lucy Cocke Diary, 3 May 1863, UVA.

⁵⁹For a discussion of the intimacy of the owner/slave relationship from the slaves' perspective, including their sense of reciprocal obligations and mutual possessiveness, see Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll, 133-137.

daughter, who had helped to distract the soldiers as a baby. Similarly, former slave Mary Jones remembered that her mother, who had belonged to Thomas Nelson Page of Gloucester County, had hidden her mistress's silverware in the chicken house when she saw Union soldiers approach.⁶⁰

Certainly there are apocryphal stories among the litany of "buried silver" Civil War reminiscences, but the prevalence of wartime descriptions suggests that many such incidents did occur and that they held profound meaning for slaveholders and slaves, particularly the former. Beyond its considerable intrinsic value, silver was an indication of social class. Elizabeth Wallace made this clear when she described the aftermath of a Union raid into North Carolina in 1863: "They are now selling to the negroes and the low white people the articles they stole. Mules and merchandize, ladies' wearing apparel & silver spoons and other silverware, elegant velvet cloaks dresses &c." The appropriation of silver and other items by Union soldiers from Confederate civilians during the war symbolized the upheaval in the social order generated by the war and emancipation.⁶¹

⁶⁰Sally Taliaferro used her pen to indicate the significance of her decision to send her wedding silver away with two of her slaves in early 1862: "Sent bricklayer George and Hester to Richmond. Sent my silver." In 1949, Taliaferro's daughter Nina wrote up the story of the transfer of the silver in "Unusual War Incident." Sally Taliaferro Diary, 13 Jan. 1862, LVA; Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 187-189. See also Pauli Murray's discussion of her maternal grandmother's role in assisting her mistress in burying the silver and other valuables on the day that Union cavalry marched into Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Murray, Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family (1956, rev. ed., N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1978; repr. ed., Perennial Library, 1987), 162-163.

⁶¹Wallace, Glencoe Diary, 27 August 1863, 56. A caricature of General Benjamin F. Butler from the immediate postwar period depicts him on a horse laden with what appears to be stolen silver, including cutlery, plates, and goblets, and women's clothing. Lenoir Chambers, "Notes on Life in Occupied Norfolk, 1862-1865," VMHB 73 (April 1865): Between pages 142 and 143.

Although the complexities of "faithful" behavior would become lost in the tales told by slavery apologists and ex-slaves after the war, during the war some mistresses realized that the continued carrying out of orders by slaves did not necessarily represent dedication to their owners. Some slaveholding women distrusted good behavior because they believed that the whole black race had become untrustworthy; they interpreted individual loyalty as a temporary exception to the rule. Anne Bradford related the pessimism of her sister Sally Tazewell in Norfolk: "Their negroes she says as yet behave themselves, but she expects that they will become as insolent and presuming as the rest."⁶²

Other slaveholding women seized on slaves' assertiveness in the absence of their owners to assure themselves of their slaves' "faithfulness." In the summer of 1862, Leah Seddon Taliaferro of Gloucester County emphasized that, in her absence during the Peninsula campaign, her slaves Katy and William had on their own accord carried a portrait to a neighboring plantation for safekeeping. To Taliaferro, this represented true devotion. Katy and William's actions may have resulted from a variety of motivations, including a desire to take charge in a potentially dangerous situation, a calculated attempt to ensure security in the future, and regard for their owners. Similarly, a slave cook who lived in Virginia and went to a Union army camp to get food for her owner's family, enabling them to survive, had switched roles with her mistress even as she remained a

⁶²Sally wrote to Anne from Norfolk, and Anne sent Sally's news to Hugh Blair Grigsby in Charlotte County. Anne Bradford, Hillsboro, N.C., to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 16 June 1863, Grigsby Papers, VHS.

"faithful" slave.⁶³

The role of slaves as purveyors of information that was useful to their owners is another standard theme among former slaveholders' reminiscences about "faithful" wartime slaves. The behavior of slaves in telling their owners of the imminent arrival of Union troops, however, is open to multiple interpretations. By warning owners so that stores and valuables might be hidden from Union soldiers, slaves who had decided to stay on were also looking out for their own physical well-being. Knowledge of Union troop movements also gave them unprecedented, if momentary, power over their owners. This role reversal perhaps helped to trigger mistress Jane Gaines's vehement reaction when a slave cook named Mary informed her during the Peninsula campaign that the armies were close by: "Go away, Mary, you are a triplitt [counterfeit jewel], and you haven't your share of sense." But Mary was right, and the Gaines family had to leave home the next day. In Union-occupied areas, slaves could use their fraternization with Union troops to taunt or otherwise irritate slaveholders anxious for information. On 1 July 1862, Harriette Cary of Williamsburg wrote: "Annoying information we get through the contrabands--who believe anything told them by the Yankees, to whom they seem partial." Slaves' easy intercourse with Union occupiers in Williamsburg also irked Lucy Tucker, even as it facilitated her shipment of clothing to her daughter Cynthia behind Confederate lines in Mecklenburg County: "Showing the times Patsy sends one of the

⁶³Leah Seddon Taliaferro, "Belle Ville," to Sarah Alexander Seddon Bruce, 19 Aug. 1862, Bruce Family Papers, VHS; Massey, Women in the Civil War, 211.

dresses."⁶⁴

Some slaveholding women actively sought to encourage "faithful" behavior among slaves. After a visit from Union cavalry in 1864, Virginia Hankins wrote to her brother, "Tell Isaac the servants all behaved splendidly." Likewise, after the Cocke family in Fluvanna County had experienced a raid by Union troops under General Philip H. Sheridan, Mary Custis Lee, wife of General Lee, wrote to the family: "You must remember me to the servants & tell them how glad I am to hear of their fidelity."⁶⁵

Faithfulness can perhaps best be explained by the fact that most slaves lived in worlds made up of intricate relationships and responsibilities based on both their own family and kin connections and those of their owners. At the end of a letter to her daughter in 1864, for example, Mary Penn of Patrick County sent her love to her daughter's "black people" and included a message of love from her slaves to her daughter's. During the war, slave women made decisions about their conduct in light of this web of relationships. In many, perhaps most, cases, staying on and acting as "faithful" servants reflected slave women's efforts to maintain and stabilize their family

⁶⁴Mann Memoir, 4, VHS; "Mrs. Tinsley's War Recollections," *VMHB* 35 (Oct. 1927): 398; Cary Diary, *Tyler's* 12 (1930-31): 167; Lucy Ann Tucker to Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman, Williamsburg, 6 November 1863, Tucker-Coleman Collection, W&M. The same Jane Gaines may have later worked as a matron at General Hospital Number Twelve in Richmond, where her slaves worked as well. Massey, *Women in the Civil War*, 52. Slaves also conveyed information about the fate of Confederate soldiers to their owners. See, for example, Pattie Watkins, [Prince Edward County], to Nannie Watkins, [c.1862], Watkins Papers, W&M.

⁶⁵Presumably Isaac was James Hankins's personal servant. Virginia Wilson Hankins, Bacon's Castle, to James DeWitt Hankins, 11 July 1864, Hankins Family Papers, VHS; M.C. Lee to [Lucy Cocke?], 28 [n.m., n.y.], Cocke Family Papers (Main Cocke Deposit), UVA.

ties as much as possible.⁶⁶

In a disquieting whirl of movement and dislocation, slave and slaveholding women confronted each other on an increasingly female homefront. They had different ideas about how to adapt slavery to wartime circumstances. The process of emancipation had begun for many slave women even as they found themselves detailed to labor for the establishment of a Confederate nation behind the lines. In the face of shortages and inflation, slaveholding women fought a losing battle to hold off the demise of slavery through maternalism. Through wartime escape and liberation, slave women would accelerate the process of emancipation, and slaveholding women begin their reluctant adaptation to a world without slavery.

⁶⁶Mary C. Penn, Patrick Co., to [Eliza Penn Hairston?], 18 Nov. 1864, Elizabeth Seawell Hairston Papers, SHC.

Chapter Two

"You can go when you want to.
You are just as free as she is !":
Wartime Escape and Liberation

On 13 May 1863, Sally Taliaferro of Gloucester County recorded in her diary: "Mrs. Mann's Cely and all her children gone with her husband last night." In her memoir of the Civil War, Mann's daughter Lizzie recalled that Cely, a laundress, had left when her husband brought Union soldiers from Yorktown for her and their children, including a baby. Denying Cely any agency, Lizzie Mann claimed that she would have stayed "if she had been let alone."¹ Yet, perhaps Cely had communicated with her husband about the best night for him to come with the soldiers. Then again, Cely may have been somewhat ambivalent about leaving behind the Mann place to face the uncertainty of a new way of life in an unfamiliar location. As Lizzie Mann recalled, "My Mother had told Cely that if she ever went to the Yankees, she would have to stay with them, that she

¹Lizzie Jackson Mann Memoir (typescript), n.d., 8, VHS; Sally Taliaferro Diary, 13 May 1863, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M. The liberation of slave women by their husbands who had left earlier was not uncommon. On 15 Feb. 1864, for example, Elizabeth Wallace of Norfolk County noted that black Union soldiers had returned from North Carolina "with the negro women . . . they left behind when they went to the Yankees." Eleanor P. Cross and Charles B. Cross, Jr., eds., Glencoe Diary: The War-Time Journal of Elizabeth Wallace (Chesapeake, Va.: Norfolk County Historical Society, 1968), 15 Feb. 1864, 94.

could not come back or have anything to do with us."² While this warning reveals Mrs. Mann's inability to conceive of Cely as an independent person, it also places in bold relief the momentousness of Cely's decision to leave.

In wartime Virginia, slave women like Cely lived in a world of new challenges and old constraints. Because of their gender, they had fewer opportunities than slave men to use the presence of the Union army to gain their freedom. When they did escape, they often carried their children with them, along with portable household goods if possible. To effect their liberation, they relied heavily on ties of family, kin, and neighborhood. They left behind slave mistresses forced to adjust to new work demands and to question some of their assumptions about slavery in general and their own former slaves in particular.

The theme of liberation predominates in the documentation of slave women's emancipation. In wartime renditions of liberation written by white chroniclers, slave women, and many men, are presented as passive. A report of escaped slaves compiled in 1863, for example, described thirty-seven slaves owned by John Seldon as "carried away from Westover Chs City County by the Yankees" in August 1862. In this and more elaborate Confederate and Union wartime interpretations of emancipation, there is no

²Lizzie Jackson Mann Memoir (typescript), n.d., 8, VHS. For an example of escape plans coordinated between a husband who had fled to Union lines and his wife who was still in bondage, see James McPherson, The Negro's Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted During the War for the Union (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1965), 27-28. See also Lynda Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 1850-1870 (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1992), 117-118. On the strength of slaves' local attachments, see Leon Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1980), 305-307.

indication of what part slaves played in their own liberation.³

Yet the theme of liberation also reflects certain realities. In Virginia, the Union army did serve as both a catalyst for escape and an actual liberating force.⁴ Thirty years after the war ended, Jennie Jackson of Norfolk succinctly summarized her transition from slavery to freedom: "We belonged to Wm. Ellis at Sewell's Point this county, and remained there until after the northern soldiers got here."⁵ In addition, many slaves and Northern abolitionists viewed emancipation as an act of God's deliverance. The

³The slaves included three adult female field hands (Phillis, Lucy, and Jane) and four middle-aged house slaves (Susan, a nurse; Polly, a cook; Angelina, a spinner and nurse, and Patience, a seamstress). Several teenagers and children rounded out the female contingent of the group. One of the women may have been Sister Robinson, who was interviewed by the Virginia Writers' Project in 1937. Seldon reported the slaves missing in Charlotte County, where he had probably relocated as a refugee. Reports of Escaped Slaves, 1863, Charlotte County, Records of the Auditor of Public Accounts, Records of the Executive Branch, Record Group 48, Library of Virginia (LVA), Richmond, Va. (hereafter Reports, RG 48, LVA); Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1976), 240-242. Twenty-five slaves, seventeen of whom were age sixteen or older, lived with Seldon in 1860. Eighth Census of the United States (1860), Manuscript Slave Schedules, Charles City County, Virginia.

⁴Some African-American families still pass down oral accounts of first encounters between slave ancestors and Union troops. William H. Wiggins, Jr., O Freedom! Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1987), 70.

⁵Pension of George Nottingham, Case File #94488 (Mother), RG 15, NARA. The role of Union soldiers as liberators became starkly clear in Dinwiddie County in July 1864. Union raiders broke into the jail and took away several prisoners, including slaves Hannah and Agnes. Hannah had been convicted of murder or attempted murder and sentenced to die later in the month. Agnes had been charged with the murder of two white women. Similarly, a female slave convicted of murdering her mistress was released by federal troops in Winchester in 1862. There is no indication of the treatment these women received once freed from jail. William H. Mann, Dinwiddie Court House, to Governor William Smith, 1 July 1864, Executive Papers, RG 3, LVA; Drew Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press), 58.

increasingly feminine make-up of the homefront as the war progressed also encouraged an emphasis on liberation. Women, children, and elderly slaves were more likely than young men to gain their freedom by the arrival of Union soldiers at the site of their enslavement.⁶ Still, although many slave women did not liberate themselves in a physical sense by running away or joining the army, they liberated themselves emotionally by shifting their loyalties from their owners to the Union cause.

In Virginia, African-American women encountered Union forces as both liberators and abusers. But despite depredations by Union troops, slave, free-born, and freed women contributed to the Union war effort through both domestic work and field labor. Slave and free black women served as guides, spies, informants, farm hands, cooks, laundresses, and nurses. They received little compensation or recognition in return. Among contrabands not employed as military laborers, women predominated, and they found themselves defined by the army as a burden. Yet by bearing witness to their past and present sufferings before missionaries and Union officers, contraband women began the process of defining themselves as citizens with rights protected by the Constitution.

Gender roles influenced wartime escape and liberation. Escape had been one of the ultimate forms of resistance to slavery long before the war broke out. It had also long been a form of resistance chosen more frequently by men than by women. During the

⁶For two Northern interpretations of liberation which depict this feminization, see the April 1863 Harper's Weekly illustration "Arrival of a Federal Column at a Planter's House in Dixie," in Faust, Mothers of Invention, 240, and the 1865 Harper's Weekly illustration of a slave woman, framed by two children and another woman, greeting Union soldiers with enthusiasm from behind a fence, in Wiggins, O Freedom!, 70.

war, opportunities for escape multiplied, especially for those slaves who lived near Union-occupied areas. Impressionistic evidence suggests that men escaped more frequently during the war than women. Enslaved men detailed to work on Confederate fortifications crossed over to Union lines. As early as the summer of 1861, escaped slave men enlisted in the Union navy; the following summer, numbers of men who lived near federal outposts took flight to join the Union army. Some family men left home and then returned for their wives and children. The manpower needs of the warring armies, along with the division of labor within slave households that allocated the care of young children to women and girls, opened more avenues for escape to men than to women.⁷

While men predominated among slaves who escaped to Union lines in Tidewater Virginia, particularly early in the war, all of the fugitives in the region benefited from some favorable local conditions. With the spread of mixed farming and the advent of truck farming during the antebellum period, many of the region's slaves had become a mobile labor force. Slaves had been hired out and found themselves working with both neighboring slaves and free blacks. Slaves were thus acquainted with area roads and waterways, and the black community in the area was tightly knit. In 1861, Confederate use of slave labor and owners' attempts to remove their slaves to the interior in response to these requisitions prompted numerous Tidewater slaves to seek refuge at Fort Monroe on the Peninsula between the James and York rivers.⁸

⁷For a gender analysis of antebellum slave resistance, see Deborah Gray White, Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South (N. Y.: W.W. Norton, 1985), 70-76.

⁸Berlin, et al. describe slaves and free blacks in the Upper South as "socially inseparable" because of intermarriage and close interaction in general. The editors do not include a gender analysis in their discussion of slave laborers' increased mobility.

Not surprisingly, the first escapees to Fort Monroe, designated "contraband" by General Benjamin F. Butler, were men. Shepard Mallory, Frank Baker, and James Townsend, whose owner had determined to send them to North Carolina to help build Confederate batteries there, escaped to Fort Monroe on 23 May 1861, just a day after Butler had arrived there with reinforcements. The escaped slaves offered to assist the Union, and Butler refused to return them to their owner, Colonel Charles K. Mallory of the 115th Virginia Militia. In his report of 24 May 1861 to Lieutenant-General Winfield Scott, Butler made clear that two of the men had wives and children in Hampton and that one of the two was married to a free woman. Butler thus used the slaves' family ties to bolster his case for giving the men shelter at Fort Monroe.⁹

Men probably experienced greater mobility than women. Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Thavolia Glymph, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, series 1, vol. 1, The Destruction of Slavery (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), 14-15, 59-60; Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, series 1, vol. 2, The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South (N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 9 (quote).

⁹Butler encountered no opposition when he came ashore at Fort Monroe with a modest force; by May 1861, 12,000 soldiers were stationed at the fort. In contrast to Butler's position, General John A. Dix on the Eastern Shore of Virginia ordered Union camps off-limits to blacks, and officers enforced this stringently. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: G.P.O., 1899; repr., Historical Times, Inc., 1985), Series I, 2:648-651 (hereafter OR); Edward L. Pierce, "The Contrabands at Fortress Monroe," Atlantic Monthly 8 (Nov. 1861): 627; Robert Francis Engs, Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861-1890 (Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 17-18; Louis S. Gerteis, From Contraband to Freedman: Federal Policy Toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865 (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1973), 11-13, 58; George R. Bentley, A History of the Freedmen's Bureau (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1955), 1-2. Colonel Mallory had served in the Virginia Convention that voted to secede. George Benjamin West, When the Yankees Came: Civil War and Reconstruction on the Virginia Peninsula, ed. Parke Rouse, Jr. (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1977), 51.

Butler incorporated female slaves into the contraband policy that he developed in response to the actions of slaves Mallory, Baker, and Townsend. In consultation with his superiors, Butler slowly pieced together a policy by which escaped slave men and women who could work would labor for the Union rather than for its foe. On his own initiative, Butler then gave refuge to all other escaped slaves as well, having contended in a letter to Scott that this was both the politically wise and the humane course to take.

The decisions made by Butler and his superiors regarding slaves in lower Tidewater Virginia eventually became official United States policy with congressional passage of the 1861 and 1862 Confiscation Acts. The First Confiscation Act, passed in August 1861, allowed for the confiscation of slaves who labored on behalf of the Confederacy. The Second Confiscation Act, enacted in July 1862, declared free all slaves owned by Confederate masters who entered Union lines. That same month, the Militia Act freed the mothers, wives, and children of freedmen who had left their Confederate owners and signed on with Union forces. The dependents had to belong to Confederate owners rather than Unionist slaveholders; not until 3 March 1865 was freedom given to the wives and children of all soldiers and sailors, as Congress sought "to encourage enlistments and to promote the efficiency of the military forces."¹⁰

¹⁰Scott and Secretary of War Simon Cameron fully supported Butler's expansion of the definition of contraband of war. Butler was not an abolitionist; after his troops took over New Orleans in April 1862, he sought to accommodate Unionist slaveholders in Louisiana by returning fugitive slaves to them. His attitude toward African-Americans evolved as the war progressed. He became convinced of black men's competence for military service and leadership after observing the free black units of the Louisiana Native Guards, which he mustered into Union service. As a member of the House of Representatives after the war, he championed the Civil Rights Bill. Berlin, *et al.*, eds., Destruction, 27, 60-65, 70-72; Berlin, *et al.*, eds., Military, 15, 19; Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877 (N.Y.: Harper & Row,

Following the trail blazed by Mallory, Baker, and Townsend, approximately 900 black men and women had entered Union lines at Fort Monroe by 30 July 1861, most of them hailing from the surrounding county of Elizabeth City, since neighboring counties remained behind Confederate lines. Slaves soon gave Fort Monroe a new nickname, "Freedom Fort." It became the hub of contraband life as the federal presence expanded during the Union army's Peninsula campaign in the spring and summer of 1862. In March 1862, there were 652 adult male and 341 adult female contrabands in the Fort Monroe military district around Hampton. By the end of 1862, close to 3,000 escaped slaves were living under the protection of the fort. While the Peninsula campaign ultimately failed in its quest to capture Richmond, the Union army did secure the port city of Norfolk, which it retained for the rest of the war. About 10,000 blacks found themselves within federal lines when Union troops took Norfolk in May 1862.¹¹

Until the fall of 1862, most slaves who escaped to Union lines did so as individuals or members of small groups. In the aftermath of the Second Confiscation Act and the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, and in anticipation of the coming of

1988), 533; Philip Morgan, ed., "Don't Grieve After Me": The Black Experience in Virginia, 1619-1986 (Hampton, Va.: Hampton Univ., 1986), 47; OR, Series I, 2:52-54, Series III, 4:1228.

¹¹Fort Monroe, built between 1818 and 1834, had been constructed in part by local slave laborers hired by the federal government. Highlights of Black History at Fort Monroe, The Casemate Papers (Ft. Monroe, Va.: Ft. Monroe Casemate Museum, n.d.), [1], [2]; "Freedom's Fortress: Fort Monroe," Visitor Guide and Map, n.d.; Pierce, "The Contrabands at Fortress Monroe," 628, 630; Engs, Hampton, 22-23, 206; Berlin, et al., eds., Destruction, 61, 67; Gerteis, Federal Policy, 19, 22 (Gerteis places the 1862 figure at Ft. Monroe closer to 5,000); U.S. Congress, House, Africans in Fort Monroe Military District: Letter from the Secretary of War..., 37th Cong., 2d sess., 1862, H. Exec. Doc. 85, serial 1135, 10.

winter within a Confederacy increasingly strapped for provisions, large groups of slaves, including many women and children, began to flock to Union-held territory. Military authorities in Virginia established several contraband camps for the refugees.¹²

More slaves escaped in response to the Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Abraham Lincoln on 1 January 1863. The proclamation specifically reached out to male slaves by offering them military positions behind the front lines, as defenders of forts or armed seamen, for example.¹³ The articles of the preliminary proclamation in September 1862 and the final version in January 1863 did not provide for the freedom of any more slaves than those already covered by the Second Confiscation Act, but the proclamations did mandate the enforcement of that act by military personnel. The proclamations were also significant as moral statements that appealed to many slaves and Northerners, and as declarations of the government's commitment to the use of black

¹²Berlin, et al, eds., Free Labor, 26, 30-31; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 52. For references to slave flight in late 1862, see Doris C. Sturzenberger, "The Southern Lady Ideal in the Life of Cynthia Beverley Tucker, 1840-1870" (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1979), 71, and American Missionary Magazine (AM) 8 (Aug. 1862): 180.

¹³Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, series 2, The Black Military Experience (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982), 5-7. News of the Proclamation spread quickly. On 2 January 1863, the War Department released General Orders Number One, a three-page document which included the text of the Proclamation. 15,000 copies were distributed within the army. The Navy spread the news by issuing a copy of the Proclamation a few weeks later. Recruiting stations were established in Union-held areas to enlist black troops; recruiters displayed posters and made speeches regarding the Proclamation. John Hope Franklin, The Emancipation Proclamation (N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963), 127, 130.

laborers and soldiers to win the war.¹⁴

Historian W.E.B. Du Bois later emphasized the transformative power of the final proclamation for slaves: "It sent them into transports of joy and sacrifice. It changed all of their pessimism and despair into boundless faith. It was the Coming of the Lord." Although the 1863 proclamation excluded areas of Tidewater Virginia under Union control, which included the counties of Norfolk, Princess Anne, Elizabeth City, and York, it only inspired more slaves to flock to them, particularly to the burgeoning communities of freedpeople in Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Hampton. As Tidewater slaveholder Cynthia Coleman, a refugee in North Carolina, wrote to her former in-laws in April 1863, "My own opinion is that only one in a hundred or a thousand can be trusted in sight of a Yankee camp." By the summer of 1863, about 26,000 freedpeople lived in Union-held territory in Tidewater Virginia. Slavery remained legal in this area until after the war had ended, making it the only region exempted from the Emancipation Proclamation not to abolish slavery later in the conflict.¹⁵

¹⁴Barbara Jeanne Fields, "Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States of America," New Left Review 181 (May/June 1990): 111; Berlin, et al., eds, Military, 5; Willie Lee Rose, Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment (N.Y.: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1964), 185-187. President Abraham Lincoln wanted to issue an emancipation proclamation in July 1862, as an addition to the Second Confiscation Act, yet he took the advice of Secretary of State William H. Seward and decided to wait until the Union had secured a victory on the battlefield. Edgar A. Toppin, "Emancipation Reconsidered," Negro History Bulletin 26 (May 1963): 235.

¹⁵The Eastern Shore counties of Accomac and Northampton were also excluded. W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880 (as Black Reconstruction, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1935; repr., N.Y.: Touchstone by Simon & Schuster, 1995), 87; Cynthia [Beverley Tucker Coleman], Warrenton, N.C., to [Lawrence and Sarah Washington], 23 April 1863, Goldsborough Papers, Special Collections Library, Duke

The proclamation did legally free slaves in the counties of interior Southside Virginia, which remained in the Confederacy. Yet, as a former Piedmont Virginia slave named Richard Toler recalled on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the proclamation, "The Confederates didn't exactly break any records doing Lincoln's bidding."¹⁶ The proclamation gave many slaves in interior areas hope, but resulted in the immediate freedom of just a small number of them. Without Union troops close by, escape attempts remained prohibitively risky.¹⁷

Univ., Durham, N.C. (DK); Berlin, *et al.*, eds., Free Labor, 73, 97; Gerteis, Federal Policy, 24-25; Ervin Jordan, Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1995), 262; Franklin, Emancipation Proclamation, 139-140. According to missionary Lucy Chase, when slaves near Norfolk appealed to Orlando Brown, Superintendent of Contrabands, about their exemption from the proclamation, he pointed out to them that they could attain their freedom at Fort Monroe, and many did so. Henry L. Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home: Letters from Contraband Camps (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1966), 23.

¹⁶"Former Slave Reflects," Cincinnati Enquirer, 31 Dec. 1938, quoted in Jordan, Black Confederates, 252, see also 177, 257-258, 319-320. Many Confederate supporters viewed the proclamation as an incendiary document issued to bring about slave retaliation against whites. Officials issued heated responses to the Emancipation Proclamation. These included an address by Virginia Governor John Letcher, which portrayed white women and children as in increased danger from slave violence even as it described most slaves as loyal and content. Confederate propagandists also created stories, songs, and poems in which slaves responded negatively to the proclamation and advocated the continuation of slavery. H.W. Flournoy, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts from January 1, 1836, to April 15, 1869; Preserved in the Capitol at Richmond (Richmond: 1893; repr., N.Y.: Kraus Reprint Corp., 1968), 238-243; Drew Faust, The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1988), 63-65.

¹⁷John S. and Emily J. Salmon, Franklin County Virginia, 1786-1986: A Bicentennial History (Rocky Mt., Va.: Franklin County Bicentennial Commission, 1993), 293; Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 112-114. Ervin Jordan estimates that several hundred Virginia slaves were released from bondage by their owners in response to the 1863 proclamation. Jordan, Black Confederates, 262. Unionist Episcopal minister Rev. John T. Clark of Halifax County, for example, freed his slaves to comply with the proclamation. Frank W. Klingberg, The Southern Claims Commission (Univ. of

In the lower Tidewater, the Union army served as a catalyst for the escape of many slave women. The proximity of the army encouraged slaves to question slaveholders' prerogative of ownership. Nancy, an escaped slave who lived on Craney Island near Norfolk in 1863, told missionary Lucy Chase that she had been content in her relationship with her mistress--until the Union army got close.¹⁸

Female escapees like Nancy faced different challenges than men. As the primary childcare-givers, they had to decide whether to take their children into an unknown and potentially dangerous situation. Women with young children, in particular, were not as easily mobile.¹⁹ In addition, the practical question of how to transport their meager but highly important possessions tested the resourcefulness of most slaves, especially those who escaped in family groups. Probably few were as fortunate as Norfolk County's Mahala and Rachel. In full daylight, these house slaves packed their belongings in a cart

California Press, 1955; repr., N.Y.: Octagon Books, 1978), 109.

¹⁸Swint, ed., Dear Ones, 42; Barbara Jeanne Fields, Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1985), 127.

¹⁹Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1986), 49; White, Ar'n't I a Woman?, 68-74. When Mary Pope of Southampton County left her owner in November 1864, she brought her four children with her; one of them died en route to Union lines. Daniel W. Crofts, Old Southampton: Politics and Society in a Virginia County, 1834-1869 (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1992), 212. Some women who escaped left their children behind. Lucy Chase, for example, reported that a freedwoman named Nancy had left her children with her owner when she escaped. Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home, 42. Myrta Lockett Avary, a defender of slavery, claimed that "it was not an unknown thing for negro mothers to leave their children along the roadsides." Myrta Lockett Avary, Dixie After the War: An Exposition of Social Conditions Existing in the South, During the Twelve Years Succeeding the Fall of Richmond (N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1906; repr., N.Y.: Da Capo Press, 1970), 190-191.

after their mistress Elizabeth Wallace discovered that they were planning a nighttime escape. Many women who escaped walked, often heading for the closest major river to be picked up by Union boats. Many of the fugitives carried pots on their heads. The wife of Orlando Brown, Superintendent of Contrabands at Norfolk who was stationed on Craney Island in 1862-1863, noted in 1863 that most of the escaped slave women who came to Craney Island carried tubs or boilers on their heads, even if they had little clothing on their bodies. These iron pots enabled women to cook and wash for their families and to supplement their resources by providing products and services to others. In addition, the tubs symbolized resistance because they had been placed at the entrance to secret prayer meetings for their supposed use in muffling sounds.²⁰

A letter written by Sally Taliaferro in August 1862 chronicles several escapes of women with children and conveys the determination of departing slave women to bring as much of their households with them as possible. Taliaferro informed her husband that one of their neighbors in Gloucester County was "driving a brisk trade by carrying fugitives to Yorktown by water, for a dollar a head," including "whole families of women & children." She continued: "Polly, from Elmington, with four children, and another daily expected went off two nights ago--with her bed &c. Lucy from Church Hill, with

²⁰Jones, Labor of Love, 49; Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 212-213; Wallace, Glencoe Diary, 21 May 1863, 37; Swint, ed., Dear Ones, 33; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 53; Engs, Hampton, 69; Sally N. Robins, History of Gloucester County, Virginia, and Its Families (Richmond: West, Johnston, & Co., 1893), 16-17. My description of cooking pots as tools refines that provided by Ira Berlin et al., who group cooking utensils with personal possessions rather than productive property. Berlin, et al., Free Labor, 43. Early in 1864, a slave foreman in Middleburg, Virginia, told his mistress that not one slave would remain in the town if they could get their possessions moved with them. Of course, many slaves left behind any personal property they owned and took flight with only the clothes on their backs. Catherine Barbara Broun Diary, 1 Jan. 1864, 33, SHC.

four Marseilles quilts, any quantity of sheets, pillow cases, feather beds &c. Sylla, Hally's nurse, & four children, the youngest twelve years old, Ann & two large children, carrying the cloth she was weaving which she cut from the loom." Taliaferro concluded: "It is impossible to imagine the present state of things; and impossible for us to endure it much longer." She correctly predicted that the Second Confiscation Act would only encourage more escapes.²¹

The escape of women like Polly, Lucy, Sylla, and Ann usually involved coordination with family, kin, and neighbors. Slave women who escaped to Union lines in the Tidewater generally traveled to destinations where they had relatives or friends, particularly male family members. Union-occupied areas provided women with the opportunity for contact with male family members who had already left to work for or join the army. As former slave Robert Ellet recalled much later, in June 1863 he and his mother left King William County for Hampton, where they apparently joined his father, who served as a cook for the Union army, and his brother, who assisted an officer in General George Stoneman's cavalry.²²

Similarly, Hannah Gordon of Portsmouth, Virginia, made her way to Fort Monroe shortly after her husband Edward did. The two had been married for several years when the war broke out. After he discovered that his owner planned to send his slaves south while Portsmouth remained under Confederate rule, Edward had escaped to the fort. As

²¹Originally made in Marseille, France, Marseilles is a thick cotton cloth with a raised weave. Sally Lyons Taliaferro to William Booth Taliaferro, "Dunham Massie," 2 August 1862 [incomplete], William Booth Taliaferro Papers, W&M.

²²Perdue, *et al.*, eds, *Weevils*, 83-88.

Hannah remembered years later: "I joined him there and we lived together there until he enlisted in the 1st [United States Colored Cavalry]."²³

Like the Gordons, Mary and Daniel MUNDIN had married several years before the war began. As slaves in Princess Anne County, they lived about fifteen miles apart. As Mary later recalled in describing her husband's escape, "He ran away and joined [the army] before I knew it." Daniel enlisted in December 1863; by July 1864, when Mary gave birth to their fifth child, son Daniel, she was living in Norfolk County as well, probably in the city of Norfolk. She lived not far from friends Rosetta Robertson and Judy Barnes, both of whom had grown up with her in Princess Anne and both of whom attended the births of all of her children. Mary visited her husband while his regiment was encamped in Norfolk; only later in his service did they experience complete separation.²⁴

Lizzie Ellis and her grown son James escaped to Hampton from Williamsburg late in 1862. The slaves of Cynthia Coleman's husband, Dr. Charles W. Coleman, they made their way to the home of Robert Brown, a shopkeeper whom they had met in Williamsburg in 1861. Brown had only recently relocated to Hampton.²⁵

²³Gordon served as a sergeant in Company C of the 1st United States Colored Cavalry. He served from 4 December 1863 until his death on 10 Sept. 1865. Pension of William E. Gordon (alias Edward F. Gordon), Case File #412269/77793, RG 15, NARA.

²⁴Pension of Daniel MUNDIN, Case File #154377 (Widow), RG 15, NARA. In her analysis of South Carolina women's pension applications, Leslie Schwalm found similar evidence of community ties in the testimony of claimants. Schwalm, "The Meaning of Freedom: African-American Women and Their Transition from Slavery to Freedom in Lowcountry South Carolina" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, 1991), 120.

²⁵Pension of James Ellis, Case File #163569 (Mother), RG 15, NARA.

The Ellises joint escape may have been exceptional. Older women often remained with their owners while their grown children took flight. Some were not well enough physically to travel; others believed that their owners owed them protection and care in return for their years of service. Charlotte Wilson of Smithfield in Isle of Wight County watched as her son Andrew escaped to enlist in the Union army, leaving her behind to take care of her infirm husband, America. Andrew told his comrades that he wished he could send his mother some of his soldier's pay, but he had no way of getting it to her at the plantation of his former owner, which remained behind Confederate lines.²⁶ Like Charlotte Wilson, Cynthia Coleman's "Mamy" and her husband remained behind while their children departed, including daughter Bev and her eight-year-old son. Along with "Mamy" and her husband were "Uncle" Charles and his wife; "the two latter too old to work have remained to be taken care of," Coleman remarked in April 1863. These two couples were the only slaves belonging to Coleman's mother, Lucy Tucker, who had not yet left.²⁷

Arena Baker, an elderly slave woman who belonged to Sallie Galt of Williamsburg, appears to have remained with Galt until her mistress could no longer provide for her. In January 1864, Galt wrote a letter "humbly, prayerfully, & tearfully" commending Baker, her children, and grandchildren to the care of Union troops. Galt

²⁶Pension of Andrew Wilson, Case File #191269 (Mother), RG 15, NARA; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 215.

²⁷Cynthia [Beverley Tucker Coleman], Warrenton, N.C., to [Lawrence and Sarah Washington], 23 April 1863, Louis M. Goldsborough Papers, DK. Fifteen slaves, eight of whom were age sixteen or older, lived with Lucy Tucker in 1860. Eighth Census of the United States (1860), Manuscript Slave Schedules, James City County, Virginia.

wrote a similar pass for seventy-three-year-old Aleck Preston, who may have been Baker's husband.²⁸

A report submitted in September 1864 by Brigadier-General Edward A. Wild, an abolitionist from Massachusetts who commanded a brigade made up of Virginia and North Carolina contrabands, conveys the eagerness with which some women embraced the prospect of freedom and the danger inherent in leaving. From Newport News, Wild provided an army escort for several black men who worked in Union hospitals to go by boat to Smithfield, in Confederate territory, "for the purpose of getting their families, if possible." The group sailed across the James River and landed at night "but became delayed by the numbers of women and children anxious to follow, whom they packed in extra boats picked up there, and towed along." As the entourage slowly made its way down Smithfield Creek and back to the James, it was "intercepted by a force of irregular appearance, numbering about 100, having horses and dogs with them, armed variously with shotguns, rifles, &c. . . . They attacked the leading boats, killed a man and woman, and wounded another woman therein. The contrabands then rowed over to the opposite bank and scattered over the marshes. How many more have been slaughtered we know not."²⁹ Slave women who attempted to leave the Confederacy, even with the protection of their husbands and Union troops, had no guarantee that they would reach Union-held territory.

²⁸In both letters, Galt invoked a loving, long-standing commitment between her family and the slaves. Letters written by Sallie Maria Galt for Arena Baker and Aleck Preston, Jan. 1864, Galt Papers I, W&M.

²⁹Wild recommended that signal stations around Smithfield be broken up and that several houses be burned in retaliation for the assault. OR, Series I, 42, Pt. 2:653.

In Williamsburg under Union occupation, Eliza Baker's experience of escape was an amalgam of leavetaking and liberation. Sometime between October 1863 and May 1864, Baker went to see Major James Wheelan, the provost marshal, to get a pass to visit her mother in the countryside on a Sunday. Her recollection of their conversation, in his office on the former colonial capital's Palace Green, follows: "He said, 'What you want to wait till Sunday fer?' And I said, 'Cause I can't go till Sunday. I have to work for Mrs. Whiting.' And he said, 'You can go when you want to. You are just as free as she is!'" After the provost marshal gave her a pass for Tuesday, Baker went back to the Whitings', got one of her two dresses, and "took out and went down home," never to return to the Whitings again.³⁰ The provost marshal's exclamation that Baker was as free as her mistress illustrates how some slave women received encouragement from Union officials and acted on it.

Other slave and free black women in Tidewater Virginia had a more uneasy relationship with Union soldiers, whom women depicted as both saviors and devils. Ex-slave Richard H. "Father Dick" Parker, a Norfolk preacher, recalled how women had

³⁰Eliza Baker, Memoirs of Williamsburg, Va. (Report taken by Elizabeth Hayes of a conversation between Eliza Baker and the Rev. Wm.A.R. Goodwin, 4 May 1933), Archives and Records Dept., Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Va., 1-2, 7. Major James Wheelan, of the First New York Mounted Rifles, served as provost marshal in Williamsburg from October 1863 to May 1864. Carson O. Hudson, Jr., Civil War Williamsburg (Williamsburg, Va., and Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, in association with Stackpole Books, 1997), 89. William Wiggins discusses the use of "down-home" by African-Americans to signify a spiritual attachment to place. Wiggins, O Freedom!, 79. The significance of the presence of Union troops is further illustrated by the following entry in the diary of Catherine Barbara Broun of Middleburg in northern Virginia: "I see a servant girl Sallie passing with her bundle and child running off I call at her and started to go after her but some Yanks rode up and I was affraid to venture." Broun Diary (typescript), 29 April 1863, 18, SHC.

responded to the entrance of Union troops in May 1862: "O Lord! Too good to be true! Bless the Lord! No more hand-cuffin' the children now! God bless Abraham Lincoln!" Similarly, Confederate supporter Emmeline Allmand Crump Lightfoot remembered that as regiments of Union soldiers entered Richmond at the end of the war, "the negroes were in a wild state of excitement, many women rushing up to the soldiers calling them their Saviour." On the other hand, in June 1863 a free-black woman of Suffolk who was burned out by Union troops was quoted by Mary Jeffery Galt, a Confederate supporter, as referring to the soldiers as "'so mean devil won't have 'm & God won't let 'm die & too mean to live.'"³¹

Eagerness over the prospect of liberation from bondage was accompanied by anxiety over the possibility of ill-treatment at the hands of the soldiers. Abuse of black civilians--which included the rape of women, restoration of escaped slaves to their owners, forcible impressment of black men, white troops' hostility toward black soldiers, and unequal treatment of black troops by army officials--made many Tidewater slaves

³¹AM 12 (April 1868): 169, quoted in Cassandra Newby, "'The World Was All Before Them': A Study of the Black Community in Norfolk, Va., 1861-1884," (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1992), 31-32; Emmeline Allmand Crump Lightfoot Memoir, 1927, 8, VHS; Mary Jeffery Galt Diary, 28 June 1863, Galt Family Papers III, W&M; Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, Reminiscences of Peace and War (N.Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1904), 356; Myrta Lockett Avary, A Virginia Girl in the Civil War (n.p., c. 1902), 362-363; Avary Dixie After the War, 30-31. For similar expressions among Tennessee slaves, see John Cimprich, "Slave Behavior during the Federal Occupation of Tennessee, 1862-1865," in Donald G. Nieman, ed., The Day of the Jubilee: The Civil War Experience of Black Southerners (N.Y.: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 52-53. One freedwoman recalled mistresses' throwing china out of their second-floor windows at the crowd of slaves that congregated to welcome Union soldiers in Norfolk. AM 18 (April 1874): 93.

wary of the army and government officials in general.³²

Ambivalence toward Union troops by slave women was also fostered by slaveholders' portrayals of the Union army. Some owners attempted to prevent their slaves from absconding by demonizing Union soldiers in front of their slaves, an effort that may well have created as much curiosity as fear. Eliza Baker of Williamsburg remembered the characterization of Union soldiers provided by the woman to whom she had been hired: "Mrs. Whiting had told us that the Yankees were devils, with horns on their heads, and that they would make us all pull the artillery guns." Undeterred, Baker related this description to the first Union soldier she met. He accompanied her home and proceeded both to chastise and humiliate Whiting. Assuming the role of a suspicious master, the soldier forced Whiting to drink water from her well to prove to him that it was not poisoned.³³

Slaves throughout the South, intent on concealing their feelings about the war

³²Throughout the Confederacy, many slaves responded cautiously to Union troops when they arrived in their territory. Local citizens' patrols and Confederate guerrillas, antagonistic and violent toward slaves, made many bondpeople afraid of outsiders. The guerrillas sometimes disguised themselves as Union soldiers and then tricked slaves. Also, many slaves toned down their response to Union troops because they realized that their masters could reclaim their positions of power after the Union army left. Litwack, *Been in the Storm*, 119-120, 122-124, 130, 149-163; Berlin, *et al.*, eds., *Destruction*, 10, 88-90; Jordan, *Black Confederates*, 269; Newby, "'World All Before Them,'" 40; Berlin, *et al.*, eds., *Military*, 1-34; Sally Taliaferro Diary (typescript), 5 July 1862, 8 July 1862, LVA.

³³Baker, *Memoirs*, 1-2. Other efforts by mistresses and masters to instill fear in slaves included warnings that Union soldiers would eat them, drive them off the land in the manner of the removal of the Indians, send them to Cuba, or bore holes in their arms for wagon staves and make them pull the wagons. Perdue, *et al.*, eds., *Weevils*, 19-22, 149-151; Litwack, *Been in the Storm*, 119-120; Swint, ed., *Dear Ones*, 42; *AM* 5 (Oct. 1861): 245; *AM* 18 (April 1874): 93.

from their owners, sometimes went along with their owners' negative depictions of Union soldiers. Like Linda, a cook in Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's novel Iola Leroy, slave women read their owners' facial expressions and general demeanor for information about the war even as they feigned disinterest or distress over the possible arrival of Union troops.³⁴ One Virginia slave woman told a northern minister in 1863 that although slaves knew about the Emancipation Proclamation, they pretended that they did not around their owners. She had asked her master, "'What's this Massa Lincoln is going to do to the poor nigger? I hear he is going to cut 'em up awful bad. How is it Massa?'" She then escaped to Union lines when she had the opportunity.³⁵

While, in the words of a former slave named Elizabeth Sparks, the Union army ultimately served "to break up the system," it also inflicted significant suffering among women on the home front. Seven years after the war ended, Mary Johnson of Norfolk was asked whether Union troops had encamped near Suffolk in August of 1862. She replied simply: "De Lor. Yes sir plenty of them." As Johnson's response suggests, the army profoundly disrupted everyday life. After the army impressed her husband in late 1863, freedwoman Jane Wallis of York County had to figure out how to feed her family while coping with her own ill health and a sick child. She asked a Northern missionary

³⁴Harper traveled throughout the South after the war, visiting every state except Arkansas and Texas. According to her friend William Still, she spent considerable time with freedwomen. In the spring of 1872, she visited Hampton Roads and met with groups of freedpeople. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Garrigues Bros., 1893; repr., N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 1-2, 9-11; Southern Workman 1 (May 1872): 4.

³⁵James Freeman Clarke, Autobiography, Diary and Correspondence ed. Edward Everett Hale (Boston, 1891), 296, quoted in Litwack, Been in the Storm, 19.

to try to effect the release of her husband. In late 1864, a pregnant Surry County slave mother had to manage alone after Union troops took away her husband, despite his protests. In the interior Southside, former slave George White later recalled a foray by Union troops into Danville. Although the soldiers distributed some provisions among the slaves, they also created more work for them. White's mother had to attempt to clean her mistress's soiled dresses, which the soldiers had put through the slop.³⁶

Tidewater free blacks in particular experienced deprivation at the hands of Union troops. Many free black women were loyal to the Union and exploited by the army. As one officer told a free black woman in Tidewater North Carolina, "We have been fighting for you and we are hungry and must take your stuff." Lydia Deans of Norfolk County, a free woman who had purchased her husband's freedom before the war, remained a quiet supporter of the Union throughout the conflict: "I didn't talk much about it, but my feelings was strong fer de union cause--coul'dnt vote [on the secession ordinance.] I always stuck fer de Union." Deans watched in 1862 as Union troops took the recently repaired oyster sloop she had helped her husband buy. Like many other free blacks in the area, she later submitted a claim for reimbursement to the Southern Claims Commission established by Congress to reimburse Unionist civilians for stores that had

³⁶Testimony of Mary Johnson, 6 Feb. 1872, Claim of Benjamin Summers, Case File #11561, Norfolk County, Settled Case Files for Claims Approved by the Southern Claims Commission (SCC), 1871-1880, Records of the Land, Files, and Miscellaneous Division, Records of the Accounting Officers of the Dept. of the Treasury, Record Group 217, NARA; Berlin, *et al.*, eds., *Military*, 138; Louisiana W. Hankins to Virginia Hankins, 18 Oct. 1864, Hankins Family Papers, VHS; Perdue, *et al.*, eds, *Weevils*, 275, 309-312.

been appropriated from them by the Union army during the war.³⁷

The many civil, economic, and social limitations placed on free blacks encouraged them to wish for Union victory; as one man from Nansemond County testified after the war, "We knew that if the North or Union soldiers were successful we would be free although we were free before the war." At the same time, their precarious economic status made them exceedingly vulnerable in the aftermath of Union raids. Many became less independent economically during the war because of the army's demands. Mary Ashby, a free-born widow with two children, had to move into Union lines at Yorktown after her horse and cart were taken to Fort Magruder near Williamsburg during the war. She remained there until Richmond fell. Free-born widow Lucy Green of Charles City County lost her independence as soldiers slowly destroyed her farm between 1863 and 1865: "I was living there very comfortably & the soldiers broke me up entirely--killed my horse & cow, & hogs, dug up my garden, burnt my fences & took all my

³⁷Regarding reticence on the part of free-black Unionists, Suffolk merchant George Singleton testified in 1872: "Most of the colored people were loyal and while they could not converse much about the causes and effects of the war their actions showed their sentiments." Summary Report, 20 Dec. 1875, Testimony of Lydia Deans, 29 Nov. 1872, Claim of Lydia Deans, Case File #17684, Norfolk County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA; Deposition of George W. Singleton, 15 Feb. 1872, Claim of Alfred Gale, Case File #10881, Nansemond County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA; Testimony of Amos Riddick, 30 Dec. 1872, Claim of George and Margaret Scott, Case File #17878, Norfolk County; (National Archives Microfiche Publication M1407, #4064), Southern Claims Commission Disallowed Claims, 1871-1880, Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, Record Group 233, NARA; Appeal of George and Margaret Scott, Case File #9700, Records of the U.S. Court of Claims, Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, 1884-1943, Record Group 123, NARA.

things--I have to live now with one of my sons."³⁸

Despite its destructiveness in Tidewater Virginia, the Union army provided an alternative to slavery that increasing numbers of slaves were willing to explore. Some slave women who headed for Union lines openly displayed their sense of victory over their owners before leaving. Susie Melton, a slave near Williamsburg, recalled that her mistress had denied to the slaves that President Lincoln would emancipate them. When Melton and other slaves learned that Lincoln had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, they celebrated by dancing and singing outdoors, despite the cold. They continued to make their sentiments known when they sang, "Sun, you be here an' I'll be gone," as they left for Union lines at daybreak.³⁹ In a more surreptitious declaration of triumph, some

³⁸When Green refused to open her stable for some soldiers, they bored a hole through it with an auger and killed her horse with a bayonet. When she complained to officers about the soldiers' appropriations of her provisions and domestic goods, she received this reply: "Old lady put a kettle of hot water on the fire & scald the rascals so we may know them." Deposition of Albert Copeland, 15 Feb. 1872, Claim of Daniel Bell, Case File #4463, Nansemond County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA; Summary Report, 8 Dec. 1873, Testimony of Mary Ashby, 23 Oct. 1872, Claim of Mary Ashby, Case File #14164, York County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA; Testimony of Lucy Green, 21 Jan. 1873, Claim of Lucy Green, Case File #18854, Charles City County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA; Berlin, *et al.*, eds., *Destruction*, 679; Berlin, *et al.*, eds., *Military*, 657. For references to other free-black women who suffered wartime raids or dislocation by Union troops, see Claim of Sarah E. Lawrence, Case File #12371, Nansemond County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA; Claim of Letitia Faulk, Case File #16813, Norfolk County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA; J.E. White to Irene, 20 Feb. 1865/21 Feb. 1865/8 Mar. 1865, Ada P. Bankhead Collection, UVA. Faulk also lost provisions to the Confederate army.

³⁹Even more assertively, Betty Jones of Charlottesville recalled that when her grandmother heard about the Emancipation Proclamation, she confronted her mistress and shouted at her, "'I'se free! Yes, I'se free! Ain't got to work fo' you no mo'. You can't put me in yo' pocket now.'" When her mistress began crying and ran into the house, Jones's grandmother knew that the proclamation was a reality. Perdue, *et al.*, eds., *Weevils*, 212-213; 180 (both the Melton and Jones interviews were taken by Perdue *et al.* from the heavily edited published version of *The Negro in Virginia*); C. Vann

slave women escaped wearing articles of clothing that belonged to their mistresses. In September 1862, for example, Venus, a slave in Gloucester County, departed with all of Fanny Shackelford's clothes.⁴⁰

For other slave women, the liberation experience included the opportunity to play out more explicit role reversals with their owners. Whipping owners under the gaze of Union soldiers, though rare, exemplified this most starkly. One of the most famous incidents occurred near Jamestown in the spring of 1864, with the encouragement of Brigadier-General Edward A. Wild. Wild described how he had facilitated the whipping of a former slaveholder known for his cruelty among local slaves:

I found half a dozen *women* among our refugees, whom he had often whipped unmercifully, even baring their whole persons for the purpose in presence of *Whites and Blacks*. I laid him bare and putting the whip into the hands of the Women, three of Whom took turns in settling some old scores on their masters back. . . . Even in this scene the superior humanity of the Blacks over their white master was manifest in their

Woodward, ed., Marv Chesnut's Civil War (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), 833. In Winchester, Virginia, Cornelia McDonald recorded that in response to the Emancipation Proclamation, slave women were holding up their outer skirts to show their white petticoats. This may have been similar to a "protopolitical" dance performed by South Carolina freedwomen in relation to a dispute with a plantation owner in 1865, as interpreted by Julie Saville. McDonald claimed that the ritual signified "that somebody's sheets have been abstracted to manufacture the luxurious garments, nothing more." McDonald, Woman's Civil War, 114; Julie Saville, The Work of Reconstruction: From Slave to Wage Laborer in South Carolina, 1860-1870 (N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 86-87.

⁴⁰Some slave men did the same with their masters' clothing. Such appropriations had practical as well as philosophical meaning. Litwack, Been in the Storm, 53; McDonald, Woman's Civil War, 114; Sally Taliaferro Diary (typescript), 2 Sept. 1862, LVA; Avary, Dixie After the War, 182-183. For further examples of role reversals through the appropriation of clothing or other goods, see Faust, Mothers of Invention, 74, 222-223.

moderation and backwardness. I wish that his back had been as deeply scarred as those of the women, but I abstained and left it to them.⁴¹

Katie Blackwell Johnson, who lived in Lunenburg County as a slave, recounted a similar scene upon the arrival of Union soldiers next door: "On the plantation next to ours, the mistress was whipping a house girl. The soldiers made the house girl strip the mistress, whip her, then dress in her clothes. She left with the soldiers. I never saw her again." The experience of punishing and humiliating a former owner no doubt impressed slaves with the significance of the social upheaval signified by emancipation.⁴² Yet Johnson's description of the soldiers as "making" the slave girl whip her owner suggests that she was somewhat ambivalent about fulfilling a role reversal. She may have feared retaliation; possibly she rejected the thought of becoming like her former oppressor. Many liberated slaves were restrained toward their former owners. Elizabeth Sparks of Mathews County remembered that Union soldiers had told her mistress to give her clothes and anything else she wanted. Sparks had refused these gestures, she said, because her mistress had treated her pretty well.⁴³

⁴¹Wild identified the slaveholder as William H. Clopton; a black sergeant who described the scene identified him as Mr. Clayton. Wild was later court-martialed and found guilty of disobedience in connection with the incident, but this was shortly reversed by General Butler because none of the officers on the court commanded black troops. Ira Berlin, *et al.*, eds., Destruction, 68, 95-98 (quote); Litwack, Been in the Storm, 64-65. See also Cyrus A. Branch, James City County, to Governor William Smith, 15 May 1864, Executive Papers, RG 3, LVA, for another possible reference to the whipping.

⁴²Perdue, *et al.*, eds., Weevils, 160-163; Southern Workman 14 (March 1885): 4.

⁴³Perdue, *et al.*, eds., Weevils, 273-277. Many slaves were distressed by Union soldiers' wanton destruction and appropriation of slaveowners' property, especially the

Still, some slaves in Union-occupied areas were aggressive about the appropriation of their former owners' property and spaces. Former slaveholding women meticulously recorded their losses. Anne Bradford, a refugee from Norfolk, reported in late 1862 the rumor that slaves had taken over her sister Mary's property on the York River, with the intention of dividing the land among themselves. Several months later, she noted that her sister Sally in Norfolk had lost about a dozen hams from her smokehouse and suspected run-away slaves to be the culprits. Mary Galt of Norfolk contended in the spring of 1863 that black residents and refugees basically did as they pleased in the city. Norfolk's Evelyn Sharp was more specific in the spring of 1864 when she wrote to refugee Chloe Whittle that African-Americans were being allowed to inhabit vacant rooms in any house and to sit in any church pew they chose. The role reversals brought about by black Virginians' assertiveness under Union occupation were encapsulated in such popular wartime songs as "Ole Uncle Abram's Comin'" and "Kingdom Comin'," which celebrated slaves' appropriations of their owners' lands and homes.⁴⁴

theft of crops the slaves had cultivated and harvested. Former slaveholder Lizzie Mann recalled that slaves had refrained from assisting soldiers in robbing slaveowners in Gloucester County. Litwack, Been in the Storm, 122-124; Mann Memoir (typescript), 15, VHS.

⁴⁴Anne Elizabeth Tazewell Bradford, Hillsboro, N.C., to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 24 Nov. 1862, 12 May 1863, Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, VHS; Mary Jeffery Galt Diary, 22 May 1863, Galt Family Papers III, W&M; Emily R. Davies, "'What Sorrows and What Joys': The Civil War Diaries of Cloe Tyler Whittle, 1861-1866" (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1993), 162; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 111-112; Willard A. & Porter W. Heaps, The Singing Sixties: The Spirit of Civil War Days Drawn from the Music of the Times (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 268-270; Richard L. Morton, ed., "Life in Virginia by a 'Yankee Teacher,' Margaret Newbold Thorpe," VMHB 64 (April 1956): 197. Former slaves, including Eliza Baker of Williamsburg, later

Initially, slaveholding women did not necessarily lament the departures of all of their slaves. In early July 1863, Chloe Whittle recorded in her diary that the family's cook, named Affey (or Aphey), had "vamoused" with her two children. For Whittle, their absence made home so "delightful" that she decided to postpone a planned trip to South Carolina. By mid-April 1863, Norfolk County's Elizabeth Wallace and her husband had concluded that "it would be much better for us if all the negroes would leave us for then we could hire white people who, now that the negroes are all crazy with freedom, would be more faithful and more interested in their labors." Shortly thereafter, Wallace and her daughter Bettie discovered that Mahala, Rachel, and other house slaves planned to leave for Union lines during the night. Wallace told them to leave during the day and may have loaned them a cart.⁴⁵

Ultimately, however, the departure of slave women for Union territory meant new work responsibilities for slaveholding women. Recalling the experiences of "ladies" who had to cook, scrub, sweep, feed the livestock, and split wood, in 1906 Myrta Lockett Avery described emancipation as "inversion, revolution." In the initial days after her

provided renditions of these songs to twentieth-century interviewers. Baker, Memoirs, 16. In early 1864, General Benjamin F. Butler had placed churches in Norfolk and Portsmouth under provost marshals to make sure that only loyal ministers preached; he also allowed black and white soldiers to use the churches whenever they wanted. Spencer Wilson, "Experiment in Reunion: The Union Army in Civil War Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Maryland, 1973), 212.

⁴⁵Davies, "'What Sorrows and What Joys,'" 11 July, 1863, 115; Wallace, Glencoe Diary, 15 April 1863, 21 May 1863, 26, 37. Within the Confederacy as a whole, Faust charts slave mistresses' growing disaffection from the institution of slavery during the war because of their difficulty in getting slaves to work and their fear of violence; she also notes the desire of many mistresses to retain a domestic slave to do the household drudgery. Mothers of Invention, 70-74.

house slaves left in May 1863, Elizabeth Wallace described the various resources that she used to get the work done. Family members chipped in. She hired neighbors and sent out the wash. Although Wallace hired a variety of black and white servants over the next year and a half, late in 1863 she recorded that she had spent the day patching clothes for the family's three remaining slaves, all of whom were male: "It is the first time I have mended for them as we always had women to do such things and since they left us Old Pleasant washes and mends for them." Obviously, Wallace had not been able to secure Pleasant's services that day. Without her former female house slaves, Wallace had less time to fill her role as a genteel farm wife and mother. On 26 July 1863, she recorded in her diary: "Since I have had so much drudgery to perform I have neglected the children every day as well as Sunday." Tellingly, in 1863 Wallace's young daughter Katie penned a composition entitled "Home Life--The Kitchen," in which she chronicled her mother's efforts to do without a cook. In contrast to Elizabeth Wallace, Katie presented a cheerful picture, declaring that a fried-chicken dinner prepared by her mother "tastes as good as if old aunt Rose herself had cooked it" and concluding, "you see the Southerners can get along without their 'colored gentlemen and ladies' as the Yanks call them."⁴⁶

⁴⁶Sixty years later, Mary Elizabeth Massey echoed Avary, citing a "domestic revolution." Avary, Dixie After the War, 182-183; Massey, Women in the Civil War (as Bonnet Brigades), N.Y.: A.A. Knopf, 1966; repr., Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1994), 280-282; Wallace, Glencoe Diary, 22-25 May 1863, 23 June 1863, 26 July 1863, 21 Dec. 1863, 37, 43, 50, 82; Eleanor P. Cross and Charles B. Cross, Jr., Child of Glencoe: Civil War Journal of Katie Darling Wallace (Chesapeake, Va.; Norfolk County Historical Society, 1983), 13-16, 23, 31-32, 36-37; Marli Frances Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves: Gender, Race, and South Carolina Women, 1830-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Rochester, 1986), 226-228. Faust claims that many slaveholding women had little knowledge of or experience in practical housewifery, in Mothers of Invention, 77-79.

One initial response by elite women forced to take on new roles because their slaves left during the war was to treat the work as a lark. On her way to South Carolina from Norfolk in October 1863, Chloe Whittle stayed with a Mrs. Webb of Suffolk. All of Webb's slaves had left, although she had retained the services of a young hired boy. Webb did her own cooking and washing, as did most of the "ladies" of Suffolk, according to Whittle. She continued: "They take it very cheerfully, turning it into a joke & it is amusing to hear the ladies comparing their experience in the culinary departments." Whittle herself and her sister Grace ("Gay") had been without any household workers for six days during the summer and had "descended into the kitchen" to cook. Although they had made good biscuits, they had not been able to master corn bread. Most of the trouble they encountered came when they had to move the heavy pots required for cooking. Whittle also claimed that throughout the summer, she had served as the household's main chambermaid, her Aunt Fanny as the dining room servant, and Gay as the nurse and assistant chambermaid. On 11 September 1863, Chloe Whittle's morning activity included "emptying the slop water & making up Father's bed & mine." She reconciled herself to such work in part by describing herself as taking on a temporary role.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, in Williamsburg in mid-April 1863, Sallie Galt described a similar shortage of domestic workers, but claimed that white men had stepped in to do the work formerly performed by slave women: "It is such a strange state of things here Gentlemen make all the biscuits sweep out the house & do all the work servants used to do." Very

⁴⁷Whittle had found herself with new duties as early as late June of 1862, when a household worker named Cary had left the family. Davies, "What Sorrows and What Joys," 11 Aug. 1862, 25 Sept. 1862, 11 Sept. 1863, From 19 Oct. 1863, 70, 80, 120, 140.

few slaves remained in the town. On 14 April 1863, Williamsburg's Isabella Sully complained about having to do drudgery after the departure of two slave women at sunrise a few days before. With Confederate soldiers on the march into the town, she wanted to talk to them rather than worry about "the vulgar considerations of pots, pans[,] kettles, brooms, dust, dishabille or anything else."⁴⁸

Once their slaves began departing, slaveholding women had to try to come to terms psychologically with emancipation. Their constant references in their diaries and letters to the departures of slaves who had belonged to themselves or to their relatives and friends indicate their attempts to create order out of the upheaval taking place around them. For some women, emancipation threatened a spiritual crisis. In May 1863, Elizabeth Wallace took up her Bible and transcribed into her journal more than three pages of "Texts of Scripture bearing upon the subject of Slavery." She concluded that both God and Jesus had sanctioned slavery and maintained that although some slaveholders had abused the institution, abolitionists had ultimately done more to pervert it.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Sallie Maria Galt to "Dearest Cousin," Williamsburg, 15 April 1863, Galt Papers I, W&M; Isabella Sully, Williamsburg, to Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman, 14 April 1863, Tucker-Coleman Collection (Uncataloged), W&M. Galt's reference is the only one I have found that describes men doing housework during the war. Drew Faust suggests that the increasing popularity of short hair among young women as the war progressed reflected in part the reality that slave women were less available to arrange their mistresses' hair. Faust, Mothers of Invention, 226.

⁴⁹Ferebee Journal [identified by me as a journal kept by Elizabeth Wallace], Miscellaneous Southern Women Materials, MoC. For the chronicling of departures, see, for example, Anne Elizabeth Tazewell Bradford, Hillsboro, N.C., to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 24 Nov. 1862, 27 Dec. 1862, Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, VHS (as of 27 December 1862, sixteen of the Bradfords's slaves had left), and Sally Taliaferro Diary, 2 Aug. 1861, 4 Oct. 1861, 8 May 1862, 19 May 1862, 26 May 1862, 13 July 1862, 30 July 1862, 4 Aug. 1862,

Many slaveholding women expressed a range of sometimes contradictory sentiments in their attempt to reconcile themselves to the evidence of slaves' rejection of slavery.⁵⁰ Some, such as Caroline Hill, who taught school in King William County, maternalistically claimed that escaped slaves did not know what they were doing. She referred to departing slaves as "poor deluded creatures" and wished that they "knew their own interests better;" in early July of 1863, Hill lamented the departure of two more slaves, but reassured herself that her family was healthy and industrious. In February 1863, Lucy Ann Page of Gloucester County trivialized the motives of escaped slaves: "Poor Creatures they are so crazy about sugar & coffee I believe it has carried many a one away." Other mistresses criticized slave women for running off with infants or breaking family ties. In late October 1862, Lucy Tucker wrote to her daughter Cynthia, "Eliza & family left a few days since[,] her infant two weeks old." Sally Taliaferro recorded on 4 August 1862 that a slave named Jane had departed, despite the illness of Jane's mother. Similarly, Cynthia Coleman noted that her "faithful" former "Mamy" had been "deserted by all of her own children;" Coleman subtly identified herself as one of "Mamy's" white "children" and remained supportive of her even after she too left Lucy Tucker in the fall of 1864. Other slaveholding women recorded the sufferings of fugitive slaves, such as high mortality rates in contraband camps, predicted their exploitation by the Union army, or exulted in the return of slaves to their owners. Some emphasized the

7 Aug. 1862, 2 Sept. 1862, 13 May 1863, 16 Mar. 1864, 26 Mar. 1864, 7 Apr. 1864, LVA and W&M; Wallace, Glencoe Diary, 10 May 1863, 33.

⁵⁰See also Tracey Weis, "Negotiating Freedom: Domestic Service and the Landscape of Labor and Household Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1850-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers, 1994), 184-188.

continued "faithfulness" of those slaves who had not left.⁵¹

Slave escapes sometimes caused conflict within slaveowning families, whose members disagreed about how to stop their bondpeople from leaving or how to get them to return. Sally Taliaferro, for example, vehemently disagreed with the strategy of accommodation employed by her mother-in-law, who was living away from Gloucester County but still communicating with her slaves there. By letter, Mrs. Taliaferro asked her remaining slaves to convey to the escapees "that she thinks it perfectly natural they should desire to try a change, and is not at all angry with them for having gone--& if they will return, they shall be received without a word of reproach." Sally refused to read her mother-in-law's letters to the remaining slaves, but a neighbor agreed to do so. Sally claimed that the slaves responded by acting as if they were free, going to the market and selling chickens, eggs, and other provisions. Sally herself rejected advice from family

⁵¹Caroline Kean (Hill) Davis Diary, 15 June 1862, 1 July 1862, 6 May 1863, 5 July 1863, 66, 69, 124, 134, VHS; Lucy Ann Page to Captain Peyton Nelson Page, Greenway, 20 Feb. 1863, Southern Women's Collection (in progress), MoC; Sallie Maria Galt to "Dearest Cousin," Williamsburg, 15 April 1863, Galt Papers I, W&M; Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman, Clarksville, N.C., to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 23 March 1864, Anne Elizabeth Tazewell Bradford, Hillsboro, N.C., to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 27 Dec. 1862, 16 June 1863, Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, VHS; Sally Taliaferro Diary, 4 Aug. 1862, LVA; Broun Diary, 22 Nov. 1863, 29-30, SHC; Lucy Ann Tucker, Williamsburg, to Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman, 29 October 1862, Tucker-Coleman Collection (Uncataloged), W&M; Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman to Lucy Ann Tucker, Clarksville, 2 Nov. 1864, Tucker-Coleman Collection, W&M. Although in April 1863 Cynthia Coleman described blacks as a "faithless race" and predicted that all slaves would eventually leave their owners, she still held out hope for slavery: Coleman noted that her husband's mother had retained some of her slaves, who would ultimately belong to her children. Cynthia [Beverley Tucker Coleman], Warrenton, N.C., to [Lawrence and Sarah Washington], 23 April 1863, Goldsborough Papers, DK.

members to sell her slaves in Richmond or to hire them out and leave Gloucester.⁵²

As mistresses sought to adjust to wartime emancipation, some black Virginia women used what few resources they had to contribute toward Union victory so as to end slavery forever.⁵³ The evolution of United States citizenship among slave and free black women in wartime Virginia included identification with the Union. Many black women shared a messianic belief in Abraham Lincoln and a growing consciousness of the alliance that existed between local black communities, the Union army, and the Northern

⁵²Sally Lyons Taliaferro to William Booth Taliaferro, Dunham Massie, 27 June 1862, [Mary?] to Sally Lyons Taliaferro, Laburnum, 25 [n.m.] [1862], James Lyons to Sally Lyons Taliaferro, Laburnum, 31 August 1864, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M. See also Stephen Ash's description of community pressure against a Fredericksburg man who decided to pay his remaining slaves, in When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865 (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1995), 161.

⁵³The contributions of slave and free black women to Union victory received little attention at the time and have received little consideration by historians. A recent essay on gender in the Civil War ignored slave women's role as political agents on the domestic front during the war even as it replayed the familiar theme of slaveholding women's contributions. Massey, Women in the Civil War, 268-270; LeeAnn Whites, "The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender," in Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds., Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992), 3-21. First-hand accounts of African-American women's wartime efforts include Susie King Taylor's A Black Woman's Civil War Memoirs, ed. Patricia W. Romero (N.Y.: M. Wiener, 1988) and Brenda Stevenson, ed., The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimke (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988). Histories of Civil War-era African-Americans which focus on the role of black men as military laborers and soldiers include peripheral references to women's work as laundresses, nurses, and cooks. See Bell Irvin Wiley, Southern Negroes, 1861-1865 (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1938); Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1953); Dudley Cornish, The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865 (N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 1966); James M. McPherson, The Negro's Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted During the War for the Union (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1965); James H. Brewer, The Confederate Negro: Virginia's Craftsmen and Military Laborers, 1861-1865 (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1969); Ira Berlin, et al., eds., Military; Jordan, Black Confederates.

public in opposition to the Confederacy. Awareness led to talk and then to action, as women quickly embraced the notion that they might help bring about abolition and change the course of American history.

More than six years after the war ended, Nansemond County farmer James Baker attested to the Unionism of his wartime neighbor Cherry Hale: "She was always down on the rebels, and in favor of the Union; and so regarded by her loyal neighbors. . . . I consider her as all colored women throughout, that is, that she loved the Union cause."⁵⁴ Although there was more ambivalence than Baker suggested, many African-American women fervently prayed for Union victory, and some worked hard to help bring it about. For these women, the Union cause represented deliverance from slavery and freedom from the legal and economic restraints of a slave society.

Efforts by slave, freed, and free-born black women to contribute to Union victory usually centered around traditional domestic work and spaces. Some black women served the Union cause by providing information to Union officers. Direct evidence of this is rare: neither contemporary accounts nor recollections of the assistance provided to

⁵⁴Hale's claim for reimbursement for three oyster boats does not specify her pre-war status but suggests that she was a free black. Testimony of James Baker, 29 November 1871, Claim of Cherry Hale, Case File #9976, Nansemond County, (M1407, #1467), Disallowed Claims, SCC, RG 233, NARA. See also Lucy Chase's assertion in 1863 that freedpeople were proud to be associated with the Union. Of course, she and other missionaries wanted to see ex-slaves as loyal and tried to inculcate Northern middle-class civic values among them. See discussion below. Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home, 61. For a reference to two contraband women who sent a homespun sheet and a pair of socks, respectively, to the Northwestern Sanitary Commission Fair in Chicago in 1863, see Massey, Women in the Civil War, 38.

the Union by black Virginians as spies and guides usually mention women.⁵⁵ Indirect evidence exists in the fact that kitchens where female slave cooks worked and lived became the targets of visits from Union officers and soldiers. Kitchens had been defined by slaves and owners as slave spaces before the war, and during the war some slaves became quite assertive about their claims to these spaces.⁵⁶

⁵⁵Berlin, et al., eds., Destruction, 88-90; OR, Series I, 2:1003-1005, Series II, 6:1053; Testimony of J.W. Alvord, Inspector of Schools and Finances for the Freedman's Bureau, 3 Feb. 1866, in U.S. Congress, House and Senate, Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1866, H. Rept. 30, serial 1273, part 2 of appended testimony, 244-248; American Missionary 7 (June 1863): 125-126; Pauli Murray, Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family, rev. ed. (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1978; Perennial Library, 1987), 125-126; Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 97-98. For Union officers' willingness to follow the lead of slave women, see Daniel Crofts's discussion of a slave woman, apparently under orders from her master, who directed Federal gunboats into a Confederate ambush in Winton, North Carolina, in February 1862, in Old Southampton, 199. One of the few black female slaves who eventually received recognition was Mary Louveste, a resident of Norfolk who worked for the Gosport Navy Yard and carried information on the construction of the ironclad Virginia to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles in Washington, D.C. Welles later wrote in support of Louveste's application for a pension from the federal government. Thomas C. Parramore with Peter C. Stewart and Tommy L. Bogger, Norfolk: The First Four Centuries (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1994), 203; Jordan, Black Confederates, 283-285. The most famous African-American woman who served as a Union spy was Harriet Tubman, who apparently eventually received a pension for her efforts. Lyde Cullen Sizer, "Acting Her Part: Narratives of Union Women Spies," in Clinton and Silber, eds., Divided Houses, 127-133.

⁵⁶Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 237; John Michael Vlach, Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1993), 43-47; Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1974), 542; Mary Titus, "'Groaning tables' and 'Spit in the kettles': Food and Race in the Nineteenth-Century South," Southern Quarterly 30 (Winter-Spring 1992), 15-16. In late 1863, slaveholder Sally Tazewell of Norfolk reported that two of her sisters' kitchens had been taken over by runaway slaves and free blacks, who, she said, "refuse positively to quit." Sarah Tazewell to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 8 Dec. 1862, Grigsby Papers, VHS. In 1866, a former slaveholding woman in Elizabeth City County stated that six or seven families had occupied the kitchen on her property over the course of the war. Testimony of Mrs. Watts, 28 [Feb. 1866], Davy Armstead v. Thomas Watts, Proceedings of Cases Before Freedmen's Court, 1866 & 1867, Office of the Assistant

Union soldiers who visited kitchens were hungry for provisions *and* eager for details about local surroundings and Confederate slaveowners.⁵⁷ Early in the war, a United States naval officer visited the kitchen of a Norfolk slaveowner in an attempt to encourage her slaves to escape. In May 1863, a resident of Louisa County reported that three Union soldiers had "come up to the kitchen . . . and talked with the cook, but did not notice the family at all." Similarly, when Union cavalry visited the Hankins family in Surry County in July of 1864, some of the soldiers stayed around the yard and kitchens all night. They left with a mule and a horse.⁵⁸

Some slave and free black women cooked and washed for Union troops. Like their Confederate counterparts, Unionist slaveholders who boarded officers and nursed

Subassistant Commissioner, Fort Monroe, Va., #4140, Records of Subordinate Field Offices, Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, NARA (hereafter Proceedings, #4140, RG 105, NARA).

⁵⁷Claims submitted to the Southern Claims Commission by black and white Virginians during the 1870s make clear that soldiers sometimes took cooking utensils as well as provisions; the petitions also indicate that soldiers sometimes destroyed kitchens for building materials. Slaves thus deprived of their property and living spaces surely resented the actions of the troops. See Claim of Lucinda Thomas, Case File #2439, Halifax County; Claim of Sarah King, Case File #641, Norfolk County; Claim of Emily Bryant, Case File #13981, Prince George County; Claim of Parthenia Collins, Case File #15814, Prince George County; Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA.

⁵⁸Pat, Cottage Home, to Mr. and Mrs. James G. White, King William, Va., 16 May 1863, Southern Women Collection (in progress), MoC. The naval officer, identified only as Commander Boutwell, was later arrested as a spy in Richmond. William Stanley Hoole and Addie Shirley Hoole, eds., Confederate Norfolk: The Letters of a Virginia Lady to the Mobile "Register," 1861-1862 (University, Ala.: Confederate Publishing Co., 1984), 20, 22, 43. Virginia Hankins, who informed her brother that all of the slaves behaved well when the Union forces visited, does not appear to have placed any significance on their visitation to the kitchens. Virginia Wilson Hankins to John DeWitt Hankins, 11 July 1864, Hankins Family Papers, VHS.

soldiers in their homes drew on the labor of their slaves.⁵⁹ Semi-autonomous slaves and free blacks assisted the Union army from their homes as well. Sometimes they received pay; often they did not. Mary Cowling, a slave washerwoman who lived with her free-born husband William in Suffolk during the war, cooked and washed for Union troops camped several hundred feet from her husband's house. Cowling testified that she had supported the Union throughout the war; a local merchant claimed, "She was wishing for the success of the Union forces, so that she [could] obtain her freedom." Lucy Green, the free-born widow who slowly lost her farm to Union troops in Charles City County, cooked for Union forces. Stated Green, "I dont know what the war was about exactly. I know the Yankees were on the side of the colored people & I was on their side." Green's daughter Martha sewed and washed for the soldiers camped nearby. A slave cook who provided food for Union troops in Duplin County, North Carolina, was later killed by a Union guard for threatening to kill her mistress when she discovered that the mistress had hired a new cook and would not have to fend for herself in the kitchen.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Ada Jones, a slave hired to Emily Bryant of Prince George County, probably assisted her mistress when she fed Union soldiers and nursed the sick at her house. Testimony of Emily Bryant, 30 July 1872, Testimony of Ada Jones, 29 March 1876, Claim of Emily Bryant, Case File #13981, Prince George County Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA. Unionist slaveholder Henrietta Bowden also may have drawn on her slaves' labor when she nursed sick officers on her York County farm in 1862. Summary Report, 14 Dec. 1874, Testimony of Henrietta Bowden, 2 June 1872-15 Feb. 1874, Claim of Henrietta Bowden, Case File #245, Norfolk County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA.

⁶⁰Testimony of Margaret Scott, 30 Dec. 1872, Claim of George and Margaret Scott, Case File #17878, Norfolk County, Disapproved Claims, (M1407, #4064), SCC, RG 233, NARA; Appeal of George and Margaret Scott, Case File #9700; U.S. Court of Claims, RG 123, NARA; Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home, 144-145; Matthew Page Andrews, comp., The Women of the South in War Times, rev. ed. (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Co., 1923), 237-245. Green's profession of ignorance may have been

Although Southern Claims Commission testimony may have suggested so, women did not do domestic work for the military simply because they wanted the Union to prevail in the war. Cooking and washing for soldiers helped some women to survive. Former slave Matilda Carter of Hampton, for example, remembered accompanying her mother to Union army camps to sell food to the soldiers. In Hampton, contraband women sold cakes and pies from stands on County Street; a horse railway along the street joined Fort Monroe and two military hospitals.⁶¹

Other African-American women were formally employed by the government behind the lines as laundresses, nurses, cooks, and personal servants. They received scant compensation for their labor, especially during the early months of the war. Under the wage system set up by General John E. Wool at Fort Monroe in the fall of 1861, women who worked as servants for officers and soldiers were to be "paid" four dollars per month by their employers; male servants were to receive eight dollars. The

dissemblance; for a very similar statement, see the SCC testimony of Betsie Walker of Appomattox County, quoted in Morgan, Emancipation in the Tobacco Belt, 108; Testimony of Lucy Green and Martha Taylor, 21 Jan. 1873, Claim of Lucy Green, Case File #18854, Charles City County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA. Like Green, Cowling had to relocate. Soldiers tore down William Cowling's dwelling house, kitchen, and smoke house to use the building materials for quarters. William Cowling later drowned in the service of the Union army at Bermuda Hundred. By the time Mary Cowling filed a claim for the property in 1872, she had moved to Norfolk. Summary Report, n.d., Depositions of Mary Cowling and George W. Singleton, 6 May 1872, Application to Have Testimony Taken, 21 Jan. 1873, Claim of Mary Cowling, Case File #13131, Norfolk County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA.

⁶¹Berlin et al., eds., Free Labor, 19; Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 68-70; Highlights of Black History at Fort Monroe (Fort Monroe, Va.: Fort Monroe Casemate Museum, [1972]), [5]. In Georgia, black women who lived on the Sea Islands during the war washed Union sailors' clothes for pay. Other escaped slaves sold chickens and vegetables to troops serving on the warships. Clarence L. Mohr, "Before Sherman: Georgia Blacks and the Union War Effort, 1861-1864," in Nieman, ed., The Day of the Jubilee, 162.

contrabands, however, did not actually receive any money. After clothing costs were deducted, the funds were allocated to the quartermaster for the care of the destitute who were not working. Men who worked as military laborers were allowed to keep two dollars of their ten-dollar wage. When Captain Charles B. Wilder became superintendent of contrabands under General Wool in March 1862, he convinced Wool that the contrabands should receive all of their wages directly and that the quartermaster's fund be eliminated. Wool also approved Wilder's suggested pay scale of fifteen dollars per month for skilled men, ten dollars per month for unskilled men, and five dollars per month for women and children. Almost two years later, when women and men were authorized to work in government hospitals as cooks and nurses, both were to receive ten dollars per month and one ration per day; white women were to receive forty cents per day.⁶²

Still, contrabands had difficulty getting paid promptly, and some never received any pay at all. By December 1862, the U.S. government owed \$31,435.95 in back wages to contraband laborers at Fort Monroe. In the spring of 1864, several freedpeople, including five women, who had worked on Craney Island near Norfolk appealed to

⁶²Louis Gerteis, Federal Policy, 19-20; Joe M. Richardson, Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861-1890 (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1986), 7; Jones, Labor of Love, 118; Berlin, et al., eds., Free Labor, 19-21, 25; Quarles, Negro in the Civil War, 247; "Africans in Fort Monroe Military District," U.S. House of Representative, 37th Cong., 2d Sess., 1861-62, House Executive Documents 1135: Doc. #85, 2. Almost as many blacks served as military laborers as joined the Union army (186,000). Litwack, Been in the Storm, 97-98. In early December 1863, black men and women were authorized to work as cooks and nurses at government hospitals for black patients; in mid-January 1864, they were authorized to work in all U.S. general hospitals. OR, Series III, 3:1155, 4:32.

Captain Orlando Brown, Superintendent of Negro Affairs in Norfolk, for overdue pay.⁶³

From November 1861 to February 1862, thirty-seven laundresses received rations for doing the wash for black laborers at Fort Monroe. At contraband camps in and around Hampton, freedwomen did the laundry for both Hampton Military Hospital and Chesapeake Military Hospital. At times, more than one hundred women were employed by the Hampton hospital. In Portsmouth, female contrabands worked at the Balfour Naval Hospital and at the Macon Hotel, which was used as a hospital for black patients. Although many contraband women were officially listed simply as cooks and laundresses, they often nursed patients as well.⁶⁴

Other women produced provisions for the Union military and for their own families on government farms established on confiscated Tidewater plantations during the war. In the spring of 1862, Captain Wilder convinced General Wool to let refugees occupy abandoned lands around Hampton. Although General John A. Dix, who replaced Wool in June 1862, was less amenable to this, by 1863 contrabands were living on about fifty farms overseen by Wilder, including the Fayette Sinclair farm and the Booker Jones

⁶³Some of the claimants listed could not be identified by sex. The women were Maria Clomis, May Dennis, Sally Wilson, Sarah Gaiter, and Phebe Russell, a cook. Brown responded that the payrolls had been forwarded to the General Superintendent. "A list of men and Women who have worked for Government under Captain O. Brown AQM at Craney Island," Fortress Monroe, Va., 14 April 1864; Miscellaneous Records, 1863 & 1864, Dept. of Negro Affairs, Ft. Monroe, Va., #4113, RG 105, NARA; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 97-98; Richardson, Christian Reconstruction, 8; OR, Series I, 18:480-481.

⁶⁴U.S. Congress, House, Africans in Fort Monroe Military District: Letter from the Secretary of War..., 37th Cong., 2d sess., 1862, H. Exec. Doc. 85, serial 1135, 5; Highlights of Black History, [5]; John S.C. Abbott, "The Military Hospitals at Fortress Monroe," Harper's New Monthly Magazine (Aug. 1864): 310-311 (with sketch of washerwomen carrying bundles of laundry on their heads, on p. 311); Wilson, "Experiment in Reunion," 180; Massey, Women in the Civil War, 52.

farm. By early 1865, the government oversaw a comparable number of farms on the south side of the James River, in Norfolk and Princess Anne counties.⁶⁵

Plots of land on government farms were assigned to families or, more specifically, to male heads of households. Yet women, children, and old or disabled men cultivated the crops for the most part, while able-bodied men worked as military laborers. In its preliminary report on conditions among freedpeople and their potential contributions to the Union cause, the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission in June 1863 recommended to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton that the government take fuller advantage of contraband women's experience raising crops by relocating more refugees to abandoned plantations. In his annual report for 1864, Captain Orlando Brown stated, "Much of the farm labor has been performed by women: the men being mostly engaged in manufacturing staves and lumber and chopping wood." These women faced daunting challenges in their efforts to produce corn. Much of the land was poor, and families had only small plots since the land available fell far short of the demand. The farm tools and horses provided by the government were largely cast-offs. Confederate and civilian raiders targeted the farms, many of which were located on the outskirts of federal territory. In addition, residents on some farms got caught in the administrative crossfire between the army and the Bureau of Negro Affairs, the arm of the War Department that managed the settlement of freedpeople on abandoned farms.⁶⁶

⁶⁵Richardson, Christian Reconstruction, 7; Gerteis, Federal Policy, 20-21, 25, 42-43; OR Series I, 18:570-571.

⁶⁶Gerteis, Federal Policy, 36-37; Engs, Hampton, 40-41. The Taylor farm, established on Little Bay near Norfolk for soldiers' families, consisted of 126 houses in December 1864; each dwelling had 1 1/2 acres of land. Dependents living there numbered 3617.

Many contraband women could barely keep themselves and their families alive in the camps hastily erected for refugees by a military unprepared, and sometimes unwilling, to protect and provide for them. Wartime freedom challenged even the most hardened among ex-slave women as they confronted dislocation and deprivation in a war zone. Nascent settlements of freedpeople in the lower Tidewater were devastated by impressment, rape, and pillage when the Union army launched attacks against Richmond in the spring of 1862 and against Petersburg and Richmond two years later. Suffering from hunger, disease, or abuse, some contrabands returned to their owners.

Throughout the war, the Union army's goal in Virginia was not to effect a smooth transition from slavery to freedom but to defeat the Confederate army. The military had no precedent to draw on in its attempts to deal with the large number of refugees who flooded Union-held areas in the lower Tidewater, especially after 1862. This inexperience was compounded by ignorance, racism, and greed on the part of some officers and soldiers. Even those who whole-heartedly supported the freedpeople had little understanding of the life they had left behind. This was often true as well of well-meaning middle-class missionaries who arrived from the North to teach and preach among the freedpeople.⁶⁷

Berlin, et al., Free Labor, 103-104, 208, 210; Perdue et al., eds, Weevils, 103. The Freedmen's Inquiry commissioners were Robert Dale Owen, James McKaye, and Samuel Gridley Howe. OR, Series III, 3:73, 443, 453-454. Large-scale cooperative farming was successfully instituted at the Corinth contraband camp in Mississippi in 1863, but the dispute between the War and Treasury Departments over plantation-leasing prevented officials from taking heed of the Corinth achievement. Cam Walker, "Corinth: The Story of a Contraband Camp," in Nieman, ed., The Day of the Jubilee, 344-346, 350.

⁶⁷Berlin, et al., eds., Free Labor, 104-105; Richardson, Christian Reconstruction, 8; Gerteis, Federal Policy, 24; Anne Elizabeth Tazewell Bradford, Hillsboro, N.C., to Hugh

Even sympathetic officers defined freedwomen as a particular problem.⁶⁸ By the time he had left Fort Monroe in mid-August 1861, General Butler had become frustrated with his contraband policy because of the sheer number of slaves who were flocking to Fort Monroe, including the large number of women and children for whom he had limited employment. His successor General Wool also viewed dependents as a burden. So did General John Dix, Wool's replacement the following June. Not wholly sympathetic to the plight of escaped slaves and at a loss as to how to provide for them in a war zone, Dix looked into sending the contrabands North. This idea did not bear fruit, so he segregated the fugitive slaves closer to home. In late 1862, he sent them to Craney Island, situated six miles from Norfolk in the Elizabeth River, before adequate shelter had been constructed. Dix sought "to remove the contraband women and children from contact with the camps--a contact injurious to both," and he planned for the contrabands

Blair Grigsby, 24 Nov. 1862, Grigsby Papers, VHS. In August of 1863, about 26,000 blacks lived within Union lines in the Virginia Tidewater, approximately 14,000 men and 12,000 women. About 5000 were still slaves, about 5000 were free blacks, and more than 15,000 were contraband, or escaped slaves. Not all of the contraband, of course, came from the Tidewater; the 26,000 black inhabitants included more than 8000 transient residents, most of whom were probably contraband. These figures are based on a census of Union-held territory in the counties of Elizabeth City, Warwick, Norfolk, Nansemond, and Princess Anne, and in Yorktown and its surroundings. Berlin, *et al*, eds., *Destruction*, Figure 13--Census of Blacks in the Union-Occupied Virginia Tidewater, [Norfolk, Va. August 20, 1863], 91. Engs argues that the army's harsh, inflexible approach toward blacks in the Hampton area, where the black community was relatively well prepared for the transition to freedom, demonstrates how ingrained ideas about black inferiority and incompetence were, in *Hampton*, 31, 35, 42-43, 75.

⁶⁸Mary Elizabeth Massey makes a similar point and provides evidence from Alabama and South Carolina, in *Women in the Civil War*, 272-274.

to fish and pick oakum on the island.⁶⁹

The experience of freedwomen at the contraband camp on Craney Island in 1862-1863 provides a microcosm of wartime freedom and is particularly well-documented because of the presence of Northern Quaker missionaries Lucy and Sarah Chase for half of 1863.

Most of the ex-slaves on the island had escaped from Suffolk and had been moved from place to place on the Peninsula by Dix to keep them away from Union troops.⁷⁰ By early 1863, there were about eighteen hundred ex-slaves on the island, with others still arriving. The refugees included many women and children. According to Lucy Chase, the freedpeople were not pleased to be there. They viewed it as a "slave-pen" and resented the limitations placed on the mobility they had so recently gained. Chase later described freedpeople on the island as "so befogged that many of them do not know but that they are in slavery now." She attributed this to the influence of slavery itself, but her descriptions suggest that restrictions on mobility and poor conditions on the island discouraged ex-slaves from seeing their situation as an improvement over enslavement. Most arrived with little clothing and were exposed to bitterly cold winds on the island. Shelter consisted of barracks and some tents left behind by soldiers, as well as a hospital for the sick.⁷¹

⁶⁹Gerteis, Federal Policy, 18-19; Berlin, et al., eds., Destruction, 63-66; Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 91, 95; QR, Series I, 18:391, 461, 480-481.

⁷⁰Newby, "The World All Before Them," 91, 95; Berlin, et al., eds., Free Labor, 136-137, 151; Gerteis, Federal Policy, 26.

⁷¹Swint, ed., Dear Ones, 21, 24; Berlin, et al., eds., Free Labor, 150-154.

Although Lucy Chase described freedpeople on the island as "docile," her letters indicate that at least some of the ex-slaves viewed their liberation as an action they had taken on their own behalf and their freedom as a condition for which the government bore some responsibility. Placing themselves alongside men who had joined the army, several freedwomen and men on the island described their situation as contrabands as beginning when they "entered" or "came into" the army. Women referred to the number of children they had lost since they had entered the army, and men noted that they had not obtained any clothing since they had entered.⁷²

Despite the poor conditions, contrabands on Craney Island attempted to recreate some semblance of community life there. One evening in January 1863, the Chase sisters visited freedpeople in their tents and found some women sewing while others joined men in attending prayer meetings, playing games, or singing and dancing. Lucy Chase noted that the contrabands treated each other courteously and demonstrated particular respect for the aged. Yet all was not tranquil. Chase referred to lying and stealing, which she described as legacies of slavery. An army guard on the island, on the other hand, traced stealing among freedwomen to their mistreatment by the army. Chase also noted that Orlando Brown, Superintendent of Contrabands at Norfolk, who was stationed on Craney Island in the winter of 1862-1863, believed that freedwomen were being ruined by idleness. As a holding place, Craney Island remained a site of transition for escaped slaves throughout the rest of the war.⁷³

⁷²Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home, 42, 45, 59.

⁷³Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home, 24, 34, 36; Berlin, et al., eds., Free Labor, 151-154; Gerteis, Federal Policy, 29. In the summer and fall of 1864 an experiment in moral

Military officials continued to view ex-slave women as a problem throughout the conflict, even as they recognized the usefulness of women as magnets for the attraction of slave men who could fight for the army. As commander of the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, General Butler articulated this belief when he issued General Orders Number 46 in December 1863:

Women and children are received, because it would be manifestly iniquitous and unjust to take the husband and father and leave the wife and child to ill-treatment and starvation. Women and children are also received when unaccompanied by the husband and father, because the negro has the domestic affections in as strong a degree as the white man, and however far south his master may drive him, he will sooner or later return to his family.⁷⁴

Women and children were to be provided with "suitable subsistence" by the Superintendent of Negro Affairs, and this assistance was to continue for the duration of a soldier's service in good standing and six months afterwards should he die in battle or as a result of wounds or disease. Soldiers were to be given certificates of subsistence for their families to use.

Butler also encouraged recruiting raids into the Confederate interior of Virginia and

instruction took place on the island. Missionary teacher Marcia Colton attempted to reform about one hundred young freedwomen who had been fornicating with white soldiers. She had great difficulty keeping the women and their army guards apart. Richardson, Christian Reconstruction, 12-13. Litwack identifies the women as prostitutes who had been arrested. Litwack, Been in the Storm, 457-458.

⁷⁴Berlin, et al., eds., Free Labor, 171; Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 50-51; OR, Series III, 3:1139-1144.

North Carolina; these generated soldiers for the army and increased the number of slave families behind Union lines.⁷⁵

Even with the assistance of missionaries from the North, military authorities had great difficulty providing for the growing refugee population. In October 1863, missionary teacher H.S. Beals, who worked with his wife in Portsmouth, had written: "Every day the last week we have been thronged morning and evening with shivering, half-clad women and children whom we have partially clothed. This transition state through which these people are passing, is truly a wilderness of suffering."⁷⁶ In 1864, the city of Norfolk was increasingly overburdened with refugees. Disease was rampant, including a smallpox epidemic in April. A visitor to the city remarked upon "the large company of women, both white and black, standing in front of the commissary's office to receive rations for the support of their families." In July, Captain Orlando Brown requested from his superior officer twenty-five pairs of shoes for women and an equal number for children. Later that year, Sarah Chase wrote from Norfolk to the New England Freedmen's Aid Society requesting cooking utensils or even stove lids "to bake the universal corn cake on."⁷⁷

⁷⁵Berlin, *et al.*, eds., Military, 135-138; Berlin, *et al.*, eds., Destruction, 68-69.

⁷⁶AM 7 (Dec. 1863): 278-279. For references to donations of clothing for contrabands, especially for women and children, see AM 6 (Aug. 1862), 180, 184; AM 7 (Feb. 1863), 44; AM 7 (June 1863), 137.

⁷⁷There was also apparently smallpox among contrabands in Norfolk in August 1863. Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 67-69; Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Norfolk: Historic Southern Port (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1931), 251; Capt. Orlando Brown to Col. Josiah Kinsman (telegram), Norfolk, 30 July 1864, Letters, Orders, and Telegrams Received by Lt. Col. J.B. Kinsman, General Superintendent, Nov. 1863-Dec. 1864, #4108, RG 105, NARA; Swint, ed, Dear Ones at Home, 132; OR, Series I, 29, pt. 2:635.

In response to the refugee crisis, both Captain Wilder, in charge of freedpeople north of the James River, and Captain Brown, in charge south of the James, encouraged freedwomen to migrate North to take positions as domestic servants. Few women volunteered; those with husbands in the army were particularly reluctant to leave. Brown went so far as to suggest that freedpeople be sent north forcibly. His supervisor, Lieutenant Colonel Josiah B. Kinsman, who had general oversight of freedpeople for the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, wanted to withhold rations from women who refused to emigrate. Butler jettisoned this idea.⁷⁸

In addition to rejecting emigration, women also attempted to hold the army to Butler's General Orders Number 46 through more direct means, but with seemingly little success. Ann Sumner, whose husband was in the army, wrote to Butler in February 1864 that the quartermaster at Portsmouth had rejected her requests for wood. When Butler referred her letter to the quartermaster, he explained that he had forwarded requests such as hers to the Superintendent of Negro Affairs, since he had not been given any orders to fill them. It does not appear that Sumner received any relief. Mary K. King, threatened with a cessation of rations unless she moved to a government farm, appealed to her husband, Private Decatur King of the First U.S. Colored Cavalry, who in turn appealed to one of his officers. The officer learned that Captain Orlando Brown planned to implement such a policy for freedpeople who did not have their own homes once enough

In December 1863, rations were distributed to 4917 women and children and 484 men in Norfolk. Consolidated Ration Return for Contrabands in Government Charge, 1 Dec. 1863-31 Dec. 1863, Miscellaneous Records, 1863 & 1864, #4113, RG 105, NARA.

⁷⁸Berlin, *et al.*, eds., Free Labor, 106, 204-206; Gerteis, Federal Policy, 37-39; Engs, Hampton, 38-39.

housing had been constructed on the farms.⁷⁹

Freedpeople also drew on communal ties to attempt to remedy or stave off deprivation. When black men were impressed to work for the army at Bermuda Hundred in May 1864, a large group of women and children came to Captain Orlando Brown to try to persuade him to facilitate the release of their relatives. Instead, he convinced the men to volunteer for the army by promising to go with them and make sure that they got mustered in properly.⁸⁰ Other formal group efforts included black benevolent associations formed to assist newly arriving contrabands. Missionary teacher John Oliver helped to organize such societies in Norfolk and Portsmouth in 1862 and 1863 respectively. In addition, mutual aid and burial societies at local churches eased the plight of some of the refugees.⁸¹

John Oliver worked for the American Missionary Association, which was the leading relief and educational organization in the Tidewater area during the war. Oliver was one of several black Northerners employed by the AMA in the region; most of the more than fifty missionaries sent to Hampton Roads were white. Local free-born and freed women worked with AMA missionaries as teachers, aides, and monitors; one of the most famous teachers was Norfolk-native Mary Peake, who died in early 1862.⁸²

⁷⁹Berlin, et al., eds., Military, 721; Berlin, et al., eds., Free Labor, 188.

⁸⁰Berlin, et al., eds., Free Labor, 191-192.

⁸¹Richardson, Christian Reconstruction, 61-62, 190; Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home, 84.

⁸²Oliver was quite critical of military authorities, and their opposition to him led him to offer to resign in 1863, which the AMA accepted. Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 82; Engs, Hampton, 45, 205; Richardson, Christian Reconstruction, 4-5,

AMA and other missionaries attempted to assist freedpeople in making the transition from slavery to freedom by offering them an education. Young and old responded enthusiastically to the opportunity to learn to read and write. "All are crazy about school," observed Confederate supporter Mary Jeffery Galt of Norfolk in May 1863. Missionary teachers taught much more than the ABC's. They provided instruction in vocational skills, deportment, Christianity, and civics.⁸³

In the rudiments of learning, missionary teachers do not appear to have made a distinction between women and men, but instructors did offer additional classes for women in domestic economy and sewing. These sessions were more likely to take place in the evening, when adults could take advantage of them, than during the day. Missionary teachers hoped to mold freedwomen into efficient farm wives or productive factory workers.⁸⁴

Other interactions between missionary teachers and freedwomen recreated aspects of the mistress-slave relationship. Some missionary teachers referred

189-191; Swint, ed, Dear Ones at Home, 39.

⁸³Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 104; AM 8 (April 1864), 98; Mary Jeffery Galt Diary, 5 May 1863, Galt Family Papers III, W&M.

⁸⁴Richardson, Christian Reconstruction, 44; AM 7 (Dec. 1863): 279-280, Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home, 117. The AMA's desire to turn freedwomen into educated and virtuous middle-class women continued after the war. Also after the war, industrial schools supervised by the Freedmen's Bureau instructed women in sewing. AM 13 (Jan., Feb., Mar. 1869): 9, 35, 59-60; AM 18 (April 1874): 87-88; Report of Schools, 5th District, for April 1867, Miscellaneous Reports, #4138, Fort Monroe, RG 105, NARA; Melissa M. Soto, "African-American Women's Gender and Political Identities in Reconstruction South Carolina and Georgia," (M.A. thesis, Univ. of Wisconsin at Madison, 1994), 19-20.

possessively to freedwomen who worked for them as servants. In late 1864, AMA teacher Anna Wilkins, for example, wrote from near Norfolk: "Phillis, our girl, was ironing in one corner of the room, meat was boiling in the kettle in the fire-place, bread cooking in the Dutch oven, and Miss Lewis and I trying to teach eighty scholars!" The Chase sisters displayed a similar attitude while supervising contraband women seamstresses on Craney Island in 1863: "Our women are ready with their needles." Lucy Chase made clear that she and her sister Sarah had cut out the fabric so that the women would make practical garments and not indulge in fashion. Yet Chase's observations also indicate that emancipated slave women who worked as domestic servants for teachers were not about to relinquish any of the prerogatives they had established for themselves under slavery. Complaining about the slow pace of freedwomen's work as servants, she went so far as to express sympathy with slave mistresses. Chase also discovered that freedpeople continued to view the kitchen as their domain: "White people are looked upon as intruders in their kitchens," she commented in 1863.⁸⁵

As part of their transition from slavery to freedom, freedwomen made use of missionaries as outsiders who could bear witness to their suffering and their courage. Among the legends of President Lincoln popular with slaves was one that depicted him as a God-like chronicler of outrages inflicted upon them. In 1863, one freedwoman in Norfolk demanded that Sarah Chase fill such a role. Confronting Sarah with her

⁸⁵AM 9 (Feb. 1865): 38; Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home, 29, 32-33, 36-37, 63-64; Richardson, Christian Reconstruction, 242-243. See also Willie Lee Rose's judicious discussion of paternalism among missionary teachers on the South Carolina Sea Islands, where some slaves sought to establish hierarchical relations with white missionaries and felt uncomfortable with those who made assertions of social equality, in Rehearsal for Reconstruction, 159-162.

eighteen-year-old daughter, with whom she had been reunited after years of separation, the freedwoman pointed out her daughter's scars from numerous whippings. Lucy Chase quoted the woman as saying, "See how they've done her bad, see how they've cut her up." In May 1865, Aggie Peters of Norfolk, who had been free before the war, visited Sarah Chase in Richmond to relate injustices suffered by herself and other African-Americans. In addition, although AMA teacher Charles Day claimed that "no pen can describe" the reunions of long-separated family members, he and other missionaries did chronicle them, along with ex-slaves' past and present distress.⁸⁶

Freedwomen and men also took advantage of missionary teachers' desire to shape them into patriotic American citizens. In conjunction with the Union occupation, missionaries provided access to civic space long denied to freedpeople. In 1862, the AMA turned the former Hampton courthouse, which had been burned by retreating Confederates the previous year, into a church and schoolhouse. Missionary teacher Lewis Lockwood exulted: "We built a church and schoolhouse out of the ruins of the old courthouse--a place of injustice and oppression; thus being converted into a place for the education and salvation of the oppressed." Conveying to former slaves a sense of redemption tinged with retribution, Northerners like Lockwood attracted the antipathy of local white residents.⁸⁷

⁸⁶Wiggins, *O Freedom!*, 71-72; Swint, ed., *Dear Ones at Home*, 99, 160-162; *AM* 6 (Oct. 1862): 232. See also the example of an elderly female plantation slave who took her master to task in front of her Union liberators for his abusive behavior toward his slaves, in Cimprich, "Slave Behavior in Tennessee," 59.

⁸⁷Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction*, 10-11; Litwack, *Been in the Storm*, 452, 462, 480-481; "Diary of Miss Harriette Cary, Kept By Her From May 6, 1862, to July 24, 1862," *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 12 (1930-31): 168.

Although the AMA defined the black citizen as a man in its monthly magazine, it does not appear that AMA teachings on citizenship and black pride were geared solely toward male students. Schoolchildren shared texts that promoted good citizenship, including books published specifically for freedpeople by the American Tract Society. Freed men and women joined in singing "The John Brown Song" for their teachers. African-American teacher William D. Harris led his class of three hundred children in songs, declamations, and speeches; West Indian emancipation and the Emancipation Proclamation were among the topics covered. One female teacher, however, let only her male students go outside to witness the procession which passed the school house following the hanging of Confederate sympathizer Dr. David Minton Wright in Norfolk; the boys sang, "John Brown's soul is marching on!" which the teacher found entirely appropriate.**

The Union army occasionally invited black residents of the lower Tidewater to participate in civic events. On 4 July 1862, contrabands joined Union soldiers in federally occupied Williamsburg for a celebratory dinner. In Union-held areas in 1863, slave and freed women participated in outdoor ceremonies to mark President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Confederate supporter Chloe Whittle described the

**AM 9 (Feb. 1865): 34-35; AM 8 (Sept. 1864): 212; AM 7 (Dec. 1863): 279-280; AM 11 (Aug. 1867): 171-172; Richardson, Christian Reconstruction, 42-43. For an example of a freedwoman who lived near Fort Monroe in 1866 and decorated the walls of her cabin with old copies of the Freedman, issued monthly by the American Tract Society, see AM 10 (May 1866): 102-103. "The John Brown Song" was a popular Union marching song which was also sung at political rallies; numerous poems were put to the tune, including Julia Ward Howe's "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and Edna Dean Proctor's "The President's Proclamation." Heaps and Heaps, Singing Sixties, 50-54, 284-285. Free blacks had been celebrating West Indian Emancipation since 1834. Wiggins, O Freedom!, 34-35.

Emancipation Day parade that took place in Norfolk on 1 January 1863:

The procession was headed by Yankees, then there was an old man with an open Bible in his hands, then the elders of the Church, then the old women in black in token of their bondage--they were in carriages; then on the sidewalks were some of the younger women in white, one of them with a wreath of evergreens over her shoulders & in her hands a US flag. The number was variously estimated; some putting it as high as ten thousand some as low as five thousand....Both of Miss Sarah Balfour's servants walked in the procession, as did Affey, our cook--indeed there were very few in town who did not. Among the [latter] honorable number was Aunt Hannah, to her credit be it spoken.⁸⁹

According to other descriptions of the procession, several women in a wagon stomped on Confederate flags. Thousands of celebrants and hundreds of black soldiers concluded the festivities at the cemetery, where they burned Jefferson Davis in effigy and buried the carcass. The women who participated in the day's celebration played both an active role as marchers and a symbolic role as representations of enslavement and freedom.⁹⁰

⁸⁹Cary Diary, Tyler's 12 (1930-31): 168; Emily Davies, "What Sorrows and What Joys," 93.

⁹⁰Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 43-44; Wertenbaker, Norfolk, 242; Parramore, et al., Norfolk, 218. At a songfest in honor of the proclamation held at a contraband camp in Washington, D.C., an elderly woman began the singing of "Go Down, Moses." AM 8 (Feb. 1863), 26. John Hope Franklin sees the Norfolk celebration as evidence that African-Americans viewed the proclamation as a message of freedom and did not heed the legal distinctions Lincoln had made between Confederate and Union-held areas. Franklin, Emancipation Proclamation, 106, 139-40. Ervin Jordan points out the irony in the fact that it was those slaves in Union-held areas, and thus not covered by the proclamation, who felt secure enough to hold public ceremonies of thanksgiving for it. Jordan, Black Confederates, 256-257. Robert Engs describes African-Americans in Hampton as wary of pronouncements made by the federal government and thus reserved in their celebration of the Emancipation Proclamation

African-American women and men encountered opposition when they attempted to establish publicly their collective claim to the symbols of the American nation. In Norfolk in early December of 1862, slaveholder Sally Tazewell had heard rumors of the proposed public celebration in honor of the Emancipation Proclamation. She hoped, however, that Union officers would prohibit such an event.⁹¹ Hearing of local opposition to the Norfolk parade, Brigadier-General Egbert Viele sought to prevent any interference but stopped short of canceling the procession, which he supported as "a source of deep mortification to the insolent secessionists."⁹² Resistance from white residents underscores both the parade participants' determination and the novelty of their public activity.

Although the parade took place, there were certainly Union officers in Norfolk whose feelings about black citizenship corresponded to those of the local whites who supported the Confederacy. After the parade, Sally Tazewell's sister Anne Bradford related the following anecdote:

At the time the negro procession was passing on the 1st Jany., the following remarks passed between Mr. Armstrong . . . and a Yankee officer. Officer.

during the commemoration organized there by missionaries. Engs, Hampton, 36. Willie Lee Rose notes that some black Sea Islanders, suspicious of the military and worried they might be impressed, declined to attend the 1863 celebration organized by General Rufus Saxton. Rose, Rehearsal for Reconstruction, 197-198.

⁹¹Sally Tazewell to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 8 Dec. 1862, Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, VHS. Private claims were also challenged; on 4 July 1862, a white woman in Norfolk was arrested after she took an American flag away from a black boy. Parramore, et al., Norfolk, 213.

⁹²QR, Series I, 18:501-502.

"Well; if the Stars & Stripes were never desecrated before they are now certainly."
 Mr. A. "I don't think so at all. The flag is in its proper place. It is the custom at the South to give the cast off things to the negroes, and they have it."⁹³

As the Union officer's sentiments reveal, the flag was not always freely given to black Virginians; they claimed it. After the war, many continued to express publicly their American citizenship. Numerous African-Americans, for example, enthusiastically took up July Fourth as a day of celebration. Black women's adoption of these patriotic symbols and events grew out of their experiences of slavery, war, and emancipation. They did not celebrate their limited acceptance as American citizens so much as proclaim their vision of full participation in the future.⁹⁴

⁹³Bradford was relaying information to Grigsby from her sister Sally Tazewell. Anne Elizabeth Tazewell Bradford, Hillsboro, N.C., to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 26 Jan. 1863, Grigsby Papers, VHS. In early 1864, General Benjamin F. Butler jailed a Presbyterian minister from Norfolk named the Rev. George D. Armstrong because he supported the Confederacy from the pulpit and remained unrepentant after he took the oath of allegiance to save his property. This may have been the same Rev. Armstrong whom Union forces were said to have arrested and placed in a chain-gang for his denunciation of the Federal occupation. Pryor, Reminiscences, 248; Wilson, "Experiment in Reunion," 213. In pointing out that African-Americans' participation in national life was contested throughout the nation during the Civil War and after, Eric Foner describes how local authorities in New York City sought to prevent black residents from participating in the procession held to mark the arrival of President Lincoln's body in the city. The War Department stepped in and kept the ceremony open to all. Foner, Reconstruction, 75.

⁹⁴Foner, Reconstruction, 95, 288-289. Fields notes that African-Americans had called for liberty as their natural right since the late eighteenth century. "Slavery, Race, and Ideology," 114-115. Conventions of black men held during and after the war elevated the ideals of the American Revolution and drew up Declarations of Rights and Wrongs based on the Declaration of Independence. Delegates included freed and free-born men. Litwack, Been in the Storm, 507-522; Jordan, Black Confederates, 215. Some white Southern women who remained defiant supporters of the Confederacy after the surrender denounced the American flag and the Fourth of July holiday. Rable, Civil Wars, 361.

In wartime Virginia, African-American women struggled against the weight of the past even as they drew on the survival mechanisms that they had developed under years of slavery. Women who had escaped or been liberated during the war would be joined by countless others upon the defeat of the Confederacy in April 1865. The "wilderness of suffering" described by missionary H.S. Beals expanded as women faced the challenge of providing for themselves and their families in a state devastated by war. Although freedwomen soon discovered that the Freedmen's Bureau was sometimes a questionable ally, they consistently visited their local agents to defend their rights to compensated labor, ownership of private property, freedom from violence, and civic participation. After the war, black and white women most frequently interacted within the white-owned domestic workplace, and freedwomen's resort to the Freedmen's Bureau meant that this workplace continued to function partly as a public, political arena during the immediate postwar period.

While former slave women attempted to bring together the resources of slave communities and the opportunities of freedom, former slaveholding women who had supported the Confederacy found relief but little promise in the end of the war. Struggling to come to terms with defeat, devastation, and emancipation, many focused on the past. Former mistresses resented military rule and their temporary displacement by freedpeople in the civic arena. Some attempted to recreate the ideal mistress-slave relationship within the postwar domestic workplace and to adapt maternalism to the free-labor environment. Many became active members of ladies' memorial associations, dedicated to the men who had fought for the "Lost Cause" and their dependents.

Adaptation to the end of slavery by women of both races would be played out in households and courthouse squares throughout Virginia for years to come.

Chapter Three

"Liberty and Equal Rights Before the Law": Freedwomen's Struggle to Establish Freedom and Claim Justice

On their first Sunday as free persons, Charlotte Brown, Sister Carrie, and other ex-slaves peacefully contemplated their new status. Then, they began to sing:

Tain't no mo' sellin' today,
Tain't no mo' hirin' today,
Tain't no pullin' off shirts today,
Its stomp down freedom today.
Stomp it down!

Stomp down Freedom today--
Stomp it down!
Stomp down Freedom today.¹

The celebration capped four days of jubilation for the group of former slaves. It was "one glorious time," Brown recalled. Former slave Charles Grandy of Norfolk remembered another freedom song:

Slavery chain is broke at las'
Broke at las', broke at las'
Slavery chain is broke at las'
Praise God 'till I die.

Come along valiant souls
Git yo' words all ready

¹Brown's interview comes from the heavily edited published version of The Negro in Virginia. Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1976), 58-59. "Pullin' off shirts" probably refers to whipping.

Ma'ch wid General thoo de fiel'
 Dis ole chatterin groun'
 Oh! Slavery chain is, etc.²

These songs were more than expressions of joy, according to Grandy. Singing about their freedom helped to convince former slaves of its reality. Some could hardly believe they were actually free. Former slave Clara Robinson of Pittsylvania County later spoke of the significance of her transition: "[Slaves] thought dey 'long to white folks. I know I did."³

For some, only the language of miracles could adequately describe the passage from slavery to freedom. As the war drew to a close, one Virginia freedwoman exclaimed: "'Isn't I a free woman now! De Lord can make Heaven out of Hell any time, I do believe.'"⁴ Years later, former slave Nelson Hammock used the case of "Aunt Sissy" to illustrate the power of emancipation. When she heard the good news, the paralyzed Sissy was said to have stood up and walked outside, where she prayed and sang a hymn.⁵ These individual spiritual and psychological transformations reflected the revolutionary nature of emancipation.

Between 1865 and 1868, Virginia freedwomen sought to unleash this

²Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 114-119. Soldiers stationed in Danville after the war later recalled nightly dances held by freedpeople in celebration of their liberation. James I. Robertson, Jr., "Danville Under Military Occupation, 1865," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 75 (July 1967): 344.

³Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 236-237.

⁴New York Tribune, 6 April 1865, quoted in Leon F. Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1980), 218.

⁵Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 127.

revolutionary potential in their daily lives. As political actors and American citizens, they insisted upon the freedom of their children, defended their right to own property, sought to obtain redress of the violent assaults perpetrated against themselves and their kin, and claimed access to civic space. Taken together, these efforts formed an arduous, and very public, crusade to establish the abolition of slavery and construct communities of freedom.

The first step toward defining freedom after the war was establishing that slavery had ended forever. After the Union army's victory in April 1865, Virginia slaves learned of the end of slavery in various ways and at different times. Some received the news from federal officers, black soldiers, or Freedmen's Bureau agents. Others gathered as their owners announced that they were free. Slaves who had experienced emancipation during the war saw the surrender of the Confederacy as a signal that finally they could truly embrace their liberation.⁶

Still, not all Virginia slaves gained their freedom in April of 1865. Some owners, particularly in isolated areas, managed to keep the news from their bondpeople. An "Equal Suffrage" address issued by "the Colored Citizens" of Norfolk in 1865 suggested

⁶Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Thavolia Glymph, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, Series I, Vol. I: The Destruction of Slavery (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1985), 52-53; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 172-179. Free blacks similarly felt relief and joy at Lee's surrender. See, for example, the testimony of Martha Mayo, 9 Feb. 1878, in Claim of Martha Mayo, Case File #18491, Halifax County, Settled Case Files for Claims Approved by the Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880, Records of the Land, Files, and Miscellaneous Division, Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, Record Group 217, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA).

that the majority of those still enslaved were women when it claimed that some planters who lived in remote areas were "forcibly retaining the wives and children of their late escaped slaves." In response to complaints of continued enslavement, Union officials in Virginia issued a military order ending slavery in the state as of May 26, 1865; former Tidewater slave Elizabeth Sparks remembered that the "Yankees" had been instrumental in spoiling the attempts by some owners to persist in holding slaves. Still, some slaveowners succeeded in doing so. Sarah Gaines recalled that she had not gained her freedom in Southampton County until a year and a half after Lee's surrender. Likewise, Armaci Adams, who described her former owners as "hell cats," had continued to work as a slave near Norfolk after the end of the war.⁷ During the immediate postwar period, then, black Virginians could not assume that slavery had ended everywhere.

Difficult decisions about what to do next followed the news of emancipation when it was received. Years after becoming free, a former North Carolina slave conveyed the uncertainty that many had associated with the practical progression from slavery to freedom: "Jes like tarpins or turtles after 'mancipation. Jes stick our heads out

⁷The ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in December 1865 formally abolished slavery in the United States. Pension of John Gaines, Case File #685380 (Invalid)/1002843 (Widow), Pension Case Files, Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 15, NARA (hereafter Gaines, #685380/1002843, RG 15, NARA); Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 1-5, 273-277; Ervin L. Jordan, Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1995), 301-302; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 181; Equal Suffrage: Address from the Colored Citizens of Norfolk, Va., to the People of the United States (New Bedford, Ma.: 1865), 3, in Afro-American History Series, vol. 3 (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc., n.d.). For former slaveholders' continued belief in slavery and their right to hold slaves, see Litwack, Been in the Storm, 188-189; U.S. Congress, House and Senate, Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1866, H. Rept. 30, serial 1273, part 2 of appended testimony, 123-128 (hereafter JCR).

to see how the land lay." After a period of contemplation, many freedpeople took to their feet. Some ex-slaves traveled to contraband camps or urban areas to locate family members; find work, food, and shelter; or express their new autonomy. Former slave Caroline Hunter, for example, moved to Portsmouth with her mother after the war, where they were reunited with her father and two of her brothers who had been sold. In June 1865, former mistress Pattie Watkins sketched the transition to freedom among the ex-slaves in her neighborhood in Prince Edward County: "The negroes keep up a great commotion through getting their families together & some going off & some coming to get homes & some people driving them off so it is the common topic of conversation." The mobility of former slaves produced upheaval in communities throughout Virginia.⁸

Other former slaves remained on plantations and farms while they considered their prospects. They were not necessarily dedicated to their former owners, despite the subsequent claims of apologists for slavery. Slaves had bonds to family and kin, ancestral burial grounds, the land they had worked, and the surrounding countryside. Elderly freedpeople believed that they deserved to be taken care of by their former owners in return for all the years they had worked. Some former slaves with benevolent owners planned to develop patronage relationships after the pattern established by some free blacks. And some freedpeople even stayed on against their former owners' wishes.

⁸Rawick, ed., American Slave, Vol. XIV: North Carolina Narratives (Part I), 145, quoted in Litwack, Been in the Storm, 213; Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 149-151; Pattie Watkins, [Prince Edward County], 24 June 1865, to Nathaniel V. Watkins, Watkins Papers, W&M. For a pictorial representation of the apprehension associated with traveling to a new locale, see Number 30 of artist Jacob Lawrence's Frederick Douglass Series (1938-39), which shows freedpeople walking briskly through a grove of large, angular trees, as reproduced in Ellen Harkins Wheat, Jacob Lawrence: American Painter (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1986), 55, plate 10.

Freedwoman Clara Robinson remembered that her former mistress "jes' turned us loose wid out anything." She continued: "Some stay dere 'till dey git notion to leave. Den dey hire out an' go some where else." Similarly, Laura, a Lunenburg County slave girl who had been hired out for 1865, steadfastly refused to leave her hirer's place after Lee's surrender despite his claims that he could not pay her.⁹

Like Laura, many former slaves faced freedom with few material resources and limited options for providing basic necessities for themselves. Postwar want grew in part out of wartime deprivation. In areas that had been close to the fighting, as in the Tidewater, many slaves and free blacks had been deprived of the meager possessions they had managed to acquire before the war. In his testimony before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction in February 1866, Alexander Dunlop, a free-born blacksmith from Williamsburg, detailed his plight: "The rebels and the northern men destroyed everything I had; what the one did not take, the other did; they did not leave me even a hammer." He also explained why local blacks were too poor to contribute financially to educational efforts: "The rebels made many raids there, and destroyed everything they could get their hands on belonging to colored people--beds and

⁹JCR, Testimony of J.W. Alvord, 244, 247-248; Perdue, *et al.*, eds., *Weevils*, 236-237; Litwack, *Been in the Storm*, 307, 330-331; J.W. Parish to Provost Marshal of Lunenburg, 31 Dec. 1865, Miscellaneous Records, 1865-1868, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Lunenburg County, #4071, Records of Subordinate Field Offices, Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, NARA (hereafter Miscellaneous Records, #4071, RG 105, NARA); Leslie Ann Schwalm, "The Meaning of Freedom: African-American Women and Their Transition from Slavery to Freedom in Lowcountry South Carolina" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, 1991), 87.

clothing."¹⁰

As the months passed after the surrender, freedpeople's prospects for bettering their material lives improved little because of both mother nature and President Andrew Johnson's leniency toward former Confederates whose abandoned lands had been taken over by the Union army during the war. Between 1865 and 1868, bad weather and crop failures impeded the recovery of Virginia's war-ravaged economy. By the fall of 1865, the collapse of land confiscation uprooted numerous Virginia freedpeople who thought they had secured property on which to build new lives. In November 1865, the American Missionary Association estimated that close to 105,000 freedpeople in Virginia had been displaced by President Johnson's policy of restoring confiscated lands to former Confederates.¹¹

¹⁰Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 266-269; Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, series 1, vol. 1, The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor (N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 1; Jordan, Black Confederates, 98-100; JCR, Testimony of Alexander Dunlop, 57-58; Schwalm, "The Meaning of Freedom," 211-212. Alexander Dunlop was president of the Colored Union League in Williamsburg, which was established in May 1865. "Equal Suffrage," after page 26. See also the testimony of Delitha James, a black resident of City Point in Prince George County, who lost her boats to Union forces in 1862 and had her house torn down by them in 1864. Testimony of Delitha James, 13 February 1873, Claim of Parthenia Collins, Admx., Case File #15814, Prince George County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA.

¹¹J. Douglas Smith, "Virginia During Reconstruction, 1865-1870: A Political, Economic, and Social Study," (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1960), 171, 189-190; Claude F. Oubre, Forty Acres and a Mule: The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Land Ownership (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1978), 24-25, 80. In November 1865, Whitelaw Reid reported a Freedmen's Bureau estimate that at least 70,000 freedpeople in eastern Virginia had been displaced. Whitelaw Reid, After the War: A Tour of the Southern States, 1865-1866 (1866; repr., N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1965), 325-327. For examples of freedwomen who emphasized that they had faced freedom with few resources, see Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 36-37, and Melissa Soto, "African-American Women's Gender and Political Identities in Reconstruction South Carolina and Georgia, 1865-

In addition, the upheaval of emancipation created its own physical distress. Freedpeople who sought refuge in contraband camps or cities at the end of the war discovered that provisions were often inadequate and living conditions unhealthy. In the Southside, women and men flocked to Danville after it was occupied by the U.S. army on 27 April 1865; by late June, several hundred freedpeople were living in crowded barracks there. In 1866, homeless ex-slaves thronged Norfolk, some begging in the streets. Former slave Charles Grandy remembered in particular the suffering of women and children. According to Grandy, two or three died of starvation each day. In Liberty, which was located in Bedford County, former slave Isabella Sourtan described herself as "cramped hear nearly to death" and grief-stricken with loneliness; she appealed for her former owner to bring her back to Gloucester County.¹²

While entreaties like Sourtan's were rare, whether they moved or stayed in place

1870" (M.A. thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1994), 38-39. For examples of contemporary references to postwar poverty in Virginia, see Robert Henderson Allen Diary, 11 Dec. 1866, Allen Family Papers, VHS; Eliza Baker, Memoirs of Williamsburg, Va. (Report taken by Elizabeth Hayes of a conversation between Eliza Baker and the Rev. Wm. A.R. Goodwin, 4 May 1933), Archives and Records Dept., Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Va., 2; American Missionary (AM) XI (March 1867), 50-51. For the importance of more scholarly attention to the poverty and exploitation experienced by many black women throughout American history, see Darlene Clark Hine, "Black Women's History, White Women's History: The Juncture of Race and Class," Journal of Women's History 4 (Fall 1992): 127-128.

¹²C. Thurston Chase to Col. O. Brown, 29 June 1865, Letters Received, July 1865-Nov. 1868, Office of the Assistant Superintendent, Danville, #3948, RG 105, NARA; Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils, 118; Isabella Sourtan to Manuel J. Thouston, Liberty, Va., 10 July 1865, Manuel J. Thouston Paper (photostat), Southern Historical Collection, Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (SHC); Robertson, "Danville Under Military Occupation," 343. In its newspaper, the occupying Sixth Corps encouraged migrants to Danville to go back to the countryside and work as agricultural laborers. The Sixth Corps, 10 May 1865, [1].

many freedpeople experienced acute physical suffering during the immediate postwar period. The winter of 1866-1867 was bitterly cold, described by freedpeople near Williamsburg as "the hardest for twenty years." Elderly and disabled ex-slaves were particularly vulnerable to cruel weather and crop shortages. In May 1867, eighteen women and nine men "suffering from old age, actual infirmity of body, or blindness, and unable to procure a sufficiency to sustain life" received rations from the Freedmen's Bureau at Gloucester Courthouse. "There are others in [Gloucester and Mathews counties] to whom Rations should be given," added the Bureau agent.¹³ For these ex-slaves and many others, the shout of the freedom song never replaced the lamentation of the spiritual. A selection of popular "Freedmen's Songs" reprinted in the American Missionary in late 1868 included the following:

Sisters hold out, just a little while longer,
 For we are going to live with God;
 There's a starry crown in Heaven,
 And we are going to live with God,
 Said never been worn by the angels,
 And we are going to live with God,
 So we'll hold out, just a little while longer,
 Then go to live with God.¹⁴

In 1866-1867, Quaker teacher Margaret Newbold Thorpe depicted freedpeople as "thanking God that they are free but wishing that freedom had brought a little more

¹³Lists of Freedpeople receiving rations at Mathews Courthouse and Gloucester Courthouse, May 1867, Unregistered Letters Received, Oct. 1865-Jan. 1869, Office of the Subassistant Commissioner, Fort Monroe, Va., #4118, RG 105, NARA; AM 11 (March 1867): 64; Richard L. Morton, ed., "Life in Virginia by a 'Yankee Teacher,' Margaret Newbold Thorpe," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography (VMHB) 64 (April 1956): 191-193.

¹⁴AM 12 (Dec. 1868): 272.

warmth and food."¹⁵

Because of prevailing gender roles, freedwomen and girls faced a variety of challenges in attempting to support themselves during the immediate postwar period.¹⁶ Women and girls usually could not take advantage of the demand for workers to do the heavy labor associated with rebuilding. Many women with young children found that potential employers did not want to hire them for fear that they would have to spend too much time and effort taking care of their children. With the Freedmen's Bureau's encouragement, some female domestic workers took jobs in the North, but many did not want to leave their homes in Virginia.¹⁷

Polly Jennings's postwar experience in Halifax County dramatically illustrates the desperation felt by many freedwomen. The mother of five young children, Jennings worked for Captain Robert Jennings, who informed her that her employment was conditional: if she had another child or became pregnant, she would be dismissed. In late May of 1868, Jennings apparently gave birth to a baby boy, alone in her house on Robert Jennings's land. On Monday, 25 May 1868, she borrowed a knife from a neighbor. That day she was seen going into the woods toward the spring several times. On Tuesday evening, freedman Logan Jennings discovered a dead baby, its throat cut, in

¹⁵Morton, ed., "Life in Virginia by a 'Yankee Teacher,'" 196.

¹⁶Freedwomen's labor will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

¹⁷Tracey Weis, "Negotiating Freedom: Domestic Service and the Landscape of Labor and Household Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1850-1880," (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers, 1994), 219-220; I.F. Wilcox to Capt. R.S. Lacey, Danville, Va., 23 June 1866, Letters Sent, Dec. 1865-May 1867, Office of the Assistant Superintendent, Danville, Va., #3947 (Vol. 148), RG 105, NARA; S.C. Armstrong to Gen. O. Brown, Fort Monroe, 23 May 1867, Unregistered Letters Received, Fort Monroe, Va., #4118, RG 105, NARA.

a hollow tree stump in the woods. Two doctors examined Polly Jennings and testified that she had recently given birth. Sent to the state penitentiary in Richmond, Jennings remained imprisoned in 1874, when a prospective benefactress wrote to Virginia Governor James Lawson Kemper on her behalf: "She was a faithfull good Servent dutifull to her Master & Mistress & If she was guilty of the crime she did so because she was turned loose after the Surrender with So many children to work for."¹⁸ While her acquaintance may have exaggerated Jennings's postwar helplessness, she spoke to the difficulty experienced by former slave mothers who had to make an abrupt transition from an environment in which owners viewed young children as a potential resource to one in which employers viewed them almost solely as an economic liability.

The federal government likewise treated female workers with young children badly, even as it began to phase out most of the facilities that had employed African-Americans during the war. Freedmen's Bureau agent Thomas P. Jackson reported from Princess Anne County in September 1865: "Women in Government Employ receive no pay and having the care of young children their labor is necessarily desultory." Women and men who had worked for the Union Army during the war continued to apply for back pay. The True Southerner newspaper, founded by a former Union Army officer in

¹⁸Kemper, a former Confederate general and moderate Conservative, had been elected governor in 1873. Evidence taken before an inquest in the case of the Commonwealth of Virginia against Polly Jennings for murder (copy), 29 May 1868, Records Relating to Complaints and Indentures, Halifax Courthouse, #4021, RG 105, NARA; Lynda J. Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 1850-1870 (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1992), 174-175; Kate W. Harvey to Governor Kemper, 30 Oct. 1874, Letters Received by James Lawson Kemper, 1874-1877, Executive Papers, Record Group 3, Library of Virginia (LVA), Richmond, Va. (hereafter Letters Received by Kemper, RG 3, LVA).

Hampton, took up their cause in December 1865. The paper drew attention to the needs of women who had cooked, washed, and nursed in the large hospitals in operation on the Peninsula between the James and York Rivers during the war. In April 1866, American Missionary Association teacher M.L. Kellogg reported from Portsmouth that freedpeople had complained to her about overdue pay for government service and tardy payment of bounties and pensions. She added: "Many widows and destitute friends of deceased soldiers have been waiting in vain, for many months, for these amounts."¹⁹

Pension records detail the plight of young widows whose husbands had died in the service.²⁰ Freedwoman Lizzie Russell, who had married during the war, made several attempts to be placed on the pension rolls after learning that her husband Jerry had died on a military transport in late 1865, only a month before their son was born.²¹ Similarly,

¹⁹Engs, Black Hampton, 85; Monthly Report, Sept. 1865, Reports and Records Relating to Complaints, 1865-1867, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Princess Anne County, #4230, RG 105, NARA; True Southerner, 21 Dec. 1865, [2]; AM, May 1866, 104. Four male and two female employees received rations at the government hospital in Hampton in January 1867. "Report of Rations issued to Sick in Hospital & employees of the Bureau in Sub. Dist. Eliz. City Co. Va., Jan. 1867," Miscellaneous Reports, Fort Monroe, Va., #4138, RG 105, NARA. The True Southerner was later edited by Joseph T. Wilson, an African-American, who moved the paper to Norfolk in early 1866. Thomas C. Parramore with Peter C. Stewart and Tommy L. Bogger, Norfolk: The First Four Centuries (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1994), 227.

²⁰For references to the dissemination of information about applying for bounties and pensions, see General Order No. 5 and Circular No. 5, B.R.F.A.L., Headquarters Sup't. 2d District, Petersburg, Va., 1 Feb. 1866, Miscellaneous Records, Lunenburg Courthouse, Va., #4071, RG 105, NARA, and Thomas M. Vincent, Assistant Adjutant General, Washington, D.C., to Mary Griffin, Yorktown, Va., 1 Feb. 1873 (copy), Warner Throckmorton Jones Papers, W&M. On the political nature of such applications, see the review essay by Kathleen Jones, "Citizenship in a Woman-Friendly Polity," Signs 15 (Fall 1990): 802.

²¹Simmons received her certificate on 3 Oct. 1884; she was paid for the period between her husband's death and her remarriage, to Henry Simmons, in February 1868.

31-year-old Sarah Ann Riddick, who had come to Norfolk County from North Carolina during the war, had two children and a baby to support when she filed her pension claim in April 1866. Riddick's husband Harvey, a soldier in the United States Colored Cavalry, had died of chronic diarrhea in Louisiana the previous October.²² On 30 November 1865, Hannah Gordon of Portsmouth filed a claim "for the purpose of obtaining the Bounty Money, Arrears of Pay, and all other arrearages or sums of money due by reason of the service of [Edward Gordon]" Hannah had a nine-year-old daughter, Alice Virginia, to raise in the aftermath of her husband's death from disease contracted as a soldier.²³

In addition to such individual efforts, freedpeople pooled their limited resources to help each other through the transition to freedom. In 1866, black Virginians in Danville formed the "True Friends of Charity," a mutual benefit society to assist the old and infirm. Members were concerned about the postwar black population increase in Danville, which had led employers to lower wages and landlords to raise rents. Members

Like other pension case files, Simmons' file includes applications and depositions which were taken at various times and which contain numerous contradictions regarding names and dates. Still, the documents illustrate the general course of her postwar life. Pension of Jeremiah Russell, Case File #209483 (Widow), Pension Case Files, Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 15, NARA (hereafter Russell, #209483, RG 15, NARA).

²²In 1890, Sarah Ann (Riddick) Brothers received payment (eight dollars per month) for the period between 21 October 1865 and 10 October 1867, the date of her remarriage, to Miles Brothers. Pension of Harvey Riddick, Case File #274675 (Widow) and #274676 (Children), RG 15, NARA.

²³Hannah appears to have beaten the system by receiving two certificates on account of her husband's death, one in 1866 and the other in 1895. In 1892, she also received payment as the widow of Henry Simpson, a Navy veteran whom she had married in 1868. Pension of Edward Gordon (alias William Edward, alias Edward F.), Case File 412269/77793 (Widow), RG 15, NARA.

of the society urged the local Freedmen's Bureau agent to try to remedy the black population increase and ward off further suffering in the coming winter. In Norfolk, benevolent societies associated with local churches helped the poor and sick, assisted with burials, and raised money for their churches. Groups such as the Daughters of Saint Luke presented their donations to their congregations collectively, attired in the regalia of their orders.²⁴ Many of the benevolent societies formed by freedpeople during and after the war would continue to sustain their communities into the twentieth century.

Impoverished women also applied directly to their local Freedmen's Bureau agents. In 1867, for example, freedwoman Milly Taylor of Suffolk reported to Freedmen's Bureau agent J.W. Barnes that she had been deserted by her husband and could not find work because she had an infant. Barnes recommended to his superior that Taylor's husband be arrested and made to return to his family. In 1866, agent J.A. Yeckley of Lunenburg Courthouse reported that a homeless freedwoman suffering from syphilis had been evicted with her three children and charged with theft. His superior urged him to try to find employment for her, but if he could not, he was to see whether the county would provide for her. His last resort was to send her to Farmville, where Union forces had taken over a Confederate hospital at the end of the war.²⁵

²⁴I.F. Wilcox to R.S. Lacey, Danville, Va., 20 Jan. 1866, Letters Sent, #3947, RG 105, NARA; AM (Sept. 1866): 195. On the significance of secret societies in postwar Richmond after the war, see Peter J. Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890 (Urbana and Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989), 13-16, 26.

²⁵J.W. Barnes to Brevet Major J. H. Remington, Suffolk, Va., 7 Nov. 1867, Reports and Records Relating to Court Cases, Jerusalem, Va., #4026, RG 105, NARA; J.A. Yeckley to Capt. Stuart Barnes, Lunenburg Courthouse, Va., 13 June 1866, Miscellaneous Records, #4071, RG 105, NARA; Herbert Clarence Bradshaw, History of Prince Edward County, Virginia: From its Earliest Settlements through its Establishment

Freedwomen were determined to make use of it as one of the few resources available to them and, by doing so, to exercise the advantages of citizenship. Their perseverance reflects the depth of their need. Matilda Fields's efforts are illustrative. A poor widow, in June 1868 she visited Bureau agent Samuel Chapman Armstrong at Fort Monroe. She explained that a corporal in the Ninth United States Colored Troops had died at her house in August 1865. The corporal had owed her a debt, and before he died he had given her an order on his pay. He had told her to submit it to the surgeon in charge at the hospital at Camp Hamilton; the surgeon had forwarded the order to Washington, D.C., but Fields had not received any response. She needed the money. Armstrong inquired on her behalf, only to learn that the Treasury Department did not consider her claim valid, and that, in any case, the corporal's heir had submitted a claim for his pay.²⁶

By visiting Bureau offices, freedwomen did more than attempt to alleviate their suffering. They took part in what many of them viewed as a messianic struggle to eradicate slavery from Virginia forever and to establish their rights as citizens and workers. Black Virginians took full advantage of the Freedmen's Bureau, which had offices scattered throughout the state between 1865 and 1869.²⁷ Ex-slaves were cruelly

in 1754 to its Bicentennial Year (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1955), 414.

²⁶S.C. Armstrong to Orlando Brown, Fort Monroe, Va., 15 June 1868, Unregistered Letters Received, #4118, RG 105, NARA.

²⁷In March 1865, the United States Congress established the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands within the War Department. Its purpose was to provide relief for freedpeople and white refugees, organize schools for ex-slaves, assist with the development of a free-labor system, and promote equal justice before the law. The Bureau officially shut down operations on 30 June 1872, although it had ceased to

disappointed by the Bureau's inability to secure confiscated land for them and dismayed by its rigid emphasis on the sanctity of labor contracts.²⁸ Still, African-Americans

perform most of its functions on 31 Dec. 1868. Three different men directed Bureau operations in Virginia. In June 1865, Colonel Orlando Brown, who had served as Superintendent of Contrabands in Norfolk during the war, took office as assistant commissioner with his headquarters in Richmond. Under his leadership, the state was divided into eight districts, with each one headed by a superintendent; districts were broken down into subdistricts overseen by assistant superintendents. In May 1866, Brown was succeeded by Major General Alfred H. Terry, who was in charge of the postwar military occupation of Virginia. Terry served until August 1866, when he was replaced by Major General John M. Schofield. In March 1867, when Schofield became commander of the recently formed First Military District, Brown again took the helm as assistant commissioner. That April, an administrative reorganization took place. The eight districts became ten subdistricts headed by subassistant commissioners, and districts were broken down into divisions administered by assistant subassistant commissioners. James Oakes, "A Failure of Vision: The Collapse of the Freedmen's Bureau Courts," Civil War History 25 (March 1979): 66; William S. McFeely, Yankee Stepfather: General O.O. Howard and the Freedmen (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968), 327-328; William T. Alderson, "The Influence of Military Rule and the Freedmen's Bureau on Reconstruction in Virginia, 1865-1870," (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt Univ., 1952), map following page 31; Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 133-134, 262; Introduction to Microfilm Publication M1048, pp. 1-2, (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1048, roll 1), Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (BRFAL), 1865-1869, Records of the BRFAL, RG 105, NARA (hereafter Introduction, M1048, AC/VA, BRFAL, RG 105, NARA); The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington: G.P.O., 1899; repr., Historical Times, Inc., 1985), Series I, 46:1139 (hereafter OR).

²⁸Tensions existed between the Bureau and freedpeople for a variety of reasons. As Lynda Morgan points out, the Bureau and freedpeople differed over the relationship between economic and political rights, with the Bureau tending to separate the two and freedpeople tending to see them as closely linked. Tensions also arose because of the conduct and outlook of Bureau personnel. Many Bureau officials at the state and local level viewed their jobs as perquisites accorded for their military service rather than as obligations to protect black freedom. Agents varied as to ability and disposition toward the freedpeople. In addition, agents were sometimes undercut by military officials sympathetic to local whites. Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 140; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 379-386. Critical accounts of Bureau efforts include Louis S. Gerteis, From Contraband to Freedman: Federal Policy Toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865 (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1973); Engs, Freedom's First Generation, 99-136; Schwalm, "The Meaning of Freedom," and Morgan, Emancipation

consistently made use of the Bureau in their efforts to fashion a world without slavery in their daily lives.²⁹ They secured assistance with their applications for bounties and pensions, attended schools overseen by Bureau agents, received information about their rights and the law through public announcements, acquired marriage licenses and formalized marriages entered into under slavery, arranged transportation for family reunifications, and attempted to obtain justice in Bureau courts.³⁰

in Virginia's Tobacco Belt.

²⁹While most of the freedmen's conventions held during the immediate postwar period articulated support for the Bureau, many also pointed out the limitations of individual unsympathetic agents. Litwack, Been in the Storm, 519. When Generals John Steedman and Joseph S. Fullerton were sent by President Andrew Johnson to review the activities of the Bureau in the South, Norfolk blacks, among others in numerous Southern cities, voiced their support for the Bureau. Johnson believed that the Bureau violated the Constitution and promoted laziness; he readily accepted Steedman and Fullerton's finding that the Bureau was no longer necessary. Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877 (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1988), 169, 247-248.

³⁰The Bureau established its own courts in May 1865 because none of the Southern states but Louisiana accepted black testimony in the court room, and few permitted blacks to bring suits against whites. Under Commissioner Oliver Otis Howard's plan, provost courts run by military commissioners, state courts, or United States courts would adjudicate capital crimes, felonies, and disputes over real-estate titles. The Bureau would take on minor infractions involving freedpeople. Southern states quickly passed laws allowing the admission of black testimony so that civil courts could reopen. Bureau agents monitored the civil courts. Although by early May 1866, civil courts were back in operation in Virginia, Bureau courts were eventually re-established in the Tidewater counties of Nansemond, Elizabeth City, and York because the civil courts were not providing equal justice to black residents. After the establishment of military government by the First Reconstruction Act in March 1867, Bureau courts existed at the discretion of the commanders of the military districts. Although cognizant of the limitations of Bureau courts, freedpeople showed their preference for them over civil courts as late as 1868 by continuing to bring their complaints to the Bureau. Oakes, "Failure of Vision," 68-69, 72-75; Alderson, "Influence of Military Rule," 93; George R. Bentley, A History of the Freedmen's Bureau (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1955), 152-153, 156-159, 165-166. For an indication of the variety of cases heard by Bureau courts, see "Report of the various classes of civil and criminal cases, acted upon by Freedmens Court for Elizabeth City County Va. from January 1st 1866 to December

In October 1871, when H.C. Percy, a Bureau officer in Norfolk, Virginia, vouched for Mary Mundin's identity as the widow of former Union soldier Daniel Mundin, he cited "several years personal acquaintance with the [pension] claimant, who has been a frequent visitor at my office." Bureau offices and courthouse squares served as forums in which freedwomen could take direct action during the immediate postwar period. These public spaces were particularly significant for the development of citizenship among women, who were denied the ballot secured by their male counterparts in 1867. Bringing their concerns to Freedmen's Bureau officers and pleading their cases in Bureau courts, women sought redress of their grievances in public venues.³¹

As applicants to the Bureau, women theoretically had the same access to these spaces as men did.³² As plaintiffs and witnesses before the Bureau, freedwomen applied

31st 1866", Miscellaneous Reports, Aug. 1866-Feb. 1868, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Fort Monroe, Va., #4138, RG 105, NARA.

³¹Percy also noted that two years earlier he had paid Mary Mundin the bounty and arrears of pay due to Daniel at his death. On her affidavit of 6 June 1871, Mary requested that she be contacted care of the Norfolk branch of the Freedmen's Savings Bank, where Percy had his office. Pension of Daniel Mundin, Case File #154377 (Widow), Pension Case Files, Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 15, NARA (hereafter Mundin, #154377, RG 15, NARA). For illustrations which show freedwomen coming before the Bureau, and which convey the public nature of seeking redress, see the drawings of the Richmond office of the Bureau in Richard Lowe, "Testimony From the Old Dominion Before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction," VMHB 104 (Summer 1996): 379, and Dorothy Sterling, ed., The Trouble They Seen: The Story of Reconstruction in the Words of African Americans (1976; repr., N.Y.: DaCapo Press, 1994), 69.

³²By arguing for the significance of freedwomen's access to Bureau offices as public spaces, I do not mean to suggest that these were the only forums in which women took political action after the war. Freedwomen were political actors in both the public and private "spheres," which overlapped considerably in the immediate postwar period (aptly

to outside authorities for assistance in resolving conflicts, which was a new development for most former slaves. Although some slaves had managed to manipulate their owners by using mistress against master or by grumbling to their owners' relatives or neighbors, few had had the opportunity to try to right perceived wrongs through direct expression of their concerns before an avowedly impartial authority.

The entire process of applying to the Bureau for redress of grievances reinforced the transition from slavery to freedom. Freedpeople realized their new status as petitioners when they entered Bureau offices, which were often established in county courthouses or confiscated homes of former slaveowners--places which had held sinister potential for slaves.³³ In addition, after apprising a Bureau agent of their difficulties, freedpeople themselves often hand-delivered the agent's order to the person against

illustrated by the fact that women delivered Bureau orders to the homes of those against whom they had lodged complaints). Still, it is important not to downplay the reality that black Virginians' access to public space had been severely limited under slavery or to minimize the fact that agency in the civic arena was defined as a primary way to express one's citizenship. For expansive notions of what constitutes public activity, see Jones, "Citizenship in a Woman-Friendly Polity," 797-804, and Mary P. Ryan, "Gender and Public Access: Women's Politics in Nineteenth-Century America," in Craig Calhoun, ed., Habermas and the Public Sphere (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992), 285.

³³Summary of Proceedings in Response to Requests from Captain D.J. Connolly, Freedmen's Bureau agent (copy), Lunenburg County Court, 8 April 1867, Miscellaneous Papers, #4071 (filed with #4066), RG 105, NARA; George Benjamin West, When the Yankees Came: Civil War and Reconstruction on the Virginia Peninsula, ed. Parke Rouse, Jr. (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1977) 107-113. Slaves had been in courthouses as servants accompanying their masters and as defendants in criminal cases. Slaves had also been taken to courthouses as property for sale. Free blacks had had to register their status at their county courthouse. E. Lee Shepard, comp., "'This Being Court Day,'" VMHB 103 (Oct. 1995), 460. In Lynchburg in early 1869, black residents attended the auction at which the former Bureau office was sold, a possible indication of their sense of ownership of the Bureau. Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 212.

whom they had lodged a complaint.³⁴ This frequently meant facing former owners or current employers who were likely to fly into a rage at the Bureau's order. Freedpeople who registered complaints thus risked violent retaliation.³⁵

In practical terms, getting to Bureau offices could be a challenge. Bureau offices were located in cities, towns, and courthouse junctions, so freedpeople living in outlying areas had to make an effort to get to them. Once a complaint was registered, agents were supposed to collect evidence at the scene of the dispute, which enabled them to get testimony from witnesses who were not able or willing to go to the Bureau office.³⁶

³⁴Julie Saville notes this practice in lowcountry South Carolina as well. She also found evidence of freedpeople visiting Bureau offices in kin groups. The Work of Reconstruction: From Slave to Wage Laborer in South Carolina, 1860-1870 (N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 92, 109-110. In July 1865, Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas of Georgia recorded that a group of freedmen had delivered a Bureau summons to her husband Jefferson at home one evening. Virginia Ingraham Burr, ed., The Secret Eye: The Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 1848-1889 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1990), 275-276. For Virginia references to collective attendance of freedpeople at local court proceedings during the postwar period, see Diary of Robert H. Allen, 13 Aug. 1866, Allen Family Papers, VHS; Norfolk Journal, 6 Dec. 1866, [3]; Steve Elliott Tripp, "Restive Days: Race and Class Relations in Lynchburg, Virginia, 1858-1872," (Ph.D. diss., Carnegie-Mellon Univ., 1990), 247.

³⁵Matilda Frix, a freedwoman from Georgia, speculated in 1867 that her housemate Cheary Ransom had become the object of violent intimidation because she had registered a complaint with the Freedmen's Bureau against her female employer for overdue wages. Sterling, ed., The Trouble They Seen, 69-70. For a freedman beaten by a woman and her three sons after delivering a Bureau letter to them, see Daniel Crofts, Old Southampton: Politics and Society in a Virginia County, 1834-1869 (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1992), 234.

³⁶Sara Rapport, "The Freedmen's Bureau as a Legal Agent for Black Men and Women in Georgia: 1865-1868," Georgia Historical Quarterly 73 (Spring 1989): 47-48. Throughout its existence in Virginia, the Bureau had a smaller presence in the interior Southside than in the lower Tidewater. In her analysis of Virginia's tobacco belt, which includes the interior Southside, Lynda Morgan found that there was a great deal of turnover among the agents and that the areas under individual agents' control grew over time. Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 134, 156, 267. Bureau

Freedmen's Bureau records of complaints and court proceedings, then, provide insight into the lives of those individuals who had grievances and the wherewithal to seek redress of them.³⁷

Slaveholders' attempts to keep young children in bondage brought mothers and fathers to Freedmen's Bureau offices throughout Virginia. Applying to the bureau to claim their children from slaveholders who refused to release their youngest workers, freedwomen publicly repudiated the old order and established their right to their children's persons and labor.³⁸

commissioner O.O. Howard recognized the importance of both accessibility and the widespread dissemination of information. Circular Number 11, issued by Howard on 12 July 1865, instructed assistant commissioners to locate subdistrict offices "at some point easy of access for the people" of the locality. The circular also directed agents to "explain, by constant recapitulation, the principles, laws, and regulations of this Bureau, to all parties concerned," in public addresses and private conversations. Circular No. 11, War Dept., B.R.F.A.L., Washington, D.C., 12 July 1865, Reports and Records Relating to Court Cases, 1866-68, Office of the Subassistant Commissioner, Jerusalem, Va., #4026, RG 105, NARA.

³⁷Much of the documentation kept by agents is bureaucratic in form and limited in detail. Testimonies and final decisions are often absent. Relationships between complainants and defendants are frequently unstated. Although the parties involved are often identified by race, sometimes they are not. In addition, the pre-war status of African-Americans is rarely noted, so it is difficult to distinguish former slaves from former free blacks. See also Bentley, History of the Freedmen's Bureau, 251, note 52.

³⁸The Bureau did not always prove an ally in this quest. Agents in some regions were heavily involved in apprenticing freedchildren to whites, even in cases where orphaned children had relatives who wanted to raise them. Lynda Morgan suggests that girls who worked as domestic servants predominated among apprentices in the Virginia tobacco belt. Both Morgan and Leslie Schwalm, who examined indentures in lowcountry South Carolina, argue that Bureau agents do not appear to have ever understood the role of fictive kin and extended families in African-American communities. Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 173-177; Schwalm, "The Meaning of Freedom," 335. For indentures apprenticing girls as household workers in Virginia, see, for example, "Indenture, 1865 August 19, for Apprenticeship of Servant," [Polly, age 5],

Although men often spoke for themselves and their wives in appealing to the Bureau for help in recovering their children, some women lodged complaints as well. In Norfolk in September 1865, freedwoman Lucy Jane Ellis obtained an order from Freedmen's Bureau agent Thomas P. Jackson requiring the release of her daughter, Amanda. Ellis wanted both the ten-year-old girl and her household effects, but the girl's former owner, Christina Dowdy, who lived on a farm in neighboring Princess Anne County, refused to release them. Jackson ordered Dowdy to do so.³⁹ Similarly, in 1867, Southampton County's Mary Tyler successfully applied to her local Bureau office for the return of her children Robert and Fanny.⁴⁰

Other freedwomen encountered fierce opposition when they attempted to secure the release of their children. In October 1865, Rebecca Grey applied to Bureau agent Jackson in Norfolk. Clinton Bell of Princess Anne County refused to give up Grey's thirteen-year-old son Hardy. Jackson gave Grey an order requesting that Bell permit the

Indenture, #6060, UVA; Indentures made between Capt. Wilcox and Ruth S. Hairston of Pittsylvania County, 18 Dec. 1865, [Polly, age 13; Sally, age 17], Indenture made between Capt. Wilcox and Emily Williams of Pittsylvania County, 27 Jan. 1866, [Martha, age 9], Contracts, Indentures, and Court Records, 1865-1867, Office of the Assistant Superintendent, Danville, Virginia, #3950, RG 105, NARA.

³⁹Thomas P. Jackson to Mrs. Christina Dowdy, Norfolk, 18 Sept. 1865, 2, Orders Issued and Copies of Leases and Work Agreements, Aug. 1865-Mar. 1866, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Princess Anne, Va., #4228 (Vol. 368), RG 105, NARA. By late fall of 1865, most districts in Virginia had three-judge Bureau courts consisting of the local agent, a representative chosen by local blacks, and a representative chosen by local whites. Bentley, History of the Freedmen's Bureau, 152-153. For the oath administered to Bureau court members by the Southampton County agent, see Proceedings, Southampton Co., #4027 (Vol. 1), RG 105, NARA.

⁴⁰Order, 1867, Jerusalem, Proceedings of Freedmen's Courts, 1866-67, Office of the Subassistant Commissioner, Jerusalem, Va., #4027 (Vol. 256), RG 105, NARA.

child to leave with his clothes and other possessions. Grey delivered the order to Bell, but he remained defiant, stating that he would be hanged before he would give up the child. According to Miles Wilson, a resident of Norfolk County who accompanied Grey on her second visit to agent Jackson, Bell claimed that the boy did not want to leave. Hardy, however, complained that Bell had been violent to him and had threatened to hurt his mother. In February of 1866, Jackson sent Bell a second letter: "Further refusal [to give up the boy] will be at your peril." When he met with Bell later that same day, however, Bell claimed to have taken Hardy to Norfolk, where the boy had refused to go with his mother. It is unclear whether Grey, persistent as she was, got her son back that winter.⁴¹

In the face of such recalcitrance, freedwomen sometimes turned to sympathetic white Virginians for assistance. Rhody Stokes of Lunenburg County took advantage of her ties to Mary Jennings of Richmond. In a letter written in early 1866, Jennings explained Stokes's situation to Bureau agent Stuart Barnes. Shortly after being reunited with her grandson, Stokes had received a visit from his former owners, who "forcibly took the child away from her." In addition, Stokes was having difficulty with the people who were renting the plantation where she lived. Stokes had apparently received lifetime use of a plot of land from her former owner when he died in 1837. Jennings requested a copy of the will "that I may know how she is situated . . . it is very necessary to know

⁴¹Thomas P. Jackson to Clinton Bell, Norfolk, 18 Oct. 1865, 24 Oct. 1865, 5 Feb. 1866, 10, 14, Orders, #4228 (Vol. 368), RG 105, NARA.

what are her rights."⁴²

Similarly, in January 1866, James M. Neal of Caswell County, North Carolina, wrote to the Danville, Virginia, Bureau agent on behalf of freedman Samuel Green. Neal employed Green's wife, who had lived with her daughter Litha Ann in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, in 1865.⁴³ Mrs. Green had encountered resistance when she prepared to leave the residence of her employer, George Jones, the previous fall. Jones had insisted on keeping Litha Ann because he had no one to assist his wife in the household. In addition, he did not have Litha Ann's winter clothes and shoes ready, which may account for why the Greens had agreed to let their daughter stay for a short time. Once the Greens had departed for North Carolina, however, Jones had Litha Ann bound to him without their consent. Attesting to Samuel Green's moral character and his financial independence as a factory hand, Neal informed the Danville agent that Green wanted the indenture nullified.⁴⁴

⁴²The records do not indicate the connection between Stokes and Jennings, nor do they indicate the resolution of the two matters brought up by Jennings. The records do include a copy of the will of Stokes's former owner James MacFarland, but the only provision related to her reads: "Rhody with her child Tommy has my consent to go to which of my children she chooses and her choice shall be binding." Mary M. Jennings to Capt. Stuart Barnes, Richmond, Va., 3 Feb. 1866, Miscellaneous Records, Lunenburg Courthouse, Va., #4071, RG 105, NARA.

⁴³Neal did not provide Mrs. Green's first name and presented Samuel Green as the head of his household. Yet as the employee of Neal, Mrs. Green probably played a role in soliciting his assistance (perhaps Neal's wife was involved as well). Neal was not necessarily a disinterested patron, for he may have planned to hire Litha Ann or require that she work for him as part of her mother's employment. James M. Neal to [J.F. Wilcox], Yanceyville, Caswell County, [N.C.], 31 Jan. 1866, Letters Received, Danville, Va., #3948, RG 105, NARA. Lynda Morgan identifies the family by the name of Grinn. Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 175-176.

⁴⁴The records do not indicate how the case was resolved.

Free-born women made use of the Bureau in their efforts to reunite their families as well. In Southampton County in May 1866, "an original Free woman (colored)," as she was described by agent Morton Havens, requested assistance from the Bureau in breaking an indenture she had made for her son before the war ended. She had bound him until age twenty, but hoped to take advantage of "the new order of things" to get him back. She believed she could do "considerable better" for him in her present situation. Havens was obviously sympathetic; he noted that the boy's master had not taken the oath of allegiance to the federal government. His supervisor, however, recommended that the woman "stand by her contracts."⁴⁵

Freed couples who no longer lived together also used the Bureau to adjudicate the guardianship of their children. Single women or those with husbands who were not able-bodied needed the labor of older children to survive. In June 1867, for example, John Burbridge applied to the Bureau in York County for custody of the two children he had had with Mary Winder years earlier. By 1867, both Burbridge and Winder were married to others. Burbridge had not participated in the upbringing of his children with Winder. In her testimony, Winder made an eloquent case for her right to the children: "I have worked hard to raise these children, they are now at an age, that they can help me, and I do not know what would become of me, if they were taken away, from me." To buttress her contention that the children were necessary for her support, she added that her

⁴⁵Morton Havens to A.S. Flagg, 3 May 1866, Southampton County, Va., Reports and Records Relating to Court Cases, Jerusalem, Va., #4026, RG 105, NARA.

husband was old and could not do much work. The court decided in her favor.⁴⁶

At the same time that freedwomen sought to establish one and for all that their children were no longer property, they also contributed to the "new order" by using Freedmen's Bureau courts to defend their ownership of small amounts of personal property. Disputes over property during the immediate postwar period help to tell the story of freedwomen's struggle for autonomy within impoverished communities. Modest in value, the property claimed included household goods, livestock, and small amounts of cash.⁴⁷ All were essential to freedpeople in their attempts to establish independent households. The stakes were considerable for that reason, but also because the legal sanction afforded to freedpeople's property ownership clearly demarcated slavery from freedom.

Formalizing the right to property ownership was even more significant for freedwomen, who did not have the transformative experiences of military service and voting, than for freedmen. Also, women's use of the courts to claim household goods left behind with owners during the war reflects their role as keepers of these wares under slavery. In addition, women's demands for remunerative property, such as wash pots and

⁴⁶John Burbridge v. Mary Winder, York County, 19 June 1867, 70-71, Register of Cases Tried in Freedmen's Courts Within the District, Jan.-July 1867, Office of the Subassistant Commissioner, Fort Monroe, Va., #4128 (Vol. 43 1/2), RG 105, NARA.

⁴⁷Scattered references to freedwomen's involvement in property disputes, as both plaintiffs and defendants, can also be found in the brief descriptions of Mayor's Court proceedings for Norfolk and Portsmouth published in the Norfolk Journal after the war. Early historians dismissed freedpeople's claims to small amounts of property as trivial. See, for example, John Preston McConnell, Negroes and Their Treatment in Virginia, 1865-1867 (Pulaski, Va.: B.D. Smith & Brothers, 1910), 24-25; Bentley, History of the Freedmen's Bureau, 160.

livestock, underscores their continued identities as producers and economic agents after the war.

Disputes over property sometimes pitted freedwomen against former owners, who had once been able to claim the plaintiffs themselves as their property. Conflicts over property also arose among former slaves as they restructured their family lives. Through their participation in property disputes, freedwomen contributed to the often messy task of restructuring relationships among residents of post-slavery communities.⁴⁸

To establish independent households after the war, freedpeople sought to build on the possessions they had accumulated under slavery.⁴⁹ When slave women left suddenly for Union lines during the war, they sometimes abandoned much of their personal property. Mary Armstead, a cook from Elizabeth City County, departed from the kitchen on Thomas Watts's land shortly after Union troops entered Hampton in the summer of

⁴⁸For property disputes between freedpeople, see, for example, Fanny Hamlet v. Anthony Hamlet, 7 April 1866, 169, Register of Complaints and Lists of Persons Receiving Rations, 1865 and 1866, Office of the Assistant Superintendent, Charlotte Courthouse, Va., #3920 (Vol. 127), RG 105, NARA; Mary Warner v. Henrietta Pendleton, 31 Aug. 1865, Register of Proceedings of Freedmen's Court, July 1865-May 1866, Office of the Subassistant Commissioner, Norfolk, Va., #4160 (Vol. 352), RG 105, NARA; Maria Clomis v. Thomas Wilkins, 12 December [1866], Proceedings of Freedmen's Court, Fort Monroe, Va., #4140, RG 105, NARA; Esther Jackson v. Fanny Shagford, 15 March 1866, 24, Register of Proceedings of Freedmens Court for Elizabeth City County, Dec. 1865-July 1867, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Fort Monroe, Va., #4139 (Vol. 211), Esther Jackson alias Esther Allen v. Fanny Shagford, 16 March 1866, Proceedings, #4140, RG 105, NARA. Shagford is referred to as Sheppard in the text of the proceedings records.

⁴⁹In her discussion of slaves' property in lowcountry South Carolina, Julie Saville emphasizes the significance that slaves placed on the food crops and small farm animals they had accumulated by carving out the right to do work for themselves after they had satisfied their work requirements for their owners. She notes that slaves' disposition of this property undergirded ties of community and kinship among bondpeople. The Work of Reconstruction, 9.

1861. She left behind valuable property--two beds, pillows, one bolster, five pieces of bed covering, several chairs, a safe, and two chests filled with clothes belonging to herself and her husband, David. In early 1866, David Armstead took Thomas Watts to court, demanding compensation for the goods and claiming that Mrs. Watts had appropriated them. Mary Armstead and freedwoman Christina Tabb, who had helped to move the things from the kitchen to the house, served as primary witnesses. The court ordered Thomas Watts to pay David Armstead thirty dollars.⁵⁰

Freedwomen confronted former owners and employers to assert a formal claim to various types of property. On 18 September 1865, Celia Wiggins obtained an order from Freedmen's Bureau agent Thomas P. Jackson. Jackson required that Frank Rogers of Nansemond County allow Wiggins to get the household effects that she had left with him some time earlier. Margaret Lawrence applied to Jackson the same day. Lawrence's fourteen-by-sixteen red frame house was located on the Mitchell farm, and Jackson requested that Corporal John Miller of the Ninth Vermont Volunteers assist her in removing it.⁵¹ In February 1867, Rhoda Pollard went to the Bureau agent in Mecklenburg County to recover clothing that belonged to her and her daughter, Delia, from Harbl Sizemon, her former employer. The agent ordered Sizemon to give up the

⁵⁰A bolster is a long cushion or pillow. Testimony of Mary Armstead and Christina Tabb, 13 Feb [1866], 28 Feb. 1866, Davy Armstead v. Thomas Watts, Proceedings of Cases Before Freedmen's Court, 1866 and 1867, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Fort Monroe, Va., #4140, RG 105, NARA.

⁵¹Thomas P. Jackson to Mr. Frank Rogers, Norfolk, 18 September 1865, 1, Thomas P. Jackson to Corpl. John Miller, Norfolk, 18 Sept. 1865, 3, #4228 (Vol. 368), RG 105, NARA.

items.⁵² Patience Williamson of Mecklenburg County had left the place where she lived as a slave without the approximately seventy dollars she had managed to save and hide. When two young girls later found the money, Williamson took the father of one of them to court but was unsuccessful in obtaining the cash.⁵³

Freedwomen who brought property disputes to Bureau courts compelled their neighbors to recognize their rights of ownership and made clear their determination to see that the laws protecting these rights were enforced. In February 1867, Nancy Cozzens of Mecklenburg County protested when Robert Wilburn took a horse from her to satisfy the house rent that she owed him.⁵⁴ In August 1866, freedwoman Margaret Bailey of Elizabeth City County charged a Mrs. Dobbins with trespass. Bailey maintained a vegetable garden, which she had enclosed with a fence to keep out foraging animals. Bailey claimed that Dobbins's hog broke down her fence and did two dollars worth of damage to the crop. Upon discovering the hog, Bailey had seized him "pursuant

⁵²Rhoda Pollard vs. Harbl Sizemon, Register of Complaints, Jan. 1867-Nov. 1868, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Boydton, Va., #3898 (Vol. 143), RG 105, NARA.

⁵³Bureau courts were no longer in operation at this time. Bureau agent George Graham forwarded the complaint to Mecklenburg County Justice of the Peace Joseph Tarwater, who replied that he could take no action on the case because it involved more than fifty dollars. Patience Williamson v. George Waddilton, 11 Mar. 1868, 28-29, Register of Complaints, Jan. 1867-Nov. 1868, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Boydton, Va., #3898 (Vol. 143), Order in Case of Patience Williamson v. George Waddilton, Boydton, Va., 11 Mar. 1868, Contracts, Bills of Lading, and Judgments, 1865-1868, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Boydton, Va., #3899, RG 105, NARA.

⁵⁴It is unclear whether Cozzens got her horse back; the agent wrote a note to Wilburn requiring him to return the horse or demonstrate his claim to it. Wilburn was white. Nancy Cozzens v. Robert Wilburn, 19 Feb. 1867, 4; Register of Complaints, #3898 (Vol. 143), RG 105, NARA.

to existing orders" and reported the incident to the Bureau. According to Bailey, Dobbins had then sent a man over to cut the hog loose. Bailey asked Dobbins to pay damages, but she refused. Demonstrating her lack of respect for the proceedings, Dobbins also refused to come to court in answer to the two summonses issued to her. The court awarded Bailey two dollars.⁵⁵

Bailey's defense of her vegetable garden and attention to local fence laws was mirrored by other freedwomen's claims to their livestock. In February 1866, Mary Jones of Southampton County used the local Bureau court to get back her black cow from David Joyner, a white man. A few months later, Fannie Ricks did the same to recover a pig taken from her by Burgess Joiner.⁵⁶ One well-documented dispute involving a horse suggests that the ownership of productive livestock by freedpeople particularly rankled former slaveowners. In March 1866, an African-American woman from Lunenburg County appealed to the Bureau for the return of her horse. She testified that a Union captain had given her the "much broken down" horse in return for cooking and other work that she had done for him. Joseph Hardy, a wealthy former Confederate supporter who owned the land where the woman lived, took the horse from her. He swore that she had claimed the horse after the officers had left. He also stated under oath that "he told her that no nigger could own a horse on his place." Bringing along a black witness,

⁵⁵Margaret Bailey v. Mrs. Dobbins, 22 Aug. 1866, Register of Complaints, Elizabeth City County, #4139 (Vol. 211), Margaret Bailey v. Mrs. Dobbins, 27 Aug. 1866, Proceedings of Freedmen's Court, Ft. Monroe, Va., #4140, RG 105, NARA.

⁵⁶Burgess Joiner's race is not indicated; he was not assessed court costs because he was too poor. Mary Jones v. David H. Joyner, Jerusalem, 17 Feb. 1866, Fannie Ricks v. Burgess Joiner, Jerusalem, 14 April 1866, Proceedings of Freedmen's Courts, #4027 (Vol. 255), RG 105, NARA.

Hardy proceeded to Richmond, where he obtained an order from the U.S. Department Commander allowing him to retain the horse.⁵⁷

The contentiousness of postwar Virginia, reflected by disputes over property, erupted into countless violent incidents. Even as they struggled to procure basic necessities and protect their property, Virginia freedpeople had to cope with violence at the hands of unrepentant white residents. In the monthly report he submitted on 31 July 1868, Freedmen's Bureau agent Mortimer Moulden noted a continued drought in Southampton County and "much want among the poor and indigent, both white and colored." Those in need had applied to him repeatedly for assistance. Moulden also reported that race relations had descended to the lowest point he had ever observed in the county, with former Confederates resorting to violence to intimidate potential black voters.⁵⁸

Between 1865 and 1868, former slaves in Virginia lived in fear. The first wave of violence took place in 1865-1866 and included numerous assaults on individuals, as well as two widespread disturbances in Norfolk. The second surge occurred in 1867-1868, when Virginia held its constitutional convention, and included scattered instances of

⁵⁷Lt. J. Arnold Yeckley, the Bureau agent at Lunenburg Courthouse, and his superior, Capt. Stuart Barnes, protested the interference of the Department Commander Alfred H. Terry in the case, but General Orlando Brown, Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau in Virginia, upheld the order. Lt. J.A. Yeckley to Capt. Stuart Barnes, 8 March 1866, Barnes to Yeckley, 14 March 1866, Yeckley to Barnes with endorsements, 26 April 1866, Miscellaneous Records, #4071, RG 105, NARA.

⁵⁸Mortimer Moulden to General Orlando Brown, Jerusalem, 31 July 1868, #4026, RG 105, NARA.

intimidation by the Ku Klux Klan.⁵⁹ Although black former Union soldiers and, later, black male voters were the leading targets of violent intimidation, women also became victims. They were targeted as mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters of soldiers and voters. They were also exceedingly vulnerable in their role as domestic and agricultural workers intent on establishing that freedom would be different from slavery.⁶⁰

⁵⁹The 1866 Norfolk riot developed out of whites' interference with a parade held by blacks to mark the passage of the Civil Rights Bill in April. Cassandra Newby, "The World Was All Before Them': A Study of the Black Community in Norfolk, Va., 1861-1884," (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1992), 158, 164-179. By 1867, there had been race riots in several other Southern communities as well, including the cities of Richmond, Memphis, Charleston, Atlanta, and New Orleans. Litwack, Been in the Storm, 280. For references to Klan activity in Virginia, see William A. Blair, "Justice Versus Law and Order: The Battles Over the Reconstruction of Virginia's Minor Judiciary, 1865-1870," VMHB 103 (April 1995): 178, Norfolk Journal, 3 April 1868, [3], 18 May 1868, [1]; Mortimer Moulden to General Orlando Brown, Jerusalem, 25 April 1868, Reports and Records Relating to Court Cases, #4026, RG 105, NARA; Morton, ed., "Life in Virginia by a 'Yankee Teacher,'" 202. One group victimized by the Klan in the South between 1868 and 1871 were freedwomen who were considered to be dressing above their station (I have yet to come across any references to this in Virginia). Foner, Reconstruction, 430.

⁶⁰See the illustration of a girl being whipped by two former Confederate soldiers before a crowd of them, in Sterling, ed., The Trouble They Seen, 49. Catherine Clinton emphasizes the pervasiveness and savagery of the violence perpetrated against freedpeople during Reconstruction. She argues that sexual violence carried out against black women in the South became more brutal after emancipation. "Bloody Terrain: Freedwomen, Sexuality, and Violence During Reconstruction," in Clinton, ed., Half Sisters of History: Southern Women and the American Past (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1994) 137, 149. Women also faced violence from freedmen and, less frequently, from each other. See, for example, Rebecca Farmer to Capt. Stoneman [Stowell?], Clover Depot, 30 June 1868, Rebecca Farmer v. Marcus Farmer, 1 July 1868, Littleton Edmunds to W.H.H. Stowell, Halifax, 18 August 1868, Records Relating to Complaints and Indentures, #4021, RG 105, NARA; See also Edmunds to Stowell, 20 July 1868; Complaints #45 and #51, Register of Complaints, Halifax Courthouse, Va., #4020 (Vol. 248), RG 105, NARA. Clinton claims that women did not usually want to involve agents in domestic troubles. In her work on the transition to freedom in lowcountry South Carolina, Leslie Schwalm describes domestic abuse cases as "one of the relatively few instances where women invited the state to mediate in their personal and family lives." In addition, she provides examples of women who sought the Bureau's aid in recovering

Virginia witnesses who testified before the Congressional Joint Committee on Reconstruction in 1866 sketched a climate of violent intimidation and fear.⁶¹ Alexander Dunlop, the Williamsburg blacksmith who had lost all of his tools to the opposing armies during the war, maintained that although the U.S. army retained a presence in Williamsburg, he and many others still did not feel safe. He told the committee that, should military protection be withdrawn, he would have to leave the area because former Confederates had threatened him with death.⁶²

Other witnesses from the Tidewater recounted murders, whippings and beatings,

property stolen from them by their husbands. Clinton, "Bloody Terrain," 140; Schwalm, "The Meaning of Freedom," 344-347.

⁶¹The Joint Committee's subcommittee for Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina consisted of Senator Jacob M. Howard of Michigan and Congressmen Roscoe Conkling of New York and Henry T. Blow of Missouri; Howard alone did the interviewing of all of the witnesses on Virginia except Robert E. Lee. Forty-nine witnesses discussed Virginia, including seven black men who had come to Washington for a freedmen's rights convention. They were the only blacks to appear before the Joint Committee. (Clara Barton was the only woman to provide testimony; she discussed the Andersonville prisoner-of-war camp.) Although Howard was a radical Republican, he gave little time to the seven black witnesses. The question asked most often of the witnesses on Virginia was, "What is the southern white attitude toward the freedmen?" The agenda of the Joint Committee was to compile evidence against President Johnson's Reconstruction program, and members framed their questions accordingly. Richard Lowe, "Testimony From the Old Dominion Before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction," VMHB 104 (Summer 1996): 374, 375, 378, 386, 387-388, 398.

⁶²JCR, Testimony of Alexander Dunlop, 57-58. General Alfred H. Terry, Commander of the Department of Virginia, which covered all of Virginia except Alexandria, the counties of Fairfax and Loudon, and the northern part of the Shenandoah Valley, testified that he had a force of between 2600 and 2700 men, organized mostly in one- and two-company posts. Stations in the Lower Tidewater included Norfolk, Fort Monroe, Yorktown, and Williamsburg; in the interior Southside, Danville, with Petersburg and Lynchburg in the nearby Piedmont. JCR, Testimony of General Alfred H. Terry, 141. In June 1865, Union troops in Virginia had numbered 46,000. By October 1876, there were fewer than 400 in the state. Jordan, Black Confederates, 289.

nighttime searches, and death threats. General Orlando Brown, Assistant Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau in Virginia, reported that violence against freedpeople occurred almost daily and noted that outrages had increased as the number of U.S. troops in the state decreased. When asked what he thought would happen to black residents if the military and the Freedmen's Bureau were removed from Virginia, freedman Daniel Norton of Yorktown replied, "They would be in danger of being hunted and killed."⁶³

Before the committee, black Virginians and their white supporters defined the violence as politically motivated vengeance and intimidation. The perpetrators sought to punish black residents for their role in helping to bring about Union victory and to prevent them from associating with Northerners in the future. The Reverend Mr. William Thornton, a black Baptist minister from Hampton, told the committee that a woman and her husband had been whipped thirty-nine times because they had attended one of his monthly services in Mathews County. The couple had been warned not to go

⁶³JCR, Testimony of Colonel Orlando Brown, Testimony of Daniel Norton, 123-127, 51-52. See also JCR, 49-51, 54-55, 58-59. The degree of protection offered by the military depended upon the leadership of the local force. Immediately after the war, for example, the provost marshal in Danville was sympathetic to white employers and sent out men to punish black workers physically. By March 1866, the Bureau agent stationed in Danville attributed racial harmony to the presence of the military and the Bureau. C. Thurston Chase to Col. Orlando Brown, "Capitol Square," 29 June 1865, Letters Received, Danville, Va., #3948, and J.F. Wilcox to Col. Orlando Brown, Danville, Va., 1 March 1866, Letters Sent, #3947, RG 105, NARA. Daniel Norton's testimony is all the more telling in light of the fact that he was highly critical of the Bureau on other occasions. Engs, Black Hampton, 131. Norton escaped slavery in Gloucester County during the 1850s and became educated as a doctor in New York. Returning to Virginia after the war ended, he served on the 1867-1868 Constitutional Convention and then represented James City and York Counties in the Virginia Senate from 1871-1873 and from 1877-1887. He was chosen by the freedpeople of Yorktown as their representative on the Freedmen's Bureau court there. Luther Porter Jackson, Negro Officeholders in Virginia, 1865-1895 (Norfolk: Guide Quality Press, 1945), 30.

to hear a "Yankee darkey"; they in turn had protested that Thornton was a Virginian. Asked by Senator Jacob Howard why the couple had not resisted their flogging, Thornton replied, "They are that much down." "Did they not know that they had a right to resist?" Howard continued. Thornton responded, "They dare not do it." Equally eloquently, free-born Madison Newby described the effects of violent intimidation in Surry County: All they want is some protection and to know what their rights are; they do not know their rights; they do not know whether they are free or not, there are so many different stories told them.⁶⁴

Violent intimidation worked to limit freedpeople's options. Captain E. W. Coffin, Assistant Superintendent for Negro Affairs at Yorktown shortly after Lee's surrender, believed that the freed women and girls who constituted the majority of the "surplus labor" in his jurisdiction would go back to their former residences in Mathews and Gloucester counties if they had assurances of their safety. Similarly, missionary Sarah Chase reported from postwar Norfolk that the fear of violence was so great that many African-American residents left their homes only if absolutely necessary. In July 1867, former slaveholder Sarah Payne described freedpeople in rural Campbell County as "generally peaceable and quiet and, as a general thing, they show very little disposition to be insolent" Obviously, many former slaves sought to avoid trouble with their white

⁶⁴Newby's sentiments were repeated by Jaquelin Wood, a white resident of Lynchburg, in his description of the situation in the countryside: "They hardly realize up there that they are free. In the towns where they are protected by the Freedmen's Bureau it is a little different." Thornton's testimony contains the only explicit reference to a female victim. JCR, Testimony of Rev. William Thornton, Testimony of Madison Newby, Testimony of Jaquelin M. Wood, 52-53, 54-56, 84-86. For additional descriptions of the political nature of violence by former Confederates in Virginia, see JCR, 28-30, 49-51, 51-52, 58-59.

neighbors by keeping to themselves as much as possible.⁶⁵

Women and girls were sometimes attacked because of their relationship to male family members. By beating and, especially, raping women in front of their families, white opponents of emancipation contested the independence of black families and scorned the idea that black men should be able to protect black women under freedom. In July 1866, for example, Freedmen's Bureau agent J.R. Stone, who was stationed in Suffolk, reported that Manuel Ballard of Isle of Wight County had been shot by local whites. Ballard's wife was whipped and their child wounded. Similarly, when armed and masked men broke into Wesley Edwards's house in Danville on a Saturday night in mid-August 1868, they raped his daughter, threatened the lives of the rest of the family, and stole Edwards's gun.⁶⁶

In late June 1867, Caroline Drury of Southampton County died after she was beaten by her employer because her sons were not available to work for him. The Drury case is a particularly well-documented example of the violence that could erupt out of the changed labor conditions of postwar Virginia. According to the testimony of several of her children, Drury had been working outside on June 26 when Dr. L. W. Jones accused her of sending away her sons George and Henry, whom he had hired as laborers.

⁶⁵Berlin, *et al.*, eds., *Free Labor*, 238-239; Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 211; Sarah Payne to Mary, 20 July 1867, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS, 37-38. Four years later, Payne wrote, "We never hear of any difficulties about here between the whites and blacks." Payne to Mary, 5 April 1871, 110.

⁶⁶J.R. Stone to [William P. Austin], Suffolk Va., 5 July 1866, M1048, roll 10, AC/VA, BRFAL, RG 105, NARA. The Danville case does not identify the perpetrators or victims by race. Cases Reported, August 1868, Letters Sent, Danville, Va., #3947 (Vol. 148), RG 105, NARA.

Jones then beat Drury about the head and shoulders with a stick of seasoned sycamore. Two of her younger children ran to get George and Henry; Jones stopped beating Drury as they approached. Both sons confronted Jones and denied that their mother had any control over their actions. After a sleepless night, Caroline Drury got up, nursed her baby, and did the wash. At noontime dinner, she complained to her family of pain. Shortly afterward, she dropped dead in her cabin; as Henry testified, "I saw my mother no more[;] then she was dead."⁶⁷ Jones, frustrated by his inability to control his laborers, lashed out at Caroline Drury when he concluded that she had usurped his authority.

While it is not clear whether Drury asserted her prerogative as a parent, other mothers clearly did. By reporting instances of violence against their children to the Bureau, mothers sought to protect their children and to send a message to their employers. In August 1868, Ellen Tucker visited the Bureau office in Danville to report that her son George had been beaten. That October, Sarah Skipwith made a similar trip to the Boydton office in Mecklenburg County, where she claimed that employer Richard Yancey had thrown a rock at her daughter Celia. Since Bureau courts were no longer in operation, Bureau officer George Graham sent the case on to a justice of the peace, who declared Celia disobedient and dismissed the matter as "only a small affair not worth noticing." In April 1868, freedwoman Betsy Townes, also of Mecklenburg County,

⁶⁷Apparently the original inquest did not find Jones at fault for Drury's death; Deacon attempted to establish that Drury could have died of compression of the brain as a result of the assault. His supervisors, however, rejected his request that the case be reopened. Grand Jury Inquest into Death of Caroline Drury, 28 June 1867, Testimony taken by Lt. A.G. Deacon, military commissioner, 6 Sept. 1867, Proceedings of Freedmen's Courts, Jerusalem, Va., #4027 (Vol. 256), RG 105, NARA; Crofts, Old Southampton, 230-231, 393.

protested that David Chandler and his son John had struck her daughter Isabella with a stick and choked her. According to the justice of the peace, a compromise was reached between Betsy Townes and Chandler; she would return to work for him without cost or reduction in wages. The J.P. presented the resolution as if Townes had been at fault. These justices' dismissiveness of freedwomen's complaints reveals why freedpeople lamented the demise of Bureau courts.⁶⁸

Still, until 1868, while Bureau agents continued to monitor the doings of county courts, the courthouse remained a refuge for mothers who sought redress for violence perpetrated against their children. At her mother's behest, on 4 June 1868, twelve-year-old Parthenia Hendricks of Halifax County lodged a complaint of assault and battery against her step-uncle, Jacob Lacy, for a beating he had administered to her on 2 June.⁶⁹ It seems that on that day Parthenia's step-father Israel had given Jacob permission to discipline her if she did not work properly in the field, but did not expect Jacob to whip her severely. As Parthenia later testified before the justice of the peace, "He whipped me good with both switches in his hand." Israel himself had tried to whip Parthenia earlier in the day, after the manager of the farm had complained about her work. Parthenia's

⁶⁸In the Townes case, the reference to cost probably meant that Chandler would not subtract from Townes's wages the time that she missed, but it may have indicated court costs. Cases Reported, August 1868, Letters Sent, Danville, Va., #3947 (Vol. 148), Sarah Skipwith v. Richard Yancey, 30 Oct. 1868, Contracts, etc., Boydton, Va., #3899; Betsy Townes v. David and John Chandler, 2 April 1868, 28-29, Register of Complaints, Betsy Townes v. David and John Chandler, 2 April 1868, Contracts, etc., Boydton, Va., #3898 (Vol. 143) & #3899, RG 105, NARA.

⁶⁹Parthenia Hendricks v. Jacob Lacy, 4 June 1868, Report of S.S. Kent in the case of Parthenia Hendricks v. Jacob Lacey for Assault & Battery, June 1868, Records Relating to Complaints and Indentures, 1865-68, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Halifax Courthouse, Va., #4021, RG 105, NARA.

mother, Eliza, had intervened, however, telling her husband that he would have to whip her first.

After learning about Jacob's beating of Parthenia, Eliza took matters into her own hands. She grabbed a large hickory stick and confronted Jacob in the field. He threatened to treat her just as he had Parthenia. Eliza described her response: "I stuck him with the stick I had as hard as god would let me, and Caught his fingers in My Mouth & bit them as hard as I could, and I thought I heard the bones of his fingers Crack. I tried to bite them off. I tore his pantaloons off him, and I did my utmost [to] get hold of his privates and in that way his pants were torn off. I do not know whether I had [full hold?] or not, but I had My Arm around his Neck and in that way I dragged him a little distance. . . . My conscience checked me and I let him go & run."

After she had milked the cows that evening, Eliza was confronted about the fight by Colonel John A. McGraw, the owner of the farm. He threatened to have members of the family jailed. Eliza explained to him that only her husband Israel could whip Parthenia. McGraw responded that if Israel did not whip the child, he would. As Eliza testified, "I Walked off from the Col. and after getting some little distance said that if I could not get Justice I would go to the Co. House." Parthenia's complaint to Bureau agent William H.H. Stowell was the result. Stowell forwarded the complaint to Justice of the Peace S.S. Kent, who appears to have had Jacob jailed briefly and then discharged after hearing the witnesses testify.⁷⁰

Some freedwomen lodged protests against their employers when they became the

⁷⁰Kent took the testimonies at McGraw's farm.

objects of violent assault themselves. In late January 1866, a freedwoman named Saluda, who lived in Lunenburg County, charged her employer, Marshall Parish, with beating and choking her. According to Saluda, Parish was upset with the way that she had set the table one morning, so that evening he beat her on the head with a chair and his fist, choked her, and knocked her down. Parish claimed that Saluda had refused to put the knives and forks on the table properly when he told her to, so he had shoved her by grabbing her clothing around the collar but had not struck her. An eight-year-old black boy named Solomon did not witness the incident but testified that Parish had threatened to shoot Saluda when she returned to get her child the day after the altercation. The Bureau court acquitted Parish, annulled the contract between the two, and ordered him to pay her \$2.50. In a similar but less well-documented case in May 1868, Sally Toone of Mecklenburg County registered a complaint against her employer, charging that he choked her, threatened her, and drove her off his property.⁷¹

Some of the complaints made by freedwomen grew out of confrontations in which they had been verbally assertive. While slavery had often silenced slaves by

⁷¹Parish is also identified as J.W. Marshall, J.M. Parrish, and J.W. Parrish. Toone did not appear for her court date before the justice of the peace. Ligon denied choking her. Toone was awarded payment for the work she had performed. *Saluda v. Marshall Parish*, 27 Jan. 1866, Register of Complaints, April-Nov. 1868, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Lunenburg Courthouse, Va., #4068 (Vol. 286), RG 105, NARA; Notes regarding Saluda case, Miscellaneous Records, 1865-1868, Lunenburg Courthouse, Va., #4071, RG 105, NARA; *Sally Toone v. Henry Ligon*, Boydton, Va., 2 May 1868, Contracts, etc., Boydton, Va., #3899, RG 105, NARA. Bureau records of assault cases often only include the names of the plaintiff and defendant without indicating their relationship. In many cases, an employee/employer relationship cannot be proven but is plausible. See, for example, *Mary Gregory v. W.A. Keaton*, 11 May 1868 [assault], Register of Complaints, Apr.-Nov. 1868, Lunenburg Courthouse, Va., #4068 (Vol. 286); *Agnes Dailey v. J.J. Daley, Esq.*, Boydton, Va., 10 July 1868 [whipping with a horsewhip], #3899, RG 105, NARA.

forcing them to hide their true thoughts and feelings while in the company of slaveowners, emancipation unleashed a torrent of words and emotions. In this sense, women were liberated as much as men.

By bringing to court incidents in which they had expressed themselves forthrightly, women demonstrated their belief in the validity of verbal resistance to unjust behavior. In December 1866, Eliza Butts registered a complaint against storeowner Nelson Hodges with Portsmouth mayor J.C. White. Butts had sent her daughter to Hodges's store for some meal, and she returned with change that was five cents short. According to the Norfolk Journal, Butts went to recover the change and spoke "very insultingly to Mr. Hodges's wife." It seems that Nelson Hodges then literally kicked Butts out of the store. In Halifax County in the spring of 1868, the wife of Prescott Mosley received a threat of caning from landowner M.M. Stanfield after she refused to relay a message to her husband, telling Stanfield to do it himself.⁷²

Some freedwomen who resorted to threats and verbal abuse, whether against whites or other blacks, found themselves brought up on charges before the Bureau. In July 1865, Maria Blunt pleaded not guilty to drawing a knife on Martha Davis and threatening "to rip her guts out." She was found guilty and bound over to keep the peace. In 1866, Mary Ratell, a white woman, lodged a complaint at the Fort Monroe office

⁷²Report of James H. Blackwell in the Case of M.M. Stanfield, 1 April 1868, Records Relating to Complaints and Indentures, Halifax Courthouse, Va., #4021, RG 105, NARA. After chastising Hodges for taking the law into his own hands, White dismissed the case because the confrontation had occurred in the county and told Butts to apply to a county judge for redress. The Norfolk Journal may have exaggerated in its description of Butts's speech in order to make Hodges's actions appear justified. Norfolk Journal, 17 Dec. 1866, [3], 19 Dec. 1866, [3]. On freedwomen's verbal assertiveness, see Schwalm, "The Meaning of Freedom," 252, and Clinton, "Bloody Terrain," 143-144, 149.

against freedwomen Jenny Pegrum and Betsy Morris. Ratell claimed that Pegrum and Morris were constantly stopping her, calling her abusive names, and threatening to shoot her. Pegrum and Morris were sentenced to one month's imprisonment.⁷³

While Virginia freedpeople did not experience reigns of terror such as those that engulfed parts of South Carolina and Louisiana after the war, they were regularly subjected to assaults and threats. While, in the words of the Reverend William Thornton, many "dared not" resist, some did come forward to hold the perpetrators accountable for their actions. As victims themselves and as the mothers of victims, Virginia freedwomen sought redress and protection.

In addition to claiming their rights to their children, their property, and the safety of their persons, freedwomen in postwar Virginia proclaimed their new status by participating in civic and communal activities. Urban women had more opportunities to do this than did women who lived in the countryside. These very public events represented a significant postwar departure; during the antebellum period, black Virginians had had limited access to civic space as individuals and had been prohibited from gathering in groups without white supervision.⁷⁴ Although postwar emancipation

⁷³The People v. Maria Blunt, 20 July 1865, Register of Proceedings of Freedmen's Court, Norfolk, Va., #4160 (Vol. 352); Mary Ratell v. Jenny Pegrum and Betsy Morris, 14 Aug. 1866, Register of Proceedings of Freedmen's Court for Elizabeth City County, #4139 (Vol. 211), Proceedings of Cases Before Freedmen's Court, #4140, RG 105, NARA. See also the reference to a street fight among several black women in Hampton, in True Southerner, 14 Dec. 1865, [3].

⁷⁴The attendance of black residents at antebellum civic events is difficult to measure. In her sample of antebellum newspapers for her study of white women and Virginia politics, Elizabeth Varon found just one reference to the presence of blacks at a party rally. The Richmond Enquirer, a Democratic organ, described an American party gathering in Franklin County in 1856 as a failure because attendance only reached "about

celebrations, political rallies, and community meetings were usually led by men, women sometimes organized their own public gatherings. Freedwomen played both supporting and symbolic roles as the state became "a battleground between former master and former slave."⁷⁵

Freedpeople in postwar Virginia had to be persistent to establish their claim to the civic arena. As one field hand with little faith in former Confederates told Bureau agent Lemuel Morton in James City County, "'They'll never get used to black men gitting up and talking.'" That public space became so contested illustrates its symbolic importance to members of both races.⁷⁶

Even before the war had ended, women and men in Union-occupied areas of the lower Tidewater had begun to lay claim to the public sphere to celebrate emancipation. The emancipation celebration staged in Norfolk on 1 January 1863 was followed by

five hundred, of both sexes, both colors, and all ages." Varon, "'We mean to be counted: White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia,'" (Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ., 1993), 296. Richmond's Black Codes of 1859 stated that Capitol Square was off limits to blacks unless accompanying a white as a servant or carrying out business for their owners or employers. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 192. On the importance of assertive public behavior to the establishment of citizenship and political equality for black Southerners, see Jane Dailey, "Deference and Violence in the Postbellum Urban South: Manners and Massacres in Danville, Virginia," *JSH* 63 (Aug. 1997): 555, 558, and *passim*.

⁷⁵Foner points out that access to political power differentiated the post-emancipation experience of blacks in the United States South from that of their counterparts in the Caribbean. Eric Foner, *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1983), 3 (quote), 45-47. My discussion focuses on the efforts of freedpeople to claim ownership of civic space.

⁷⁶Samuel C. Armstrong, Superintendent 9th District Virginia, to Bvt. Rig. Genl. O. Brown, Ft. Monroe, 30 June 1866, Letters Received by the Assistant Commissioner for Virginia, M1048, AC/VA, BRFAL, RG 105, NARA.

anniversary commemorations in that city in succeeding years.⁷⁷ The 1865 celebration featured a parade in which "colored folks of all ages and sexes" took part. Black military units, Freemasons, and "the Colored Charitable Society" were among the groups represented.⁷⁸

Emancipation celebrations had their antecedents in such slave holidays as Christmas, Easter, and the Fourth of July, as well as camp meetings and Watch Night services. Religious commemorations of emancipation included sermons, prayers, and spirituals. Patriotic songs and abolitionist anthems, as well as readings of the Emancipation Proclamation, were also featured. Celebratory activities common to both slave holidays and emancipation day celebrations included dancing, staging parades, drinking alcohol, eating barbecue, and holding athletic matches.⁷⁹

A 15 May 1868 emancipation celebration in Tarboro, North Carolina, not far from the Virginia border, illustrates the participation of women in one postwar ceremony. African-Americans of "all ages, sexes and size[s]" came to town from outlying areas. After a parade down Main Street, "two of the dark fair sex" presented a flag and banner. The banner was inscribed, "Liberty and Equal Rights before the Law."

⁷⁷To this day, emancipation celebrations take place at different times in Virginia and throughout the United States. Richmond freedpeople, for example, commemorated 3 April 1865, the day of the Confederate evacuation of the city. AM 10 (May 1866): 105; Norfolk Journal, 3 April 1868, [3]; William H. Wiggins, Jr., O Freedom! Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1987), xix-xx.

⁷⁸Thomas C. Parramore, et al., Norfolk: The First Four Centuries, 218.

⁷⁹Watch Night services were held on New Year's Eve and included prayers in anticipation of family separation and the resumption of owners' full control over slaves. After prayers, participants danced from midnight to dawn. Wiggins, O Freedom!, 25-34, 34-35, 46-47.

To have women present the banner sent a message that all members of the community had a stake in the establishment of freedom. Yet, as non-voters, women also symbolized the classic "disinterested" female and may have been chosen as a hedge against disruption or retaliation by unsympathetic whites. The festivities concluded with an evening ball.⁸⁰

Although their access to civic space was often facilitated by representatives of the federal government, freedpeople also on occasion found themselves thwarted by authorities who sought to mollify white Virginians. An anecdote related by Phoebe Yates Pember in her memoir provides a vivid example. Pember, who had served as a matron at Chimborazo Hospital in Richmond during the war, recalled that after the occupation of Richmond, U.S. military bands gave concerts on the grounds of the capitol during the afternoons. The first week, numerous local African-Americans attended, along with Union officers and soldiers, but no white inhabitants of Richmond took part. In an effort to reach out to white residents, military authorities banned black Richmonders from the concerts. Still, whites continued to stay away. Officials then allowed black nurses who cared for white children to attend with their charges. Freedwomen demonstrated their determination to take advantage of the opportunity for socializing, and, possibly, to protest their previous exclusion: according to Pember,

⁸⁰ 15 May 1868 marked the third anniversary of the occupation of Tarboro by the U.S. Army. The correspondent who mockingly described the celebration suggested that participants dressed up for the event; in his opinion, their attire was "ludicrous and fantastic." Norfolk Journal, 18 May 1868. On the dressy attire prevalent at freedom celebrations, see Wiggins, O Freedom!, 93-94. Mary Elizabeth Massey concluded that white women, North and South, placed great significance on their participation in flag-presentation ceremonies during the war, in Women in the Civil War, 36.

several nurses accompanied each child. Soon thereafter the concerts were discontinued.⁸¹

During Reconstruction, Virginia freedwomen also contributed to mass political meetings, although their secondary status was often made clear. In June 1867, an American Missionary Association teacher writing from Carrsville in Isle of Wight County explained: "When they take a vote, the women all take part also until they are told not to by the president. They are unanimously in favor of the republican party."⁸² At such meetings held throughout the state in conjunction with the 1867-1868 state constitutional convention, women voted on the issues, although they could not vote for delegates. In Nansemond County, participants in a political meeting passed a resolution in support of giving women the franchise; a Richmond mass meeting defeated a similar measure. At the convention itself in Richmond, African-Americans of both sexes and all ages filled the galleries to hear the debates among the 105 delegates, twenty-five of whom were black. Freedwomen reacted loudly to the discussions; white women also

⁸¹Phoebe Yates Pember, A Southern Woman's Story: Life in Confederate Richmond, ed. Bell I. Wiley (McCowat-Mercer Press, Inc., 1954; repr., Marietta, Ga.: Mockingbird Books, 1974), 96-97.

⁸²AM 11 (Aug. 1867): 172; Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 160-161; Michael Hucles, "Many Voices, Similar Concerns: Traditional Methods of African-American Political Activity in Norfolk, Virginia, 1865-1875," VMHB 100 (Oct. 1992), 547. One advocate for freedpeople in the lower Tidewater claimed that about 5000 people usually attended mass meetings held in the region. JCR, Testimony of Calvin Pepper, 49-51. In lowcountry South Carolina, women attended political meetings and provided financial support for lecturers. In 1871, a conservative officeholder testified that freedwomen and children had voted in 1870 elections; he claimed that they cast votes for male relatives who they said were sick. Saville, The Work of Reconstruction, 169-170, 172.

attended, but were apparently not as vocal.⁸³

At mass political meetings, freedwomen addressed community concerns and laid claim to national citizenship. They joined in refuting rumors of uprisings; listening to speeches of local leaders, such as T.F. Paige's recitation "On the Evil and Domestic Relations of Slavery," delivered in Norfolk in December 1865; proclaiming their loyalty to the United States; contributing money for benevolent and political causes; voicing their support for schools and other nascent community institutions; and offering prayers for the future. That these events included expressions of patriotism was symbolized most clearly by Fourth of July gatherings. In Lynchburg on Independence Day in 1866, freedmen's teacher Jacob Yoder noted that ex-slaves "seem to be generally inclined to select this day as an anniversary day to celebrate their emancipation." On 4 July 1868, men and women assembled at the courthouse in Portsmouth to celebrate and hear political speeches.⁸⁴

⁸³See also the illustration of a Colored People's Convention, which shows women in attendance (no date or location given), in Sterling, ed., The Trouble They Seen, 65. Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," Public Culture 7 (Fall 1994): 119, 121; Lawrence L. Hartzell, "The Exploration of Freedom in Black Petersburg, Va., 1865-1902," The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth-Century Virginia eds. Edward L. Ayers and John C. Willis (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1991), 134; McConnell, Negroes and Their Treatment in Virginia, 118; Myrta Lockett Avary, Dixie After the War (N.Y.: Page & Company, 1906; repr., N.Y.: DaCapo Press, 1970), 229-231, 254. Although John C. Underwood proposed that Virginia's new constitution provide universal suffrage, the issue of woman suffrage was not discussed. Suzanne D. Lebsack, "Radical Reconstruction and the Property Rights of Southern Women," Journal of Southern History 43 (May 1977): 205-206.

⁸⁴JCR, Testimony of D.B. White, 60-62; True Southerner, 30 Nov. 1865, [2], 7 Dec. 1865, [2], 21 Dec. 1865, [2]; AM 11 (Aug. 1867): 172; Norfolk Journal, 7 July 1868, [1]; Samuel L. Horst, ed., The Fire of Liberty in Their Hearts: The Diary of Jacob E. Yoder of the Freedmen's Bureau School, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1866-1870 (Richmond: The

Freedpeople fused politics and Christianity at public meetings, many of which were held in churches. The merging of religion and politics continued the wartime definition of emancipation as deliverance by God.⁸⁵ It also reflected the realities of community formation; as African-Americans in Virginia formed new congregations upon their own volition or in response to expulsion from churches run by whites, they developed the church into a vital public institution.⁸⁶ Two political events in Norfolk in the summer of 1868 reflect this development. Supporters of Radical Republican Congressional candidate Thomas Bayne held weekly meetings at the James Street

Library of Virginia, 1996), 4 July 1866, 55. Freedpeople's espousal of Independence Day did not go unnoticed by former slaveholding women. Under the heading, "Black 4th of July--1865," South Carolinian Mary Chesnut described the celebration held in Camden, S.C. C. Vann Woodward, Mary Chesnut's Civil War (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), 832.

⁸⁵Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 23; Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia (Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), 206-207. Religious revivalism was widespread in Virginia during Reconstruction, especially among the Baptist and Methodist denominations. Norfolk blacks of all ages, for example, took part in a revival in the spring of 1866. James Douglas Smith, "Virginia during Reconstruction, 1865-1870: A Political, Economic, and Social Study," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Virginia, 1960), 346; Newby, "'The World Was All Before Them,'" 213-214.

⁸⁶Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming," 107-111, 126-141. When black Baptists founded the Virginia Baptist State Convention in 1867, they had sixty churches and 21,005 members; by 1874, they had 306 churches and 80,446 members. The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and the African Methodist Episcopal Church organized Virginia Conferences shortly after the war. Smith, "Virginia During Reconstruction," 358-360. For references to local church foundings and expulsions, see Mary B. Gwathmey, "Royal Purple Preferred" (1949), 22, Gwathmey Family Papers, VHS; Tommy Bogger, Sarah S. Hughes, Terry L. Jones, and William Paquette, Readings in Black and White: Lower Tidewater Virginia, Jane H. Kobelski, ed. (Portsmouth, Va.: Portsmouth Public Library, 1982), 23-26, 39; Marie Gordon Pryor Rice Reminiscences, 10, VHS; Northwest Baptist Church (Norfolk County) Records, 4 July 1866, 3 Nov. 1866, 1 Dec. 1866, 93, 96, LVA. See also Engs, Black Hampton, 131, 133-134; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 471; Saville, The Work of Reconstruction, 163-166.

Chapel. In August, when Freedmen's Bureau Commissioner General Oliver Otis Howard visited Norfolk, he gave speeches at three black churches.⁸⁷

In Lynchburg in June 1866, freedpeople merged Christianity and politics in a parade held to mark the first anniversary of the establishment of Sunday Schools for African Americans in the city. Participants carried banners, most of which had religious themes, but a few of which were more obviously political. One simply proclaimed, "We Are Free"; another contained an image of President Abraham Lincoln, two small Union flags, and the words, "With malice toward none and Charity to all." The celebrants gave several hurrahs, pointedly excluding Andrew Johnson. Many of the girls wore white dresses. "They rejoiced, the old and the young that they are permitted to do as they have done," teacher Jacob Yoder recorded in his diary after the parade.⁸⁸

Local authorities in Norfolk and Portsmouth attempted to place restrictions on black churches, probably in response to their use for political purposes. In December 1866, police in Portsmouth shut down several "colored feasts" because attendees were engaging in "high revelry after the legal hour of twelve, midnight." The Norfolk Journal claimed that although some feasts were for charitable purposes, others were "generally anything but moral." In May 1868, new Portsmouth mayor James E. Stokes promised to crack down on loud and disorderly feasts. A month later, in Norfolk, recently installed

⁸⁷Norfolk Journal, 18 July 1868, [1]; Norfolk Journal, 6 Aug. 1868, [1]. Similarly, in December 1865 Yorktown blacks had met at a church to elect their representative to the Freedmen's Bureau court. True Southerner, 21 Dec. 1865, [2]. Freedpeople highly regarded General Howard; Leon Litwack suggests he ranked second only to Lincoln in their eyes. Litwack, Been in the Storm, 405.

⁸⁸Horst, ed., Fire of Liberty, 31-34.

Mayor Francis DeCordy issued a special order requiring black churches to close at eleven p.m. unless they obtained permits to stay open later on special occasions.⁸⁹

There were public meetings held exclusively by women. In May 1868, the Norfolk Journal carried a description of a "Negro Female Indignation Meeting." The women gathered outside of the city "to give His Honor the Mayor a 'piece of their mind.'" It appears that the women were concerned about rumors that Mayor DeCordy planned to place new restrictions on access to the marketplace and to transport "lazy" black residents to Africa. The group of "colored citizenesses" appointed a president and secretary, but the leaders had difficulty maintaining order because numerous participants sought "all at once to 'claim the floor.'" Although the Journal mocked the women's efforts, the description suggests that these politically motivated freedwomen wanted to establish collective power as women.⁹⁰

Participation in public communal events was not for the faint-hearted; the threat of violence was real. On 16 April 1866, a few white men disrupted a parade and ceremony held by black residents of Norfolk to mark the passage of the Civil Rights Bill. After the procession but before the ceremony, which was to include readings of the Bill of Rights and the Civil Rights Bill, violence broke out. A white man shot one of the marchers and was then killed by some of the participants in retaliation; that night, a group of white men roved through Norfolk, shooting indiscriminately at black residents

⁸⁹Norfolk Journal, 8 Dec. 1866, [3]; 7 May 1868, [1]; 13 June 1868, [1].

⁹⁰The Journal used the term "colored citizenesses" in jest; I use it without the sarcasm. Blacks and whites had attended the mayor's installation earlier in the day. He had been appointed by General John McAllister Schofield, commander of the First Military District. Norfolk Journal, 13 May 1868, [1].

who were out on the streets and possibly whipping some women.

From her spot near the speakers' scaffold, where she awaited the opening prayer and hymn, Martha Ann Carter witnessed the violence that instigated the "riot." A few weeks later, she testified before the U.S. Army board of inquiry convened to investigate the violence. Eighteen-year-old Patsey Davis also attended the procession, although she testified that she had avoided the melee that broke out before the ceremony began. Although, like many other witnesses interviewed by the board, Freedmen's Bureau Superintendent A.S. Flagg testified to the orderliness of the parade, he also claimed that "there was a promiscuous procession of women and children, and many of them were not dressed very well." Flagg's mention of this group suggests that the celebrants reflected a range of social classes. His remark highlights the novelty, to white observers, of the presence of women without male escorts at a public event.⁹¹

During the immediate postwar period, emancipation celebrations required careful planning to prevent opposition from local whites and ward off violence. In December 1866, freedpeople in Norfolk invited Mayor Ludlow to a meeting at the Bute Street Methodist Church, where they planned to organize a New Year's Day celebration. They also enlisted the assistance of Freedmen's Bureau agent William Austin in arranging the event.⁹²

⁹¹Several witnesses testified that it was impossible to determine the extent of the violence perpetrated on the night of the 16th because victims were afraid to come forward after the mayor began arresting anyone who did. U.S. Congress, House, Riot at Norfolk: Letter from the Secretary of War..., 39th Cong., 2d sess., 1867, H. Exec. Doc. 72, serial 1293, 20, 32, 35, 40-41, 50-51, 62-63.

⁹²After initially opposing the celebration, the Norfolk Journal assured its readers that a police presence would ensure the safety of local citizens. Norfolk Journal, 17 Dec. 1866,

A small riot that took place in Lunenburg County in July 1868 demonstrates how violence could erupt as whites and blacks literally competed for the use of civic space. Although the testimony gathered by the U.S. military commissioner who investigated the incident contains conflicting accounts, it appears that a ten-minute melee broke out between blacks and whites assembled to hear two different speakers at the county courthouse. According to witness George C. Jackson, whites were listening to a speech by Thomas T. Goode, who was speaking from the courthouse portico, while blacks were listening to James Bland, who was speaking from the steps near the railing in front of the courthouse. The audiences engaged in verbal combat even as the speakers tried to overpower each other. The assemblage of blacks included at least one woman--when punches began to fly, the wife of Solomon Anderson took action. She came up from behind and pulled him out of the crowd, even as he assured her that he was not going to fight anyone. As she dragged him away, he looked back and saw a black man stabbed by a white man.⁹³

[3], 18 Dec. 1866, [3]; 20 Dec. 1866, [3]. Richmond's 3 April 1866 emancipation celebration came off despite threats from local whites that they would "wade through blood" before it would take place; white opponents to the celebration were said to have been the cause of the fire that burned down the Second African Baptist Church the night of 2 April. AM 10 (May 1866): 105; Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 40; Taylor, Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia, 79. The Reverend Mr. William Thornton of Hampton received a death threat after participating in a 1 January 1866 public meeting in Mathews County, possibly an emancipation commemoration. JCR, Testimony of William Thornton, 53.

⁹³Two black men were stabbed in the riot. Participants threw sticks, stones, and bricks. Testimony in the Lunenburg Riot Case, 17 July 1868, 5, 15-16, Miscellaneous Records, #4071, RG 105, NARA; see also papers of testimony in Letters and Orders Received, Sept. 1865-June 1866, #4066. James W.D. Bland, a free-born carpenter from Prince Edward County, was a delegate to the 1867-68 state constitutional convention and represented Prince Edward and Appomattox Counties in the Virginia Senate from 1869

Virginia freedwomen also accompanied freedmen to the polls on election days. Women hoped thereby to influence the outcome of political contests. Some freedwomen may have had a sense of ownership of the votes cast by their male relatives. Women also sought to provide strength in numbers so as to ward off violence from white residents who did not want black men to vote.⁹⁴ Such public efforts complemented private attempts to influence men's voting. In her "Aunt Chloe" poems published in 1872, writer Frances Ellen Watkins Harper fictionalized women's bid to ensure that their husbands would vote correctly:

You'd laughed to seen Lucinda Grange
 Upon her husband's track;
 When he sold his vote for rations
 She made him take 'em back.

Day after day did Milly Green
 Just follow after Joe,
 And told him if he voted wrong
 To take his rags and go.⁹⁵

to 1870: he died when the third story of the state capitol collapsed on 27 April 1870. At the convention, he suggested that the word "men" in the preamble to the constitution be replaced by "mankind, irrespective of race or color," but this was rejected. W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880 (as Black Reconstruction, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1935; repr., N.Y.: Touchstone by Simon & Schuster, 1995), 541-542; Jackson, Negro Officeholders in Virginia, 3-4; Smith, "Virginia During Reconstruction," 74. I have not yet been able to identify Goode.

⁹⁴Brown argues that women viewed men's vote as their vote and that this was one representation of a world view that defined the pursuit of freedom as a collective endeavor. Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming," 122-125. Nell Painter places greater emphasis on the limitations on women's political participation during Reconstruction. Painter, "Comment," in Darlene Clark Hine, ed., The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1986), 82.

⁹⁵Complete Poems of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, ed. Maryemma Graham (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 124-126; Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Garrigues Bros., 1893; repr., N.Y.: Oxford

Excluded from the polls, freedwomen recognized that voting was a form of power that should be treasured.

In their daily lives during the immediate postwar period, Virginia freedwomen sought to liberate the revolutionary potential of emancipation. They demanded that their children be set free, maintained their right to property ownership, protested physical attacks against themselves and their kin, and asserted their right to assemble freely in public places. Between 1865 and 1868, former slave women steadfastly used the Freedmen's Bureau to make these claims. Visits to the Bureau were particularly significant for the development of citizenship among women, who did not have military service or voting to demarcate slavery and freedom.

The domestic workplace helped to shape, and was shaped by, the citizenship developed by freedwomen in the midst of upheaval, poverty, and violence. Changes in labor relations provided one of the most important yardsticks with which freedwomen

Univ. Press, 1988), 177-179. See also Melissa M. Soto, "African-American Women's Gender and Political Identities in Reconstruction South Carolina and Georgia, 1865-1870," (M.A. Thesis, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, 1994), 53, for an example of a freedman who recalled that local preachers had encouraged freedwomen to influence their husbands' votes by withholding sex. For reference to a similar plea by Robert Smalls in 1876, see Marli Frances Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves: Gender, Race, and South Carolina Women, 1830-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Rochester, 1986), 323. For an anecdote about similar attempts to exert influence by Whig women in 1848, see Varon, "To Be Counted," 276. For evidence of a woman who usually encouraged her husband to vote Republican but discouraged him from going to the polls for fear of violence after the Danville "riot" of 1883, see the testimony of Violet Keeling in Herbert Aptheker, ed., A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States (N.Y.: Citadel Press, 1951), 1:739-741. See also the claim by a white man that black women had been "bribed or frightened" into influencing their husbands to vote for the Readjuster-Republican coalition before the "riot," in Edward Pollock, Illustrated Sketch Book of Danville, Virginia: Its Manufactures and Commerce (Petersburg: E.R. Waddill and Bro., 1885; repr., Danville: Womack Press, 1976), 91.

measured freedom. They made use of Bureau courts to demand compensation for their labor and to try to ensure that this compensation exceeded the provisions with which they had been supplied under slavery. Former mistresses struggled to adapt to free labor and tried to resurrect elements of the maternalism of slavery to exert some control over workers. The postwar domestic workplace provides a particularly useful case study of the transition from slavery to freedom because it was an environment closely associated with the institution of slavery.

Chapter Four

Cooking, Washing, Ironing, and Feeding the Fowls: Freedwomen and Former Mistresses Renegotiate Domestic Labor

In Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's Reconstruction novel Iola Leroy, a former slave cook named Linda describes her experience of emancipation during the Civil War:

Wen freedom com'd I jist lit out ob Miss
Johnson's kitchen soon as I could. I wanted
ter re'lize I war free, an' I couldn't, tell
I got out er de sight and soun' ob ole Miss.¹

Linda never returns to the kitchen but establishes an independent household with her husband. This fictional account by an advocate for freedwomen represents the ideal experience of emancipation for most house slaves: liberation from their former workplace and escape from the daily supervision of whites.²

¹In the ultimate role reversal, Miss Johnson is impoverished after the war, and Linda supplies her with milk, butter, and "garden sass." Linda comments on the changes that have taken place since before the war: "Ole Mistus war up den, an' I war down; now, she's down, an' I'se up." Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Garrigues Bros., 1893; repr., N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 1-2, 154, 159. See also the recollections of former slave Lillian Clarke, who described a former mistress's plea for food from her former slave as divine retribution. Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1976), 72-73.

²Both urban and rural blacks throughout the postwar South sought to minimize whites' interference in their work environments and family lives, which often overlapped. Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1986), 134; Ira Berlin, Steven F.

Although some fortunate women achieved both of these goals in postwar Virginia, most did not. Poverty amidst the devastation of war, the collapse of land confiscation and redistribution, and the necessity of caring for young children limited freedwomen's options. Years later, former slave Minnie Folkes explained why her mother had continued to cook for her former mistress after emancipation:

You see, we didn' have nothin' an' no whar to go. . . . So we all, you know, jes' took an' stayed 'til we was able wid God's help to pull us selves together. But my God it was 'ginst our will, but . . . couldn't help ourselves.³

For countless former slaves, the home place provided one of the few viable alternatives for survival immediately after the war.

Furthermore, a majority of freedpeople who did leave the site of their bondage probably continued to work for white employers.

For a century after the Civil War, household work was one of the primary forms of employment available to African-American women in Virginia.⁴ For freedwomen

Miller, and Leslie S. Rowland, "Afro-American Families in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," Radical History Review 42 (Fall 1988), 90-91; Tracey Weis, "Negotiating Freedom: Domestic Service and the Landscape of Labor and Household Relations in Richmond, Va., 1850-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers, 1994), 199. For a twentieth-century fictional account of an elderly former female house slave who yearns for "a place of her very own" years after emancipation, see Katherine Anne Porter, "The Last Leaf," in The Leaning Tower and Other Stories (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1944), 59-65.

³Perdue, et al., eds., Weevils in the Wheat, 94-95, 134.

⁴According to census records, of 102,729 black females age ten and above gainfully employed in Virginia in 1910, 34,931 were servants, 27,723 laundresses, and 21,499 agricultural workers. Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce, Negro Population, 1790-1915 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 522.

who performed domestic work in the households of their former owners or other white Virginians, emancipation resulted in change in the contest over their work.⁵ In the lower Tidewater and interior Southside regions of Virginia, the domestic workplace in white households became politicized in new ways during and after the Civil War as servants evolved into citizens. African-American women sought to break down the borders of the domestic workplace by pursuing the arbitration of labor disputes in Freedmen's Bureau courtrooms and by participating in civic activities that proclaimed their primary

⁵Most recent published historical and sociological studies of black domestic workers and their white employers examine domestic service in the twentieth century. See Judith Rollins, Between Women: Domesticity and Their Employers (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1985); Susan Tucker, Telling Memories Among Southern Women: Domestic Workers and their Employers in the Segregated South (N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1988); Bonnie Thornton Dill, Across the Boundaries of Race and Class: An Exploration of Work and Family Among Black Female Domestic Servants (N.Y.: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994); and Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, Living In, Living Out: African American Domesticity in Washington, D.C., 1910-1940 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994). Although they focus on various sections of the eastern United States, all of these studies emphasize the race and class tensions in the worker/employer relationship and document domestic servants' preference for live-out work over live-in service. Recent examinations of female domestic servants in the immediate postwar period include Marli Frances Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves: Gender, Race, and South Carolina Women, 1830-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Rochester, 1986); Weis, "Negotiating Freedom"; Tera Hunter, "Household Workers in the Making: Afro-American Women in Atlanta and the New South, 1861 to 1920" (Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ., 1990); and Hunter, "Domination and Resistance: The Politics of Wage Household Labor in New South Atlanta," Labor History 34 (Summer 1993): 205-220. Weiner, who found close bonds between mistresses and female slaves, charts freedwomen's increasing disaffection from both female employers and domestic work itself, which became less varied and more arduous after the war. Challenging the myth of the mammy, Hunter emphasizes agency and resistance among Atlanta's household workers, particularly washerwomen, in response to employers' attempts to mold them into a servile labor force. Weis argues that although emancipation did little to change the content of domestic work in postwar Richmond, it altered significantly the context in which this work took place. Weis emphasizes the role played by women of both races in shaping the transition from slavery to free labor within Southern households.

identification as members of the freed community.⁶ They faced former mistresses for whom the domestic workplace was the central venue for the adjustment to emancipation.⁷ Female supervisors, often backed by male relatives who were the actual employers of household workers, sought to reinforce their authority over the workplace by limiting their servants' interactions with the freed community.⁸ The postwar domestic

⁶Eric Foner uses the phrase "politicization of everyday life" to describe the daily social tensions between the races that came to the surface in the form of violence and insurrection scares during the immediate postwar period. Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1988), 122-123. At the beginning of her study, Tracey Weis applies the concept of politicization to the households of former slaveholders in Richmond, claiming that female domestic servants played a major role in politicizing these spaces and suggesting that violence was the ultimate expression of this politicization. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 1-4. Like Weis, I see the interactions between domestic workers and employers as political because the participants were renegotiating labor relations, but I also want to suggest that the domestic workplace became politicized as a result of freedwomen's attempt to define the workplace as a communal space and their activities as citizens in the public arena. On politicization that resulted in part from the attempts of municipal and state authorities to regulate household labor, see Hunter, "Domination and Resistance," 219-220.

⁷According to Tracey Weis, residence patterns in postwar Richmond suggest that the home-centered workplace became increasingly rare, except in situations that involved cooking, cleaning, and the like. Between 1860 and 1870, there was a significant decrease in white households with black laborers, artisans, and factory hands as tenants. "Negotiating Freedom," 201-202. See also the comments of Englishman James Lord Bryce, who in 1895 claimed that white and black Southerners seldom interacted outside of domestic service. American Commonwealth, 3d ed. (N.Y., 1895), 2:504-505, quoted in Charles E. Wynes, Race Relations in Virginia, 1870-1902 (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 1961), 106.

⁸David M. Katzman Seven Days A Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), 214-215. Domestic servants interviewed by Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, all of whom migrated from the rural South and worked in Washington, D.C., between 1910 and 1940, stressed the role of women as managers of the daily affairs of the household as the greatest change they experienced in live-in work when they moved to Washington. Clark-Lewis, Living In, Living Out, 107-108; see also Katzman, 197. For a fascinating case in which a dispute between two white men over the employment of a black cook resulted in political insults and appeals to honor, see George Y. Bradley to Major R.H. Graves, Pineville, Powhatan,

workplace involved not just freedwomen and former mistresses but also their families and kin.

During the postwar period, employers and servants continually renegotiated labor relations within the white-owned domestic workplace. Former house slaves used various strategies to try to ensure that continuing to do domestic work would not undermine their status as free persons. They did so by working for employers other than their former owners, changing jobs, living away from the workplace, limiting the tasks they were willing to do if hired, and taking advantage of the Freedmen's Bureau during its brief existence to demand remuneration.⁹ Negotiations over duties, wages, and hours, along with debates over the presence of workers' family members in the workplace, reflect freedwomen's attempts to merge community strength with the self-determination of free labor. These deliberations also reflect the desire of former mistresses to resurrect the benefits of slavery, particularly their ability to call on domestic laborers at all hours of the day or night and to dictate terms to their workers.

Upon the defeat of the Confederacy, former slaveholding women had to try to come to terms with the finality of emancipation. The jubilation, tempered by

10 January 1868, George Y. Bradley Letters, Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, N.C. (DK).

⁹Daniel Sutherland, "A Special Kind of Problem: The Response of Household Slaves and Their Masters to Freedom," *Southern Studies* 20 (Summer 1981): 157-158; Hunter, "Household Workers," 49-51, 76-79; Leslie A. Schwalm, "Sweet Dreams of Freedom': Freedwomen's Reconstruction of Life and Labor in Lowcountry South Carolina," *Journal of Women's History* 9 (Spring 1997): 27-29. Women who had been hired out as slaves had experience with bargaining with employers over hours, tasks, and opportunities to work for supplemental wages. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 160-162.

apprehension, expressed by slave women at the end of the war had its counterpart in the despair, moderated by relief, experienced by slaveholding women who had supported the Confederacy. Whereas freedwomen celebrated emancipation, former mistresses viewed it as the crowning blow of a series of setbacks suffered since the conflict began. In a letter to one of her Northern cousins, Sarah Payne of Campbell County sought to convey her region's distress:

I presume you have not felt the war
and can hardly imagine our condition;
after enduring innumerable privations
for four years, then at the end of it
for the whole social system to be
suddenly overturned, many persons
by that means deprived of every cent of
property, almost every person left without
any money, and worse than all, every
family mourning the loss of one or more
friends or seeing them maimed or crippled
for life.¹⁰

Mary Palmer of Appomattox County lived the misery that Payne described. The mother of seven young children, Palmer was married to a man who had been an invalid for nine

¹⁰Payne believed that slaveholders deserved compensation for their former slaves. Sarah P. Payne to Cousin Mary, Campbell County, Va., 30 Sept. 1865, 18 March 1866, 2, 13-14, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va. (VHS). For other expressions of despair, see Louisa H. H. M. to [Eliza P. Hairston], 24 Nov. 1865, Elizabeth S. Hairston Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (SHC); Cary Anne Peyton to Sarah Bruce Seddon, Rwanna Rectory, 10 June [1865], Seddon Family Papers, VHS; Suzanne Lebsack and Kym S. Rice, "A Share of Honour": Virginia Women 1600-1945 (Richmond: The Virginia Women's Cultural History Project, 1984), 99; Nancy T. Kondert, "The Romance and Reality of Defeat: Southern Women in 1865," Journal of Mississippi History 35 (May 1973): 141-152. Confederate deaths in the Civil War came to approximately 260,000, which was more than one-fifth of the adult white male population in the South. Foner, Reconstruction, 125.

years. Appealing to the New York Ladies' Southern Relief Association for food and clothing in 1867, she placed her plea in the context of the uncompensated loss of her family's emancipated slaves:

We lost all of our property by the war.
We had 7 likely young slaves at Lees
surrender. During the war we sold our
land to support our white and black family.
We thought so much of our black people we
kept them and now we are entirely
destitute of even a livelihood: have no
home nor any property at all.¹¹

For Palmer and her husband, wartime paternalism had backfired in the face of Confederate defeat and the abolition of slavery. They had placed their faith and financial

¹¹Palmer added that the Catholic Church had been doing the best at actually supporting those in need and that she was ready to take its assistance. In July 1867, The Reverend Mr. R.L. Dabney of Prince Edward County described Palmer as "still pinched by destitution." Mary A. Palmer, Pamplins Depot, Appomattox County, Va., to the Philanthropist of New York [Mrs. Algernon Sidney Sullivan], 30 Jan. 1867, and R.L. Dabney, [illegible], to [Sullivan], 8 July 1867, The New York Ladies Southern Relief Assocn., 1866-67, Original Report and Correspondence, Also Letters from Confederates in Northern Prisons, Vol. 1, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Va. (hereafter NYLSRA Report, Vol. 1, MoC). The NYLSRA was founded by Mary Mildred Hammond Sullivan, a native Virginian married to Algernon Sidney Sullivan. A resident of New York City since 1857, she had spent the last several months of the war with relatives in the Shenandoah Valley. The NYLSRA distributed its funds through Southern ministers and was most concerned about genteel poverty. There is evidence that some aid distributed by the organization went to black Southerners. In its short existence, the association contributed more than sixty thousand dollars in funds, and more than seven thousand in provisions and clothing. It raised money through solicitations and entertainments. Anne Middleton Holmes, The New York Ladies' Southern Relief Association, 1866-1867 (N.Y.: The Mary Mildred Sullivan Chapter, U.D.C., 1926), [7]-8, 61-62, 96-110; Edmund C. Murdaugh, Rectory of [illegible], Cabin Point, Surry County, Va., to [Sullivan], 17 April 1867, NYLSRA Report, Vol. 2, MC; Matthew Page Andrews, comp., The Women of the South in War Times, rev. ed. (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Co., 1923), 428; Mary Elizabeth Massey, Women in the Civil War (as Bonnet Brigades), N.Y.: A.A. Knopf, 1966; Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1994), 324.

resources in the continuation of slavery, and the consequences proved devastating.

Former mistresses had been raised in a rigidly hierarchical world, and emancipation seemed tantamount to revolution to them. While Elizabeth Wallace of Norfolk County acknowledged in April 1865 that the demise of slavery was probably for the best, she could not envision blacks and whites living together harmoniously: "One or the other must be superior or there will be no peace, even after peace is declared. Who shall be uppermost?" The inclination of women like Wallace to view the situation in terms of absolutes was encouraged by the rhetoric of freedpeople and Northern missionaries, who reveled in role reversals and the metaphor of the bottom rail on top.¹²

The temporary upheaval of "the whole social system" described by Payne and alluded to by Wallace, together with the dismantling of the Confederate state and the presence of federal troops, left some former slaveholding women with an acute sense of dislocation. In telling contrast to expressions of national inclusion by freedwomen during the immediate postwar period, some former mistresses depicted themselves as strangers in a foreign country. On 12 June 1865, Chloe Tyler Whittle of Norfolk told a United States Army officer, "I am an alien enemy of the United States & always shall remain such." After describing her disaffection from the federal government in the summer of 1865, Sarah Alexander Bruce of Halifax County declared to her sister-in-law Sarah Seddon, "I look on myself as a foreigner, without a country." Lamenting the downfall of the Confederacy during the previous year, on 1 January 1866 young Mary Cocke of Fluvanna County in the Virginia Piedmont recorded in her diary: "My heart

¹²Ida S. Ferebee Journal, 1863-1865 [identified by me as a journal kept by Elizabeth Wallace], 12 April 1865, 80, MoC.

swells & throbes [sic] even now with deep sorrow at the thought that I[,] I this day have no country am almost an alien & stranger in my own land." Expressing her preference for sitting in her chamber with the shades closed, Imogen Lyons of Richmond wrote to her step-daughter Sally Taliaferro of Gloucester County: "Like yourself I sigh for other lands, where I might never rest my eyes upon another black face nor anymore blue-bottle flies which swarm & torture us to such an extent here that I hate to look out of the window." Confederate defeat, emancipation, and Union occupation had left former mistresses adrift within their own communities and bereft of their national state, and they were keenly aware of their loss.¹³

Feelings of relief punctuated this miasma of alienation. Some former slaveholding women defined the end of slavery as a blessing. In their view, emancipation had freed them from the responsibilities of slave management. When

¹³Chloe Tyler Whittle Diary Beginning 22 March 1865, 12 June 1865, Whittle-Greene Papers, Manuscripts and Rare Books Dept., College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va. (W&M); Sarah Alexander (Seddon) Bruce to [Sarah (Bruce) Seddon], 6 Aug. 1865, Seddon Family Papers, VHS; Mary Braxton Cocke Diary (1866-1868), 1 Jan. 1866, Cocke Papers (Cocke Deposit), Special Collections Dept., Univ. of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va. (UVA); Imogen Lyons, Richmond, to Sally Lyons Taliaferro, 18 Aug. 1865, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M (emphasis in original); Emmeline Allmand Crump Lightfoot Memoir, 10-11, VHS; Conway Davies Whittle to Conway Whittle, n.d., Conway Whittle Papers, W&M; George Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989), 222. During the war, Confederate supporter Catherine Broun had used the foreign country metaphor to describe a visit to Alexandria and Washington, D.C.: "I felt that I had no part, no lot in it, it is a foreign country." Catherine Barbara Broun Diary (typescript), 18 Nov. 1862, 2, SHC. Although he argues that the postwar hostility of former Confederate women toward Northern soldiers was probably exaggerated by male observers, Gaines Foster speculates that one of the explanations for this hostility was women's distress over the effect of emancipation on the domestic workplace, specifically the increase in drudgery that they had to perform and the decrease in administrative responsibility. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 29-32.

Sarah Payne's cousin Mary suggested that her parents must have had difficulty in coping with the departure of their slaves, Payne replied that, on the contrary, her parents were better off without them: "Papa was a poor manager with servants. He made more by his own labour than all his servants and Mama has been one of the greatest slaves I ever knew." Willing to use the term "slave" to describe her mother but not their former slaves, Payne resurrected the antebellum refrain that depicted slavery as a burden for mistresses.¹⁴

Despite Sarah Payne's denials, her cousin Mary had made a good point. Older former slaveholders experienced a particularly difficult adjustment to the departure of their slaves. In a letter to her granddaughter, Mrs. J.E. White of Isle of Wight County lamented the situation in which she and her husband found themselves upon the departure of Maria and Margaret, two of their former slaves: "Just imagine two forlorn beings as we were neither of us able to help ourselves; left alone without a soul to do anything for us." Even when neighbors and their household workers chipped in, White's difficulties continued: "If I were to tell you how I managed to do many little things it would make you laugh; grunting & oh dearing all the time."¹⁵

The "little things" that went into domestic upkeep were too much for some

¹⁴Sarah P. Payne to Cousin Mary, Campbell County, Va., 20 June 1866, 22, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS; Leon F. Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1980), 196; Rable, Civil Wars, 118. See also Catherine Barbara Broun Diary (typescript), 1 Jan. 1864, 33, SHC; Myrta Lockett Avery, Dixie After the War: An Exposition of Social Conditions Existing in the South During the Twelve Years Succeeding the Fall of Richmond (N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1906; repr., N.Y.: Da Capo Press, 1970), 181.

¹⁵Mrs. J.E. White to Irene, 13 May 186[5], Ada P. Bankhead Collection, UVA.

elderly former slaveholders to handle. In November 1865, Robert Allen of Lunenburg County described his neighbor Phoebe Bagley's circumstances: "She is Selling out to go to live with her son Geo L. Bagley because since the negroes are freed she has no means of living except the Rents of her lands and no body to stay with her & take care of her & she is [g]eting very old now in her 74 year of age. . . ." In 1871, even Sarah Payne acknowledged a generational difference in the ability to adjust to emancipation when she noted that her daughters had done better than she at managing to perform housework efficiently. In addition to the practical adjustment to emancipation, the emotional adaptation took a toll on some older women. In reminiscences written after the war, Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman melodramatically claimed that her mother Lucy had treated her slaves so much like children that she had suffered "a blow upon her heart which helped to shorten her life" when they departed.¹⁶

To adapt to a world without slavery, former slaveholding women of all ages had to draw on their own resourcefulness and that of their families. Some expressed pride in their efforts to be more independent, although few matched Virginia Hankins of Surry County in hyperbole. Dispensing advice to her younger brother Willy in 1870, Hankins wrote: "Now that we no longer have servants to stand at our backs, to obey our beck & call, there is all the more need that we should try to return to the ways of the Golden Days, when men wielded ponderous battle axes or leapt from crag to crag over snowy mountains after the deer--strong limbed, rosy cheeked bright-eyed--glorious King Olafs."

¹⁶Diary of Robert H. Allen, 15 Nov. 1865, Allen Family Papers, VHS; Sarah P. Payne to Mary, 16 July 1871, 122-123, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS; Mrs. George P. Coleman, ed., Virginia Silhouettes: Contemporary Letters Concerning Slavery in the State of Virginia (Richmond, Va.: The Dietz Press, 1934), 57-58.

The ever-practical Sarah Payne simply reassured her cousin: "I do not feel at all like giving up because I have lost part of my property. Mr. Payne has always worked and so have I."¹⁷

Tellingly, Payne then added: "I presume I can always hire some one to cook and wash for me." Many former slaveholding women hoped to continue to depend on African-American women to do the most laborious drudgery associated with housekeeping, particularly cooking and washing clothes.¹⁸ In the domestic arena more than any other environment, former slaveholding women attempted to stave off the effects of emancipation. In Halifax County, Sarah Bruce could soften the reality of black freedom for herself by hiring her former house slaves for 1866: "We shall retain all our former house servants & ther[e] is nothing to remind me of the change in our status as regards the negroe." She reassured herself, "The negroes in this neighbourhood, are as

¹⁷Virginia Hankins to William Albert Hankins, Bacon's Castle, 21 January 1870, Hankins Family Papers, VHS; Sarah P. Payne to Mary, 30 Sept. 1865, 5, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS; Donna Rebecca Dondes Krug, "The Folks Back Home: The Confederate Homefront During the Civil War," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Irvine, 1990), 364-407. See also the postwar editorial "Our Relative Domestic Positions Demand Mutual Sacrifices," which urged owners of large houses to invite destitute relatives to occupy the spacious, superfluous dining rooms and parlors "built and arranged according to the ancient regime, when negro servants were always at hand to be summoned by pulling the bell rope or telling the house servant to do so." Norfolk Journal, 7 Dec. 1866, [2].

¹⁸Sarah P. Payne to Mary, 30 Sept. 1865, 5, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS; Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves," 277-285, 297. Drew Faust suggests that the loss of domestic slaves to do the household drudgery was "emancipation's greatest cost" for white women, and many of them sought to avoid paying the full price by retaining at least one household worker. Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996), 74.

humble & docile as possible, & behave wonderfully, considering the circumstances."¹⁹ Sally Brent of Fluvanna County was able to keep her "3 old, & highly valued servants" for a few years after the war; their departure in 1868 "completely uprooted" her home and signified the culmination of seven years of "sorrow & bereavement."²⁰

In their post-emancipation diaries and letters, more than one former mistress presented the postwar mobility of domestic servants as the bane of her existence. Finding and retaining household workers was a new challenge for former slaveholders, especially those who had not done much hiring in the past.²¹ After her nurse and cook left in succession in 1868, Cynthia Coleman of Williamsburg summed up the sentiment of many former mistresses when she wrote: "These changes are very trying." About twenty-five years later, in an unpublished fictional essay entitled "Etchings in Black and White," Coleman underscored the permanence of mobility among household workers. In the piece, she created a dialogue between a cook and the son of her most recent employer. The cook explained that she had stopped working for the family because of

¹⁹Sarah Alexander Bruce to Sarah Seddon, 25 Dec. 1865, Seddon Family Papers, VHS. George Rable points out that former mistresses both asserted that former slaves were unchanged by freedom and openly worried about uprisings among freedpeople and the potentially disruptive effects of U.S. Army occupation forces on them. *Civil Wars*, 257.

²⁰Sally Faulcon Brent to Bettie Burwell Cocke, Recess, 11 Dec. 1868, Cocke Papers (Cocke Deposit), UVA. For other associations by white women between the presence of servants and the comforts of home, see Fanny Anderson to Mary E. Bruce, Lexington, 4 June 1867, James Bruce Family Papers, UVA; Catherine Barbara Broun Diary (typescript), 1 Jan. 1869, 53, SHC.

²¹Marli Frances Weiner suggests that the inability to find servants was the most frequent and vociferous complaint made by postwar female employers in South Carolina. Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves," 309-310.

community pressure; her neighbors had begun to equate her six years of service with enslavement and had threatened to conjure her if she did not leave the family.²²

The independence represented by such choices troubled many employers, who resented having to train new workers or do household work themselves. In 1871, Richard Elder of Richmond published in a popular magazine an article entitled "Servantgalism in Virginia," in which he complained of "an ever-revolving kaleidoscope of colored servant-gals, here to-day and gone to-morrow." Elder claimed to have hired eighteen servant women and girls over the course of eight years. He also complained about his wife and female relatives' having to do drudgery. While Elder was largely dismissive of the decision to move on, many employers acknowledged that many workers wanted to do just that. In January 1870, Mildred Watkins of Prince Edward County informed her son: "Abbey & Mary & their families have all left [your sister] Susan and gone to housekeeping." A month later, Mildred's daughter Pattie elaborated on Susan's situation: "She has two women both new ones but she seems to like them very well. So many negroes have left for the south that it is hard to get hands. Though there are a good many settled to themselves." Susan was exultant in January 1872 when the cook she had employed for the past two years signed on for another year. Some Virginia employers tried to limit turnover within the domestic workplace by supporting strict vagrancy laws, circumscribing their household workers' interactions with the freed community through restrictive contracts, and requiring potential domestic servants to provide references from

²²Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman to [an aunt], Williamsburg, 30 July 1868, Berkeley Papers, UVA; "Etchings in Black and White," [c. 1895], Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman Papers, Tucker-Coleman Collection, W&M.

former employers.²³

While the mobility of freedwomen affected the domestic workplace, so did the reduced circumstances of former mistresses. Between the loss of the capital they had invested in slaves and the sluggish postwar economy, many former mistresses in Virginia had to continue to simplify their lifestyles after the war ended.²⁴ Strained economic conditions prompted some former mistresses to take in boarders to try to make ends meet, a development which created demand for servants and provided the cash with which to pay them, while making the environment in which they worked less predictable.²⁵ When Sallie Galt of Williamsburg decided to take in boarders in the

²³Richard B. Elder, "Servantgism in Virginia," Lippincott's Magazine (July 1871): 636-637; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 350, 358; Cassandra Newby, "'The World Was All Before Them:' A Study of the Black Community in Norfolk, Va., 1861-1884," (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1992), 151-152; Foner, Reconstruction, 200-202; Anne Elizabeth Bradford to Hugh Blair Grigsby, Norfolk, 27 Jan. 1876, Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, VHS; M.A. Anderson, Lexington, to Mary E. Bruce, 12 Jan. 1869; Fanny M. Anderson to Mary E. Bruce, Lexington, 27 May 1883, James Bruce Family Papers, UVA; Mildred S. Watkins, [Prince Edward Co.], to Nathaniel V. and Nannie Watkins, 22 & 28 Jan. 1870, Pattie Watkins to Nannie Watkins, 2 Feb. 1870, S.W. Redd, [Prince Edward Co.], to Nathaniel V. Watkins, 20 Jan. 1872, Watkins Papers, W&M. In 1883, a white Alabama woman referred to emancipation as the beginning of a "'makeshift kind of life'" for housewives who no longer had household help on demand. Jones, Labor of Love, 132.

²⁴For examples of want among white women in Virginia during the immediate postwar period, see Mrs. Sarah A. Rodgers, Prince Edward Courthouse, Va., to Mrs. Sullivan, 26 June 1867, W.B. Wellons, Suffolk, to Mrs. J.J. Roosevelt, 19 June, 1867, Juliet L. Evans, Cherry Hall near Williamsburg, to Mrs. Algernon S. Sullivan, 11 Aug. 1867, Ella Cole, Charlotte County, Va., to the Ladies of the relief society, 18 May 1867, Alex. G. Brown, Lynchburg, Va., to Mrs. Algernon S. Sullivan, 4 April 1867, 17 April 1867, NYSLRA Report, Vol. 1 (Rodgers and Wellons) and Vol. 2 (Evans, Cole, and Brown), MoC.

²⁵Boarders sometimes brought nurses with them. Doris C. Sturzenberger, "The Southern Lady Ideal in the Life of Cynthia Beverley Tucker, 1840-1870," (M.A. Thesis, College of William and Mary, 1979), 86; Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman to Hugh

winter of 1866, her former slave Arena Baker protested strongly. A mediator on Galt's behalf was unsuccessful in convincing Baker to accept Galt's plan: "She expressed her determination not only to vacate the room in the 'Old House,' but to vacate the Kitchen & yard with her family, if the contemplated change in your Home took place." Although willing "to cling to and serve" Galt for the rest of her life, Baker refused to "be subjected to others under existing circumstances." It appears that the two women eventually came to a compromise, as Galt did take in a few boarders over the next several years, and Baker continued to work for her.²⁶

At the same time, emancipation and the scarcity of cash placed limits on domestic production in some households. In July 1867, Sarah Payne wrote to her cousin Mary, "We are too poor to make wine, jelly and preserves, so I get clear of a great deal of work that I used to have to do." Earlier, Payne had informed her cousin that she planned to sell her cloth-making equipment; making no distinction between slaves and freed workers, she commented that she had "so few servants to clothe."²⁷

Blair Grigsby, Williamsburg, 15 Dec. 1879, Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, VHS; M.A. Anderson to Mary E. Bruce, Lexington, 3 Oct. 1866, 1 Oct. 1867, James Bruce Family Papers, UVA; Emma Blacknall to Fannie Blow Blacknall, Norfolk, 8 Feb. 1881, Pegram Family Papers, VHS; Hennie W.S. to Sally Lyons Taliaferro, Rose Hill, Rappahannock County, 27 Oct. 1869, Hennie W.S., Warrenton, to Sally Lyons Taliaferro, 25 August 1871, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M.

²⁶Talbot Sweeney to Sally Galt, Williamsburg, 6 Feb. 1866, William R. Galt, Norfolk, to Sally Maria Galt, Williamsburg, 8 April 1867, Sally M. Galt, Williamsburg, to William Galt, 4 Sept. 1868, Delia A. Braithwaite, Williamsburg, to Sallie Galt, 27 [n.m.] 1877, Galt Papers I, W&M; Elizabeth N. Pitzer, "Sallie and Elizabeth Galt: Compliance and Resistance to the 'Southern Lady' Role in Antebellum Williamsburg," (M.A. Thesis, College of William and Mary, 1985), 62.

²⁷Payne suggests that she had played more than a supervisory role in domestic production. Sarah P. Payne to Mary, 18 March 1866, 20 July 1867, 11-12, 42, Sarah P.

Frustrated by post-emancipation assertiveness and mobility among domestic servants, some former mistresses attempted to transform their households so they could give up domestic workers altogether. In early 1868, Sarah Payne of Campbell County explained to her Northern cousin that her detached kitchen and lack of household technology prevented her from being free of servants intent on exercising their freedom to move from job to job:

If I only had my kitchen joining my house and a good stove in it and my water at the door and a good washing machine, I shouldn't ask any darkie [to work for me], any odds at all, so long as my health is as good as it is.²⁸

That December, Payne's husband complied with her wishes, moving one of the plantation's outbuildings closer to the dwelling house and connecting them with a porch.

The Paynes placed their new cooking stove in the reconstructed kitchen, and Sarah Payne

Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS. Marli Frances Weiner emphasizes the decrease in domestic production as one of the most significant changes for household laborers after the war. While female slaves had sometimes spent their days performing domestic production on behalf of the slave community, postwar domestic workers focused almost exclusively on their employers' needs. And they did largely the most onerous work for the white family because former mistresses, who had fewer supervisory and entertaining duties, did some of the easier tasks that slaves had done. Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves," 296-300.

²⁸Sarah P. Payne, Campbell County, to Cousin Mary, 13 Feb. 1868, 52, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS. See also Marjorie Stratford Mendenhall, "Southern Women of a 'Lost Generation,'" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 33 (Oct. 1934): 338-339, and Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Women in the Civil War (as Bonnet Brigades)*, N.Y.: A.A. Knopf, 1966; repr., Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1994), 282. For an early twentieth-century example of a New England woman who exulted in being free of servants after she had "replaced" them with household technology, see Katzman, *Seven Days a Week*, 256. For claims by white women that if they, rather than their husbands, controlled the household they would give up domestic workers, see Caroline Hagood to Sarah Rootes, 5 July 1866, Sarah A. Rootes Papers, DK, and Tera Hunter, "Household Workers," 16-17.

achieved her goal of living without house servants, although she did send out her wash. Yet Payne only briefly viewed her new kitchen as a personal triumph over domestic workers. Acknowledging that she and her children were too busy with housework to pursue their schooling diligently, she soon lamented the costs of self-reliance. In the end, she attributed her "freedom" not to her new kitchen but to a scarcity of servants and her inability to pay the wages demanded by those who were available.²⁹

While former mistresses lamented the changes brought about by emancipation, former slaves sought to reconcile domestic labor and freedom. One case brought before a Freedmen's Bureau court introduces the intricacies of the transition to free status for former slave women who were household workers. In April 1866, freedwoman Maria Pickett of James City County sued her former owner Henry Warner for compensation for the work performed by herself and two of her daughters between April and September 1865.³⁰ As a cook during this period, Maria Pickett had asserted the continued right of

²⁹Sarah P. Payne, Campbell County, to Cousin Mary, 5 Dec. 1868, 16 July 1871, 24 April 1872, 12 Aug. 1872, 76, 121-123, 128, 140, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS; Ruth Hairston and Ann Hairston, Beaver Creek, to Eliza Perkins Hairston, Christmas [1865], Hairston and Wilson Family Papers, SHC; Mary P. Watkins, [Prince Edward Co.?], to Nannie D. Watkins, [c. 1865], Watkins Papers, W&M; Leon Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 358. On some antebellum Southern plantations, the kitchen had been linked to the dwelling house by a covered walkway. John Michael Vlach, Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1993), 44. See Daniel Sutherland, Americans and Their Servants: Domestic Service in the United States from 1800-1920 (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1981), 198, for the example of a Virginia woman who installed a stove but claimed that she would have preferred a cook using the open fireplace if she could have afforded such a servant.

³⁰The following discussion is based on the testimony in *Maria Pickett v. Henry Warner*, 17 April 1866, Letters Sent, April-November 1867, and Proceedings of Freedmen's Court, March-May 1866, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Williamsburg, Va., #4299 (Vol. 451), Records of Subordinate Field Offices, Records of

her family to the kitchen and its provisions. By taking Warner to court, she maintained her right to this traditional prerogative and claimed payment beyond it.³¹

In the uncertain months following the defeat of the Confederacy, Maria Pickett cooked for Warner's family, while her daughters Anna and Nym did both domestic and field work and her four younger children assisted when needed. In September, Maria stopped working for Warner, although she continued to live on his land until the end of the year. That same month, after the crops were made, Warner told Maria's recently arrived husband, Pirson, to take his wife and children away. By attempting to send the family off with Pirson Pickett, Henry Warner sought to use Maria Pickett's family ties to avoid making the transition to paid labor.

The family remained, however, and the children continued to work for Warner; Maria's sickly daughter Nym replaced her in the kitchen. Maria Pickett and her witnesses testified that she had had to purchase more than half of her daughters' food after September. Taking Warner to court months later, Maria Pickett hoped to ensure

the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter RG 105, NARA). It is unclear whether Pickett sought wages or in-kind remuneration. Although she only formally demanded compensation for the period from April to September 1865, she indicated in her testimony that she believed Warner to be liable for her daughters' work between September and December. The members of the court were J.S. Hubbard, representing local whites, and J.B. Wiggins, serving on behalf of the Freedmen's Bureau. The space for the representative of local blacks was left blank, which could indicate that he was not present; it might also have been a clerical oversight on the part of the Bureau agent.

³¹According to Eric Foner, former slaves in the U.S. South, and in the Caribbean, did not think that freedom should entail giving up either the traditional "right" to subsistence they had maintained under slavery or any autonomy they had managed to carve out. In lowcountry South Carolina and Georgia, for example, postwar rice workers desired the continuation of plots of their own and unsupervised daily labor. Foner, Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1983), 57, 86-87.

that he did not provide less for her family than he had before emancipation.

Trying to establish that the Pickett family had not wanted for food while on his plantation, Warner and his witnesses testified that from April until September, Maria had eaten in the kitchen, where she had often been joined by family members. Washington Page, who had issued rations to the family, testified: "As long as Mrs. Pickett was in the kitchen her children flocked around her and got what they could. . . ." ³² He had not heard anyone object to their presence there, nor had he heard any complaints of hunger. Mrs. Warner, Henry Warner's mother, had given Maria Pickett and her children permission to gather and cook vegetables and to dig sweet potatoes.

Although not present in the court room, Mrs. Warner was a significant figure in the dispute. ³³ Henry Warner testified that after the war he had told Maria Pickett and her children that he had no work for them and could not pay them. Yet he had promised his mother that he would feed Pickett and her family. Maria may have appealed to Mrs. Warner in April 1865 when Henry first attempted to dismiss the family. For her part, Mrs. Warner may have wanted to retain Maria Pickett's services as a cook, hoping that her son would eventually be able to afford them and spare her the work of the kitchen or the adjustment to a new cook.

The court decided that Henry Warner had fulfilled his responsibility to Maria

³²That Washington Page referred to Maria Pickett as "Mrs. Pickett" suggests that he was an African-American.

³³Many elite white women in the South viewed public appearance in court as inconsistent with female modesty. Laura Edwards, "The Politics of Manhood and Womanhood: Reconstruction in Granville County, North Carolina" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991), 224.

Pickett and her daughters. Ruling that the women were not entitled to any further compensation, the members of the court translated the access of the slave cook's family to rations, kitchen leftovers, and garden truck into full payment for labor performed.³⁴ In addition, the court validated Henry Warner's claim that the family had done little work for him during the last few months of 1865. In the end, however significant the personal or moral satisfaction she received from taking her former owner to court, Maria Pickett lost in her effort to be compensated beyond the traditional kitchen rights of slavery.

The Pickett-Warner case introduces several themes important to the postwar renegotiation of domestic service. The first of these is the significance of Maria Pickett's position as cook, one of the few skilled jobs available to freedwomen.³⁵ Although most former mistresses were forced to make do with fewer domestic workers after emancipation, many did their utmost to retain the services of a woman who could cook.³⁶

³⁴Arguing that paternalism declined after the war, Eric Foner asserts that planters transformed the slave "rights" of clothing, housing, and access to garden plots into commodities to be purchased by freedpeople. Foner, Reconstruction, 131.

³⁵Slave men had occasionally worked as cooks. Report of Escaped Slaves, Charles City County, 1863, Records of the Auditor of Public Accounts, Record Group 48, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Va. (hereafter Public Accounts, RG 48, LVA); Faust, Mothers of Invention, 77. According to Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, slave men, in addition to boys, may have worked under the authority of female cooks in the kitchen; this would have been one of the only instances in which women supervised men under slavery. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1988), 186-187.

³⁶The wartime experience of Elizabeth Wallace of Norfolk County reflects the importance that former slaveholding women placed on the retention of a cook. After her house slaves left in May 1863, Wallace supplemented family labor with a variety of hired black and white women. A neighbor named Mrs. Speight cooked, among other things, from June to August; Wallace discharged her when she refused to move in with the Wallaces as she had originally agreed. To Wallace's chagrin, Margaret Platt, hired in July 1863, shortly made clear that she could not--or would not--do all of the cooking on

In January 1871, for example, Pattie Watkins of Prince Edward County described her sister-in-law Mary's situation: "She has only one woman. She cooks and milks and they put out the washing and Mary and the children do the housework." Columnist Orra Langhorne, who had been writing about the transition to freedom in Virginia since shortly after the Civil War, quoted the following anecdote in a turn-of-the-century discussion of domestic service in the South: "You can do without friends, you can do without books; But civilized man cannot do without cooks." She continued in her own words: "Upon the presiding genius of the culinary department depend, to a great extent, the health, peace, and comfort of our families." Her sentiments reflect the outlook of many middle- and upper-class white women in the decades after emancipation.³⁷

her own. Wallace relieved Margaret of the cooking when Mary, a slave woman who belonged to a neighboring estate, offered her services in return for food and clothing for herself and her children. Wallace set her to cooking--and milking, washing, ironing, and scouring. "I breathe more freely now that I am rid of the worst of the cooking," Wallace recorded in her diary. Mary apparently had help in the kitchen from Ann Meigs of North Carolina; Meigs lived in as a hired servant, but Wallace complained about the kitchen drudgery that Meigs left to her. When Mary and her children left early in 1864, Wallace pessimistically hired an unskilled white girl to cook; she never showed up for work. Wallace finally found a cook with whom she was pleased when she hired Vilet (or Violet) at five dollars per month to cook, clean, and garden in mid-January 1864. Vilet was joined by her daughter Silvia in October; both remained until at least December, when Wallace's diary ends. Glencoe Diary: The War-Time Journal of Elizabeth Curtis Wallace, eds. Eleanor P. Cross and Charles B. Cross, Jr. (Chesapeake, Va.: Norfolk County Historical Society, 1968), 42, 47, 50, 53-55, 58, 77, 86, 88, 136; Child of Glencoe: Civil War Journal of Katie Darling Wallace, eds. Eleanor P. Cross and Charles B. Cross, Jr. (Chesapeake, Va.: Norfolk County Historical Society, 1983), 23, 31-32, 36-37, 90. Other former mistresses also experimented with white cooks. Fanny M. Anderson to [Mary E. Bruce], [c. 1885], James Bruce Family Papers, UVA; Daniel E. Sutherland, "A Special Kind of Problem," 165-166.

³⁷Orra Langhorne, "Domestic Service in the South," Journal of Social Science 39 (Nov. 1901): 169, 174-175; Pattie Watkins, [Prince Edward Co.], to Nathaniel V. Watkins, 2 January 1871, Mildred S. Watkins, [Price Edward Co.], to Nathaniel V. Watkins and Nannie Watkins, 22 Jan. 1870, Watkins Papers, W&M. Langhorne

Postwar kitchens like the one on Henry Warner's land became the sites of conflict in part because slave cooks had gained leverage from both their mistresses' dependence on their skills and the layout of Southern households. In antebellum Virginia and throughout the South, the kitchen on many plantations, farms, and town lots was separated from the dwelling house. Cooks took advantage of the separation to increase their authority in the kitchen, which often served as their living quarters and as social gathering places for the fellow slaves.³⁸ On large plantations, mistresses entered kitchens

advocated such reforms for household workers as community childcare and standardization of hours and duties. See also her 1883 discussion of white families' making do with fewer household workers and thus entertaining visitors less frequently, in Langhorne, Southern Sketches From Virginia, 1881-1901, ed. Charles E. Wynes (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1964), 22. The "right" for a wife to choose her own cook was included among the facetious listing of "Woman's Rights" compiled by students at the Moldavia Female School in Charlotte County in 1888. "Moldavia Register," 2 June 1888, Comfort Family Papers, VHS.

³⁸In the colonial South, detached kitchens had become increasingly prevalent at the beginning of the eighteenth century, as slaveholders sought to reinforce hierarchies of race and class. Practically, detached kitchens kept heat, smoke, smells, and noise away from the slaveholding family's dwelling space (some large plantations had detached dining rooms as well). As slave spaces, kitchens did not always stand alone; the plantation South included combination kitchen/dairies and kitchen/laundries. And, on some plantations, slaves ate in rooms attached to the kitchen. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 149; Vlach, Back of the Big House, 43-47, 143; Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1972), 542; Mary Titus, "'Groaning tables' and 'Spit in the kettles': Food and Race in the Nineteenth-Century South," Southern Quarterly 30 (Winter-Spring 1992), 15-16. An undated map of Glencoe, the farm of the Wallace family of Norfolk County, shows three or four detached "kitchens" and suggests that possibly the term was used to identify surrounding slave or tenant cabins as well as the actual kitchen. Ferebee Journal, 1863-1865, loose insert, [79], MoC. Attentive to the role of free blacks in antebellum domestic service, Tracey Weis has described brick outbuildings as "intermediate space," where slaves experienced greater physical separation from slaveowners than did free black servants who lived in, but less than those who lived out. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 143. Regarding the kitchen as living space, see also the testimony of Mary Armstead and Christina Tabb, 13 Feb. [1866], 28 Feb. 1866, Davy Armstead v. Thomas Watts, Proceedings of Cases Before Freedmen's Court, 1866 and 1867, Office of the Assistant Subassistant

only briefly to check on the progress of cooks and their helpers. More knowledgeable and often older than their supervisors, slave cooks routinely challenged their mistresses' control and wielded influence over the dining room, the focus of slaveholders' family and entertaining rituals. Northerner Lucy Chase, who taught escaped slaves on Craney Island near Norfolk during the war, commented: "We are subject! to a very curious cook. It is evident that she has always been used to ruling the roost." Well aware that they were ultimately subject to the will and caprice of their owners, cooks made the kitchen a center for the appropriation of food for their families and the gathering of information for the slave community. Cooks with responsibility for obtaining foodstuffs from local markets had the opportunity to gather information and gossip. Their mobility likely added to the relatively high status cooks held as skilled workers within the slave community.³⁹

As purveyors of food and information, cooks found that the war heightened their importance to their fellow slaves, as well as their own vulnerability to their owners'

Commissioner, Fort Monroe, Va., #4140, RG 105, NARA.

³⁹Henry L. Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home: Letters from Contraband Camps (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1966), 30. Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, Reminiscences of Peace and War (N.Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1904), 380; Titus, "'Groaning tables' and 'Spit in the kettles,'" 15-16; Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household, 98, 158-161, 315; Deborah Gray White, Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South (N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 1985), 128-129. Titus, White, and Fox-Genovese focus on large estates; on smaller plantations and farms, there may have been more interaction between slaves and mistresses in the kitchen. See also the descriptions of joint work in the kitchen, contained in the journal Elizabeth Wallace left to her children. Ferebee Journal, 1863-1865, MoC.

suspicion and mistreatment.⁴⁰ After the war, cooks continued to assert their independence, and they were portrayed far less favorably than mammies in the writings of slavery apologists.⁴¹ In Henry County at the end of 1865, Penelope, a former slave who worked as a cook, decided when she would leave the kitchen of the Hairston family after she declined to sign on for 1866; rather than leave at Christmas as hired slaves usually had, she stayed until her sons were ready to put her up.⁴² At the same time, freedpeople persisted in defining white-owned kitchens as black-controlled space. A warning issued by the Norfolk Journal in 1868 suggests the continued use of kitchens as sites of socializing and information-gathering. After a spate of robberies, the Journal advised housekeepers to "see that your kitchens are not the resort of strangers who come to see 'dare cousins.'" In a rare overt reference to the postwar kitchen as a political space, in November 1868 Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas of Georgia recorded a conversation in her journal that could well have taken place among freedpeople in Virginia: "I heard Dinah complaining to Ned & telling him about 'telling the white folks

⁴⁰See the discussion of slave cook Mary and her mistress Jane Gaines in Chapter One. See also Hunter, "Household Workers," 24-25, for the example of Aggie Crawford, an Athens, Georgia, slave cook who stole newspapers and related war news to other slaves.

⁴¹For a stark representation of this, see Myrta Lockett Avary's comparison of a former slave cook who complained to a Northern teacher about the suffering she had experienced under slavery and a mammy who defended her former owners, in Dixie After the War, 314. Maria Titus argues that nineteenth-century fictional idealizations of the plantation elevated the loyal mammy figure over the more independent cook to emphasize the trope of slaves as members of the white family. These fictional accounts grew in appeal over the course of the century. Titus, "'Groaning tables' and 'Spit in the kettles,'" 17-18.

⁴²Ruth and Ann Hairston, Beaver Creek, to Elizabeth Hairston, Christmas [1865], Hairston and Wilson Family Papers, SHC; Atlanta Constitution, 25 Feb. 1916, in Tera Hunter, "Household Workers," 266.

everything what is said in the kitchen.'" Ned had told Thomas that black workers had been discussing the upcoming presidential election.⁴³

In addition to highlighting the significance of the kitchen, as a suit over compensation, the Pickett-Warner case exemplifies one of the greatest points of conflict between freed workers and former slaveholders. Numerous observers of race and labor relations in Virginia during the immediate postwar period remarked upon the resistance of former owners to paying freedpeople for their labor. Regarding conditions in Virginia in 1866, one Northern observer wrote: "The belief inheres in the minds of the late masters, that they have still a right to appropriate [the negro's] labor." Testifying before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, former slave Daniel Norton said of former slaveowners in the Tidewater: "They are not willing to pay anything for work."⁴⁴

In early 1866, a freedman reported that his former mistress had told him she would not settle with him "until he went and brought the Yankees up," probably a

⁴³Norfolk Journal, 17 Sept. 1868, [1]; Virginia Ingraham Burr, ed., The Secret Eye: The Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 1848-1889 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1990), 295. See also Elder, "Servantgism in Virginia," 634-635. For a modern view, see Trudier Harris, From Mammies to Militants: Domesticity in Black American Literature (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1982), 15-16. Based on analysis of twentieth-century literature about domestics and oral interviews with domestic workers, Harris describes the kitchen as "the black town, the nigger room, of the white house." The kitchen is the domestic worker's refuge; she waits there for further duties, and she sees family members or friends who want a word with her there. Yet the space is never really hers; it is only given over temporarily by white female employers who associate drudgery and their belief in black inferiority with the space.

⁴⁴J.T. Trowbridge, The South: A Tour of Its Battle-Fields and Ruined Cities... (Hartford, Ct.: L. Stebbins, 1866), 229; U.S. Congress, Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1866, House Rept. 30, serial 1273, part 2 of appended testimony, 52 (hereafter Testimony of Norton, JCR); Tho. C. Bowe to [I.F. Wilcox], Pittsylvania Co., Va., 30 Jan. 1866, Letters Received, July 1865-Nov. 1868, Office of the Assistant Superintendent, Danville, Va., #3948, RG 105, NARA.

reference to the local Freedmen's Bureau agent. In 1868, Lucy Chase described the effects of such recalcitrance on washerwomen in Richmond: "Not a few hardworkers are growing thin and weak by trying to live on promises to pay. Still, here--as elsewhere, people with ready money leave their washing-bills unpaid; and I visit many women stooping over their washtubs, weak in body and hopeless in mind, who say, 'I keeps on washin for em, for if I leave em they'll never pay me what they owe me.' So wearing care and scanty food unite with their task-masters in grinding them very small."⁴⁵

During the immediate postwar period, some Virginia freedwomen sought redress for non-payment of wages through Freedmen's Bureau courts. As with the property disputes brought before the Bureau, the amounts demanded were usually small. The cases reflect the poverty of freedwomen, yet also their determination to uphold the principle of compensation for labor performed. As in the case of Maria Pickett versus Henry Warner, wage disputes sometimes pitted former slaves against their former owners. When successful in their suits against their employers, some freedwomen had the satisfaction of receiving immediate payment "in open court."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Henry L. Swint, ed., Dear Ones at Home: Letters from Contraband Camps (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1966), 233; American Missionary (AM), 10 (May 1866): 104. Chase's description of the Richmond washerwomen provides a striking illustration of Frederick Douglass's 1880 assertion: "To me the wonder is, not that the freedmen have made so little progress, but, rather, that they have made so much--not that they have been standing still, but that they have been able to stand at all." Frederick Douglass, Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written By Himself: His Early Life as a Slave, His Escape from Bondage, and His Complete History, rev. ed. (1892; repr., N.Y.: Collier Books, 1962), 503.

⁴⁶Mary Jefferson v. P. Ligan, 14 April 1866; Violet Ann v. Abraham Roberts, 5 May [1866], Register of Complaints and Lists of Persons Receiving Rations, 1865 and 1866, Office of the Assistant Superintendent, Charlotte Courthouse, Va., #3920 (Vol. 127), RG 105, NARA. Neither of these cases indicates the type of work performed by the

Female domestic workers received pittances for their labor. In June 1865, General Orlando Brown, Assistant Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau in Virginia, recommended to Bureau Commissioner Oliver Otis Howard six to ten dollars per month for cooks and servants, in addition to rations, quarters, and two dollars for clothes and medical care. Evidence suggests, however, that freedwomen's actual pay was at the lower end of or less than these standards. In a June 1866 report to Brown, Superintendent Samuel C. Armstrong, who oversaw several lower Tidewater counties, stated that women generally received about five dollars per month, half the rate paid to men. One scholar of Reconstruction in Virginia estimated that the average annual wage for female domestic servants was \$24.00 to \$30.00, or \$2.00 to \$2.50 per month, during the immediate postwar period. In 1866, George Washington, an African-American resident of James City County who was interviewed by Superintendent Armstrong, placed postwar wages in context when he described his daughter's situation: "My daughter works out--gets less than she used to when a slave; one girl does now, what three used to--less pay and harder work." The economic depression from 1873 to 1879, on the heels of Virginia's recovery from the ravages of war, hardly improved wages.⁴⁷

plaintiffs; Bureau records of wage disputes frequently refer to "services rendered" without identifying the work performed. See, for example, Register of Complaints, 1867 and 1868, Office of the Assistant Superintendent, Danville, Va., #3949 (Vol. 400), Register of Complaints, July 1865-May 1866, Office of the Subassistant Commissioner, Norfolk, Va., #4161 (Vol. 351), RG 105, NARA. Howard N. Rabinowitz claims that many white employers faced with suits paid their black workers out of court rather than face them on an equal basis in the courtroom. Rabinowitz, Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890 (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), 33.

⁴⁷James Douglas Smith, "Virginia During Reconstruction, 1865-1870: A Political, Economic, and Social Study," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Virginia, 1960), 205-206; Jones, Labor of Love, 62; Charles E. Wynes, Race Relations in Virginia, 1870-1902

A generation after the war, pay remained low. An 1889 promotional handbook for Charlotte County indicated that "good cooks, house-servants, &c." received from four to six dollars per month, while untrained girls were paid two to three dollars per month. In Danville in 1898, W.E.B. Du Bois placed wages for female domestic workers at about the same rates, with nurse-girls earning one to three dollars per month, general servants four dollars, and cooks five dollars. He stated that low wages had contributed to the unpopularity of domestic service among black residents, who increasingly viewed the occupation as "a relic of slavery"; he also noted that many of the more experienced servants had emigrated to the North where they could make three or four times as much money for less work. When in 1885 the Lynchburg Virginian attempted to refute Northern claims that Southern domestic servants were poorly paid, it merely succeeded in sending the message that even skilled servants like cooks were not supposed to make enough money to live independently. An anecdote in the 3 January 1885 issue told the story of a live-in cook who managed "to go to herself," or set up housekeeping on her own; yet the paper presented the woman's achievement as an indication that she had been

(Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1961), 15. Brown also recommended twelve to fifteen dollars per month for male field hands and five to eight dollars per month for female field hands. William T. Alderson, "The Influence of Military Rule and the Freedmen's Bureau on Reconstruction in Virginia, 1865-1870," (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt Univ., 1952), 53-54. Armstrong did not specify whether his five-dollar figure referred to field or domestic labor. The counties under his supervision were Elizabeth City, York, James City, New Kent, King William, Charles City, Warwick, Mathews, and Gloucester. Saml. C. Armstrong, Supt. 9th Dist. Va., Ft. Monroe, to Bvt. Brig. Genl. O. Brown, 30 June 1866, (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1048, roll 10), Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Virginia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (BRFAL), 1865-1869; Records of the BRFAL, Record Group 105; NARA (hereafter M1048, AC/VA, BRFAL, RG 105, NARA). The Bureau published in local newspapers its general orders and circulars containing information about the labor of freedpeople. Morgan, Emancipation in the Virginia Tobacco Belt, 139.

indulged by her employer through excessive wages rather than as evidence of the family's hard work and frugality.⁴⁸

During the immediate postwar period, freedwomen could use Bureau courts to uphold written contracts or verbal agreements for compensation.⁴⁹ On 6 April 1866, Susan Brooks of Elizabeth City County took Kitty Miller to court for wages due. Brooks testified that she had worked for four months at a rate of seven dollars per month and that Miller refused to settle with her. After subtracting what Miller had already paid Brooks, plus the expense of a dress, some cotton, and a spool, the court determined that Miller owed Brooks \$16.25. Miller complied with the decision.⁵⁰

As demonstrated in both the Pickett-Warner and Brooks-Miller cases, Freedmen's Bureau courts proved ready to redefine as remuneration the goods formerly provided to

⁴⁸R. V. Gaines, comp., Hand-Book of Charlotte County, Virginia (Richmond: Everett Waddey, 1889), 16-17; Lynchburg Virginian, 3 January 1885, [1]; W.E. Burghardt Du Bois, "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study," Bulletin of the Department of Labor 3 (Jan. 1898): 20-21. For evidence of stagnant wages and falling prices for everyday goods during the postwar period, see Crandall A. Shifflett, Patronage and Poverty in the Tobacco South: Louisa County, Virginia, 1860-1900 (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1982), 40-43.

⁴⁹Freedmen's Bureau involvement in labor contracts between blacks and whites varied from place to place and depended on the zeal, or lack thereof, of individual agents. Employers did not legally have to get contracts approved by Bureau agents. Foner, Reconstruction, 165.

⁵⁰It is unclear whether Brooks had a written contract. Susan Brooks v. Kitty Miller, 6 April 1866, 29, Register of Proceedings of Freedmen's Court for Elizabeth City County, Dec. 1865-July 1867, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Fort Monroe, Va., #4139 (Vol. 211), Susan Brooks v. Kitty Miller, n.d., Proceedings of Cases Before Freedmen's Court, #4140, RG 105, NARA.

slaves by their owners.⁵¹ Yet Bureau agents' approval of in-kind compensation reflected more than acceptance of paternalism; it also resulted from the reality of Virginia's cash-strapped economy. In 1866, when Milly Wormley succeeded in her attempt to recover four dollars from May Spence for washing, Spence was given a week to come up with the cash. In the 1860s and 1870s, even the socially prominent Sally Taliaferro of Gloucester County occasionally had to write to her husband when he was in Richmond and request cash to pay the servants and keep up with household expenses. In 1869, Ella Gertrude Thomas of Georgia sold a diamond ring so that she could pay household workers.⁵²

Freedwomen's attempts to recover cash wages took on even greater significance in such an environment. Employers' continued efforts, beyond the immediate postwar period, to come up with money to pay their servants attests to the determination of freed workers to receive a form of payment that signified their independence from their

⁵¹In Jerusalem, Va., on 21 April 1866, a Bureau court ordered J.R. Persons to give Henry Pope a suit of clothes or its equivalent for both his wife and daughter as compensation for their work between Lee's surrender and Christmas 1865. Persons gave Pope cash for the clothes. Henry Pope v. J.R. Persons, Jerusalem, 21 April 1866, Proceedings of Freedmen's Courts, 1866-1867, Office of the Subassistant Commissioner, Jerusalem, Va., #4027 (Vol. 255), RG 105, NARA. Slaveowners had often hired out women who had children for their provisions alone. Morgan, Emancipation in the Tobacco Belt, 62.

⁵²Milly Wormley v. May Spence, 13 Feb. 1866, Register of Proceedings of Freedmen's Court, July 1865-May 1866, Office of the Subassistant Commissioner, Norfolk, Va., #4160 (Vol. 352), RG 105, NARA; Martha A. Sibley, "William Booth Taliaferro: A Biography," (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1973), 109; Sally Lyons Taliaferro, Dunham Massie, to William B. Taliaferro, 12 Jan. [1866?], 5 Feb. [1877], William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; Sally Faulcon Brent to Dr. Cary Charles Cocke, Brems Recess, 24 July n.y., Cocke Papers (Cocke Deposit), UVA; Morgan, Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 190. Thomas's predicament resulted in part from her husband's poor business sense. George Rable, Civil Wars, 243.

employers and their progression out of slavery and dependency.⁵³ Yet freedwomen, like Maria Pickett, did not necessarily oppose all in-kind payments, as long as they did not receive less than they had under slavery.⁵⁴ In Suffolk in February 1866, two freed girls named Adeline and Ann took the estate of William King to court for payment for their services as servants from the time of Lee's surrender until two weeks before Christmas of 1865. Adeline stated before the court that she had received adequate food and medical care, and she said that she would have been content if she had been given a new dress. The court determined that the estate should provide both her and Ann with new dresses of homemade cotton by the first of April.⁵⁵

In such cases involving wage disputes and in-kind compensation, it is virtually impossible to distinguish freedwomen's desires from the courts' notions of their wants and needs. In 1866, a woman from Charlotte County named Violet Ann lodged two complaints against Abraham Roberts. On her own behalf, she took him to court to

⁵³Some employers who could not furnish cash wages had to do without household workers, at least temporarily. Morgan Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 277-285. For a former mistress's acknowledgement that wages represented a break with the past, see Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman's description of domestic servants as "strangers" who work for "filthy lucre." Coleman, ed., Virginia Silhouettes, 57.

⁵⁴In June 1865, after her husband had requested that wages be paid her, a former South Carolina slave named Ellen spoke scornfully of his "meddling" and told her employer Mary Chesnut: "I don't care for money. I gits money's worth." Of course, Ellen may have been dissembling: her husband Claiborne had asked that she be paid in cash during her absence of a few days; perhaps they were using a "bad cop/good cop" scenario to try to manipulate Chesnut. C. Vann Woodward, ed., Mary Chesnut's Civil War (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), 830.

⁵⁵Adeline & Ann v. Estate of William King, decd., Suffolk, 15 Feb. 1866, Letters Received, March 1867-Dec. 1868, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, #4277 (Vol. 437), RG 105, NARA.

demand wages, as well as damages because he had beaten her. She also presented a case against him on her daughter's behalf, claiming that he owed the girl wages. In both cases, the court decided in her favor. In the first case, Violet Ann was to receive one suit of summer clothing or its equivalent. In the second case, she was to receive four dollars for her daughter's labor; Roberts paid her the money in court. The two different awards may have been responses to Violet Ann's determination of her family's needs; or, the settlements may have simply reflected the court's evaluation of her circumstances and Roberts's resources.⁵⁶

Many freedwomen who worked as domestic servants in postwar Virginia received a combination of cash and in-kind payments through the end of the century. In-kind payments probably reflected a combination of employers' cash-poor households and servants' needs for material goods. In-kind compensation also arose when employers maternalistically decided what was best for their workers and proceeded to substitute clothing or other necessities for cash. It is unclear whether workers had any say about the value given by employers to in-kind payments.

Accounts kept by Sally Taliaferro of Gloucester County reflect this blend of compensation. Although she usually paid cash wages to her household workers, Taliaferro sometimes indicated that payments included provisions. "Paid Betty in dress & cash 3.00," she recorded in March 1874. In May 1879, she "paid Sarah Shoes \$1.25." That December, a payment of \$2.10 to Eliza included wool and calico worth \$1.10. On 1 January 1887, she paid Sarah in shoes, dress, and balmoral worth \$3.35. That June, Ellen

⁵⁶Violet Ann v. Abram Roberts and Violet Ann v. Abraham Roberts, 5 May [1866], 176-177; Register of Complaints, #3920 (Vol. 127), RG 105, NARA.

received her \$3.00 in corn.⁵⁷ In interior Southside Virginia, Pattie Watkins Scott of Charlotte County also occasionally combined cash and in-kind payments. On 10 August 1883, Scott wrote, "I sold Sallie a trunk I got in Richmond as part of her wages."⁵⁸

In order to be able to pay household workers cash, female employers received money from their husbands, sold domestic produce, and took in boarders. The latter two enterprises depended in part on the labor of the servants themselves, a fact which at least a few housekeepers recognized. In 1881, Emma Blacknall of Norfolk informed her daughter, "Lucy Pegram is coming next Saturday--& then I shall have a girl for house work, & to attend to her room--her board will enable me to do that--and I am determined to do all I can, to make my tenants & boarders happy--as that is our living now."

Similarly, on 20 September 1882, Pattie Scott recorded in her diary: "I have sold enough butter eggs fowls & wool to pay Sallies hire & for my washing to the first of Aug." The transition from slavery to free labor impressed itself upon employers like Scott when

⁵⁷"Balmoral" probably refers to a woolen petticoat. In September 1872, Taliaferro's step-mother Imogen Lyons responded to her request for old dresses and suggested that they might be used "to give in exchange for labor." See cash accounts listed in the back of Taliaferro's diaries for 1872-1889. The 1874 diary includes undated accounts, as well as entries for 1893-1894, 189[6?], 1898, and 1899. Not all of the cash accounts are included in the transcripts of the diaries. Imogen Lyons to Sally Lyons Taliaferro, 21 Sept. 1872, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M.

⁵⁸Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 10 Aug. 1883, VHS. In his 1898 study of Farmville, Va., W.E.B. Du Bois noted that live-in servants received "good board, fair lodging, much cast-off clothing, and not a little training in matters of household economy and taste," in addition to wages. Du Bois, "The Negroes of Farmville, Va.," 21. There are indications that freedwomen became less tolerant of in-kind payments over time. Interviews with domestic workers in the late twentieth century have revealed deep resentment toward employers who use leftover food or "gifts" of second-hand clothes and similar items to keep wages low. Susan Tucker, Telling Memories Among Southern Women, 146-147.

they had to meet their workers' demands for cash wages.⁵⁹

In addition to highlighting the incomplete transition from in-kind compensation to wages, the Pickett-Warner case also demonstrates the ambivalent relationship between ex-slaveholders and household workers' families and kin. As soon as the war had ended, Henry Warner had come to see Maria Pickett's large family as a liability. Yet he had also taken advantage of the availability of her older children as laborers.

Like Maria Pickett, many postwar cooks discovered that employers did not want to hire women with young children; tellingly, employers sometimes referred to servants' young children as an "encumbrance." When employers did hire mothers, they sometimes sought to keep the children out of the kitchen, a regulation that paid little heed to the feeding needs of infants and that undermined the transmission of skills from old to young, which had been so central in the female slave world. In addition, servants with young children were sometimes expected to accept lower wages. A postwar labor contract between Robert Wilson of Pittsylvania County and freedman Simon Claiborne provides a stark example of planters' efforts to control both access to the kitchen and their servants' family lives. The contract stipulated that Claiborne's wife Isabella would receive \$48.00 at the end of the year if she did not give birth to a child; \$36.00 if she did. Isabella was to keep her children out of the kitchen unless she had the permission of the

⁵⁹Emma Blacknall to Fannie Blow Blacknall, Norfolk, 8 Feb. 1881, Pegram Family Papers, VHS; Pattie Scott Diary, 20 Sept. 1882, 87, VHS. Although Sally Taliaferro did not make any such explicit connections between income based on black workers' labor and wages to pay servants, she did record on 8 February 1875 that she had received ten dollars in oyster money. Also, her husband appears to have used her 1879-1888 diary at one point and recorded in it that he paid her ten dollars for the servants. Cash Account, Sally Taliaferro Diary (1872-1875), 14 April [c. 1880], Sally Taliaferro Diary (1879-1888), William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M.

Wilson family. In addition, she could not leave the plantation without Wilson's permission.⁶⁰

While employers of domestic servants saw young children as a distraction in the workplace, they employed and sometimes exploited older children. Freedmen's Bureau complaint registers contain numerous references to efforts by freedpeople to recover wages due to their children.⁶¹ Several members of a family sometimes worked for the same employer. While this enabled families to look out for one another, it also multiplied the responsibilities of adult workers. An 1866 contract between Robert Dortch Baskervill of Mecklenburg County and a freedwoman named Louisa, for example, included her work as a seamstress and general servant, as well as the work of her daughter Sarah as nurse for Baskervill's children. The contract stipulated that Louisa

⁶⁰Labor contract, 29 Jan. 1867, Hairston and Wilson Family Papers, SHC; Samuel C. Armstrong, Fort Monroe, to Gen. Orlando Brown, 30 June 1866 M1048, AC/VA, BRFal, RG 105, NARA; Sarah P. Payne, Campbell County, to Cousin Mary, 13 Feb. 1868, 51-52, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript copy), VHS; F. T. Anderson, Lexington, to Mary E. Bruce, 26 Aug. 1867, M.A. Anderson, Lexington, to Mary E. Bruce, 1 Oct. 1867, M.A. Anderson, Lexington, to Mary E. Bruce, 5 April 1870, Fanny M. Anderson, Lexington, to Mary E. Bruce, 27 May 1883, James Bruce Family Papers, UVA; Catherine Clinton, "Bloody Terrain: Freedwomen, Sexuality, and Violence During Reconstruction," in Clinton, ed., Half Sisters of History: Southern Women and the American Past (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1994), 141; Jones, Labor of Love, 4, 73-75; White, Ar'n't I a Woman?, 129; Langhorne, "Domestic Service," 171-172; Katzman, Seven Days, 220-221; Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 204-205; Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves," 296-300. On the restrictiveness of postwar contracts, see Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 408-420, and Leslie Ann Schwalm, "The Meaning of Freedom: African-American Women and Their Transition from Slavery to Freedom in Lowcountry South Carolina" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1991), 251.

⁶¹See, for example, Milly Ann Williams v. Daniel Barber, Amelia Anderson v. Hilly [Stants?], Peter Chaney v. Mrs. Williamson, Lucy Terry v. [Hitson?] Sparrow, 8-9, 12-13, 14-15, Register of Complaints, 1867 and 1868, Danville, Va., #3949 (Vol. 400), RG 105, NARA.

was "to be responsible for the good conduct of her daughter Sarah." Family labor arrangements also increased the potential for conflict. The Caroline Drury murder case, in which Drury died after receiving a beating from her employer because he could not find her sons to work for him, and the Hendricks/Lacy assault case, in which Eliza Lacy violently confronted her brother-in-law after he whipped her daughter, provide stark examples of this.⁶²

Mothers who represented their children before Bureau courts faced the difficult challenge of proving the labor performed by several individuals. In Suffolk in early 1866, Kittie Denson took R.H.B. Denson to court for compensation for work performed by herself, her two sons, and her daughter between 9 April 1865 and Christmas. Before the court, Kittie Denson and her sons Emmet and Wells presented their version of the postwar agreement between Kittie and R.H.B. Denson. They claimed that he had told them that if they stayed on, he would feed, clothe, and pay medical expenses for them, but could not pay them in money. Backed up by his son Jim, R.H.B. testified that he had not said that he would pay Kittie and her children in provisions, but rather that he would give the men of the farm a piece of land to till, and she and her sons would share the yield. According to R.H.B. and Jim, Kittie and her sons had each received more than two

⁶²Litwack, *Been in the Storm*, 337; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 135. In the Louisa-Baskervill contract, Louisa and Sarah were to receive thirty dollars, board and clothing "as formerly," and board for Louisa's five young children. They could not leave the premises without Baskervill's permission. The contract is not dated or signed. The Baskervill contracts, which are particularly detailed, provide an excellent example of employers' attempts to continue the labor relations of slavery in the postwar period by insisting that workers perform their duties as they had in bondage, limiting their mobility, and dictating their personal behavior. "Memo: Contract between R.D.B. and Louisa 1866," Baskervill Family Papers, VHS.

barrels of corn and a shoat. The defendants also claimed that Wells and Emmet had left the place before the corn was gathered. The court decided that the children were not due anything more than the corn and shoats they had received. For her work, Kittie was awarded three dollars in provisions, in addition to the corn and shoats, to make up for deficiencies in the clothing that R.H.B. Denson had provided her. In addition, she was not to be charged for anything that she had purchased except one silk dress worth eight dollars.⁶³

Although it is impossible to verify whose version of the Denson/Denson verbal agreement was correct, the scenario laid out by R.H.B. Denson and his son indicates that in agricultural communities women's household labor was sometimes defined as a corollary to the primary field work performed by men. Another case reflects this more clearly. In December 1865, William J. Berryman and James M. Williams of Pittsylvania County rented their farm for 1866 to two freedmen named Gary and Amos. The workers agreed to raise corn, tobacco, and oats in return for half of the crop. As part of the contract, Gary and Amos were to furnish the hands necessary to work the farm. In return for the use of the house they occupied, Gary and Amos also had to supply two female servants to work for the families of Williams and Berryman. The women, who would be fed by their employers, were to include a cook and a general servant who would wash, clean, make beds, tote water, set and clear the table, milk the cows, churn, and wash the

⁶³It is not clear what type of work Kittie and her daughter did. *Kittie Denson v. R.H.B. Denson*, Suffolk, 26 Feb. 1866, Letters Received, #4277 (Vol. 437), RG 105, NARA.

dishes.⁶⁴

Numerous freedwomen employed as household workers in the countryside faced obligations similar to the multiple duties stipulated for the general servant in the above contract. The work of domestic servants on plantations and farms extended beyond the dwelling house into the yard and gardens. Although the contract signed by Gary and Amos did not require the cook to do anything but cook, other labor agreements did. Contracts for former slave Nannie Cannon of Mecklenburg County between 1865 and 1868 list her duties as cooking, washing, ironing, keeping the kitchen and yard clean, and feeding the fowls. In the summer of 1867, two female servants worked for Sarah Payne in Campbell County. An old woman cooked, washed, and milked, while a girl toted water, cleaned around the house, helped in the garden, and watched Payne's youngest child. As a new housekeeper several years after the end of the war, Elizabeth Hairston wrote to her mother, "Sallie has promised to cook for me all the year--(cook, milk, wash--anything else I want) for \$2 1/2 a month." In 1885, employer Pattie Watkins Scott of Charlotte County gave an indication of the vast amount of labor that household workers in the countryside performed: "I got fretted with Paulina today & turned her off & as Louisa was sick I had to churn[,] stew fruit[,] cook rice, feed pigs, set table & do ever so many things. I feel very tired." Scott's weariness belied the fact that Nancy, another

⁶⁴Contract between William J. Berryman and James M. Williams and Gary and Amos, freedmen, 8 Dec. 1865, Contracts, Indentures, and Court Records, 1865-1867, Office of the Assistant Superintendent, Danville, Va., #3950, RG 105, NARA. Similarly, in 1868, missionary teacher M.L. Kellogg described a case in which a mother washed as rent for the family's dwelling place while her sons worked for the owner. AM 12 (June 1868): 135-136.

black woman who worked for Scott, had cooked and milked the cows.⁶⁵

Pattie Scott's detailed diary illuminates the negotiation of domestic work in a rural county twenty years after the war had ended. Resonances from slavery remained. Scott continued to see household workers' labor as a resource she could occasionally share with friends and relatives. In late June of 1882, she recorded in her diary: "I sent Sallie to Mrs Daniels yesterday & she sent me one ear of corn." Similarly, in 1883 she sent Paulina, who cooked, to a cousin's house on two occasions. In April, Paulina assisted with wedding preparations, and in September she helped bake for a church feast.⁶⁶

Still, the women who worked for Scott found various ways to differentiate freedom and slavery. Most significantly, they could leave. On 15 December 1883, Scott recorded: "Sallie came this morning to say that she couldn't work for me any longer as she is to be married soon but she put Polly in her place." By furnishing her own replacement, Sallie may have been attempting to keep herself in good favor with Scott; after she married, Sallie occasionally worked for Scott in the garden or at the wash tub. Moreover, by promoting Polly as her replacement, Sallie helped one of her acquaintances to get some temporary work. Indeed, the fluidity created by turnover within the domestic

⁶⁵Contracts between Wm. R. Baskervill & John Cannon for the service of Cannon's wife Nannie, Contract between W.R.B. and Betty, 9 June 1865, Baskervill Family Papers, VHS; Sarah P. Payne to Cousin Mary, Campbell Co., Va., 20 July 1867, 36-37, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS; Elizabeth S. Hairston to Eliza Penn Hairston, [1874?], Elizabeth S. Hairston Papers, SHC; Pattie Scott Diary, 16 Feb. 1885, VHS. See also M.L. Comfort, Moldavia, to Lotty Comfort, 18 Sept. 1874, Comfort Family Papers, VHS.

⁶⁶Pattie Scott Diary, 28 June 1882, 18 April 1883, 3 & 4 Sept. 1883, VHS.

workplace enabled some servants who worked for employers with multiple workers to act as power brokers. In early 1875, Susan, a seamstress and general servant who worked for Sally Taliaferro, informed her employer that a worker named Sarah preferred cooking to nursing; as a result, Taliaferro decided to "put [Sarah] back in the kitchen, and get a younger nurse."⁶⁷

Favored workers like Sallie and Susan used their influence to promote other workers or mediate for them. While favorite slaves had held similar leverage, they may have had less occasion to exercise it because of the more static pool of workers within slaveowning households. Then again, the increased fluidity of household employment after the war also meant that fewer women would be likely to acquire the kind of influence over their employers that Sallie and Susan had gained.

In January 1884, Pattie Scott wrote, "Polly's month was out & I got Louisa to wait on me." Louisa and other servants who worked for Scott had their own interpretations of what "waiting on" her would entail. They insisted that they be given time to do their own work, such as sewing and washing, when they wished. On 13 March 1884, for example, Scott recorded in her diary: "Louisa had to sew. I did want so much to have the dining room cleaned up." They also took time off to go to the county courthouse or to attend

⁶⁷Pattie Scott Diary, 15 Dec. 1883, 19 May 1884, 3 June 1884, 27 April 1885, 4 May 1885, VHS; Sally Lyons Taliaferro to William B. Taliaferro, Dunham Massie, 23 January [1875], William Booth Taliaferro Papers, W&M. On the temporary nature of domestic service jobs in South Carolina after the war, see Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves," 296-300. On domestic servants' sharing information about employers, particularly advice about those who did not treat their workers well and should thus be avoided, see Jones, *Labor of Love*, 126, 133.

social functions.⁶⁸

Household workers employed by Scott also asserted control over the work they carried out for her. Before Sallie left full-time work, Scott complained: "Sallie has been cleaning off the old tomatoes vines. I have plenty of tomatoes now if any one would take the trouble to gather & cut them." If Sallie did not always do what Scott wanted her to do, she also did not always work as fast as Scott would have liked.⁶⁹ Scott obviously shied away from telling Sallie exactly what she needed done, perhaps because Sallie had made minimal interference a condition of her labor.

In Charlotte County and beyond, freedwomen sought whenever they could to limit the number of demands placed on them in the workplace. In 1871, a Virginia woman complained to her daughter about the requirements laid down by local cooks: "We have to do all the flour parts & dishes[,] loose [*sic*] our time & pay them full prices . . ."⁷⁰ In 1867, a servant hired by Mary Evelyn Bruce in Halifax County for her parents in Lexington took another position so that she would only have to do general house cleaning and not cook or wash.⁷¹ Freed workers, especially those able and willing to

⁶⁸Pattie Scott Diary, 10 Jan. 1884, 13 Mar. 1884, 21 Mar. 1883, 4 Jan. 1884, 28 Nov. 1882, 26 Dec. 1882, 28 June 1884, 6 April 1885, 12 April 1885, 27 May 1885, VHS. See also Contract between Julia Simmons and Thos. W. Hayes, 1 Jan. 1866, Contracts, Bills of Lading, and Judgments, 1865-1868, #3899, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Boydton, Va., RG 105, NARA; Sally Taliaferro Diary (1872-1875), 6 Oct. 1872, 3 Nov. 1872, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M.

⁶⁹Pattie Scott Diary, 31 Oct. 1882, 13 Oct. 1883, 7 Jan. 1884, VHS.

⁷⁰[Mary Christian Kennerly Penn?], Sandy Ridge, to [Eliza Penn Hairston?] 2 Jan 1871, Elizabeth S. Hairston Papers, SHC.

⁷¹F.T. Anderson, Lexington, to Mary Evelyn Bruce, 26 Aug. 1867, 12 Sept. 1867, James Bruce Family Papers, UVA.

move from place to place, had freedom of choice and exercised it.

One of the most significant ways in which the domestic workplace changed after the war was in the trend toward live-out service. Freedwomen who worked in white households wanted to establish an independent life outside their work environment, even if it meant living in a cabin, shanty, or former barn not far from their employers' dwelling house. Because live-out service was a step away from the domestic-labor-on-demand ideal of slavery, many former mistresses lamented the change. Others were pleased to be relieved of the expense of providing room and board. By the late nineteenth century, the trend away from live-in service was obvious and widespread. In 1898, W.E.B. Du Bois commented on day service in Farmville: "The increased independence of the servant and the decreased responsibility of the employer make this a popular system." He added: "It is, however, poorly paid, being a subsidiary employment for most families; and in hard times, when the [live-in] house servant would have to be retained, it is easy to cut off this sort of worker." Nevertheless, many women chose the greater instability and independence of live-out service over the more secure but suffocating live-in situation.⁷²

⁷²Jones, Labor of Love, 4; Sutherland, Americans and Their Servants, 34; Clark-Lewis, Living In, Living Out, 147-149, 168-172; David Comfort II to David Comfort III, 24 Feb. 1866, Comfort Family Papers, VHS; Hunter, "Household Workers," 76-79; Du Bois, "The Negroes of Farmville, Va.," 22. In Richmond, the percentage of white households with live-in domestic servants declined from one-half in 1860 to one-third in 1870. Tracey Weis speculates that this reflected freedpeople's desire to differentiate slavery and freedom, employers' lack of cash, and racial animosity. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 214. In his study of postwar Richmond, Peter Rachleff found that female and male live-in domestic servants rarely held elected office within secret societies; he interprets this as an indication that living and working in a paternalistic environment was not considered by black Richmonders as compatible with a position of authority within benevolent and civic organizations. Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890 (Urbana and Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989), 32. For a household worker's litany of the burdens of live-in service early in the twentieth century, see Katzman, Seven Days,

Many freedwomen who worked in white households further differentiated freedom from slavery by working for their employers only part-time.⁷³ The postwar diaries of Sally Taliaferro of Gloucester County reveal numerous instances of short-term hires. Susan and Milly, two former slaves who had belonged to the Taliaferro family, worked for Sally Taliaferro intermittently at a variety of jobs during the postwar period. Susan, who had criticized slaveholding to Taliaferro's face during the war, usually worked for her former mistress as a seamstress. On 21 November 1872, for example, she spent the morning making pants for Taliaferro's son George. Susan also took on a variety of roles during special occasions. On 16 January 1873, she spent a day and evening assisting with Leah Taliaferro's nineteenth birthday party. In mid-December of the next year, she supervised the making of souse, lard, and sausage. In early 1875, she helped to nurse Sally Taliaferro's newborn son Edward Carrington and appears to have stayed at the Taliaferro house for several weeks after he was born. Milly, who also helped with the baby, occasionally sewed and darned for Taliaferro. Milly also sometimes provided day-care in her house for Taliaferro's younger children. On 9 February 1885, she worked for Taliaferro in the morning, making soap.⁷⁴

24-26.

⁷³Hired slave women who had worked as domestic servants had hired themselves out for various amounts of time, from one day to one year. Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 160-162. For freed laborers' desire to have as much autonomy as they possibly could during Reconstruction, see Foner, Nothing But Freedom, 86.

⁷⁴After the birth of her child, Taliaferro was distressed over Susan's inability to stay longer than she did but conceded that she could not afford to continue to hire "such an expensive nurse" anyway. Sally Taliaferro Diaries, 15 May 1872, 24 June 1872, 8 Sept. 1872, 26 Oct. 1872, 21 Nov. 1872, 17 Jan. 1873, 11 Feb. 1874, 13 Feb. 1874, 1 May 1874, 16 Dec. 1874, 24-26 Jan. 1875, 27 Feb. 1875, 14-15 March 1875, 9 Feb. 1885, 13

By working part-time and living in their own homes, women such as Susan and Milly ensured that they were not entirely at the beck and call of their former mistress. Although Taliaferro's diary is quite terse, one entry imparts a sense of the constant negotiation that went on between herself and household workers during the postwar period. On 1 November 1872, Taliaferro wrote: "Expecting Susan to make my quilt, who did not come. Drove to see her and Aunt Katie in the evening." Two weeks later, Susan had completed the green poplin quilt. While domestic-labor-on-demand had ended, rudiments of the mistress-slave relationship remained in the personalistic nature of employer-servant relations. By continuing to live near the large, socially prominent Taliaferro family, Susan and Milly ensured that they would be able to find work. Yet, as they attempted to carve out autonomy for themselves, Sally Taliaferro took advantage of their proximity to increase her access to their labor.⁷⁵

Of all domestic workers, washerwomen were best able to limit their employers' interference in their daily lives. Most were able to work at home, where they could be near their children and away from white supervision. Family members and neighbors assisted washerwomen with the weekly loads of laundry that they picked up from their

Aug. 1886, Sally Lyons Taliaferro to William Booth Taliaferro, Dunham Massie, 23 Jan. [1875], William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M. For similar references to part-time workers, see Mildred S. Watkins, [Prince Edward Co.], to Minnie Watkins, 21 Oct. 1869, Watkins Papers, W&M.

⁷⁵Sally Taliaferro Diary, 1 Nov. 1872, 4 Nov. 1872, 13 Nov. 1872, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; see also 7 July 1886, when Sally Taliaferro went to the home of two servants in search of a presumably stolen thimble. For other examples of white women going to the homes of black women to hire them for brief periods, see Anne Hope Thomas Gravely Diary, 17 Feb. [1882], 1 Nov. [1882], Gravely Family Papers, LVA.

clients. In this sense, their work for white employers could be merged with their work for their own families. In addition, by picking up dirty clothes on Monday and returning them clean on Saturday, washerwomen ensured that they had one day per week free from paid labor.⁷⁶

The popularity of washing as a vocation associated with communal life and relative autonomy from employers is suggested by the observations of soldiers in the Union Army's Sixth Corps, which occupied Danville after Lee's surrender. The corps's newspaper made note of the large number of freedwomen who were settling in Danville and working as washerwomen: "Danville will shortly be one of the cleanest towns on the face of the globe." It continued: "We fear the inhabitants are to be drowned in soap and water." Obviously, the women sought to take advantage of the army's presence, as well as that of the town's permanent residents.⁷⁷

⁷⁶Jones, Labor of Love, 125-126. Tera Hunter has demonstrated that postwar washerwomen's independence from white supervision was achieved through communal effort. Postwar strikes by laundry workers took place in Jackson, Mississippi (1866), Galveston, Texas (1877), and Atlanta (1881). In the South, steam laundries did not begin to compete seriously with the manual system of washing clothes until the 1940s. Hunter, "Household Workers," 76-79, 153-165, 178, 221-222; Hunter, "Domination and Resistance: The Politics of Wage Household Labor in New South Atlanta," Labor History 34 (Summer 1993): 208.

⁷⁷The Sixth Corps, 12 May 1865, quoted in James I. Robertson, Jr., "Danville Under Military Occupation, 1865," VMHB 75 (July 1867): 343-344. Around the wash tub, female slaves had socialized and exchanged information. About freedwomen on Craney Island during the Civil War, Lucy Chase pronounced, "They have a ravenous fondness for washing. I don't know whether it is natural or because they have nothing else to do; but they are always at the wash tub." Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867: Series I, Vol. II: The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor (N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), 152. The Sixth Corps under Major General Horatio G. Wright occupied Danville on 27 April 1865, and most units remained there for about three weeks. Robertson, "Danville Under Military Occupation," 334-335, 338, 346-347.

Despite their relative autonomy, washerwomen performed backbreaking work at low pay.⁷⁸ When forty-five-year-old freedwoman Susan Ann Nottingham of Norfolk County applied for a mother's pension in November 1866, she asserted that her income as a washerwoman was not enough for her to provide for her five children. Although she did not indicate what her wages were, she supplemented them by selling truck crops she was able to raise on the acre of poor land that she rented.⁷⁹ In early 1867, Eliza Jackson took Annie Drewry to the Freedmen's Bureau court in Elizabeth City County for payment for washing she had performed for the month of February. Jackson testified that she had washed for Drewry three times, completing 109 pieces at a rate of five cents per piece. She also worked ten days for Drewry as a house servant, at a rate of two dollars per month, and put in two days of scouring, at a rate of fifty cents per day.⁸⁰ Thirty years

⁷⁸The difficulty of washing was attested to by a former slaveholding woman who recalled her attempt to clean her clothes in Petersburg in the summer of 1864, in Myrta Lockett Avary, *A Virginia Girl in the Civil War* (n.p., c. 1902), 306-308. In postwar Norfolk, women found guilty of minor offenses could be sentenced by the mayor to service on the wash-tub gang. *Norfolk Journal*, 3 April 1868, [3].

⁷⁹After her pension was approved on 6 May 1867, Susan Nottingham received eight dollars per month until she died in 1877. She also received payment for the period from her son George's death on 19 October 1865 to 6 May 1867. Pension of George Nottingham, Case File #94488 (mother), Pension Case Files, Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 15, NARA (hereafter Nottingham, #94488, RG 15, NARA). In November 1865, Cynthia Tucker Coleman agreed to pay \$4.50 per month to have her washing done, which she considered an "enormous price"; she quickly switched when another woman offered her a special rate of \$2.50 per month. Cynthia Beverley Tucker Coleman to Charles W. Coleman, Williamsburg, 9 Nov. 1865, Tucker-Coleman Collection, W&M.

⁸⁰The court allowed Jackson only \$3.01, which was \$4.10 less than she claimed; the documents do not indicate why. It appears that a relative of Jackson's, possibly her husband, worked for a relative of Drewry's, possibly her husband. *Eliza Jackson v. Mrs. Annie Drewry*, n.d., and *Washington Jackson v. R. W. Drewry*, 13 March 1867, Proceedings of Cases Before Freedmen's Court, Fort Monroe, Va., #4140, Eliza Jackson

later, W.E.B. Du Bois found that washerwomen in Farmville received from fifty to seventy-five cents for a family wash. Some also did laundry for the white girls who boarded at the local normal school and paid \$1.25 per month each to have their laundry done.⁸¹

In another effort to distinguish freedom from slavery, household workers made clear that their time in the domestic workplace was secondary to community life and public political activity.⁸² Female domestic servants joined other black Virginians in attending Emancipation Day celebrations, political meetings, Republican conventions, and elections at the courthouse. In its description of the crowd at the October 1867 Republican convention in Richmond, the New York Times noted: "As is usual on such occasions, families which employ servants were forced to cook their own dinners, or

v. Mrs. Ann Drewry, 13 March 1867, Register of Proceedings of Freedmen's Court for Elizabeth City County, #4139 (Vol. 211), RG 105, NARA. For further, terse references to wage disputes involving washing, see Lucy Ann Nimmo v. Miss Mary Balls, 9 Oct. 1865, Miss Margaret Spence v. Julie A. Moore and Mary Banks, 23 Oct. 1865, Sarah Bastic v. Anne Murphy, 26 Oct. 1865, Julia Ann Moore v. Miss Spring, 14 Nov. 1865, Annetta Lane v. Sarah Hazell, 5 March 1866, Mary Simpson v. Sally Mus[cat?], 4 April 1866, and Hannah Brown v. Mary Burns, 7 April 1866, Register of Complaints, Norfolk, Va., #4161 (Vol. 351), RG 105, NARA. The Bastic, Lane, Simpson (as Simmons), and Brown (as Anna) cases are also documented in #4160 (Vol. 352), Register of Proceedings of Freedmen's Court, July 1865-May 1866.

⁸¹Du Bois, "The Negroes of Farmville, Va.," 22.

⁸²Jones, Labor of Love, 131-132; Hunter, "Household Workers," 97-98. This sentiment had existed under slavery as well, but slaves had fewer opportunities than free persons to express their preference for communal activity. See Sally Taliaferro's claim on 29 June 1862 that she had to watch her children all day because her slaves were attending the funeral of a slave child. Taliaferro Diary (1862-1863), 29 June 1862, LVA. Also, see Deborah Gray White's reference to resistance by a slave named Suckey, who belonged to Robert Carter during the eighteenth century and took advantage of his absence to tell the overseer that Carter had told her she could attend any meetings she wanted to during the week. White, Ar'n't I a Woman?, 181.

content themselves with a cold lunch." At the turn of the century, Myrta Lockett Avary recalled: "Elections were preceded by political meetings, often incendiary in character, which all one's servants must attend." She further described how women and men attended elections during Reconstruction and created a picnic-like atmosphere at them, with female hucksters selling lemonade and ginger cakes.⁸³

A sarcastic reference in 1870 by a white man to difficulties on the job with "American Citizens of African descent" give an indication of how freedpeople's civic activity rankled some employers. Before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction in 1866, Virginia native John Baldwin had alluded to the reluctance of white employers to countenance political consciousness on the part of their domestic servants. Arguing for gradualism in civil rights before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, he noted that despite their affection for their former mammies, former slaveholders would not accept

⁸³Emily R. Davies, "'What Sorrows and What Joys:' The Civil War Diaries of Cloe Tyler Whittle, 1861-1866" (M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1993), 1 Jan. 1863, 93; Pattie Scott Diary, 26 Dec. 1882, VHS; New York Times, 18 Oct. 1867, quoted in Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," Public Culture 7 (1994): 118; Avary, Dixie After the War, 282-284. References to overt political expression by female domestic servants at work are rare. Cooks and maids in Yazoo County, Mississippi, demonstrated their partisanship at work by wearing campaign buttons of General Grant during the 1868 election campaign. Foner, Reconstruction, 290-291. See also an account, from an 1885 issue of the New York Freeman, of a dispute between a domestic worker and her employer in Louisville, Kentucky, over her subscription to the Freeman; the account is possibly apocryphal. Katzman, Seven Days a Week, 27. At the 1867-1868 Virginia constitutional convention, African-American delegate Burwell Toler used the subject of the domestic workplace to chastise white Virginians for their hypocritical obsession with racial purity under slavery: "When de cook make up de bread wid her black hands it was all right, but if de gal dat brought it to de table eat a little piece on it, dey made her car it back and de cook had to cook sum more." Norfolk Journal, 2 March 1868, 1. Toler, who represented Hanover and Henrico counties, was a minister. Luther Porter Jackson, Negro Officeholders in Virginia, 1865-1895 (Norfolk, Va.: Guide Quality Press, 1945), 42.

an assertion of equality from them.⁸⁴

Their identity as free workers and their activity in the civic arena did make domestic servants less deferential to their employers than slaves had been to their mistresses, and this change greatly disturbed former slaveowners. The manifesto issued by Democrats in Danville just prior to the election there in November 1883, entitled "Coalition Rule in Danville" and often referred to as the "Danville Circular," specifically complained about household workers who used their language to elevate blacks above whites in front of their employers: "It is a very common practice for the negroes who are employed about our houses to allude to white ladies and gentlemen as men and women, and to negroes as ladies and gentlemen. This is a practice almost without exception by the negro women. They do it to irritate and throw contempt on the white race." Although the circular was designed to inflame white-supremacist passions, its descriptions of black assertiveness surely had a basis in fact.⁸⁵

Similarly, at the turn of the century, Myrta Lockett Avery highlighted the deterioration of domestic work in the postwar South by noting that applicants for

⁸⁴E.B. McClanahan, Bristol, to Mrs. T.W. Sydnor, 31 Jan. 1870, Sydnor Papers, UVA, quoted in Smith, "Virginia During Reconstruction," 420. Baldwin was a Unionist before secession and speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates in 1866. Testimony of John B. Baldwin, JCR, 102. In 1868 Freedmen's Bureau agent Mortimer Moulden reported from Southampton County that many employers had driven off laborers who attended public meetings and had not paid freedpeople for the work they had performed; he did not specifically mention household workers. Monthly Report for July 1868, Jerusalem, 31 July 1868, Reports and Records Relating to Court Cases, 1866-68, Office of the Subassistant Commissioner, #4026, RG 105, NARA.

⁸⁵Edward Pollock, Illustrated Sketch Book of Danville, Virginia: Its Manufactures and Commerce (Petersburg: E.R. Waddill & Bros., 1885; repr., Danville: Womack Press, 1976), 88.

positions in Atlanta referred to themselves as ladies. Complaining about the unreliability of domestic workers after the war, Avary also cited the example of a cook from Halifax, Virginia, who interpreted the Civil Rights Bill to mean that she could remain in her parlor and act like a white "lady." As much wishful thinking as reality, an 1889 handbook which sought to encourage settlement in Charlotte County described African-American residents as servile and reassured prospective employers that "the better class of negro women" were eager to get positions as household workers. At about the same time, nostalgic reminiscences written by white Virginians set forth images of contented and docile domestic slaves, such as the "gay-turbaned milkmaid" and the "neat maids, with bare brown arms and chaste homespun gowns" described in an 1893 history of Gloucester County.⁸⁶

To make their way in a difficult and often hostile postwar world, most former slaves in Virginia had to work for white employers. From cooks and washerwomen to less specialized workers, female domestic servants sought to ensure that the borders of the postwar workplace would be porous. When possible, they moved from job to job. Yet women with young children found moving a challenge and job prospects scarce. When possible, to influence negotiations over duties, hours, and wages within the workplace, they exercised their newly acquired civil rights and participated in creating vibrant civic communities. Yet, in Freedmen's Bureau courts, some found their attempts to merge the survival mechanisms of slavery with the potential of free labor stymied.

⁸⁶Avary, Dixie After the War, 192; R. V. Gaines, comp., Hand-Book of Charlotte County, Virginia (Richmond: Everett Waddey, 1889), 16-17; Sally N. Robins, History of Gloucester County, Virginia, and Its Families (Richmond: West, Johnston, & Co., 1893), 11, 14.

When possible, freedwomen drew on black community and mutual support. Yet many discovered that employers, intent on defining emancipation to benefit themselves, wanted to individualize work relationships and limit the communal nature of the domestic workplace. Historical analyses of twentieth-century domestic service, which emphasize the isolation of household workers and their lack of collective power, suggest that employers more than succeeded.⁸⁷

⁸⁷Tucker, Telling Memories, 148; Dill, Across the Boundaries of Race and Class, 11; Katzman, Seven Days a Week, 212; Harris, From Mammies to Militants, 12; Bettina Aptheker, "Domestic Labor: Patterns in Black and White," in Woman's Legacy: Essays on Race, Sex, and Class in American History, 119-120, 126-127.

Chapter Five

Maternalism Versus Mutual Assistance: Intertwined Pasts and the Development of Black Community Life

On September 30, 1869, a freedwoman named Lina got married at her employer's residence in Surry County, Virginia. Lina, who worked as a domestic servant, had invited twenty-five guests to the wedding, but more than one hundred and fifty of her neighbors came to the event. Revelers partook of a special wedding supper that Lina had laid out in the kitchen. The feast included a large, butter-flavored bride's cake that had been baked by Virginia Hankins, the daughter of Lina's employer and supervisor of the household's domestic workers.

Because her father was ill, Virginia oversaw all of the evening's activities, but while Lina and her guests celebrated, Virginia worried. She was concerned that the uninvited guests might become rowdy and expressed relief the next day that "they all behaved very well & quietly." Virginia also fretted over the changes that marriage might make in Lina as a worker. She wrote to her brother Willie: "I am very sorry she should have married and expect she will not be as useful as she used to be. I don't know what I shall do in keeping house, if she leaves me. I never will be able to leave home or keep things clean & nice." Perhaps sponsoring the wedding in an attempt to convince Lina to stay on, Virginia viewed Lina's marriage as potentially disruptive to the family's domestic

arrangements.¹

Between 1865 and 1890, white women like Virginia Hankins continued to be involved in the personal lives of their black workers, particularly favored servants like Lina.² Maternalism evolved after slavery into female employers' use of the domestic environment to influence household employees' work and private lives; the employers sought to limit what they perceived as the negative effects of emancipation, particularly the high turnover of servants.³ Maternalism had considerable significance for former

¹Virginia Hankins, Bacon's Castle, to William Albert Hankins, 1 Oct. 1869, Hankins Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia (VHS).

²In his travels through North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia after the war, journalist Sidney Andrews found "not a few" instances of "real attachment to individual servants" amidst the general state of antagonism between the races. Andrews, The South Since the War (1866; repr., N.Y.: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 395. It is the personalism of the employer/household worker relationship that has prompted some scholars to downplay the effects of emancipation on domestic service. See Judith Rollins, Between Women: Domesticity and Their Employers (Phila.: Temple Univ. Press, 1985), 51, and Jacqueline Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1986), 127. For another perspective, see the interviews with former domestic servants who worked in Washington, D.C., in the early twentieth century and asserted that employers in the South had demonstrated more respect for their privacy, in part because of lack of interest, than employers in the District. Elizabeth Clark-Lewis, Living In, Living Out: African American Domesticity in Washington, D.C., 1910-1940 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 113, 125.

³In addition, as argued by Judith Rollins in her analysis of twentieth-century domestic service, maternalism is closely tied to women's traditionally subordinate role in society; female employers have secondary status in their households and in the larger society, which increases their demands for deference. Thus, although the essence of both maternalism and paternalism is a view of the domestic servant as an adult child, the two modes of control are different. Rollins's argument that maternalism is based on the affective nature of female interactions and that both female employers and domestic servants are aware of the emphasis placed by employers on the nature of the relationship, which is seen as more significant than the work performed, is less applicable to postwar Virginia. Rollins, Between Women, 173-189. David Katzman also uses the term maternalism, but he applies it solely to Northern employers who sought to provide

mistresses because they had fewer other expedients than men did to try to control the social revolution caused by emancipation.⁴

In postwar Virginia, maternalism ranged from expressions of concern to material assistance to moralistic interference. Depending on the situation at hand, freedwomen like Lina demanded, accepted, or rejected the maternalistic overtures made by their female employers. African-American women who worked as domestic servants could be increasingly discriminating about maternalistic material assistance because they had ever more viable community institutions of their own upon which to draw. In postwar Virginia, race relations between women often reflected the stormy interplay of the personalistic labor system of domestic service and the development of an independent freed community.

After the Civil War, many women who had once supervised slaves continued

protection, education, and a Christian atmosphere for their live-in workers and to acquire affection, affirmation, and companionship for themselves. David M. Katzman, Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), 153-162.

⁴Historical discussion of paternalism during the post-Civil War period has focused on its demise as a result of strained economic conditions, black mobility, and racial antagonism. See Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1974), 110-111; Marli Frances Weiner, "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves: Gender, Race, and South Carolina Women," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Rochester, 1986), 317-318, 329; Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1988), 130; George C. Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Urbana, Ill.: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989), 33-34; 257-260. For close attention to how paternalism changed within the overall pattern of decline, see Guion Griffis Johnson, "Southern Paternalism toward the Negroes after Emancipation," Journal of Southern History 23 (Nov. 1957): 483-509. Johnson identifies five levels of paternalistic thought that white Southerners exhibited after emancipation and used to develop segregation.

maternalistic traditions established under slavery, sometimes at the behest of their household workers. From encouraging cooks' appropriation of leftover foods to giving Christmas gifts to participating in servants' weddings and funerals, some female supervisors sought to use their material resources and social standing to control or pacify household workers. In a significant new development, they also perpetuated the vestiges of maternalism in an effort to retain servants.

While former slaveholding women continued maternalism into the postwar period to try to ensure a stable work force, they also acted out of habit, emotional attachment, and racist assumptions of black inferiority. Some had feelings of genuine affection for their former slaves even as they remained devoted to the image of themselves as charitable mistresses.

Whatever their motivations, former slaveholding women continued to perceive their former slaves as dependent children and to treat them accordingly. When former slaves moved on after the war, some former mistresses made sure to dispense maternalistic advice along with their farewells. In May 1865, for example, Mrs. J.E. White of Isle of Wight County recorded her parting with Maria, a former slave: "My last words to her were, 'try to be a better girl than you have been.'" In the post-emancipation period, former mistresses perpetuated the "white and black family" metaphor developed under slavery. And, for years after the war, former slaveholders described their black workers in possessive terms, referring to them as "our negroes," "my people," and even "my freedmen." In their postwar diaries, some former slaveholding women recorded the births, household arrangements, and deaths of freedpeople, just as they had chronicled

the lives of their slaves.⁵

By demanding, accepting, or refusing maternalistic gestures, freedwomen sought to influence how postwar labor and race relations would evolve. Some freedpeople viewed material contributions from former owners or current employers as recompense for past service under slavery or present low wages. Some freedwomen had little choice but to accept maternalistic offerings until they could develop resources of their own. Others, accustomed to being dependent and deferential, would never have dreamed of refusing.⁶ Like former mistresses, freedwomen acted out of habit, emotion, and self-interest. Although they shared the same human impulses, former mistresses and former

⁵Leon Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1980), 251-255, 257; Tera W. Hunter, "Household Workers in the Making: Afro-American Women in Atlanta and the New South, 1861-1920," (Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ., 1990), 119-120; Frances Butler Leigh, Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War (London: 1883; repr., N.Y.: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 214; Thomas Seddon to Sarah Seddon, [Charlottesville, Va.], May n.y., Seddon Family Papers, VHS; Contract between S.W. Hairston and Freedmen, 16 Aug. 1865, Elizabeth S. Hairston Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (SHC); Catherine Barbara Broun Diary (typescript), 21 Sept. 1865, Catherine Barbara Broun Papers, SHC; Contract between Rev. Thomas W. Greer and Ned Oliver for himself, wife Rosetta, son Ned, and daughter Lucy Ann, Mecklenburg County, 1 Feb. 1866, Contracts, Bills of Lading, and Judgments, 1865-1868, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Boydton, Va., #3899, Records of Subordinate Field Offices, Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter RG 105, NARA); Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 10 Oct. 1883, VHS; Sallie Lyons Taliaferro Diary, 8 April 1872, 17 April 1872, 20 March 1875, 5 Oct. 1875, 17 Jan. 1885, William Booth Taliaferro Papers, Dept. of Special Collections, Earl Gregg Swem Library, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Va. (W&M); Ervin L. Jordan, Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1995), 93; Mrs. J.E. White to Irene, 13 May 186[5], Ada P. Bankhead Collection, Special Collections Dept., Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va. (UVA).

⁶On the considerable degree of awe and fear of their owners that many slaves retained, see Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 186.

slaves approached each other with diverse goals and cultivated different understandings of the relationship that existed between women of the two stations.

Even as many former slaves separated themselves forever from their former owners during and after the war, other freedpeople retained ties with their former owners for decades and sought to fashion a new relationship with them. As a relief worker in the Yorktown-Williamsburg area reported in 1865, some freedpeople wanted to live near their former owners as long as they could do so "in the right way." Connections maintained by former slaves resulted in part from practical necessity; freedpeople needed both employment and information. Especially while they decided what to do next immediately after the war, many ex-slaves continued to work for former masters and mistresses. In addition, to create new lives as freedpeople, former slaves needed information about their families from their former owners. In the effort to reunite with family members, freedpeople sought assistance from former owners to confirm when and to whom family members had been sold. In filing pension claims, survivors of soldiers who had died in the war sometimes gave pension agents the names of former slaveholders for verification of marriage and birth dates. Ex-slaves used the documentation of slavery--from masters' accounts to mistresses' Bible records--to begin the chronicle of freedom.⁷

⁷Pension of Harvey Riddick, Case File #274675 (Widow), Pension of Jeremiah Russell, Case File #209483 (Widow), Pension of James Ellis, Case File #163569 (Mother), Pension Case Files, Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 15, NARA; Richard L. Morton, "Contrabands' and Quakers in the Virginia Peninsula, 1862-1869," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 61 (Oct. 1953): 426 (emphasis in original). Reflecting the race and class biases of the period, some government agents probably requested the names of former masters and mistresses so as to have testimony from white people with social status. In her analysis of pension claims filed by ex-slaves,

Some freedpeople were comfortable with the language of paternalism and invoked it when seeking information about their relatives. One freedwoman in search of her Virginia relatives used the family metaphor so treasured by many former slaveholders. In July 1868, Milly Richard wrote to a relative of her former owner in search of news about her parents, grandmother, and sisters. Richard had lived in Virginia before she was sold in 1853. Thirty-five years later, she wrote from Mississippi: "I do not know whether any of my people white or black are living now but thinking that may [sic] probably this letter may fall into the hands of someone who knows the old family, I have concluded at last to write."⁸ The familial imagery that former slaveholders found appealing became useful to former slaves intent on re-establishing family ties broken by slave sales.⁹

Elizabeth Regosin found that the oral testimony of former owners was given more weight by pension officials than that provided by former slaves. More than half of the sixty-six claims she examined contained testimony of former owners, who usually backed up the testimonies of ex-slaves. She did not come across any references to former owners who refused to testify, but did find a former mistress who expressed her bitterness over emancipation and refused to sign her testimony. Elizabeth Ann Regosin, "Slave Custom and White Law: Ex-Slave Families and the Civil War Pension System, 1865-1900," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Irvine, 1995), 40, 49-56.

⁸In the text of the letter, Richard identified herself as Milly Armstrong. Milly Richard, Vicksburg, to Capt. Thomas Russell, 8 July 1868, Virginia Cities Collection (Williamsburg), W&M. See also the letters written from Tennessee by Polly Graham and her daughter Martha (Graham) Barbee to Nannie Watkins, Granville County, N.C., 1878-1881, Watkins Papers, W&M, in which they ask Nannie to send them a photograph of her daughter, provide them with their ages, and relate news to them about their relatives, friends, and former neighbors.

⁹In the early 1880s, Frances Butler Leigh of Georgia recorded that young descendants of her former slaves would say to her, "We your people, missus," even though they had never been slaves and did not work on her plantation. She took satisfaction in this. Perhaps the young people believed that she had an obligation to them based on their ancestors' service. Leigh, Georgia Plantation, 237. For former slaveholding women's

Since freedpeople's restructuring of family life after the war entailed both reunification and the dissolution of ties formed under slavery, some freedwomen sought assistance from former owners when confronted with unwanted changes in their family lives. In the aftermath of marital discord, Amy Stewart of Centreville in northern Virginia twice solicited assistance from her former mistress. In 1871, after discovering that her husband Henry had sold the large quilt that she had left in her former mistress's care, Stewart wrote to request that her former owner buy back the quilt. In a veiled criticism of her former mistress's vigilance, Stewart asked that her things be placed under lock and key. Almost two years later, Stewart wrote to request a copy of her marriage license because Henry had left her, denied they had ever been married, and proceeded to remarry.¹⁰

Not surprisingly, the rare extant letters written by former slaves and retained by former slaveholders contain sentiments of affection and express the desire to maintain bonds. In their postwar letters to former mistresses, some freedwomen also expressed affection for their former owners and for the places they had lived under slavery. When Queen Bruce of Newark, New Jersey, wrote to Annie Sims of Wilson, North Carolina, in 1888, she confided: "I often think of you and wish I could see you although I am surrounded by all the comforts of life but I must say I have never realize[d] there is

memories of slaves' use of such possessive terms as "our white folks" and "our black folks," see Letitia Burwell [Page Thacker, pseud.], Plantation Reminiscences (n.p., 1878), 11, and Sarah P. Payne to Cousin Mary, 2 Jan 1871, 97, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS.

¹⁰Amy Stewart to "My dear Mistress," Centreville, Va., 31 March 1871, Amy Stewart to "My dear Mistress," Sunny Side, Va., 20 Jan. 1873, *Miscellaneous Letters (1839-1891) from Virginians*, UVA.

anyplace like home." Bruce sent messages of love from herself and members of her family to members of the Sims clan. She promised to "come home" for a visit the next year.¹¹

In 1868, a freedwoman named Lucy Cousins, who lived in the mountains of western Virginia, shared similar sentiments with her former mistress, Mrs. T.W. Sydnor. Yet their postwar relationship was more than emotional. In July, Cousins thanked Sydnor for forwarding to her a sum of money from the sale of a pig in which Cousins had held an interest. She also responded reluctantly to Sydnor's request to hire one of her children. Later that fall, Cousins thanked Sydnor for some advice she had proffered, apparently about Cousins's estrangement from her husband.¹²

Because the majority of freedpeople could not write when the war ended, passing news through literate intermediaries continued to be an important method of communication for dispersed families. Freedpeople who continued to work for, or simply stay in touch with, former owners had access to news about faraway kin who maintained ties with the relatives of these former owners. African-American family

¹¹If any freedwomen with ties to Virginia wrote to their former owners to denounce them, their missives probably would not have been saved; I have yet to find any such letters. Queen Bruce to Mrs. A.R. Sims, Newark, N.J., [23 May 1888], Bailey Family Papers, VHS. For other letters in which former slaves expressed the desire to visit their former owners, see Lucy Skipwith to John Hartwell Cocke, Hopewell Plantation, Alabama, 7 Dec. 1865, in Randall M. Miller, ed., "Dear Master": Letters of a Slave Family (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1978), 262-263; Alice Dabney to "My Dear old Master" [Thomas Smith Dabney], Montgomery, [Ala.], 10 Feb. 1867, Dabney and Davis Family Papers, UVA; Amy Stewart to "My dear Mistress," Centreville, Va., 31 March 1871, Miscellaneous Letters (1839-1891) from Virginians, UVA.

¹²Cousins's letters were written for her. James Douglas Smith, "Virginia During Reconstruction, 1865-1870: A Political, Economic, and Social Study" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Virginia, 1960), 420-422.

members sometimes took advantage of the opportunity to send messages to each other in the letters exchanged between white kin.¹³

Of course, former slaves provided similar links to the past for former owners. Although the condescending paeans to "aunties" and "uncles" written by postwar slavery apologists ultimately did far less than full justice to the knowledge and wisdom of older freedpeople, some former slaveholders sought genealogical information from former slaves and looked to them as touchstones to their ancestors. The oral culture developed by slaves proved invaluable to white Virginians eager to resurrect their own histories. In March 1873, for example, Sally Galt of Williamsburg recalled the vivid stories that one of her recently deceased former slaves had told about her grandfather. Coincidentally, almost exactly five years later, Galt received a letter from one of her Richmond friends who had some questions about her ancestors and specifically requested that Galt seek the answers from a local freedwoman.¹⁴

A small number of women who applied for compensation from the Southern Claims Commission (SCC), established by Congress in 1871 to reimburse loyal Southerners for quartermaster and commissary stores they had provided to the Union army during the war, made formal use of freedpeople's memories of the war and their

¹³Imogen Lyons to Sallie Lyons Taliaferro, Richmond, 18 Aug. 1865, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; Louisa H.H.M. to [Eliza P. Hairston?], [Magna Vista?], 24 Nov. 1865, Elizabeth S. Hairston Papers, SHC; Amy Stewart to "My dear Mistress," Sunny Side, Va., 20 Jan. 1873, Miscellaneous Letters (1839-1891) from Virginians, UVA.

¹⁴Myrta Lockett Avary, Dixie After the War (N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1906; repr, N.Y.: Da Capo Press, 1970), 196-197; S.M. Galt to Cousin Eliza, Williamsburg, Va., 17 March 1873; Mary A. Frayser, Richmond, to [Sally Galt?], 23 March 1878, Galt Family Papers I, W&M.

identity as Unionists. Especially in areas where white Unionists had been few in number, white citizens who filed claims needed the support of black Unionists as witnesses to corroborate their declarations of loyalty and loss.¹⁵ As it had with the establishment of Freedmen's Bureau courts, the federal government through the SCC legitimated black testimony and affirmed the status of freedpeople as citizens. SCC claims filed by white Virginians during the early 1870s mirrored pension claims filed by black residents; in both cases, the parties involved needed information and validation from each other.

Most of the white women who filed claims in the lower Tidewater and interior Southside regions of Virginia did so as widows of men who had died during or after the war. Among black witnesses, men appear to have predominated, despite the fact that in the lower Tidewater many had been away from the home place as soldiers or military laborers during the war.

Claimants had to prove to the SCC commissioners that they had been loyal throughout the war, not simply ambivalent. They also had to prove that the property

¹⁵John D. Edwards, a special agent employed by the government to investigate claims in Little Rock, Arkansas, described blacks, and especially freedpeople, as excellent sources of detailed information about claimants. John Brownlow, a special agent who served in Tennessee, described some blacks as heavily influenced in their testimony regarding white claimants' loyalty by the treatment they had received from the claimant after the war. Frank W. Klingberg, The Southern Claims Commission (Univ. of California Press, 1955; repr. N.Y.: Octagon Books, 1978), 85-86; Reginald Washington, "The Southern Claims Commission: A Source for African-American Roots," Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives 27 (Winter 1995): 380. Black witnesses were often, but not always, identified by color in SCC documents. The commission was skeptical of freedpeople as witnesses for white claimants and sought to establish the nature of the current relationship between the two. Former slaves testifying for whites had to state whether they had belonged to the claimant, whether they worked for the claimant, whether they lived on the claimant's land, and whether they were in debt to the claimant. Some white claimants probably used pressure--from blatant intimidation to more subtle coercion--to get ex-slaves to testify for them.

taken had been requisitioned, if informally, and used by the army or navy, not appropriated by soldiers without permission for their personal gratification or destroyed to prevent use by the Confederate army.¹⁶

Virginia residents most likely learned about the SCC from newspapers, word of mouth, and lawyers who canvassed the state for potential clients. Claimants filed petitions with the SCC and then had to apply formally to have testimony taken. In the majority of claims, special commissioners took testimony at federal offices in cities such as Norfolk, Lynchburg, and Richmond; the special commissioners then forwarded their findings to the three main commissioners in Washington, D.C., who made recommendations about each case to the House of Representatives. The special commissioners were paid a small fee by the claimants. Thus, to file a claim, Virginians had to have sufficient financial resources and time to travel to the closest venue.¹⁷

¹⁶The commissioners were Asa Owen Aldis of Vermont, James B. Howell of Iowa, and Orange Feriss of New York. All claims had to be filed by March 3, 1873, and the SCC spent seven more years processing the 22,298 claims submitted. Virginians filed 3,731 of these, second in number to Tennesseans. Only 7,092 of the 22,298 claims were approved. Claimants requested a total of \$60,258,150.44; Congress awarded \$4,636,920.69. Introduction to Microfilm Publication M87, p. iii, (National Archives Microfilm Publication M87, roll 1), Records of the Commissioners of Claims (Southern Claims Commission), 1871-1880, General Records of the Department of the Treasury, Record Group 56, NARA; Klingberg, The Southern Claims Commission, vii, 69, 89, 157. In early 1872, Congress extended the purview of the SCC to include goods taken by the U.S. Navy. Washington, "The Southern Claims Commission," 374. For one widow's attempt to influence her claim, see Sallie E. Thomas, Culpeper, to Governor James Lawson Kemper, 9 Jan. 1875, Executive Papers, Letters Received by James Lawson Kemper, 1874-1877, Record Group 3, Library of Virginia (LVA), Richmond, Va.

¹⁷Those who requested compensation of \$10,000 or more had to testify with their witnesses before the three commissioners in Washington, D.C. Appointed by the commissioners, special commissioners were usually only on the job part-time and lived in the areas in which they worked. Because they had to be authorized to take testimony under oath, special commissioners were often local public servants. In claims for \$1,000

When white women called on freedpeople to help them establish their claims, they formally acknowledged slaves' extensive knowledge of their owners' resources, daily affairs, and attitudes. Implicitly, they also recognized black Virginians' identification with Unionism and their status as loyalists in the eyes of the federal government. In April 1872, Elizabeth Dennis of Halifax County requested Booker Dennis, her deceased husband's former carriage driver, to testify in support of her SCC claim. Seven years earlier, she had lost three horses and a mule to members of the Sixth Corps as it made its way to Danville; with her husband away at a neighbor's that day in 1865, she had remained in the house and relied on her slaves to act as intermediaries with the Union officer and soldiers who took the livestock. Booker Dennis, a farmer in 1872, testified that he had known Elizabeth for thirty years and had heard both her and her deceased husband express Unionist sentiments during the war. In concluding his statement, Dennis established his own credentials and spoke in favor of his former master: "I belong to a Union league & I know what it is to be a Union Man & I believe Mr. Dennis was one." The commissioners were unconvinced, describing Elizabeth Dennis's witnesses as "not well selected" because they were too close to her to give their

or less, the special commissioners could only charge ten cents per folio. They could travel to remote areas to take testimony if the claimant agreed beforehand to reimburse them for travel expenses. Special agents investigated claims on behalf of the government, which paid them. They focused on claims between \$5,000 and \$10,000. They moved throughout the South and supervised special commissioners. They could pay witnesses for the government two dollars. Klingberg, The Southern Claims Commission, 76-86; U.S. Congress, House, First General Report of the Commissioners of Claims, 42d Cong., 2d sess., 1872, H. Misc. Doc. 16, serial 1524, 24. On the significance of information dissemination among freedpeople by sympathetic lawyers, see also Sara Rapport, "The Freedmen's Bureau as a Legal Agent for Black Men and Women in Georgia, 1865-1868," Georgia Historical Quarterly 73 (Spring 1989): 51-52.

testimony much value.¹⁸

In September 1871, Sarah King, whose house in Suffolk had been used by the Union army as a hospital for a month during the war, asked two black men to speak on her behalf. Freedman Israel Riddick, a plasterer who had lived near King as a slave during the war, testified that he had seen Union cavalry take over her house. African-American custom house officer Isaac Mullen acknowledged the authority of blacks in Suffolk to gauge Union sentiment when he said of King: "I have heard her loyalty canvassed very often--more especially by colored persons, who all spoke of her in the strongest terms of confidence." Mullen sought to demonstrate that King had the backing of the black community at large.¹⁹

In her claim, Emily Bryant of Prince George County called on freedwoman Ada Jones and freedmen Mingo and Robert Jones to provide testimony. Ada Jones had been hired out to Bryant during the war, and in 1876 she recalled seeing soldiers take numerous farm animals and several vehicles from her employer, whom she had not seen since the war but continued to call "Miss Emily." Similarly, Lucinda Thomas, a Halifax County woman who had lost numerous provisions to the army after Lee's surrender, asked freedwoman Nancy Abbott and freedman Dandridge Dennis to corroborate her

¹⁸Claim of Elizabeth Dennis, Case File #1964, Disallowed Claims, SCC, (M1407, F1454), RG 233, NARA.

¹⁹Mullen came to Virginia in 1862 on the U.S. gunboat *Chicora*. Claim of Sarah King, Case File #641, Norfolk County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA. After the war, he had been recommended to Freedmen's Bureau Assistant Commissioner Oliver Brown as a potential officeholder. Richard Lowe, "Local Black Leaders During Reconstruction in Virginia," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 103 (April 1995): 188.

claim that Union soldiers had taken her property. Abbott, who had been a slave until the end of the war but had not belonged to Thomas, testified in 1878 that she had been present when Union soldiers took foodstuffs and fodder from Thomas. She recalled hearing the men tell Thomas that they had not eaten all day and that she would be paid for the provisions. Dennis remembered that Thomas had complained to the soldiers about their appropriations.²⁰

Even some white female claimants who did not use black witnesses recognized the value of associating themselves with emancipation and freedpeople, regardless of the weakness of the actual connection during the war. Mary Frances Morton, daughter of deceased claimant Ann Hodges of Norfolk County, attempted to establish her anti-slavery credentials. She stated: "I was rejoiced when I heard of Lee's surrender. I never believed in Slavery, nor did my father." She noted that her father had freed three slaves when she was young, adding, "I have often seen the colored people he freed." Claimant Sallie Hughes of Halifax County, who testified that she had not been able to do anything to help the Union during the war, pleaded for compensation for a horse taken from her after the surrender. She described how she had ordered a "servant"--probably a slave--to hide the horse in a gully. Yet to the question, "Were you at all times during the war willing and ready to do whatever you could in aid of the Union cause?" she responded:

²⁰Mingo Jones had belonged to Emily Bryant during the war. Robert Jones's wife had belonged to Bryant, and he had been hired by her for one year. Dennis had never been a slave of Thomas's. Claim of Emily Bryant, Case File #13981, Prince George County, Approved Claims, Claim of Lucinda Thomas, Case File #2439, Halifax County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA.

"Willing to give up my negroes at any time to stop the war."²¹ If Morton's anti-slavery sentiments were deeper than Hughes's, both women tacitly associated the Union war effort with emancipation, and both sought to establish their own, tenuous claim to the coming of freedom.

A public counterpart to white Virginia women who submitted SCC claims was writer Orra Langhorne, who published extensively on the aftermath of emancipation in Virginia. Langhorne, who grew up in a slaveholding family and lived in Lynchburg after the war, wrote numerous articles for Hampton Institute's monthly Southern Workman in which she chronicled the lives of black Virginians and promoted their progress toward middle-class respectability. In July 1876, the Workman published a letter purportedly written by Langhorne to a woman who had served as a mammy in her family. The former mammy, who was not identified by name, worked at Hampton Institute as a forewoman, and her two sons attended school there. Although Langhorne's letter was allegedly written in response to a missive from the freedwoman, it was obviously crafted for publication in the Workman.²²

²¹Claim of Ann Eliza Hodges, Case File #247, Norfolk County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA; Claim of Sallie P. Hughes, Case File #11251, Halifax County, (National Archives Microfiche Publication M1407, #4518) Southern Claims Commission Barred Claims, 1871-1880, Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, RG 233, NARA; U.S. Congress, House, Fourth General Report of the Commissioners of Claims, 43d Cong., 2d sess., 1875, H. Misc. Doc. 18, serial 1653, 38.

²²Southern Workman 5 (July 1876): 50, 54. Orra Gray Langhorne grew up in Rockingham County and graduated from Hollins Institute in Roanoke in 1859. Her father, a wealthy Unionist lawyer, sent most of his slaves to Ohio during the war. Married to Thomas Nelson Langhorne of Lynchburg in 1871, she helped him to run a general store and manage rental properties. They had no children. The Langhorne employed a cook, a house servant, and a gardener. Orra Langhorne began writing a regular column for the Southern Workman in July 1880. A Republican who viewed

In her optimistic, maternalistic letter, Langhorne articulated her support for black education in general and Hampton Institute in particular. She described the African-American residents of Lynchburg as neat housekeepers and well-behaved citizens. In her opinion, their circumstances were improving steadily; she attributed their progress in comparison with that of poor whites to the blacks' association with elite white slaveholders before the war. In a depiction of racial harmony, she detailed the contributions of black and white residents to the erection of a new African Baptist Church. She concluded by sending her love to the former mammy's children.²³ While Langhorne was better attuned, and more sympathetic, than most former mistresses to the development of black community life, her desire to maintain ties with individual former slaves was not atypical. When visiting former slaves, former mistresses tended to replicate the rituals of maternalism and deference developed under slavery.²⁴

herself as a radical, she applauded emancipation and favored equal civil and political rights for African-Americans. Charles E. Wynes, ed., Southern Sketches from Virginia, 1881-1901 (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1964), xv-xxxix.

²³Langhorne also sent love from Bessie, whose relationship to the former mammy was not identified. Southern Workman 5 (July 1876): 54. In 1885, Langhorne published in the Workman a piece entitled "A Slave Who Had His Way," which was about a slave educated to be a missionary to Africa by his mistress in Rockbridge County. He refused to go to Africa as she wished, so she set him up as a tanner. He remained loyal to her during the war and afterward became a minister. Southern Workman (Jan. 1885): 4.

²⁴M.L. Comfort to David Comfort III, Greenfield, 20 Jan. 1869, Comfort Family Papers, VHS; Sarah P. Payne to Cousin Mary, 2 January 1871, 97, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS. For a pictorial representation of the tension that sometimes characterized visits from former mistresses to former slaves, see Winslow Homer's A Visit From the Old Mistress (1876), probably conceived during the artist's travels in and around Petersburg in the mid-1870s, in Peter H. Wood and Karen C.C. Dalton, Winslow Homer's Images of Blacks: The Civil War and Reconstruction Years (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1988), 88, 92-95 (image on 93).

Former slaveholder Sallie Taliaferro of Gloucester County went to the homes of former slaves when she wanted them to work for her. Recreating her former role as mistress, Taliaferro also paid calls on part-time household workers when they were ill or otherwise distressed. In early April 1872, she sent dinner to Milly Thornton one evening and then visited her the next day; Milly's husband John had left her. By early the next year, John had returned. Taliaferro again visited Milly when John was convicted of an unspecified crime and sentenced to the penitentiary. Milly's disquiet was alleviated when Taliaferro's husband William, in a classic paternalistic gesture, arranged for a new trial for John.²⁵

By visiting former mistresses, former slave women took the initiative in prolonging the relationship. In July 1883, for example, Pattie Scott of Charlotte County happily received a visit from Celia, who had nursed Scott as an infant and currently worked as a cook for one of her cousins. Esther, an elderly freedwoman who visited Scott in March 1884 and June 1885, elicited pity from her. Scott described Esther as a "poor old Creature," and she gave her some meat and sugar after the 1885 visit. Scott also received visits from Sallie, a domestic worker, after she married and went from full- to part-time work. While comfortable with, and usually gratified by, visits from former slaves, Scott expressed anxiety when called on by a black woman with whom she apparently did not have an established relationship. On 25 January 1884, she recorded in

²⁵John Thornton may have been one of about thirty black voters whom Sallie Taliaferro listed as supporters of her husband William Booth Taliaferro in his victorious race as a Conservative candidate for the House of Delegates in November 1873. Taliaferro represented Gloucester County until 1879. Sallie Taliaferro Diary, 7 April 1872, 8 April 1872, 5-8 March 1873, 23 Oct. 1886; Sally Lyons Taliaferro to James Lyons Taliaferro, 8 November 1873, William Booth Taliaferro Papers, W&M.

her diary: "Mary Stirling came in today, but I do not know how to entertain negroes."

The absence of a longstanding personal tie, combined with Stirling's racial identity and possibly her high economic status relative to that of Scott's other black acquaintances, caused Scott discomfort.²⁶

The ritual of exchanging gifts played a significant role in visits between former mistresses and former slaves who remained in contact after the war. Some former mistresses gave food and clothing to former slaves who were elderly, sick, poor, or otherwise distressed.²⁷ These donations enabled former slaveholding women to resurrect the role of benevolent slave mistress that abolition had seemingly eliminated.²⁸ While such gifts gave poor and infirm former slaves additional sustenance, they could also reinforce their subordination.

Virginia Hankins's description of an 1882 visit with Lina, the freedwoman who

²⁶Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 6 Jul. 1883, 25 March 1884, 12 June 1885, 28 Jan. 1884, 29 Feb. 1884, 21 March 1884, 29 April 1884, 18 Sept. 1884, 25 Jan. 1884, VHS. For other expressions of satisfaction over visits from former slaves, see Richard Elder, "Servantgalism in Virginia," Lippincott's Magazine (July 1871): 636; Josephine Augusta Knight to Natalie Friend Blanton, 30 April 1957, Ellet-St. Catherine's Alumnae Association Papers, VHS; Lynchburg Virginian, 2 Jan. 1885, [1]. For a suggestion that former slaveholders expected such solicitude from their former slaves, see Letitia M. Burwell's discussion of Mary Custis Lee's disappointment with her former slaves, in Plantation Reminiscences, 67.

²⁷Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 29 Jan. 1884, VHS; Sallie Lyons Taliaferro Diary, 9 Feb. 1874, 1 Oct. 1874, and 16 Feb. 1875, William Booth Taliaferro Papers, W&M. See also Taliaferro, 4 Sept. 1888, for a donation of a dress and bread to "old Mrs. Smith," probably a poor white woman.

²⁸Susan Tucker suggests that female supervisors who gave gifts to female servants in the segregated South took pride in maternalism because they saw their gestures as independent economic actions outside of male control. Tucker, Telling Memories Among Southern Women: Domestic Workers and their Employers in the Segregated South (N. Y.: Schocken Books, 1988), 149.

had married in 1869, offers a glimpse of the significance that a maternalist like Hankins placed on the ritual of gift-giving. In 1882, Hankins was a teacher at the Norfolk College for Young Ladies. For Easter break that year, she visited Smithfield, in Isle of Wight County. Lina went to see Hankins while she was there. In a letter to her brother, Hankins described Lina: "She has broken very much and looked poor--was very poorly dressed. I felt so sorry for her, she seemed so overjoyed to see me." Hankins then recounted her attempts to alleviate Lina's poverty: "I carried her a dress of [sister] Mary's--& the bed-quilt Mary made for her when she was a little girl & gave her (\$2.00) two big silver dollars, she seemed delighted--And since I came back I have sent her a neat dress--so she may have something nice for Sundays--she said she never went to Church now because she had not bought a nice dress for a long time." The gifts enabled Hankins to recreate the role of the slave mistress who dispensed clothing and encouraged church attendance. In Hankins's portrayal of the visit, Lina was simply a passive receiver, but she may well have played a more active role in the ritual. In addition, Lina may have accentuated her poverty and her non-attendance at church in an effort to elicit sympathy and the concomitant gifts.²⁹

Some of the contributions of food and clothing by former owners were made at the behest of former slaves, many of whom saw themselves as entitled recipients rather than as supplicants. Some Virginia freedpeople routinely requested that former

²⁹Virginia Hankins to Louis Hankins, Norfolk College for Young Ladies, 16 April 1882, Hankins Family Papers, VHS. For a case in which a female employer placed greater emphasis on "proper" clothing for her cook's daughter than did the cook herself, who was saving her money to buy land, see Mrs. Dr. J.H. Fultz to Wash. May, Esq., Staunton, Va., 20 Dec. 1875, and Leanna Bickley to Mr. Wash May, Staunton, Va., 28 Feb. 1876, Mrs. J.H. Fultz Letters, Miscellaneous Papers, Presgraves Purchase, UVA.

slaveholders share their resources. One former mistress bitterly declared after the war, "This is the first rule in their lesson of freedom--to get all they can out of white folks and give as little as possible in return." Marie Gordon Pryor Rice of Charlotte County remembered that both poor blacks and whites in her neighborhood had requested shrouds from her for ill family members. She recalled that the sick relatives sometimes recovered and transformed their burial shrouds into everyday apparel.³⁰ Gifts thus became appropriations. As late as 1901, Virginian Orra Langhorne observed that many African-American cooks sought both the benefits of freedom and the maternalistic food allotments of slavery; cooks made clear their resentment of employers who refused to allow them to take home food for their families.³¹

Still, "gifts" to former slaves who had become employees could be used to blur the distinction between slave and free labor. Pattie Scott gave out Christmas gifts to

³⁰Avary, Dixie After the War, 190. Rice received contributions from her Northern friends for poor relief and education among local blacks and whites, which probably encouraged them to appeal to her for assistance in times of need. When her Northern friends visited, Rice brought them to see the quilts made by Milly Fields, the wife of one of Rice's former slaves who had become a renter after the war. Marie Gordon Pryor Rice, Reminiscences, ca. 1855-1885 (typescript), VHS, 17-18.

³¹Orra Langhorne, "Domestic Service in the South," Journal of Social Science 39 (Nov. 1901): 172-173. David Katzman defines food baskets as appropriations rather than gifts; because servants had virtual autonomy in the kitchen, they determined how much leftover food they would take home. Katzman, Seven Days A Week, 197. See also Hunter, "Household Workers," 137-140. In his discussion of relations of power between elites and subordinates, James Scott argues that subordinates exercise agency in manipulating power relations to achieve their own ends. He cautions, however, that the relations of power have been dictated by the dominant elites, who define the behavior of subordinates as a reflection of inherent inferiority rather than as a response to unequal power relations. James C. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990), 34-36. For a vivid example of Scott's second point, see Matthew Page Andrews, comp., The Women of the South in War Times, new ed. (Baltimore: The Norman, Remington Co., 1923), 332-335.

workers in the early 1880s. She replicated the mistress-slave tradition even to the types of presents she distributed. A day after Christmas in 1882, Scott gave some of her deceased husband's clothing to servants who worked for her, just as she might have done had they still been slaves. Early on Christmas the following year, her son Embry "went out & caught all of the servants Xmas gift." Pattie later distributed the presents, which were probably pigs or fowls.³²

During the postwar period, the lines between benevolence and compensation were fuzzy. In May 1868, Mrs. M.S. Hughes of Halifax County described the pay that she had given to a freedwoman named Caroline Crowder the previous year. She had paid Crowder forty dollars and provided food for her family of six. Hughes had also given them "presents" worth ten to fifteen dollars. When Crowder's teenaged son left the family to work on his own, Hughes told Crowder that she could no longer give her wages because the son had been "the only able one amongst them." Hughes did continue to feed the family and give them cotton to spin for their clothes. She testified, "I feel sorry for her or I would not feed them that are here for what they do." Hughes defined the family's provisions as charity rather than remuneration.³³

Some freedwomen chose to offset contributions of food and used clothing from

³²Pattie Scott Diary, 26 Dec. 1882, 25 Dec. 1883, VHS.

³³Hughes appears to have been testifying on Crowder's behalf in her effort to be compensated for her son's labor by his new employers. Statement of Mrs. M.S. Hughes, 5 May 1868, Records Relating to Complaints and Indentures, 1865-1868, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Halifax County, #4021, RG 105, NARA.

their employers with gifts of their own.³⁴ Pattie Scott recorded gifts from her household workers, including vegetables, plants, chickens, and baskets. When she worked full-time, Sallie lent Scott fifty cents when a neighbor called in a debt. In December 1882, some of Scott's servants planted periwinkle on top of her husband's grave the day after he was buried. In her will, probated in 1906, former slave Sylvia Hill left small sums of money to several members of the Gwathmey family, for whom she had worked since at least 1867.³⁵

Freedwomen sought to separate maternalistic gestures from control over their non-work lives. Marie Gordon Pryor Rice of Charlotte County recalled with exasperation that although former slaves had demanded the continuation of such contributions as "light-bread" for the sick and flowers for the deceased, they had kept

³⁴Susan Tucker has found evidence that, under segregation, some domestic servants in Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana refused to accept leftover food from whites and requested that they not be given food to make up for low wages. Others gave gifts to their employers in an effort to add balance to the relationship. Tucker, Telling Memories, 146-147. Many white employers defined black workers' acceptance of leftovers and hand-me-downs as a weakness. For early twentieth-century examples in which prominent white Virginians used cooks' appropriation of leftover food to criticize the work ethic and social behavior of black men and the morality of black families, see Langhorne, "Domestic Service," 172-173, and Katzman, Seven Days, 198. See also Hunter, "Household Workers," 264-266, and Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow, 76.

³⁵Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 12 March 1884, 18 Oct. 1884, 13 May 1885, 27 Nov. 1882, 24 December 1882, VHS; Will of Silvia Hill, 19 July 1906, and Deed of Gift, William Gwathmey to Sylvia Hill, 27 Feb. 1867, Gwathmey Family Papers, VHS. The periwinkle Scott referred to was probably the evergreen plant, but periwinkle is also the name of a mollusk shell; decorating graves with shells was a West African practice transferred by slaves to the upland South and adopted by some white Virginians. Mechal Sobel, The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1987), 219-221. See also the reference to a loan of cotton from a freedwoman to a white woman in Stephen Wood v. John H. Cole, 6 June 1868, Register of Complaints, June-Dec. 1868, Office of the Assistant Subassistant Commissioner, Halifax County, #4020 (Vol. 248), RG 105, NARA.

their political views and personal relations with their employers in "water-tight compartments." In 1881, Emma Blacknall of Norfolk made a similar observation. Her sister had sent her two dollars and a message to give to Maron, a former slave. Maron sent her thanks in return. Blacknall speculated that Maron contributed part of the money to the Good Samaritans, a mutual aid/burial society. Blacknall wrote: "I only mention this to show, they are provident--& no doubt Maron invests part of her money that way. At the same time, they don't seem to like white folks, to know much about their affairs--and I never talk about them much." Blacknall's servants had succeeded in demonstrating to her their desire to separate their work and private lives as much as possible.³⁶

Former owners' participation in former slaves' weddings and funerals combined the ritual of gift-giving with religious ceremony and social approbation. Some freedpeople requested the assistance of former owners with these events and expected their attendance at them.³⁷ Yet this did not mean that black Virginians desired former owners or current employers to dictate or dominate their life-passage rituals; workers in Virginia probably encountered such employers as Frances Butler Leigh of Georgia, who maternalistically tried make wedding ceremonies for young freedwomen as extravagant as possible in an effort to promote marriage among all of her employees. Regardless of the assistance of prominent whites with weddings, freedwomen prepared food for

³⁶Emma Blacknall to Fannie Blow Blacknall, Norfolk, 8 Feb. 1881, Pegram Family Papers, VHS.

³⁷Broun Diary (typescript), 2 May 1865, 45, SHC; Mary Braxton Cocke Diary (#6846-i), 16 April 1866, Lucy W. Cocke Collection, Cocke Papers, UVA; Sallie Lyons Taliaferro Diary, 21 June 1872, 25-26 Jan. 1873, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; Robert Francis Engs, Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861-1890 (Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 187-188.

wedding suppers and provided housekeeping items for the new couple. Marie Gordon Pryor Rice remembered that among her African-American neighbors it was "de rigueur to give each child upon marrying a dot of bedquilts." Regardless of the presence of prominent whites at some funerals of black Virginians, many of these events continued to be solemnized by large processions of black residents, as they had under slavery.³⁸

In conjunction with such weddings and funerals, white maternalism often co-existed uneasily with black communal life. The unexpectedly large gathering of black residents of Surry County at the wedding that the Hankins's family sponsored for their servant Lina in 1869 demonstrates how white maternalists could never completely control the events they organized for their black employees.

Similarly, the tension between maternalism and the mutual assistance that black servants often provided to each other is evident in Pattie Scott's depiction of the preparations for the wedding of Sallie, her favorite servant.³⁹ In early 1884, Sallie planned to marry, after which she would end her full-time employment. Before the wedding, Scott entered into a contest of wills over the wedding preparations with Paulina, who worked for Scott as a cook. More than two weeks before the ceremony,

³⁸Leigh, Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation, 161; Rice, *Reminiscences* (typescript), 15, VHS; Walter L. Fleming, ed., Documentary History of Reconstruction: Political, Military, Social, Religious, Educational, and Industrial, 1865 to the Present Time (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, Co., 1907; repr., N.Y.: Peter Smith, 1950), 2:444-445.

³⁹Like Lina, Sallie was considered essential to her employer's household. For references to Scott's reliance on Sallie, see *Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary*, 23 Nov. 1882 and 29 Jan. 1883. In the postwar period, white Virginians sometimes expressed wariness of large wedding celebrations and funerals held by their black neighbors, just as they had under slavery. Ervin Jordan, Black Confederates, 169; *Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary*, 20 May 1883, VHS; *Robert H. Allen Diary*, 11 Nov. 1866, *Allen Family Papers*, VHS.

Scott wrote: "Paulina commenced baking cake for Sallie's wedding & it puts me out no little." Scott resented Paulina's decision that it was time to leave off her normal duties to begin to prepare for the wedding. It seems the two women came to a compromise: a week later, Scott hired a servant named Mary to do her cooking while Paulina prepared the wedding feast.⁴⁰

Despite maternalistic efforts on behalf of Sallie's wedding--in addition to making jelly for the wedding, Scott donated sugar, butter, flour, and a ham and shoulder for Paulina to use--Scott never felt that she controlled the event. In the end, she enjoyed herself, despite feeling "rather at a loss" among so many black celebrants, and praised Paulina and Sallie for their hospitality. Two nights of revelry among the workers, the first possibly centered in and around the kitchen, followed. Paulina completed the ritual when she presented Scott and her son Embry with some wedding cake the day after the ceremony.⁴¹

Scott's uneasiness during the festivities derived from her limited control not only over Paulina and Sallie, but also over the community of freedpeople with whom Sallie associated. To be sure, Scott drew from this community time and again in her hiring of part-time domestic and field workers. Like other employers, she knew that freedpeople's family and kin networks were essential to the successful running of her farm. Yet, like other employers, she also viewed ties of family and kin among freedpeople as a potential

⁴⁰Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 7 Jan. 1884, 14 Jan. 1884, VHS.

⁴¹Scott Diary, 10 Jan. 1884, 21 Jan. 1884, 23 Jan. 1884, 24 Jan. 1884, VHS; Virginia Hankins, Bacon's Castle, to William Albert Hankins, 1 Oct. 1869, Hankins Family Papers, VHS.

threat because they could encourage mobility and otherwise interfere with productivity.⁴²

When some of Pattie Scott's former slaves began to purchase land in the early 1880s, she expressed a mixture of regret and relief. In October 1883, she recorded her ambivalence: "I feel real sad to think the old family has to be broken up but I knew it would have to be soon for the hands are getting old & it will save me some trouble to know they are settled on their own places." She tried to provide gifts for those who moved. In late December 1883, she wrote: "I gave old Paulina Cousin Susan's bedquilt as she had belonged to her. She seemed very much pleased." In addition, Scott gave a cow to Paulina's husband Dick. Scott's attempt to help former slaves set up housekeeping reflects the slow transition from maternalism to patronage, which signified greater physical and emotional distance between the two parties.⁴³

In their diaries and letters, former slaveholding women like Pattie Scott chronicled the growth of an increasingly autonomous community life among former slaves. Former mistresses detailed this evolution when they reflected on changes since emancipation, marked extraordinary events, and made note of their workers' activities as part of the record of work performed and time off. Employers were keenly aware of the broad outlines of black community life and kept themselves apprised of developments that might affect their workers' performance on the job.

⁴²Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow, 134, 221; Weis, "Negotiating Freedom," 1-2.

⁴³Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 10 Oct. 1883, 21 Dec. 1883, 29 Dec. 1884, 31 March 1884, VHS. In his turn-of-the-century study of Farmville, Virginia, W.E.B. Du Bois noted that some black entrepreneurs and landowners had benefitted from assistance from their former owners after the war. Du Bois, "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study," Bulletin of the Department of Labor 3 (Jan. 1898), 18, 29.

For white women, changes in the non-work lives of freedpeople reflected the transition of black Virginians from slavery to freedom. In a letter to her cousin in January 1871, Sarah Payne of Campbell County compared Christmas during slavery and after emancipation, lamenting the change: "I tell you we have nothing like our old time Virginia Christmas now. It used to be a merry frolicking time for old and young, white and black. . . . Now we see very little of the coloured people during Christmas. They leave the white people to wait on themselves and they enjoy their freedom."⁴⁴ In January 1875, Sallie Taliaferro of Gloucester County noted that local black residents had held a fair. On another occasion, she recorded: "Coloured Excursion on Northampton."⁴⁵ In December 1882, during the height of the Readjuster movement, Pattie Scott recorded in her diary: "The hands all went to the CoHouse Women & all." In 1883 and 1884, she made further references to the attendance of all hands at elections or court proceedings.⁴⁶ Scott also documented the social lives of her female domestic workers, from their

⁴⁴Sarah Payne to Cousin Mary, 2 Jan 1871, 97, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS.

⁴⁵The Northampton was probably a boat. Sallie Taliaferro Diary, 7 Jan. 1875, 17 June 1886, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M. For a discussion of "colored fairs," which included "ladies' departments," held in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Richmond in 1884, see Southern Workman 14 (Jan. 1885): 4. For freedpeople's enthusiasm for excursions, which usually referred to inexpensive pleasure trips aboard trains, often sponsored by churches or benevolent groups as fund-raisers, see Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia (Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), 65, and Jones, Labor of Love, 131-132.

⁴⁶Scott's attention to women's involvement is similar to the comments of Northern missionaries who described freedwomen's participation in large political meetings in the years between 1865 and 1868. Diary of Pattie Jane Watkins Scott, 7 Nov. 1882, 26 Dec. 1882, 7 May 1883, 15 Dec. 1883, 4 Nov. 1884, VHS.

attendance at quilting parties and weddings to their visits to a photographer.⁴⁷

Former mistresses also commented upon the two institutional mainstays of postwar community life among black Virginians, schools and churches, both of which were enabling freedpeople to become increasingly independent of former slaveowners. Schools and churches, as well as benevolent societies and civic groups, became vital social and political organizations outside of the direct control, if not beyond the occasional interference, of white Virginians.

Newly founded schools were one of emancipation's most significant legacies. Contemporaries and scholars have documented Virginia freedpeople's outpouring of support for schools. In January 1866, J.W. Alvord, inspector of schools and finances for the Freedmen's Bureau, reported that there were ninety schools for black students operating in Virginia, with close to thirteen thousand pupils and nearly two hundred teachers. Many freed adults, especially those who lived in urban areas, took advantage of the proliferation of schools during the immediate postwar period to obtain some education. From Fort Monroe in November 1869, for example, a missionary teacher reported on a forty-five-year-old widow who ate half-meals in order to save her ten-cent tuition fee so that she could attend night school and learn to write. Inspector Alvord speculated that this great desire for education derived in part from freedpeople's awareness that power and influence among whites accompanied learning. It also came from their observation of the resolve of many slaveholders to withhold schooling from them under slavery and their awareness of the continued opposition to black schools

⁴⁷Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 3 Feb. 1883, 26 Feb. 1883, 23 July 1883, 20 March 1884, 25 March 1884, 28 June 1884, 6 April 1885, 12 April 1885, 27 May 1885, VHS.

among many white Virginians.⁴⁸

The reminiscences of former slave Matilda Carter demonstrate how observations freedwomen had made during slavery could likewise inspire blacks to seek schooling. Carter remembered the importance that her mother, Ellen Wynder, had placed on education. Wynder had made sure that Carter attended schools established in Hampton during the war. As Carter recalled, "She uster tell me to try to be like Miss Mary Anne, mistress' daughter, an' all de other spectable white folks' girls"; in the area of education, Wynder viewed her former owner's daughter as a model for her daughter's life as a freedwoman. After the war, Carter attended Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, where she would have received industrial training.⁴⁹

⁴⁸U.S. Congress, House, Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1866, H. Rept. 30, serial 1273, pt. 2 of appended testimony, 244, 249-261 (hereafter JCR); American Missionary (AM) 14 (Feb. 1870): 32; Litwack, Been in the Storm, 473. In May of 1869, the American Missionary Association had sixty-two workers, including missionaries, superintendents, and teachers, in Virginia. Two years later that number had fallen to nineteen. By the mid-1870s, the AMA was describing black suffrage as a failure and criticizing freedpeople for not appreciating the association's contributions to their lives. Shortages of funds because of the national economic depression helped to foster this disaffection. AM 13 (May 1869), 98-99; AM 15 (May 1871): 97; Foner, Reconstruction, 527. In April 1871, Samuel Chapman Armstrong issued a call for teachers that was printed the following month in the American Missionary magazine. He reported from Hampton that he had received requests from numerous Virginia counties and towns for black teachers. He assured readers that former Confederates appeared reconciled to schools for black citizens. That same month, Sarah Payne wrote from rural Campbell County that many schools for black children were opening in the area, at least two of which were being run by white residents. AM 15 (May 1871): 102-103; Sarah P. Payne to Mary, 5 April 1871, 110, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS.

⁴⁹Perdue, Jr., et al., eds., Weevils in the Wheat, 69-70. The Hampton Agricultural and Normal Institute opened in April 1868. It was founded by the American Missionary Association and supported in part by the Freedmen's Bureau. Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 234. Armstrong relished the reversal underway as schools replaced slave cabins; he exulted that Hampton had been transformed from "the point of departure

Graduates of Hampton Institute who fanned out across Virginia as teachers in schools for freedchildren became role models themselves, eventually replacing the "spectable white folks' girls" in the eyes of black Virginians. One such teacher, Jennie L. Ivy, taught in Halifax County after graduating from the institute in the class of 1873-74. In December 1874, she sent a positive report back to Hampton: "The parents of the children seem to be very anxious for them to go to school, and they come very regularly and learn very fast." In addition to teaching, Ivy solicited subscribers to the Southern Workman, Hampton Institute's monthly magazine.⁵⁰

The parents of children who attended schools such as Ivy's sacrificed their older children's labor for part of the year, and they also supported schools directly as state and local government appropriations to public schools developed slowly and erratically. The expression "chickens for shoes" emerged after the war, because mothers allocated the money they saved by selling eggs and chickens to the purchase of shoes for their children so that they could walk to school. With little cash on hand, freedwomen and men made in-kind payments of fruit, eggs, vegetables, and poultry to their children's teachers.

of American slavery" to "the point of departure of intellectual freedom and power." Armstrong, who believed that blacks were intellectually inferior to whites, stressed vocational education and opposed black suffrage. AM 15 (Oct. 1871): 217; AM 15 (May 1871): 102-103 (quote on 103).

⁵⁰Ivy forwarded a list of subscribers with her letter. The Southern Workman included articles on activities at the institute, as well as letters from teachers in the field, national and local news, literary pieces, and discussions of such subjects as African-American community life, agricultural and educational developments, and missionary work abroad. In a paternalist and generally optimistic tone, the magazine preached hard work, temperance, thrift, Christianity, and morality; it presented the stable, middle-class property-owner as the ideal freedman and discouraged political activity among black Virginians. Southern Workman 4 (Feb. 1875): 4.

These contributions were necessary despite the provision in the constitution of 1869 for public schools in Virginia. Funds for schools were shortly being diverted from education to debt reduction; before the war, Virginia had gone into debt to support the construction of internal improvements, particularly railroads, and by 1870 the debt stood at \$45,000,000. The diversion of funds, and the closing of local schools that accompanied it, helped the Readjusters to gain political power in Virginia in 1879, and in the early 1880s that party provided financial support for public schools throughout the state by readjusting the debt and increasing taxes on railroads and other corporations. Black Readjusters in the General Assembly also succeeded during the 1881-1882 session in establishing Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute for Colored Persons, later Virginia State College and now a university, in Petersburg.⁵¹

Throughout the postwar period, white employers occasionally provided informal instruction to their workers. In 1866, Dr. Charles Mills of Richmond, a Virginia native who had opposed secession, informed the Joint Committee on Reconstruction that he

⁵¹Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow, 75-76, 96 (quote); Litwack, Been in the Storm, 474; Pauli Murray, Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family, Perennial Library (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1987), 182; Newby, "'The World Was All Before Them,'" 207, 215, 220-229, 233, 239, 242-243; Thomas C. Parramore with Peter C. Stewart and Tommy L. Bogger, Norfolk: The First Four Centuries (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1994), 245; Allen W. Moger, Virginia: Bourbonism to Byrd, 1870-1925 (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1968), 7, 29-30; Taylor, Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia, 268; James T. Moore, "Black Militancy in Readjuster Virginia, 1879-1883," JSH 41 (May 1975): 170, 178-179. During the war, black residents of Norfolk had contributed funds to missionary schools. From 1862 to 1865, the American Missionary Association spent \$30,000 to run its schools in the city of Norfolk; local blacks contributed \$1,000 of that total. Newby, "'The World Was All Before Them,'" 210. For the efforts of residents of Elizabeth City County to maintain their schools after public funds dried up in early 1876, see Southern Workman 5 (March 1876), 18. For references to the sale of eggs by freedwomen, see Sallie Lyons Taliaferro Diary, Cash Account for December 1875, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M.

knew of some former slaveholders who were teaching reading and writing to their former slaves, albeit in a desultory manner. He described this tutelage: "It generally devolves upon young ladies. They are now devoting a portion of their time, at intervals, to this purpose." The efforts of these young women were mirrored years later by those of Pattie Scott's young son Embry in Charlotte County. In September 1884, Scott recorded that Embry was teaching young black children in the evenings. The following May, she wrote: "Embry has started a night school among the hands."⁵²

Many black schools held annual examinations or festivals, during which children publicly participated in oral exercises to demonstrate their progress. These programs were community events that included musical performances, picnics, and sometimes even addresses by political leaders, in addition to various types of presentations by the students. A school exhibition in Lynchburg on 27 June 1866 included a recitation entitled "The world is growing old" by a normal class student named Ellen Wills, who by 1870 was herself teaching at a rural school in Amherst County. The Lynchburg event also featured tableaux on such themes as "Emancipation" and "Freedmen's Bureau." The year-end festivals held during the immediate postwar period established a tradition. In June 1882, Pattie Scott reported that all but two of her family's employees had gone to an examination at the black school. "They all came back highly pleased," she noted.⁵³

⁵²Testimony of Dr. Charles S. Mills, Washington, D.C., 17 Feb. 1866, JCR, 136-137; Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 7 Sept. 1884, 4 May 1885, VHS.

⁵³Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 10 June 1882, VHS; Samuel L. Horst, ed., The Fire of Liberty in Their Hearts: The Diary of Jacob E. Yoder of the Freedmen's Bureau School, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1866-1870 (Richmond: The Library of Virginia, 1996), 45-47, 52. Robert George Fitzgerald, grandfather of Civil Rights activist Pauli Murray, taught school in Virginia and North Carolina after the war; exercises at his schools in

Adult white men sometimes served as informal observers of year-end programs at African-American schools. Pattie Scott's husband and son attended an examination in Charlotte County in 1882. Similarly, in 1881, Sallie Taliaferro recorded that her adult son Warner had gone to the "coloured school Festival." As with weddings and funerals, black Virginians may well have invited prominent, sympathetic white men to school examinations so that they could witness the children's progress, and so that they would support the continued existence of the schools. Still, the presence of white observers typifies widespread white attentiveness to black citizens' activities in postwar Virginia.⁵⁴

That this attention was not devoid of worry is also apparent in white Virginians' descriptions of freedpeople's religious activities. In August 1872, a resident of Princess Anne County reported to the Norfolk Journal that black residents were holding a camp meeting under the leadership of three ministers. He noted that "though it was a colored camp meeting, the first families turned out in increasing numbers nightly." The white attendees were pleased with what they saw, reporting that there were no disturbances. A reminiscence by Marie Gordon Pryor Rice of Charlotte County suggests that black churchgoers sometimes responded to the presence of white observers by masking their feelings and projecting an image of unassailable propriety. Rice recalled bringing guests

1866 and 1868 included political speeches. Also, before the vote on the new state constitution for North Carolina in April 1868, Fitzgerald gave Republicans the use of his school house in Goldsboro so that they could give speeches and assemble voters to proceed to the ballot box in an orderly group. Murray, Proud Shoes, 185, 198, 201.

⁵⁴Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 10 June 1882, VHS; Sallie Lyons Taliaferro Diary, 25 May 1881, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; Daniel Crofts, Old Southampton: Politics and Society in a Virginia County, 1834-1869 (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1992), 282.

to hear Providence Burrell, a freedman, "line out" a hymn and being disappointed when he sang in a formal manner.⁵⁵

Like schools, independent black churches proliferated during and after the war. And even more than schools, churches undergirded postwar communities. They provided spiritual communion, sponsored social activities, and hosted political meetings. Ministers became prominent leaders, particularly in cities and towns. Rural areas lagged behind urban centers in attracting black preachers, so some freedpeople continued to hear sermons from white ministers who had preached to them under slavery.⁵⁶

Through churches, some freedwomen became involved in benevolent work that enabled their communities to become increasingly self-reliant. In December 1865, Baptists in Hampton formed a general temperance society, for all ages, colors, and sexes, out of three smaller groups. One woman and six men made up the committee convened to draw up a constitution and bylaws. Also in Hampton, freedwomen of the Queen Street

⁵⁵Norfolk Journal, 7 Sept. 1872, [1]; Marie Gordon Pryor Rice, *Reminiscences* (typescript), 11-12, VHS. Rice's black neighbors were probably aware of the sometimes disdainful curiosity harbored by white observers of their religious practices. In June 1866, for example, young Mary Jeffery Galt of Norfolk recorded in her diary that she had gone with others in a carriage "to see baptising niggers" near Fort Monroe. Mary Jeffery Galt Diary (1860-1866), 6 June 1866, Galt Papers III, W&M. For reference to a turn-of-the-century Primitive Baptist camp meeting attended by black and white residents of Danville, see Danville Register, 18 Aug. 1896, [1].

⁵⁶Christ Church Vestry Book, Elizabeth River Parish, Norfolk County, 325-329, Library of Virginia, Richmond (LVA); Engs, Freedom's First Generation, 13; Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 307-311, 350; Sallie Lyons Taliaferro Diary, 20 Nov. 1881, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; Sarah P. Payne to Mary, 20 July 1867, 40, Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript), VHS; Danville Daily Post, 7 Oct. 1879, [2]. Examples of social activities sponsored by churches include an October 1868 trip by Norfolk blacks on the steamer Eolus to a large baptizing ceremony in Mathews County and an 1872 church fair in Suffolk which included nightly performances of a religious dance. Norfolk Journal, 3 Oct 1868, [1], 27 Dec. 1872, [1].

Baptist Church attempted to influence local rowdies by going on a candlelight march and hymn-sing through a seedy and boisterous part of town on a Saturday night. Their efforts were not appreciated by their targets, who swore at them.⁵⁷

Many of the benevolent organizations formed by churches offered mutual-aid services for members, including housing for poor women, relief in times of financial distress, and assistance to widows, as well as burial and accident insurance. For added protection, some freedwomen belonged to more than one association and received benefits from all of them when in need. One benevolent group active in Norfolk was the Good Samaritans. Members paid fifty cents per month for the assurance that they would receive assistance when sick, have access to a nurse, and have their doctors' bills and funeral expenses paid. The Colored Female Providence Society provided similar services in Norfolk, as did the Grand United Order of Tents. The latter organization had been founded before the war by two slaves, Annetta Lane and Harriet Taylor, as a secret society to assist runaways. In 1867, the association emerged as a female lodge.⁵⁸

⁵⁷True Southerner, 14 Dec. 1865, [1]; Engs, Hampton, 184. In 1870, a black temperance society in the Eastern Shore county of Accomac had more than one hundred members. That summer the group held a picnic which was accompanied by a march of about four hundred people through Drummondtown. AM 14 (July 1870), 153. In 1894, the black chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Norfolk had two hundred members. Thomas C. Parramore, with Peter C. Stewart and Tommy L. Bogger, Norfolk: The First Four Centuries (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1994), 260.

⁵⁸Parramore, et al., Norfolk, 251; Philip Morgan, ed., "Don't Grieve After Me": The Black Experience in Virginia, 1619-1986 (Hampton, Va.: Hampton Univ., 1986), 44; Southern Workman 5 (Jan. 1876), 2-3; Emma Blacknall to Fannie Blow Blacknall, Norfolk, 8 Feb. 1881, Pegram Family Papers, VHS. Cassandra Newby has identified seven church benevolent organizations, five secret fraternal organizations, three social organizations, and five halls active in Norfolk between 1861 and 1884, in "'The World Was All Before Them,'" 351-352.

While women in Norfolk undoubtedly had more organizations to choose from than did their counterparts who lived in smaller urban areas or in the countryside, benevolent organizations flourished in many Virginia communities in the postwar period. When W.E.B. Du Bois visited Farmville in 1897, he discovered that the oldest benevolent society in town had been organized by women more than twenty years earlier. Black residents of nearby Charlotte County belonged to the financially healthy Grand United Order of Moses.⁵⁹

The comments of an elderly freedwoman named Lethe suggest how important benevolent organizations were in establishing some autonomy for former slaves who continued to work for their former owners. Lethe's employer, Marie Gordon Pryor Rice, described in her memoir how she had reacted when some black residents of Danville came to Charlotte County and established the order of True Reformers. Rice warned workers against joining the organization, and she received some grumbling in return from Lethe: "I counseled prudence, but old Aunt Lethe muttered: 'I wish white folks would let our mahters 'lone; we don' meddle wid them.'" Rice claimed to have been unsurprised when, as she perhaps self-servingly remembered it, the True Reformers left

⁵⁹Jones, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow, 126; Du Bois, "Negroes of Farmville, Va.," 36; Jane H. Kobelski, ed., Readings in Black and White: Lower Tidewater Virginia (Portsmouth, Va.: Portsmouth Public Library, 1982), 40. In 1879, the Danville Daily Post listed four black secret associations: Colored Masons, G.W. Order of Odd Fellows, Good Samaritans, and True Friends of Charity. Danville Daily Post, 7 Oct. 1879, [2]. Elsa Barkley Brown argues that public life among black Richmonders became more fractured in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in part because arenas for public activity became more numerous with the expansion of associational life. Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," Public Culture 7 (1994): 126-141.

with all of the money paid into the fund.⁶⁰

In 1883, a white woman from Birmingham, Alabama, who testified before the United States Senate Committee on Labor and Capital described (and exaggerated) the security that mutual-aid societies gave to domestic workers, an autonomy that decreased the control of employers like herself: "There is a society organized among them to look after and provide for the wants of those who are out of a job. That makes them perfectly independent and relieves them from all fear of being discharged, because when they are discharged they go right straight to some of these 'sisters.'" It is no wonder that employers of household workers were wary of benevolent organizations organized by African-Americans after the war.⁶¹

Former slaveholders like Marie Rice sometimes took satisfaction in, and probably exaggerated, tensions that arose among black Virginians in their formation of new

⁶⁰Lethe had served as a maid to Rice's mother-in-law, and she often "provoked" Rice. Rice, *Reminiscences* (typescript), 7, 9, VHS. Rice's mention of the loss of the fund may have been a reference to 1887, when sixty-six black residents joined the order and gave their insurance-certificate payments to a white storekeeper to keep safe until the money could be forwarded to Richmond. The storekeeper informed other white residents of the order's activities, and some of these men intimidated the local branch until it disbanded. The incident led William Washington Browne, the group's founder, to recommend that the order open its own bank, which it did in 1888. At the turn of the century, the Grand Fountain, United Order of True Reformers, was the largest and most economically successful black business and social organization in the country. Founded after the war as a temperance society by Browne, who was a politically conservative racial separatist, the order's services at the time of its collapse in 1910 included insurance, banking, real estate, stores, printing, building and loan, a weekly newspaper, a concert hall, a children's group, and an old folks' home. James D. Watkinson, "William Washington Browne and the True Reformers of Richmond, Virginia," *VMHB* 97 (July 1989): 375-398.

⁶¹Walter L. Fleming, ed., Documentary History of Reconstruction: Political, Military, Social, Religious, Educational, and Industrial, 1865 to the Present (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1907; repr. (2 vols. in 1), N.Y.: Peter Smith, 1950), 2:444-445.

institutions after the war. Yet such fissures were inevitable, particularly during a period of social transition and among a population whose resources were so limited. In November 1868, the Daughters of Harmonia took clergyman James Thoroughgood to the mayor's court in Portsmouth to recover thirty-five dollars that they had lent him; Mayor Stokes ruled in their favor. In Norfolk in November 1872, three male and six female members of the Sons and Daughters of David seceded and organized a new association. Members of the original group appealed to the mayor for the return of the money that the seceders had taken with them. He ruled that the latter should return the money, minus the dues they themselves had paid. This compromise reportedly satisfied both parties.⁶²

At public events, secret societies and benevolent organizations held quasi-political status and projected community strength and unity.⁶³ In January 1876, the Southern Workman reported that it had "been assured by members [of black lodges] that political discussion is not permitted in their meetings." Yet the magazine had earlier noted, "At the lodges all sorts of secular information is disseminated." While the organizations may not have openly addressed political questions in front of outsiders, they undoubtedly served as a basis for political organization and discussion.⁶⁴

⁶²Norfolk Journal, 2 Nov. 1868, [1], 3 Nov. 1872, [1].

⁶³Secret societies were primarily social groups, but their functions and those of benevolent organizations frequently overlapped. Howard N. Rabinowitz, Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890 (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), 227.

⁶⁴Southern Workman 5 (Jan. 1876): 2-3. In 1885, Edward Pollock, author of the Illustrated Sketch Book of Danville, Virginia: Its Manufactures and Commerce, charged that prior to the November 1883 election in Danville benevolent organizations and secret societies had raised money for Republican-Readjuster candidates and had expelled members who wanted to vote independently. Illustrated Sketch Book (Petersburg: E.R. Waddill & Bros., 1885; repr., Danville: Womack Press, 1976), 91.

During the 1860s and 1870s, fraternal and civic organizations participated in parades staged to celebrate Republican victories in national elections. On 6 November 1868, for example, numerous civic and benevolent groups in Norfolk participated in a parade in honor of President Ulysses S. Grant's election victory. Among the participants were members of the Union League, a political organization which also carried out benevolent work. A similar procession took place in Portsmouth. While newspaper accounts of these two events do not specify the presence of women's organizations, it is very possible that they participated. In Richmond during the 1870s, the Rising Daughters of Liberty, a black women's auxiliary of the Rising Sons of Liberty, was one of several women's groups that raised funds for political campaigns and encouraged men to vote. A pre-election political rally at the Southampton County courthouse in 1870 involved thousands of black residents, including men, women, and boys.⁶⁵

⁶⁵Norfolk Journal, 6 Nov. 1868, 26 Nov. 1868, 28 Nov. 1872; Rachleff, Black Labor, 31-32, Crofts, Old Southampton, 280. Cassandra Newby found parades to be the most popular social activity among black residents of postbellum Norfolk. Parades served to mark organizational and historical anniversaries and other significant community happenings, in addition to funerals. Parades often included military companies with their bands, as well as social and benevolent organizations. Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 318-319. Union Leagues had started in the North during the war. They became popular among Southern freedmen in 1867. Their primary role among blacks was political education, but they also raised money to aid the sick and supported the construction of churches and schools. Some local leagues in the South were interracial. Leagues in parts of the rural South were devastated by violence in 1868. Foner, Reconstruction, 283-285, 344. For references to League activity by black men in Virginia during the early 1870s, see Claim of Joshua Foulk, Case File #576, Nansemond County, Settled Case Files for Claims Approved by the Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880, Records of the Land, Files, and Miscellaneous Division, Records of the Accounting Officers of the Dept. of the Treasury, Record Group 217, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter Claim of Foulk, Case File #576, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA); Claim of Elizabeth F. Dennis, Case File #1964, Halifax County, (National Archives Microfiche Publication M1407, #1454), Southern Claims Commission Disallowed Claims, 1871-1880, Records of the United States House of

Benevolent groups and fraternal organizations also took part in celebrations held to mark the Fourth of July, a holiday largely shunned after the war by Virginians who had supported the Confederacy.⁶⁶ On 6 July 1872, the Norfolk Journal described the celebration in Norfolk: "The Colored Societies were out in full force, and made quite a fine display." In Portsmouth, black "brotherhood societies" paraded; it may be that women's groups and mixed-sex organizations fell within this rubric. In Suffolk, one society held a picnic outside of town; attendees included visitors from Norfolk and Portsmouth.⁶⁷

The Independence Day holiday provided African-American women with the opportunity to celebrate their freedom publicly and to demonstrate their citizenship. It also enabled some women to bring in extra income while providing a service for their communities. In 1872, the Norfolk Journal described women's role as hucksters on the Fourth. According to the Journal, in Norfolk "sable damsels occupied every shady nook

Representatives, Record Group 233, NARA (hereafter Claim of Dennis, Case File #1964, (M1407, #1454), Disallowed Claims, SCC, RG 233, NARA).

⁶⁶Frederick Douglass's famous speech, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July: An Address Delivered in Rochester, New York, on 5 July 1852," underscores the change represented by freedpeople's appropriation of the Independence Day holiday. John W. Blassingame, ed., The Frederick Douglass Papers, series 1, Speeches, Debates, and Interviews (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), 359-388. A century after Reconstruction, some African-Americans interviewed by William Wiggins disavowed the Fourth, which they characterized as "'whites' Independence,'" and "'white folks' day.'" William H. Wiggins, O Freedom! Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1987), xi-xii.

⁶⁷Regarding the celebration in Norfolk, the Journal wrote, "For the first time since 1860 the day was generally observed as a holiday," suggesting that white residents took part. The paper also indicated that in Suffolk only black residents marked the holiday. Norfolk Journal, 6 July 1872, [1].

with tables on which was displayed their stock of lemonades, cakes, pies, &c." The paper speculated that in Portsmouth "the horde of hash women who did the hodge-podge and 'cold vittle' business on Courthouse square, no doubt realized handsome returns." Hucksters also sold pies, cakes, and lemonade at Fort Monroe, where "most of them did a thriving trade, and stood by their stands until late in the night."⁶⁸

Black women, of course, had been selling wares at public markets in Virginia since the eighteenth century; there was nothing extraordinary about their activity on Independence Day, although their efforts may have held added significance for them on a holiday embraced enthusiastically as a celebration of emancipation. While most of these women undoubtedly worked as individuals, some of the vendors may have been raising funds for churches or benevolent organizations.

The holiday attire of freedpeople on the Fourth contributed to the communal nature of their celebration. With allusions to sensuality among black celebrants, the Norfolk Journal in 1872 made note of the "gaily dressed colored lasses and their swains, careless of the heat" who "promenaded the streets" in Norfolk. Describing the scene in Berkley, near Norfolk, the paper took a more dignified approach: "The colored folks turned out in full force and dressed in gala attire, thus attesting their great admiration for

⁶⁸Norfolk Journal, 6 July 1872, [1]. A hash-house was a cheap eating house; hodge-podge was a dish made of various meats and vegetables stewed together. See also Avary, Dixie After the War, 253, for a description of African-American vendors who set up in Capitol Square during the state Constitutional Convention of 1867-1868. In his study of postwar Fourth of July celebrations in Charleston, South Carolina, Adam Rothman discusses the dominant commercial role played by African-American women as vendors. Rothman, "'This Special Picnic': The Fourth of July in Charleston, S.C., 1865-1900," Paper presented at the Telling About the South Conference on Race and Southern History, Charlottesville, Va., 22-24 March 1996.

the day and its associations."⁶⁹

In 1876, black Virginians took advantage of the centennial of American independence to demonstrate their freedom and proclaim their citizenship publicly. Although the Centennial took place eleven years after the end of the war, it was not celebrated as widely by white Virginians as it was by their black neighbors. The Fourth of July and the ideal of federalism that it represented still resonated with freedpeople more than it did with former supporters of the Confederacy.

Because 4 July 1876 represented a significant national milestone, Virginia newspapers commented extensively on the commemoration. Newspapers published in the lower Tidewater contained more numerous and sympathetic accounts of Centennial celebrations staged by freedpeople than did those published in the interior Southside. The lower Tidewater newspapers also described more widespread commemoration of the Centennial by white residents. These distinctions may well reflect the greater proportion of Northerners who had settled in Hampton Roads after the war, the establishment of both Hampton Institute and the National Soldiers' Home for Union veterans, and the continued United States army presence at Fort Monroe. Regardless of region, however, most of the references to both black and white women at Independence Day celebrations portrayed them as spectators or contributors of food items.⁷⁰

⁶⁹Norfolk Journal, 6 July 1872, [1].

⁷⁰The newspapers reviewed for this discussion of the Centennial include: Brunswick Advocate, Bedford Sentinel, Lynchburg Daily News, Lynchburg Press, Lynchburg Daily Virginian, Lynchburg Tri-Weekly Virginian, Norfolk Landmark, Norfolk Virginian, Chatham Tribune, Pittsylvania Courier, Suffolk Herald, and West Point Star, all found on microfilm reel 397 (American Centennial Newspapers), LVA. The lack of attention to women in the mainstream newspapers suggests how important such independent

Both the Norfolk Landmark and the Norfolk Virginian detailed local preparations for the Centennial. The papers presented the day as a celebration for both races, but especially for black Virginians.⁷¹ In its Portsmouth section, the Landmark remarked, "Today will be particularly observed by our colored citizens with parades, speeches, &c." The paper outlined the public commemoration, organized by the Bannaker [sic] Lyceum, to be held at the North Street African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church. The evening exercises were to include music, prayer, readings of the Declaration of Independence and the Virginia Bill of Rights, and a speech by John Mercer Langston of Washington, D.C. There would be no charge for the event, which was open to all citizens.⁷²

publications as T.F. Paige's description of the 1885 Emancipation Day celebration in Norfolk were to black Virginia women. Paige, Twenty-Two Years of Freedom (Norfolk: Barron's Presses and Bindery, 1885).

⁷¹The Landmark's editorial on the Fourth described the "rebels" of 1861 as "legitimate successor[s]" of their 1776 ancestors and noted that Virginia had accepted defeat in its "second war of Independence" with dignity and strength. The piece ended on a conciliatory note with the assertion that Virginia was now a valuable member of the United States. The Virginian reported from Richmond on 3 July that the Fourth would be "more generally observed here tomorrow than ever since the war," and the paper indicated that both white and black military companies would parade. On 8 July, the Lynchburg Press reported that local residents had held the most festive celebration since the war, "as in the days of old." Norfolk Landmark, 4 July 1876, [2], Norfolk Virginian, 4 July 1876, [4], Lynchburg Press, 8 July 1876, [3].

⁷²Norfolk Landmark, 4 July 1876, [4]. Born free in Louisa County, Langston grew up in Chillicothe, Ohio, graduated from Oberlin College, and became a lawyer and a persuasive abolitionist orator. After the war, he and his family moved to Washington, D.C., where he served as inspector of schools for the Freedmen's Bureau and then as law professor and law dean at Howard University. He was later minister to Haiti and president of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. In 1888, he won election to the United States House of Representatives for Virginia's Fourth District, but his Democratic opponent contested the results, and Langston was not seated until September 1890. Luther Porter Jackson, Negro Officeholders in Virginia, 1865-1895 (Norfolk, Va.: Guide Quality Press, 1945), 45-46; Foner, Reconstruction, 143.

The Norfolk papers also described observances held by white Virginians, as well as an interracial celebration at Fort Monroe. On 4 July, the Landmark announced a ceremony scheduled to take place in Berkley, a village outside of Norfolk. The Landmark's assurance that "accommodations will be provided for the ladies within the enclosure, who may rest assured that good order will be preserved," suggests that the Berkley event was an affair organized by white residents; the term "ladies" was never accorded to black women by white newspaper editors.⁷³ On 6 July, the Virginian provided details about both events, as well as a brief description of parades of black societies and orders that took place in Norfolk. The Berkley commemoration included speeches, picnicking, and dancing; no reference was made to race, which again suggests that it was not a mixed observance. The Old Point festivities, however, were interracial. Many Norfolk residents and visitors took steamers to Old Point for fireworks at the Fort Monroe parade ground that evening. The fireworks began around nine o'clock at night: "There were at least 6,000 persons on the grounds, comprising all ages, colors, sexes and 'previous conditions of servitude.'"⁷⁴

In Portsmouth, black and white Virginians interacted as producers and consumers, respectively, at the Centennial. On 6 July 1876, the Norfolk Virginian reported: "At the [Portsmouth] courthouse lawn and all along the streets were gathered crowds of our colored brethren and sisters with tables spread out for the sale of all

⁷³Norfolk Landmark, 4 July 1876, [1], [4].

⁷⁴Visitors to Norfolk and Old Point included residents of Petersburg and Smithfield. The Suffolk Herald presented the Fourth as a quiet day featuring separate excursions by white and black residents. Norfolk Virginian, 6 July 1876, [3], Suffolk Herald, 5 July 1876, [2], [3].

manner of refreshments." The holiday provided an opportunity for African-Americans to expand their usual commerce in the marketplace. Women probably played the primary role as hucksters.⁷⁵

The Centennial and black celebrants received nothing but opprobrium in two newspapers published in Pittsylvania County, in the interior Southside region of Virginia. In its editorial on 6 July 1876, the Chatham Tribune reported that white Southerners ("the people of the South") were not excited about the Centennial because they had not enjoyed true political liberty since 1865. The paper bitterly proclaimed: "None but negroes are free in America, and it is a fitting commemoration of the broken down national holiday that the darkies should take the matter in hand of contributing most largely to the celebration of the return day of July 4th. Let them march and sweat and hurrah with banners streaming and drums beating. We want none of it." Similarly, the Danville Times reported that there had been no civic commemoration in Danville on the Fourth. It blamed the lack of celebration on corruption by Republicans at the national level. The Times did, however, indicate that local Democrats had used the holiday to promote their political party. On the night of the Fourth, they held a ratification meeting for Democratic presidential candidate Samuel J. Tilden and his running mate Thomas A. Hendricks which included a torchlight procession, bonfires, speeches, huzzahs, and cannon firings.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Norfolk Virginian, 6 July 1876, [3].

⁷⁶There were no civic celebrations in Lynchburg, Liberty, or Chatham either. Of Liberty's white residents, the Bedford Sentinel wrote, "The fact is our people have gotten so much accustomed during the last fifteen years to not observing this day, that even this Centennial year failed to arouse any special interest." Chatham Tribune, 6 July 1876, [2],

None of the interior Southside newspapers reviewed for this discussion contained any references to interracial celebrations. The Danville Times reported on a private picnic on the Otter River organized by the Knights of Crescent, which included the "most worthy young men" of Danville. "Young ladies" provided the food for the event, which included playing croquet, dancing, and courting. The language used by the Times indicates that upper- and middle-class whites attended the function.⁷⁷

In Danville, the Sunday School of the Loyal Street African Methodist Church held a picnic to mark the Centennial. The Bedford Sentinel similarly reported that the majority of the black residents of Liberty had attended a picnic outside of town, while some white inhabitants went to a celebration at Pleasant View, near Lynchburg.⁷⁸

The largely separate celebrations of the Centennial held by white and black Virginians reveals the differences in wartime loyalty and postwar political affiliation that would continue to influence race relations into the next century. By participating in Independence Day observations as celebrants, vendors, and spectators, African-American

Danville Times, 7 July 1876, [3], Danville Register, 5 July 1876, [3], Lynchburg Daily Virginian 4 July 1876, [3], Pittsylvania Courier, 8 July 1876, [3], Bedford Sentinel, 7 July 1876, [3].

⁷⁷Danville Times, 7 July 1876, [3]. The interior Southside newspapers reviewed include the Chatham Tribune, Danville Times, Danville Register, Pittsylvania Courier, Lynchburg Press, Lynchburg Daily News, Lynchburg Daily Virginian and Bedford Sentinel. On the role of women as preparers of holiday foods, see also the description of the commemoration and picnic held in West Point, Virginia, and attended by celebrants from Richmond and the counties of King William, King and Queen, and New Kent. The women of the Baptist fair provided ice cream. The paper made no reference to black participants. West Point Star, 6 July 1876, [2].

⁷⁸The A.M.E. picnic took place on the land of a Captain Walters. Danville Register, 5 July 1876, [3], Bedford Sentinel, 7 July 1876, [3].

women took advantage of the opportunity to proclaim their freedom and to define themselves as citizens.

In the twenty-five years after the end of the war, freedwomen engaged in important civic activity and shaped churches, schools, and benevolent organizations. Their involvement in the development of community institutions and formal support groups clearly differentiated slavery and freedom. With men, black women took advantage of the opportunity to mark publicly the progress of community development and the growth of communal identity. Within this public realm, former slave and former slaveholding women had little contact beyond their roles as producers and consumers in the marketplace.

In more private settings, black and white women in Virginia continued to interact with each other in areas other than employment after the war. Some mistresses and slaves had developed bonds of affection and stayed in contact after the war out of genuine concern for, and interest in, each other. The connections between women who had lived together as mistress and slave also continued because of common origins and shared histories. Because their pasts were so intertwined, former slaves and former owners not infrequently exchanged information with each other about family members and ancestors. Federal government programs designed to remedy wartime destruction through Southern Claims Commission reimbursements or reward wartime service through pension payments induced former slaveholding women and former slaves to use each other as witnesses.

For women who worked as domestic servants after the war, there was often no

obvious distinction between work-related contact with their employers and personal interactions with them. Maternalism continued after the war, in part because some former slave women persisted in defining gifts and the sponsorship of weddings as allocations they deserved rather than as favors their employers bestowed. Women who demanded or accepted maternalistic gestures were not seeking to replicate their bondage, however; they wanted to exert as much control as possible over these remnants of slavery. At the same time, employers who gave their servants gifts or staged weddings for them hoped to retain valued servants and stem the rapid turnover among household workers. Conflict resulted as both former mistresses and former slaves tried to shape maternalism within an environment of increasing independence among black Virginians.

Chapter Six

"The ladies took a deep interest in the affair": Emancipation Day Celebrations and Lost Cause Commemorations

Freedwomen in Virginia celebrated emancipation and gave it a prominent place within the narrative of American history. In their renditions of the Civil War and emancipation, they joined in the construction of the liberation story. Although a few of them recorded written narratives, most contributed through oral statements or public actions. In their testimonies before the Southern Claims Commission and through their participation in July Fourth and, especially, Emancipation Day celebrations, freedwomen defined themselves as citizens within a collective history of their race and nation.

At the same time, former slaveholding women were also creating a usable past out of the events of the Civil War. Although much more likely than freedwomen to pen their memoirs, former mistresses also interpreted the history of the war and emancipation publicly. As organizers of such "Lost Cause" activities as monument unveilings and Confederate Memorial Day ceremonies, they sought to ennoble defeat and defend the Old South, slavery and all.

Freedom celebrations held by black Virginians and commemorations in honor of the Confederate dead organized by white residents took place throughout Virginia between 1865 and 1890. Although the two were not in a face-to-face competition, the

public interpretation of Civil War history was constantly recast in postwar communities as African Americans celebrated liberation through Union victory and white Virginians paid tribute to the sacrifices of Confederate soldiers prior to their defeat. Through these ritualistic interpretations of the recent past, women extended their wartime affiliations into the postwar period and created new patterns of civic life in a post-emancipation society.

For women, these civic rituals offered a rare opportunity to help shape communal understanding of the war and emancipation. At Emancipation Day celebrations and Lost Cause commemorations, women of each race openly avowed their group identity in terms of race, class, and wartime allegiance. In addition, at these events black and white associated themselves with simple ideals that momentarily camouflaged the complexity of reconstructing social relations in postwar Virginia. Finally, both groups of women ultimately affirmed male organizers as leaders in local communities.

There were, however, significant differences in the parts played by women in Emancipation Day celebrations and in Lost Cause commemorations. First, although both groups of women helped to arrange and raise funds for these events, female Lost Cause supporters had more resources at their disposal and appear to have been more likely to initiate their commemorations themselves. And, although women in both camps served primarily as symbols and spectators at the ceremonies themselves, female emancipation celebrants played a more active public role than white women did at their own observances. Also, when they gathered in public, Emancipation Day celebrants always faced a much greater risk of violence than did Lost Cause supporters. Most significantly,

at their respective rituals, black and white women defined themselves differently as citizens of the United States. African-American women participated in Emancipation Day ceremonies as eager citizens, determined to bring the reality of freedom closer to its ideal and anxious to protect their newly acquired rights. White women who organized Lost Cause commemorations did so as reluctant citizens, animated by a vision not of the future but of the past.¹

For African-American citizens, the creation of a collective history that dramatized the significance of emancipation had begun during the war, with oral testimonies rendered from person to person and to Northern missionaries, teachers, and army officials. These testimonies described the suffering of slavery and the jubilation of freedom. A little-recognized postwar contribution to this history came through black Virginians' testimonies before agents of the Southern Claims Commission (SCC) between 1871 and 1880. Testifying before the SCC required that African-American women recount their efforts on behalf of Union victory and enumerate their losses as a result of Union occupation. As claimants, free-born and freed women sought redress of

¹I am defining citizenship broadly as the effort to influence one's nation, in the sense of an "imagined political community." Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities, rev.ed. (London: Verso, 1992), 6-7. For recent works that review the traditional liberal conception of citizenship that focuses on voting and suggest more expansive notions which better incorporate the experiences of women, see Mary Dietz, "Context is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship," in Jill K. Conway, Susan C. Bourque, and Joan W. Scott, eds., Learning About Women: Gender, Politics, and Power (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1989), 1-24; Kathleen B. Jones, "Citizenship in a Woman-Friendly Polity," Signs 15 (Fall 1990), 781-812; Linda K. Kerber, "A Constitutional Right to be Treated Like American Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship," in Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Kathryn Kish Sklar, eds., U.S. History as Women's History: New Feminist Essays (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1995), 17-35.

their grievances.²

Through their SCC testimony, these claimants and their witnesses created a straightforward narrative of Unionism and unity. In the effort to be recompensed for property taken by the Union army, there was little room for a claimant to be ambiguous about her loyalty. The SCC testimonies of black Virginians emphasize the common goal of Union victory as prelude to an emancipation that would benefit all African-Americans, both slave and free.³

This emphasis on a shared vision of liberation was encouraged by the commissioners themselves, who recognized all black Virginians as citizens and readily defined them as loyalists. In their summary report of free-born Lucy Green's claim, for example, they noted: "Like most of her race she unquestionably sympathized with the federal cause." Although there were specific questions asked only of former slaves,

²Throughout the South, few former slaves filed claims with the SCC, and those who did had difficulty convincing the commissioners that they had actually owned the property claimed during the war. The commissioners disallowed many claims made by freedpeople because they could not establish a clear title of ownership or because the property claimed had been transferred to them by their former owners before Union troops arrived. Frank Klingberg, The Southern Claims Commission (Univ. of California Press, 1955; repr. N.Y.: Octagon Books, 1978), 100; John Hammond Moore, "Getting Uncle Sam's Dollars: South Carolinians and the Southern Claims Commission," South Carolina Historical Magazine 82 (July 1981), 249. Some slaveholders had attempted to conceal their prized possessions from approaching Union troops by hiding them in slave cabins or on the bodies of their slaves. Such slaveowners incorrectly assumed that Union soldiers would not rummage through slaves' belongings. Leon Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1980), 109-110.

³In analyzing the petitions written by sea-island freedpeople to oppose the restoration of lands to former owners, Julie Saville found a sense of collective struggle and an awareness of the historic significance of emancipation. Saville, The Work of Reconstruction: From Slave to Wage Laborer in South Carolina, 1860-1870 (N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 90-96.

many of the questions that special commissioners in the field asked black women made no distinction of race or sex. In 1871, Cherry Hale of Chuckatuck in Nansemond County was asked the following standard question: "At the beginning of the rebellion did you sympathize with the Union cause, or with the rebellion? What were your feelings and what your language on the subject? On which side did you exert your influence and cast your vote? What did you do, and how did you vote? How did you vote on ratifying the ordinance of secession? After the ordinance of secession was adopted in your State did you adhere to the Union cause, or did you 'go with the State?'"⁴

In her response, Hale reminded her questioner that African-American women had not had the same opportunities to demonstrate their loyalty that white male claimants had enjoyed. She stated: "I had no vote (colored women dont vote, even now) and after the Ordinance of secessum was done passed I still hoped for the good old Union cause. . . ." By pointing out that black women continued to be denied voting rights, Hale implicitly criticized the Fifteenth Amendment's exclusion of women and the limitation on

⁴Throughout its existence, the SCC modified the questions asked of claimants and their witnesses. Summary Report, 5 Dec. 1877, Claim of Lucy Green, Case File #18854, Charles City County, Settled Case Files for Claims Approved by the Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880, Records of the Land, Files, and Miscellaneous Division, Records of the Accounting Officers of the Dept. of the Treasury, Record Group 217, NARA (hereafter Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA); Summary Report, Dec. 1874, Deposition of Cherry Hale, 29 Nov. 1871, Claim of Cherry Hale, Case File #9976, Nansemond County, (National Archives Microfiche Publication M1407, #1467), Southern Claims Commission Disallowed Claims, 1871-1880, Records of the U.S. House of Representatives, Record Group 233, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter Disallowed Claims, SCC, (M1407, #1467), RG 233, NARA; "Questions as to the Loyalty of the Claimant," Testimony of Sarah King, 6 Sept. 1871, Claim of Sarah King, Case File #641, Norfolk County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA.

citizenship that this restriction represented.⁵

In 1878, Martha Mayo, a free-born resident of Halifax County who had lost a mule to Union cavalry shortly after General Robert E. Lee's surrender, described in terms of gender and location her inability to assist the Union war effort: "I had no opportunity, being a colored woman and entirely cut off from the Union & its defenders--I would have done everything in my power for the Union if I had had the opportunity." Mayo's loyalty was confirmed by her husband, Cuffee, who testified that his wife had often expressed her wish for the North to prevail and "free the colored people." Added Zack Ross, a black farmer who had known Martha for twenty years, "She was a Colored woman, and the public reputation of all the Colored people in our Neighborhood was that of Unionists, or rather wanted the North to succeed."⁶

While the theme of shared Unionism prevails, SCC testimonies also reflect the reality that there was no single emancipation experience. Freedom came at different times and in different ways to enslaved women throughout Virginia. Even women who gained their freedom at the same time sometimes perceived their liberation differently. A rare SCC document contains two different interpretations of the same emancipation experience. Lucy Frasier and Amanda James belonged to Unionist Henry Bowden of

⁵Hale's claim does not specify her pre-war status; her claim for oyster boats suggests that she or a male relative had been free. The parenthetical in her testimony may have been added by the special commissioner who recorded it, but the context suggests that the words were hers.

⁶Summary Report, 13 Dec. 1878, Testimony of Martha and Cuffee Mayo and Zack Ross, 9 Feb. 1878, Claim of Martha Mayo, Case File #18491, Halifax County, Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA. For other claims of widespread Unionism among black women, see Chapter Two.

York County and gained their freedom during the Peninsula campaign in 1862. Several years after the war, both Frasier and James described their emancipation experiences in the course of testimony on behalf of Henrietta Bowden's claim for compensation.

Frasier, a thirty-year-old woman who kept house in Gloucester County, testified that when the Union army came, Bowden had told her and her fellow slaves "that he had no more to do with us" and that they would have to work the farm themselves. In contrast, fifty-year-old Amanda James, who still worked for the Bowden family, remembered that Bowden "liberated us all when he left as a refugee and came to Norfolk." James's more positive rendition of her owner's motives may well have reflected her closer relationship with, and continued employment by, the Bowden family.⁷

The histories recounted by individuals in SCC testimonies found communal

⁷James remembered the Bowdens leaving in May 1862, but the Bowdens appear not to have left for Norfolk until August, when General George B. McClellan retreated from the Peninsula. James lived on land belonging to the Bowdens' son George after the war and looked after the buildings for him. Both James and Frasier presented evidence in favor of Henrietta Bowden's claim before the commission. Summary Report, 14 Dec. 1874, Testimony of Amanda James and Lucy Frasier, 2 June 1872-15 Feb. 1874, Claim of Henrietta Bowden, Administratrix, Case File #245, Norfolk County, Settled Case Files for Claims Approved by the Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880, Records of the Land, Files, and Miscellaneous Division, Records of the Accounting Officers of the Dept. of the Treasury, Record Group 217, NARA (hereafter Approved Claims, SCC, RG 217, NARA). Henry Bowden, who served as mayor of Williamsburg under Union occupation and represented Norfolk as a Republican in both the 1867-1868 constitutional convention and the 1869-1870 session of the House of Delegates, died in 1871. Louis Moore, "The Elusive Center: Virginia Politics and the General Assembly, 1869-1871," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (VMHB) 103 (April 1995): 222-223; H.W. Flournoy, ed., *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts from January 1, 1836, to April 15, 1869; Preserved in the Capitol in Richmond*, vol. 11 (Richmond: 1893; repr., N.Y.: Kraus Reprint Corp., 1968), 475, 484, 492-494; "Diary of Miss Harriette Cary, Kept by Her from May 6, 1862, to July 24, 1862," *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 9 (1927-28): 108; Michael Hucles, "Many Voices, Similar Concerns: Traditional Methods of African-American Political Activity in Norfolk, Virginia, 1865-1875," *VMHB* 100 (Oct. 1992): 553.

expression in the public Emancipation Day celebrations staged by freed and free-born black Virginians after the war. Like SCC claims, Emancipation Day ceremonies sometimes articulated the limitations of freedom for black Americans in the postbellum United States. Community leaders used orations at Emancipation Day celebrations to summarize the progress of the race, point out the inequities it continued to suffer, and outline the steps necessary for a better future.⁸

At Emancipation Day celebrations, freed and free-born Virginians self-consciously proclaimed their arrival as citizens on the public stage. These rituals were more than social jubilees. Featuring parades of military companies and speeches by community leaders, the celebrations were highly political events with the potential to elicit violent opposition. For freedpeople who continued to have little autonomy in their work lives, attendance at such public communal activities provided an important way to differentiate freedom from slavery.⁹ As affirmations of the abolition of slavery, the

⁸Frederick Douglass, "Southern Barbarism," Washington, D.C., 1886, in The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass: Vol 4--Reconstruction and After, ed. Philip S. Foner (N.Y.: International Publishers, 1955), 436. On pre-Civil War freedom celebrations in the North, see Genevieve Fabre, "African-American Commemorative Celebrations in the Nineteenth Century," in Genevieve Fabre and Robert O'Meally, eds., History and Memory in African-American Culture (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), 72-91.

⁹Other public celebrations held by freedpeople in Virginia after the war included George Washington's birthday, the days on which the Reconstruction and Civil Rights Bills were passed, and commemorations of the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia (Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926), 62-63. The anniversary of General Robert E. Lee's surrender (April 9), which was celebrated in Mecklenburg County as Emancipation Day, was sometimes also publicly acknowledged in communities that marked other days as Emancipation Day. Taylor, 62-63; Harold Forsythe, "'But My Friends Are Poor': Ross Hamilton and Freedpeople's Politics in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, 1869-1901," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 105 (Autumn 1997): 430-432. Genevieve Fabre also emphasizes the political

celebrations may have held particular significance for women, who had not experienced military service or voting as many freedmen had.¹⁰

As public interpretations of the past punctuated with commentaries on the present, Emancipation Day celebrations portrayed the coming of freedom as a collective struggle undertaken by African Americans as a people. Undeniably, however, the ceremonies highlighted the citizenship of black men as soldiers and voters. Women's wartime efforts to bring about freedom by resisting slavery and assisting Union soldiers from the home front received little, if any, attention.

The comments of two former slaves interviewed in 1937 convey the power of Emancipation Day celebrations to mark the transition from slavery to freedom during the late nineteenth century. Cornelius Garner, a Union veteran who lived in Norfolk, recalled that slaves had been sold on New Year's Day during the antebellum period and made note of the transformation that had taken place when January First became the occasion for black residents to celebrate emancipation, in honor of President Abraham Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation on 1 January 1863. Garner stated, "Dat day, New Yeah's Day, should be kept by all de colored people. Dat is de day o' freedom." Matilda Carter, who received some schooling after the war and appears to

nature of antebellum freedom celebrations, in "'African-American Commemorative Celebrations," 75.

¹⁰Benjamin Quarles refers to women who wore red, white, and blue shawls to commemorate the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment on 30 March 1870, in "Historic Afro-American Holidays," *Negro Digest* 16 (Feb. 1967): 18. For an interpretation that emphasizes the collectivism of postwar voting among black Virginians and argues that women viewed men's votes as their own, see Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," *Public Culture* 7 (Fall 1994): 107-126.

have worked as a domestic servant at one point, adamantly agreed. She chastised young black residents of Hampton for foregoing the annual emancipation celebration, and she equated racial identity with the commemoration: "All de Negroes of today is tryin' to imitate de white folks. Dey's cut out de New Years Day parade an' a million other things. Why dey'll mos' nigh put you in jail if you say it's a shame dat Abe Lincoln was kilt." Carter did not share the younger generation's willingness to transfer its loyalty from the Republicans to the Democrats in national politics.¹¹

As postwar residents of lower Tidewater Virginia, both Garner and Carter had probably witnessed New Year's Day emancipation celebrations for years.¹² The significance, if not the size, of Emancipation Day celebrants' sharing in a communal repudiation of slavery only increased as the optimism of emancipation gradually gave

¹¹Charles L. Perdue, Jr., Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds., Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1976), 102-104, 68-70; Nancy J. Weiss, Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of FDR (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983). Like Garner and Carter, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper had urged blacks to keep the memory of emancipation alive. "Deliverance," in Poems, ed. Graham, 76-78. Into the 1930s, ex-slaves sometimes served as parade marshals, honored guests, speakers, prayer leaders, and recipients of awards at Emancipation Day and other freedom celebrations. Also, in the 1930s, January First celebrants raised funds to assist the elderly former slaves. William H. Wiggins, Jr., O Freedom: Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations (Knoxville: Univ. of Tenn. Press, 1987), 93, 95, 112. For further references to twentieth-century celebrations and their revitalization late in the century, see William H. Wiggins, Jr., and Douglas DeNatale, eds., Jubilation: African-American Celebrations in the Southeast (Columbia, S.C.: McKissick Museum, Univ. of South Carolina, 1993), and Jane H. Kobelski, ed., Readings in Black and White: Lower Tidewater Virginia (Portsmouth, Va.: Portsmouth Public Library, 1982), 46-47; "Juneteenth," History Notes (quarterly newsletter of the Virginia Historical Society) 23 (July 1996): 7; Emancipation Celebration: Souvenir Program Booklet (Norfolk Emancipation Association, 1925); Forsythe, "'But My Friends Are Poor,'" 430-432,

¹²Emancipation Celebration: Souvenir Program Booklet. See also Chapter Two for a discussion of the 1863 celebration in Norfolk.

way to the realities of violence, political reverses, and arduous work lives. Most Emancipation Day celebrations included a parade of military companies, followed by a ceremony featuring a keynote speaker. On 31 December 1872, for example, the Norfolk Journal announced in its Portsmouth section: "The colored element celebrate emancipation tomorrow. [Black politician] George Teamoh orator of the day." After official Emancipation Day functions, celebrants often continued the commemoration into the night with revelry of their own.¹³

One of the fullest accounts of a postwar Emancipation Day celebration is Thomas F. Paige's description of the 1885 jubilee held in Norfolk. Paige estimated that twelve hundred or more people attended the exercises; although the organizing committee had invited the residents of Portsmouth, Berkley, Norfolk County, and Princess Anne County to the celebration, attendance paled in comparison with the number of people who had turned out for mass meetings held during the 1860s. Still, because it took place little more than a year after the demoralizing defeat of the Readjusters by the Democrats across the state, the event had considerable import as a political statement of the tenacity of black citizens in Tidewater Virginia and their progress since the war. In a small book

¹³Norfolk Journal, 31 Dec. 1872, 4; Robert Francis Engs, Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861-1890 (Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 186; The 1864 commemoration in Norfolk included a parade of four regiments of black troops; at the subsequent ceremony, women from Washington, North Carolina, presented a flag to the Third North Carolina Colored Regiment. Ervin L. Jordan, Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1995), 257. A resident of Portsmouth, George Teamoh represented Norfolk County at Virginia's constitutional convention in 1867-1868 and was elected to the state senate by the county in 1869. Luther Porter Jackson, Negro Officeholders in Virginia, 1865-1895 (Norfolk, Va.: Guide Quality Press, 1945), 42; Thomas C. Parramore with Peter C. Stewart and Tommy L. Bogger, Norfolk: The First Four Centuries (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1994), 237-238.

entitled Twenty-Two Years of Freedom, Paige published a detailed account of the day's activities. Like the recollections of Mildred Carter and Cornelius Garner, Twenty-Two Years emphasized the primary place of emancipation in the history of African Americans and the importance of commemorating the Emancipation Proclamation. Like the Southern Claims Commission testimonies, Twenty-Two Years sketched a communal history. A close analysis of Paige's rendition of the celebration demonstrates that women played a vital, though secondary, role in the event.¹⁴

The participation of women in the 1885 celebration is evident from the preface to Paige's narrative, which paid tribute to the "patriotic men and women" who had helped make the day a success. The introduction to Twenty-Two Years, written by Union veteran and newspaper editor Joseph T. Wilson, also referred to women's role. Wilson recounted the preliminary efforts of local African Americans "to revive the spirit of 1863" in late 1884: "A meeting of the business men was called at Paige's Hotel; the call

¹⁴Norfolk businesswomen helped enable Paige to publish his book. Caroline Jones, a merchant who also provided room and board; Mrs. O. F. Ruffin, who sold dry goods, confectioneries, groceries, and other items; and Paige's wife, a proprietress who sold fruits, ices and creams, and oysters, all took out advertisements in the book. T.F. Paige, Twenty-Two Years of Freedom (Norfolk: Barron's Presses and Bindery, 1885), 19, 20, 63, 85, 91, 92. Paige had been a leading citizen of Norfolk since at least 1865, when he served as secretary of the Union Monitor Club and signed the "Equal Suffrage Address." In 1870 he was elected to the city council for the Second Ward; a decade later he actively supported Readjusterism. Paige opened the first hotel for black visitors to Norfolk, on Market Square. Equal Suffrage. Address from the Colored Citizens of Norfolk, Va., to the People of the United States (New Bedford, Ma.: 1865), reprinted in Afro-American History Series (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc., n.d.), 3:9, after 26; Michael Hucles, "Many Voices, Similar Concerns: Traditional Methods of African-American Political Activity in Norfolk, Virginia, 1865-1875," VMHB 100 (Oct. 1992): 561; Parramore et al., Norfolk, 245, 254-255. I would like to thank the Interlibrary Loan Department of the James E. Shepard Memorial Library at North Carolina Central University for providing me with a photocopy of this rare book.

was responded to by many of the best men of the race. . . . The ladies took a deep interest in the affair; the clergymen assisted; the daily newspapers gave publicity to the preliminary proceedings, and wished the leaders of the movement god-speed."¹⁵ Wilson's use of the terms "best men" and "ladies" indicates that the organizers of the celebration were from Norfolk's black middle class.¹⁶

The women's "deep interest" manifested itself in service on two of the committees appointed by the Emancipation Celebration Association in mid-December 1884. The Committee on Decorations and Illuminations included seven women, three of whom also

¹⁵According to Wilson, during the 1870s white Republicans had begun to interfere with the annual Emancipation Day celebration in Norfolk, causing divisions among black leaders to the extent that no celebration took place during the early 1880s. Paige, Twenty-Two Years, [6], 10-11. Wilson had served as a secret service agent for the Union army. Like Paige, in 1865 he was an officer of the Union Monitor Club in Norfolk, serving as corresponding secretary, and a signer of the Equal Suffrage Address. In April 1866, Wilson organized the parade in honor of the Civil Rights Bill which prompted violent opposition from white residents that left at least two blacks and two whites dead. With Paige, during the early 1870s, he represented the Second Ward as a city councilman. He edited the True Southerner newspaper in 1866, the Republican American Sentinel in 1880, and a weekly Democratic newspaper called The Right Way! beginning in 1885. He also published historical accounts of black soldiers' participation in American wars. Equal Suffrage, 3:9, after 26; U.S. Congress, House, Riot at Norfolk, 39th Cong., 2d sess., 1866-1867, H. Exec. Doc. 72, serial 1293, 34; Parramore et al., Norfolk, 227, 236-237, 255; Paige, 98.

¹⁶Glenda Gilmore discusses the evolution of the Best Man ideology in Reconstruction North Carolina, where white political leaders sought to limit the political participation of black citizens by confining officeholding to the "Best Men" of the race. These men were to be of the middle class and to conduct themselves in an exemplary patrician manner. African-American men who were leaders in their communities adopted the concept because it gave them access to political power and because they found its priorities of education, benevolence, prohibition, and Christianity appealing. Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920 (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996), 62-63, 254.

served on the Finance Soliciting Committee.¹⁷ By the end of December 1884, the finance committee had raised \$109.46 from lodges, churches, and other organizations, including the Ladies' Relief Corps of the Grand Army of the Republic and the Young Daughters of Providence. The members of the committee on decorations busied themselves with preparations at St. John's African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Chapel, where the day's exercises would take place, as well as with outfitting a float called the Liberty Car for the parade.¹⁸

Young women rode in the Liberty Car as representatives of the Goddess of Liberty and the thirty-eight states of the Union.¹⁹ The women provided a striking contrast

¹⁷The seven were Abby Dawley, Desdemonia Brown, Ellen Norris, Amelia P. Paige, Ruth A. Cook, Caroline Brown, and Anna Blunt. The two Browns and Cook also served on the finance committee. The names of the female members of the decorations committee were left off the official program printed for the event; the finance committee did not appear on the program at all. Paige, Twenty-Two Years, 18-19, 24.

¹⁸Paige, Twenty-Two Years, 25, 27, 28. Some Emancipation Day ceremonies took place in traditional civic spaces. On 1 January 1885, African Americans in Raleigh held exercises and speeches at city hall, following a parade. Norfolk Landmark, 2 Jan. 1885, [1]. For a reference to Emancipation Day celebrations held in courthouse squares in North Carolina, see Quarles, "Historic Afro-American Holidays," 17.

¹⁹A late April 1879 parade held by African-Americans in Richmond to celebrate the anniversary of the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment included a similar car occupied by thirty-eight girls dressed in white. Peter Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890 (as Black Labor in the South: Richmond, Virginia, 1865-1890, Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1984; repr., Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989), 88. During the early national period in the South, white women had occasionally represented allegorical figures or feminine ideals in civic rituals. Cynthia Kierner argues that because women were considered to be apolitical, they could be featured in such a manner. Cynthia Kierner, "Genteel Balls and Republican Parades: Gender and Early Southern Civic Rituals, 1677-1826," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 104 (Spring 1996): 203-204. At the parade held in conjunction with the 1894 unveiling of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Richmond, white girls represented the thirteen states claimed by the former Confederacy. Gaines Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913 (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press,

to the dominant militaristic ambience of the parade. Joseph Wilson described the scene on Princess Anne Avenue as the parade participants lined up for the procession:

"Malitiamen [sic], citizens, young and old, gathered there as did a hundred and more mounted men; horses and men galy [sic] dressed, the Liberty Car with thirty-eight Misses of various hue brightened the scene with its banners and gay trimmings of variegated colors." Two black horses drew the "car" with its festoons of flags and streamers, Paige added. The young women were "seated upon a shelving platform in the centre of the car, at the top of which sat Miss Sallie Stith robed in a gorgeous costume, and representing the Goddess of Liberty, as she appeared to the freedmen on the morning of January 1st, 1863." When a rainstorm postponed the parade, hundreds of female celebrants sought refuge at St. John's AME Chapel, where they "made the old temple rock with their joyous melody and loud hosannas. . . ." Eventually, the rain stopped, and the parade took place, with the Liberty Car bearing the only significant female presence among the marchers. Compared with the women who had trampled on Confederate flags while riding in Norfolk's 1863 Emancipation Day parade, the occupants of the Liberty Car appear to have been fairly passive, probably reflecting both the preoccupation with respectability and the absence of protective federal troops at the 1885 event.²⁰

1987), 131. At a 1996 ceremony held to unveil a new monument that replaced one destroyed by fire in Abbeville, South Carolina, girls representing the Confederate states replicated the roles filled by girls ninety years earlier. "Abbeville Town Square Monument Dedicated," Carologue (publication of the South Carolina Historical Society) 13 (Spring 1997): 6.

²⁰Possibly, a few women rode in the VIP carriages that followed the Liberty Car. The Liberty Car and its decorations cost the Emancipation Celebration Association \$19.25. The flags on the Liberty Car were probably American flags. Paige, Twenty-Two Years, 12, 21, 27-30, 65 (see p. 29 for the names of the participating organizations and their

At the exercises in the chapel following the parade, Sallie Stith and her thirty-eight compatriots flanked the honored guests on the speakers' platform. Among the speakers was one woman who played a featured role. Following the opening prayer, Miss A.M. Poole, who was on the board of managers of the Norfolk Lyceum, read the preliminary and final Emancipation Proclamations. According to Paige, she read the documents "in a clear, smooth, strong, silver tone." He also remembered that she had been interrupted by applause frequently, "particularly as she accented on the strong points in them--that [of] ordering the Army and Navy to support and protect the freed people in the enjoyment of their freedom." Poole's use of inflection to emphasize certain sections of the proclamations highlights the political nature of her narration. Poole's emphasis of the latter passage may well have been her commentary on present conditions, specifically the federal government's decreasing commitment to the protection of African Americans' rights.²¹

order in the procession); Wiggins, O Freedom!, 93, 95. The concern for respectability grew in part out of the onslaught on the moral character of black women by white Southern writers. See, for example, Myrta Lockett Avery, Dixie After the War: An Exposition of Social Conditions Existing in the South, During the Twelve Years Succeeding the Fall of Richmond (N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1906; repr., N.Y.: Da Capo Press, 1970), 395.

²¹Paige, Twenty-Two Years, 31, 71. Members of the mixed-sex Norfolk Lyceum met weekly for literary, musical, and dramatic exercises; the Lyceum maintained its own library. Cassandra Newby, "The World Was All Before Them': A Study of the Black Community in Norfolk, Virginia, 1861-1884" (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1992), 351. In Suffolk, Virginia, in 1872, Mary A. Keeling served as secretary of the co-educational "Seven Wise Men Society," possibly a similar organization. Southern Workman 1 (Feb. 1872): [2]. For the popularity of women as evocative readers of the Emancipation Proclamation during the late twentieth century, see Wiggins, O Freedom!, 16-17. At the 1925 celebration in Norfolk, Alice Smith, a teacher at the Abraham Lincoln School, read the proclamation. Three women performed musical pieces; at least four served on the program committee, and at least one on the decoration committee.

While Poole served as more than a symbolic mouthpiece, Miss M.E. Chapman, who had written a poem for the celebration, did not participate actively in the exercises. The Reverend Mr. J.H.M. Pollard read her poem. Chapman evoked the suffering of slavery, celebrated the rebirth brought about by emancipation and education, and urged those listening to her poem to join in giving thanks for their deliverance. Chapman's poem included one overt reference to women: "The link once far sundered is welded once more./And the sisterhood chain is as strong as before;/Despite the strong prejudice, bitterness, pride,/Truth over deception, triumphant will ride,/For Freedom is come." Chapman presented the bonds between women as integral to survival in the face of continued oppression.²²

While Chapman lauded the strength of female support networks within postbellum black communities, the male speakers at the 1885 celebration presented women largely in terms of their sexual and familial identities. The orator of the day, Thomas Norris, Jr., referred to women once, when he paid tribute to their role in elevating the moral status of black Americans. Norris's main message was to urge black voters to divide their votes between the Republican and Democratic parties. In his review of Norris's speech, Joseph T. Wilson directed his address to his male listeners, exhorting them to "unite and arise from the debris of slavery to the full enjoyment of

Emancipation Celebration: Souvenir Program Booklet.

²²Paige gives no indication of whether or not Chapman was present at the ceremony. Paige, Twenty-Two Years, 50-51. Essie Gordon, a teacher at John T. West Public School, read a poem at the 1925 Norfolk celebration. Emancipation Celebration: Souvenir Program Booklet. See Kathleen Jones's discussion of the language of sisterhood as a component of a feminist conception of citizenship, in "Citizenship in a Woman-Friendly Polity," 781-782.

manhood freedom." He chastised white Americans, and particularly white men, for failing to respect black women as mothers, wives, daughters, store patrons, and travelers. He counseled freedmen that freedom meant more than constructing homes in which they could protect their wives and children from the outside world.²³

Men initiated the 1885 Emancipation Day celebration in Norfolk and dominated its proceedings. Women assisted with the planning and played an important, if secondary, role in the ritual. Yet they were not simply dependent figures on that rainy day in January. While reading the proclamations, Miss A.M. Poole used her voice to remind her listeners of the federal government's responsibility to protect their constitutional rights. Miss M.E. Chapman referred to the resilience of sisterhood. A chorus of women transformed the rain delay into a proclamation of their faith. While Miss Sallie Stith as the Goddess of Liberty and her cohort as the thirty-eight states masked their individual identities, they also symbolized the power inherent in the ideal of freedom, the hope associated with the progress of their people toward equality, and the strong identification of black Virginians with the American nation and the federal union. Ultimately, the celebration projected ambivalence—at least on the part of men—about

²³Paige, *Twenty-Two Years*, 45-47, 55, 57, 59. In her discussion of how the masculinist narrative of the freedom struggle has resulted in a focus on great men in the public preservation of African-American history, Fath Davis Ruffins presents the conflation between freedom and manhood as generally prominent from the antebellum period on. Elsa Barkley Brown, however, suggests that the association between freedom and manhood did not dominate the discourse of the black freedom struggle until the twentieth century. Ruffins, "'Lifting as We Climb': Black Women and the Preservation of African American History and Culture," *Gender and History* 6 (Nov. 1994): 376-379; Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming," 124-125, 140-141. William Wiggins defines keynote addresses as the central political events at modern emancipation celebrations, and he traces the role of the commemorations as forums for such political activity as voter-registration drives and voter-education programs. *O Freedom!*, 109-133.

women's public role.

In his introduction to Twenty-Two Years, Wilson noted that several white businessmen from Norfolk had contributed funds to the 1885 celebration. He identified them as wealthy bankers and merchants who were "ready to see their former slaves celebrate their natal day of freedom." Neither Wilson nor Paige indicates whether these men or other white residents attended the day's festivities, but some probably watched the parade. On 2 January 1885, the white-owned Norfolk Landmark newspaper provided a brief, straightforward account of the celebration.²⁴

Like Emancipation Day celebrations, Lost Cause commemorations were rituals at which postwar citizens defined the present by invoking the past. Although many Lost Cause icons did not originate until the turn of the century, white Virginians' explicit understanding of the war as a lost cause began shortly after General Robert E. Lee's surrender in April 1865.²⁵ In July 1866, Elvira Ann Clark wrote from Halifax County of

²⁴Paige, Twenty-Two Years, 11; Norfolk Landmark, 2 Jan. 1885, [1]. The postwar diaries and letters of white Virginia women have yielded few references to Emancipation Day celebrations. In 1868, Cornelia Irwin of Norfolk did indicate that two of her daughters joined their friends to watch the parade held by black residents on New Year's Day. Cornelia Grigsby Irwin to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 1 Jan. 1868, Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Va. (VHS). See also the comments of the Reverend Mr. J.W. Leigh, husband of Frances Butler Leigh of Georgia, who witnessed the 1877 Emancipation Day parade in Charleston, South Carolina. He described it as wonderful but also noted that anyone who saw it would have concluded that white, not black, residents were oppressed. Frances Butler Leigh, Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War (London: 1883; repr., N.Y.: Negro Universities Press, 1969), 343.

²⁵Key events in Virginia's Lost Cause history include the re-interment of Jefferson Davis's remains in Richmond (1893) and the erection of the statues of Lee (1890), Davis (1907), J.E.B. Stuart (1907), and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson (1919) on Richmond's Monument Boulevard. An earlier statue of Jackson, donated by a group of Englishmen, was unveiled in Richmond in 1876. Chester D. Bradley, "Dr. Craven and the Captivity of

a visit to her deceased son's grave. Clark described her son, who had died in 1862, as "my darling child whose life was sacrificed to our lost cause." In July 1868, Freedmen's Bureau agent Mortimer Moulden reported from Jerusalem in Southampton County that "the whites (the majority of them) are all ex[-]rebels, with their love for the 'lost cause' all aglow." While Clark's lamentation contrasts with Moulden's reference to bombast, both descriptions evoke the depth of feeling invested by some Virginians in the defeated Confederacy.²⁶

White Virginia women who became involved in Lost Cause activities brought a different history to their participation in the "public sphere" than African-American women did. The civic arena had not been as closed to white women as it had to black women before the war. Although their role as public citizens had been restricted by gender conventions, middle- and upper-class white women had become increasingly

Jefferson Davis at Fort Monroe," Pamphlet (Virginia Medical Monthly 83 (May 1956), 197-199; repr., Ft. Monroe, Va.: The Casemate Museum, [1973]), [1-3]; Paul D. Escott, "The Uses of Gallantry: Virginians and the Origins of J.E.B. Stuart's Historical Image," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 103 (Jan. 1995), 55; Marylou Rhodes, Landmarks of Richmond: Places to Know and See in the Nation's Most Historic City (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1938), 43-47; Sally M. Galt to Miss [Dorothea] Dix, Richmond, 21 Feb. 1876, Galt Family Papers I, W&M. One of the major Lost Cause icons, the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), was founded in 1894. By 1899, there were 362 chapters with about seventeen thousand members. The organization was largely responsible for the upsurge in Confederate monument-building that took place in the early twentieth century. H.E. Gulley, "Women and the Lost Cause: Preserving a Confederate Identity in the American Deep South," Journal of Historical Geography 19, No. 2 (1993), 129-130.

²⁶Elvira Ann (Henry) Clark to Sarah (Bruce) Seddon, Banister Lodge, 26 July [1866], Seddon Family Papers, VHS; Monthly Report, 31 July 1868, Reports and Records Relating to Court Cases, 1866-68, Office of the Subassistant Commissioner, Jerusalem, Va., #4026, Records of the Subordinate Field Offices, Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Records Group 105, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter RG 105, NARA).

active on the civic stage during the antebellum period.²⁷ Still, many white Virginia women had seen public spaces become the domain of Union soldiers and freedpeople immediately after the war, and even after the army units departed, black Virginians continued to assert their claims to public spaces in formal ceremonies and in their daily business.

In at least one community, white and black women directly competed with each other over public space: one of the issues raised by Democrats in the October 1883 "Danville Circular," which contributed to the tense racial climate prior to the November "riot" there, was the complaint that black women were forcing "ladies" off the sidewalks and ordering them to remember to step aside in the future. While the Democrats no doubt exaggerated black women's aggressiveness for purposes of propaganda, it is quite

²⁷Recent works by Cynthia Kierner and Elizabeth Varon has examined the public political activity of white women in the South. Kierner asserts that despite their active support for the American Revolution and their acknowledged significance as Republican wives and mothers, white women found themselves largely excluded from active participation in civic rituals (the most significant of which were Fourth of July parades) during the early national period. They did not participate in parade toasts, public dinners, speeches, or military exercises, although they witnessed the latter two as spectators. Kierner argues that the passive role of white women at these events resulted from the militaristic nature of civic rituals, which grew out of the perceived need by white male leaders to demonstrate control and force within a slave society. Elite women had had a more prominent public role in civic rituals during the colonial period, as participants in such commemorations as balls held in honor of royal birthdays. Kierner, "Genteel Balls and Republican Parades," 185-210. Varon demonstrates how white women in Virginia became more active in public political life during the 1840s and 1850s, in part as a result of outreach from the Whig party. The ideology of Whig womanhood defined women as morally superior beings whose presence at campaign events elevated the proceedings and mitigated the potential destructiveness of male partisanship. Varon points out the limitations of this ideology: women were to bring their domestic virtues into the public arena when needed; they were not to become permanent public political actors. Varon, "'We mean to be counted': White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia," (Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ., 1993), 175-267, 296.

likely that the political victory of a coalition of Readjusters and Republicans in the municipal election of 1882 had given more African-American women the confidence to defend their right-of-way on city sidewalks.²⁸

White women who participated in public Lost Cause activities between 1865 and 1890 may well have viewed their exertions as a reclamation of public space. The attempt to recover courthouse squares and elevate their version of Civil War history was surely one of the challenges alluded to in 1903 by Margaret Cary Green Davis, historian of the Confederated Southern Memorial Association. She saw no need to elaborate on the Reconstruction-era "trials that beset and perplexed the women of the Confederacy in their efforts to rescue from oblivion the memories of men who stand recorded as the world's greatest heroes." Despite the obstacles, she added, the women had persevered.²⁹

²⁸Edward Pollock, Illustrated Sketch Book of Danville, Virginia: Its Manufactures and Commerce (Petersburg: E.R. Waddill & Bros., 1885; repr., Danville: Womack Press, 1976), 84-85, 88. On Saturday, 3 November 1883, just three days before the state election, two minor altercations between two young black men and a young white man escalated into serious violence after a friend of the white man shot at a black man who had tried to disarm him. Blacks in town for market day gathered to demand the arrest of the shooter, and when they refused to disperse, white men began shooting into the crowd, killing four black residents and one white man. Attacks on black community leaders and patrols of black neighborhoods followed. Jane Dailey, "Deference and Violence in the Postbellum Urban South: Manners and Massacres in Danville, Virginia," Journal of Southern History 63 (Aug. 1997): 553-590; W. Thomas Mainwaring, Jr., "Community in Danville, Virginia, 1880-1963," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1988), 67-70. See especially Jane Dailey's emphasis, articulated most clearly on page 585, on the connection that Virginians made between race relations in public spaces and civic equality. The Danville "riot" set off similar disturbances in other Virginia communities over the next year, including a May 1884 altercation in Norfolk between policemen and black residents who were attending a military company review. Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 338.

²⁹History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South (n.p.: Confederated Southern Memorial Association: 1904), 30.

Lost Cause commemorations more readily acknowledged women's wartime service, albeit in a simplistic and even distorted fashion, than did Emancipation Day celebrations. During the war, women who supported the Confederacy had become the subject of a prescriptive public discourse, to which they themselves had contributed. Presented as self-sacrificing and courageous upholders of the Confederacy, they had been assigned an important role on the homefront as supporters of the soldiers and caretakers of the family. While prescription and reality increasingly had diverged as the deprivations of war took their toll on women behind Confederate lines, the ideology of sacrifice provided the basis for the postwar glorification of female supporters of the Confederacy.³⁰

Across the former Confederacy, many middle- and upper-class white women became involved in female memorial associations dedicated to the men who had died and their surviving dependents. A large number of these organizations evolved directly out of soldiers' aid societies established during the war. Their activities included reinterment of soldiers' remains, upkeep of Confederate cemeteries, sponsorship of commemorative services and Memorial Day activities, support of widows and children of deceased soldiers, and erection of Confederate monuments.³¹ To raise the money needed

³⁰Drew Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," Journal of American History 76 (March 1990): 1200-1228. Worth repeating is Shirley Abbott's rendition of the modern version of the mythical Confederate woman: "Great-granny defying those blue-coated sons-of-bitches under the portico, just after she had personally buried the sterling silver and put down a small mutiny among the field hands." Abbott, Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South (N.Y.: Ticknor & Fields, 1983), 62.

³¹H.E. Gulley, "Women and the Lost Cause: Preserving a Confederate Identity in the American Deep South," Journal of Historical Geography 19, no. 2 (1993): 129-130. The Ladies' Confederate Memorial Association of Winchester may have been the first

for their projects, members of these groups sponsored fairs, suppers, balls, picnics, concerts, speeches, plays, tableaux vivants, and debates.³²

During the late 1860s and early 1870s, re-interment of soldiers' remains and relief work dominated Virginia women's Lost Cause exertions. These priorities linked women across regions and even classes. After Sally Lyons Taliaferro and some other women from Gloucester County donated five dollars to the Stonewall Cemetery in Winchester in 1866, Taliaferro received a thank-you letter from one of the organizers, Mrs. Philip Williams. Williams described the small sum as "proof of devotion to our lost cause and sympathy in our work" and expressed her wish that the cemetery be "the gift of the

memorial organization founded in Virginia after the war ended. It was in operation by the late summer of 1865. James Douglas Smith, "Virginia During Reconstruction, 1865-1870: A Political, Economic and Social Study," (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Virginia, 1960), 436; Suzanne Lebsack and Kym S. Rice, "A Share of Honour": Virginia Women, 1600-1945 (Richmond, Va.: The Virginia Women's Cultural History Project, 1984), 115. Drew Faust suggests that women became involved in Lost Cause activities to rebuild their faith in men, which had been significantly weakened by men's failure to protect them from suffering during the war. Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996), 247. Gaines Foster argues that the participation of women in public memorial events buttressed men's faith that women remained loyal to them despite their defeat. According to Foster, although the leadership of memorial activity probably came largely from the elite, a cross-section of society appears to have been represented at unveiling ceremonies and Memorial Day services. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 44-46.

³²Smith, "Virginia During Reconstruction," 437; George Rable, Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989), 237; History of the Confederate Memorial Associations, 29-30; Norfolk Journal, 7 Nov. 1872, [4]. Suzanne Lebsack and Kym Rice assert that many men were not supportive of early Lost Cause activities because they did not want to remember the war. Lebsack and Rice, "A Share of Honour", 115. Gaines Foster argues that men participated as fund-raisers and organizers but left the majority of the work to women because they associated both women and memorial work with sentiment. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 38-39.

whole South." not just a small number of rich individuals. She also made clear that the funds would be expended solely on the re-interment of bodies and the enclosure of the cemetery, not on decoration. However, space was reserved for the construction, in "better days," of a centrally located monument to the unknown soldier and of state monuments within each section of the cemetery.³³

Fairs and bazaars organized by women, which offered their handwork for sale to the public, melded benevolence and commemoration. One of the first of these events took place in Baltimore in the spring of 1866. Virginia women commented on the Baltimore fair, which was run by the Ladies' Southern Relief Association. On 14 May 1866, Fanny Alexander of Lexington wrote to her sister Mary Evelyn Bruce in Halifax County: "How magnanimous the Baltimoreans have been. I hope they will alleviate much suffering with the large sums they realized by the great fair." She noted that General Lee had received gifts from the association. In Norfolk, Chloe Whittle wrote a poem about the fair in which she celebrated women's strength and sacrifice. She evoked the image of a soldier's widow who had stitched through her tears "for the sake of the Baltimore fair."³⁴

³³Mrs. Philip Williams, Winchester, to Sally Lyons Taliaferro, 1 May 1866, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M.

³⁴Fanny M. Alexander to Mary Evelyn Bruce, Lexington, 14 May 1866, Bruce Family Papers, Special Collections Department, Univ. of Virginia (UVA); Chloe Tylor [*sic*] Whittle, "The Baltimore Fair of 1866," unidentified publication, 18 April 1903, Whittle-Greene Papers, Dept. of Special Collections, College of William and Mary (W&M). The Baltimore fair took place in the hall of the old Maryland Institute Building from 2-16 April 1866. The event raised \$164,569.97, which was allocated to the states of the former Confederacy according to their needs. Virginia received the largest amount, \$27,000. Clayton Colman Hall, ed., Baltimore: Its History and Its People (N.Y.: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1912), 1:214. In 1903, Margaret Cary Green Davis, historian

With her sister Grace and her aunt Frances Lewis, Chloe Whittle belonged to the Norfolk chapter of the Washington Lee Association, organized, in Chloe's words, "for the purpose of founding an Orphan Asylum in the Capitol of every State of the Confederacy for the benefit of the children of the Confederate Dead." In mid-October 1868, the association held a bazaar at the corner of Wolfe and Catharine streets in Norfolk. At the same time, across the Elizabeth River in Portsmouth, the Ladies' Memorial Aid Association was sponsoring a tableau vivant to raise funds. According to the Norfolk Journal, the association supported thirty poor widows and sixty-five children.³⁵

The political nature of some of these early Lost Cause activities is evident in a letter written in May 1867 by Imogen Lyons of Richmond to her step-daughter Sallie Lyons Taliaferro in Gloucester County. Lyons described a bazaar, organized by the "ladies" of Richmond, which was well on its way to raising more than ten thousand dollars. Lyons defiantly asked, "Don't you wish the Bazaar was for living Confederates[?]" She then discussed her disdain for United States General John A. Schofield, military governor of District One (Virginia), who had recently decided that two of the city's streetcars "shall be reserved for 'Ladies & children' in which it is said he

of the Confederated Southern Memorial Association, wrote that the groups within the association had emulated and drawn encouragement from each other. History of the Confederated Memorial Associations, 29-30.

³⁵Chloe Tyler Whittle Diary commenced 23 August 1866, 13 Sept. 1866, Whittle-Greene Papers, W&M; Norfolk Journal 13 Oct. 1868, 24 Oct. 1868. The Portsmouth association was founded on 12 June 1866. It provided food, clothing, and education for the orphans. History of the Confederated Memorial Associations, 294-295. For early fund-raising efforts in Lynchburg on behalf of Stonewall Jackson's widow, see U.S. Congress, House, Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, 39th Congress, 1st sess., 1866, H. Rept. 30, serial 1273, part 2 of appended testimony, 87.

includes 'colored' ladies and children as well as white." Lyons continued, "He is a vile Radical I believe & we are the [most] oppressed & degraded people on the face of the globe. The ladies of the Bazaar sent 'complimentary tickets' to Genl. Schofield & his Staff--I hear he particularly requested none of his Staff to go near the place." Whether Lyons's hearsay was accurate or not, she presented the bazaar as part of the postwar contest over the reconstruction of urban life in Richmond.³⁶

Virginia women's memorial activities received some recognition from male leaders. On 8 May 1868, the editor of the Norfolk Journal reported that the women's memorial association in Portsmouth had chosen the day to place flowers on the graves of Confederate soldiers, and he encouraged the South to dedicate one day out of the year as an official memorial day.³⁷ In March 1872, Jubal Early, who had been one of General

³⁶Imogen Lyons to Sallie Lyons Taliaferro, Richmond, 2 May 1867, William Booth Taliaferro Papers, W&M. For an apparent reference to efforts by Sallie Taliaferro and other women of Gloucester County to contribute to a fair in Norfolk, see R. Tabb to Sallie Lyons Taliaferro, White Marsh, 18 Oct. 1866, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M. In April 1866, black Richmonders had protested their exclusion from seats on the streetcars: the company that ran the cars agreed that black patrons would no longer be relegated to the platforms but also added two cars for the exclusive use of white women and children. Rachleff, Black Labor in Richmond, 42. Using a traditional conception of political activity, Gaines Foster describes memorial activities as largely apolitical because of the lack of political discussion at the meetings of Ladies' Memorial Associations, the leadership of women, and the occasional financial contributions of black Southerners. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 38-39, 46. Imogen Lyons' mention of the complimentary tickets is one of the few references to women as sectional mediators that I have found in depictions of memorial society activity shortly after the war. See Elizabeth Varon's hypothesis that Confederate memorial associations promoted the idea that women could play a key role in national reunification. Varon, "'We mean to be counted,'" 469-470;

³⁷Norfolk Journal, 8 May 1868, [1]. Early this century, Virginia S. Staples, the historian of the Portsmouth association, strongly emphasized the leading role played by women in commemorative activity during the immediate postwar period. She noted that the Portsmouth memorial association was "the only organization in the town engaged in

Robert E. Lee's corps commanders in the war, gave a speech at Washington and Lee University on the anniversary of Lee's birthday in which he invested women with the mission of keeping the past alive: "They tell us to forget dead issues. Can true issues ever be dead? We do believe that a people that forget their traditions are unworthy of the name of freemen. Ladies, I have faith in you to instil [sic] into the rising generation the memories of the past." The American Missionary magazine, the organ of the American Missionary Association, quoted parts of the speech and lamented in particular Early's appeal to women: "The strength of their feelings and their influence on the next generation are only too potent in perpetuating the 'memories of the past.'"³⁸

It was through their erection of Confederate monuments beginning in the mid-1870s that female supporters of the Lost Cause made their most indelible contribution to the interpretation of Civil War history in public spaces throughout Virginia. By sponsoring monuments, they could make the tangible, lasting contribution that defeat had denied their wartime exertions. Although many of the early monuments were placed in vernacular spaces, such as cemeteries, rather than civic spaces, such as courthouse lawns, both types were inaugurated by public commemorations that involved community

patriotic work" until local men founded the Portsmouth and Norfolk County Monument Association on 8 May 1875. History of the Confederated Memorial Associations, 295-296.

³⁸American Missionary 16 (March 1872): 60. A monument to the women of the Confederacy unveiled in Raleigh, N.C., early in the twentieth century showed a grandmother telling her grandson about the war and its traditions. Mildred Lewis Rutherford, comp., Historical Records of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, vol. 40, The Women of the Confederacy, 108, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Va. (MC). For more on Jubal Early's role in the Lost Cause in Virginia, see Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 52-55, 60.

leaders. Like Emancipation Day celebrations, unveiling ceremonies usually included a parade followed by poems, prayers, and speeches. By the late 1880s, these events had become more celebratory and less focused on mourning.³⁹

A little more than two years after the nation's Centennial, the Danville Ladies' Memorial Association (DLMA) unveiled a monument to the Confederate dead. Founded in 1872 by thirty young women, the DLMA raised two thousand dollars to fund the monument, a twenty-five-foot granite obelisk featuring bronze medallions of General Robert E. Lee and General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. According to the association's founder, Augusta Yates, the monument was erected in Green Hill Cemetery, "in full view of all trains on the Southern railway." To mark the occasion of the unveiling on 3 September 1878, local businesses closed, and visitors arrived from outlying areas and nearby cities and towns. In honor of the day's festivities, the streets were decorated with mottoes, festoons, and Confederate, Virginia, and United States

³⁹Gaines Foster suggests that by placing early monuments away from commonly used public areas, supporters of the former Confederacy set their "lost cause" away from themselves and gained some distance from their grief. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 45, 127-131. H.E. Gulley identifies two periods of Lost Cause commemoration that affected the Southern landscape. The first, between the end of the Civil War and World War I, was marked by the erection of monuments; generic soldiers and civilians were commemorated as well as officers, a departure from traditional monuments honoring wartime service. The second phase, which began in 1929 in Virginia and in the late 1940s in the Deep South, involved the placement of roadside markers, including some honoring white women from the Civil War and postbellum periods. Regarding the monuments, Gulley found no real difference in the images projected by those located in vernacular spaces and those erected in more public arenas. In his survey of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, he identified 352 Confederate monuments, six of which commemorated white women (all erected after 1894, the date of the founding of the UDC) and six of which included women and soldiers. The monuments of women, most of which represented anonymous figures, emphasized sacrifice, nurturance, and white unity. Gulley, "Women and the Lost Cause," 127-134, 138.

flags.⁴⁰

An inscription beneath the medallion of Lee included the words, "Memorial Tribute Of Virginia's Daughters To the Fallen Brave." If women played a role at the public ceremony associated with the unveiling, however, Yates did not record their participation. She presented the event as a male affair which included a parade of military companies and benevolent organizations, a prayer by the Reverend Mr. Alexander Martin, an introduction by Colonel Thomas S. Flournoy, and an oration by Captain John S. Wise. Yates concluded: "Taken altogether this was probably the grandest pageant ever witnessed in Danville and was highly gratifying to the Ladies' Memorial Association." In Yates's formulation, the public ceremony, which the women made possible through their organizational and fund-raising efforts, did not include active female participation. It reflected on the "ladies," but did not involve them. Its ultimate goal was to honor men, both those who had died and those who had survived to lead the public commemoration. Not until after the founding of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in 1894 would women play a more active public role in unveiling ceremonies.⁴¹

⁴⁰History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South, 275-276; Pollock, Illustrated Sketch Book of Danville, Virginia, 102-105. Similarly, stores had closed in Lexington, Virginia, on 10 May 1866, in honor of a prayer service and graveside ceremony held to mark the anniversary of Stonewall Jackson's death. Fanny M. Anderson, Lexington, to Mary Evelyn Bruce, 14 May 1866, Bruce Family Papers, UVA. The majority of early Confederate monuments represented funereal objects, particularly classical obelisks like the Danville example. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 41-42.

⁴¹History of the Confederated Memorial Associations, 277. See the description of the unveiling ceremony for the Confederate monument in Luray, Virginia, in 1898. The parade featured numerous female participants, including "young ladies in gray uniforms riding on horseback, a float of forty-five young girls representing the States of the Union,

Although she made sure to point out that women had initiated memorial work in Portsmouth and that men had not become involved until ten years after the war ended, Virginia S. Staples also presented women as selfless contributors to the remembrance of the Lost Cause. In her history of the Portsmouth Ladies' Memorial Aid Association, Staples related how in 1876 the group had postponed efforts toward a planned monument in order to help a men's group raise money for its monument. On 14 December 1876, the Portsmouth and Norfolk County Monument Association laid the cornerstone of a Confederate monument "at the intersection of the two most prominent streets in the city." The group acknowledged the assistance of the Ladies' Memorial Aid Association, which had raised and contributed a significant sum for the monument. The male orator praised "the fair women of our Southern land." Four and a half years later, women took part in raising the capstone of the monument. In subsequent years, the women's organization decorated the monument, which Staples termed "a testimonial to the faithful labors of those who lived through and bore the storm and stress of the battle day, men and women alike, veterans of the Confederacy." By 1903, when they finally erected their own monument, a simple granite shaft, to the Confederate soldiers of Portsmouth before "a large concourse" of citizens in Cedar Grove cemetery, the women of the memorial association had become veterans of the Lost Cause.⁴²

a float representing the burial of Latané, a float with three young ladies representing the North and South united through the supplication of Cuba, a float with eleven young ladies representing the Confederate States, who unveiled the statute [*sic*]: representatives from the Daughters of the Confederacy from Rappahannock county, and citizens mounted." Richmond Dispatch 22 July 1898, [1].

⁴²History of the Confederated Memorial Associations, 295-298.

Tensions between the sexes over monument construction, which Staples downplayed, developed in Richmond in conjunction with planning for the Lee monument during the late 1870s and early 1880s. Fund-raising for the monument gave women a sense of ownership of the memorial, and they sought to translate this into influence over the statue's appearance. In 1877, the Ladies' Lee Monument Committee disagreed at least twice with the male Board of Managers of the Lee Monument Association. In March, the women protested the preliminary selection of an obscure novice as sculptor of the monument without even holding a design competition. They couched their dissent in terms of selflessness: "Anxious as we are to hold our opinion and judgement in the matter subservient to your own, we find after mature deliberation, that we cannot do so without betraying the trust which has been confided to us by the contributors of the sum in our hands." As an obligation to their donors, the women had decided to solicit models from European artists. In November, the women declined an invitation to judge the models brought together by the men, claiming that the time for submitting models had been too short and that veterans and male art connoisseurs had advised against acceptance of any of the models. Not until 1886 did the women's group agree to release the funds it had raised, after Governor Fitzhugh Lee included the women's association in a new board of directors of the Lee Monument Association.⁴³

The involvement of Sallie Lyons Taliaferro and her husband William in the

⁴³The sculptor eventually chosen was Jean Antoine Mercié, a Frenchman. E.H. Brown, Elizabeth Byrd Nicholas, Imogen Lyons, and Sarah N. Randolph, Secretary, to Governor Kemper and other members of the Lee Monument Association, Richmond, 3 March 1877, Sarah N. Randolph, Secretary of Ladies Lee Monument Committee, to the Board of Managers of the Lee Monument Association, Richmond, 13 November 1877, Executive Papers, RG 3, LVA; Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 98, 100.

promotion of a monument for Gloucester County further illustrates the gender differences associated with Lost Cause activities. Sallie worked behind the scenes, while William played a public role. On 18 November 1872, Sallie recorded in her diary a visit from her neighbor Mrs. Prosser Tabb, with whom she discussed plans for the erection of a soldiers' monument. Eight days later, the Norfolk Journal reported that William had issued a public appeal for the women of Gloucester to contribute to the fund-raising effort to erect a granite monument in honor of local Confederate soldiers who had died in the war.⁴⁴

More than ten years later, planning and fund-raising for the monument continued. The Taliaferros' oldest daughter Leah went to Gloucester Courthouse to attend a meeting of "Ladies" about the memorial. A few months later, in September 1886, Sallie helped to organize a Confederate Memorial Day dinner to raise funds for the monument. The entire Taliaferro family attended the event, which included speeches from William and Virginia Governor Fitzhugh Lee, a former Confederate general.⁴⁵

At the unveiling of the monument at Gloucester Court House on 18 September 1889, William Taliaferro concluded his introductory address with a paean to the women of Gloucester County: "To the ladies of our county, who have so faithfully co-operated

⁴⁴Sallie Lyons Taliaferro Diary, 18 Nov. 1872, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; Norfolk Journal, 26 Nov. 1872, 4. In 1879, William Taliaferro delivered the oration at Virginia's commemoration of the ninety-eighth anniversary of Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown. Danville Daily Post, 7 Oct. 1879, [2].

⁴⁵Leah Taliaferro and Sallie Lyons Taliaferro to William Booth Taliaferro, 12 March [1874], Sallie Lyons Taliaferro Diary, 23 June 1886, 4 Sept. 1886, 8 Sept. 1886, William B. Taliaferro Papers, W&M; Proceedings of the Gloucester Monument Association at the Unveiling of the Monument at Gloucester Court House, Virginia, on Wednesday, Sept. 18, 1889 (West Point, Va.: West Point Virginian Print, 1890), 17-20.

with us, there is no measure of gratitude which is not due. They have come to crown the work which is so largely due to their exertions, and to entwine it with garlands." The secretary of the Gloucester Monument Association, Major James M. Stubbs, also acknowledged the women's contributions. He noted that the idea for the monument had come from "the mothers, wives, daughters and sisters of the brave heroes." Stubbs also informed the crowd that the women would "do their part in keeping alive the memories of our dead comrades" by planting evergreen and flowers around the base of the monument, a granite shaft inscribed with the names of the county's soldiers who had died fighting for the Confederacy.⁴⁶

Despite the central role of Gloucester County women in initiating and organizing the monument effort, no women served on the executive committee of the Gloucester Monument Association, which managed the money collected. Although a young woman did carry out an important duty at the ceremony, she did so because of her connection to her father. Miss Bettie H. Ware, the daughter of a former soldier, unveiled the monument before the large audience of men and women from Gloucester and adjoining counties. Women also donated the refreshments that were on sale at the ceremony to help raise the remaining funds necessary to pay for the monument.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Proceedings of the Gloucester Monument Association, 16-20.

⁴⁷The monument association had paid \$1100 for the monument, including some county funds, but still owed \$377.70. Proceedings of the Gloucester Monument Association, [6], 17-20. In 1900, Miss Susie Harwood, granddaughter of a Confederate officer who had died in the war, unveiled the Confederate monument erected at Charles City Court House under the direction of the Harrison-Harwood chapter of the UDC. Three hundred dollars in county funds were contributed to the Charles City monument. Addresses Delivered at the Unveiling of the Monument to Confederate Soldiers of Charles City County, Va., at Charles City Court House, Nov. 21, 1900 (Richmond:

In his oration at the Gloucester unveiling ceremony, Colonel Randolph Harrison referred to white women in the context of slavery. Although Harrison saw much that was good in the "New South" creed, he was critical of its presentation of slavery as a burden. Harrison described slavery as "marvelously adapted to the circumstances and surroundings of our people in the days gone by." He continued, "The result of the semi-feudal state of society then existing was the development of a race of striking individuality--'perfect woman, nobly planned,' and men of the highest order of intellect and bravery." Harrison's depiction of women as passive creations and men as thinking, forceful human beings belied the important behind-the-scenes work that women had done in promoting the monument but dovetailed perfectly with their unassuming public role at the unveiling ceremony. Furthermore, it is telling that Harrison's ultimate glorification of slavery focused on slaveowners and had nothing whatever to do with the experiences of black Virginians. On the rare occasions that speakers did mention blacks at such events, they typically praised the supposed faithfulness of slaves during the war, as at the unveiling of a Confederate monument in Charles City County in 1900.⁴⁸

Whittet & Shepperson, Printers, 1901), 5-8. In June 1883, Stonewall Jackson's daughter had unveiled the statue of Robert E. Lee at Washington and Lee College in Lexington. At reunions of the United Confederate Veterans around the turn of the century, participating groups of former soldiers brought young, unmarried women with them as sponsors. Sponsors were often related to a veteran, or they had done benevolence work for the group. Often the daughters of elite families, they took part in the veterans' parade, and some of them were usually "presented" to the veterans in a ceremony. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 88-89, 136-137, 251.

⁴⁸Proceedings of the Gloucester Monument Association, 26-28; Addresses, CCCH, 29, 35. For the sentiment that slavery had a refining influence on whites, see also Sally N. Robins, History of Gloucester County, Virginia, and Its Families (Richmond: West, Johnston, & Co., 1893), 12-13. In its educational efforts, the UDC presented slavery as a benevolent institution and downplayed the role of slavery in bringing about the war.

Descriptions of Lost Cause activities rarely refer to the participation of black residents as spectators or consumers.⁴⁹ Certainly freedpeople were aware of the efforts of former supporters of the Confederacy to pay tribute to deceased soldiers and veterans. The decorations, processions, fairs, and, ultimately, monuments in public spaces, as well as the closed stores during unveiling ceremonies, gave notice of memorial functions.⁵⁰

An interview given by Virginia Hayes Shepherd provides a rare view of the Lost Cause

Around the turn of the century, individuals and Confederate groups discussed erecting a monument to faithful slaves and lobbying for compensation from the United States government for slave property lost during the war; the Virginia division of the UDC was against the latter proposal. Race was not, however, an overt theme at Lost Cause commemorations. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 118-119, 140, 156-157, 194, 261; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1980), 100, 117-118; Angie Parrott, "'Love Makes Memory Eternal': The United Daughters of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia, 1897-1920," in *The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth-Century Virginia*, eds. Edward Ayers and John C. Willis (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1991): 223-224.

⁴⁹Myrta Lockett Avary claimed that "negroes faithful to the memory of dead friends and owners" assisted with the clean-up of Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond on 30 May 1866, before the first Memorial Day held by the Hollywood Memorial Association. Avary, *Dixie After the War* (N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1906; repr., N.Y.: Da Capo Press, 1970), 405-406. Some black organizations marched in the 1875 parade in Richmond held to pay tribute to Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, in association with the unveiling of a statue of him donated by some Englishmen. Howard N. Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), 229. Black Southerners who had assisted the Confederacy sometimes attended reunions of the United Confederate Veterans at the turn of the century. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 136, 140, 194. Years after the war, Richmond's Lee Chapter of the UDC provided aid for some freedwomen who had once worked as mammies and who were living in a home run by the city. Parrott, "'Love Makes Memory Eternal,'" 228.

⁵⁰Freedmen's teacher Jacob Yoder commented on 10 May 1866 that his school in Lynchburg had low attendance because it was a general holiday on which white residents commemorated the death of Stonewall Jackson and decorated Confederate graves. He noted that some freedpeople visited Union graves in the afternoon. Samuel L. Horst, ed., *The Fire of Liberty in Their Hearts: The Diary of Jacob E. Yoder of the Freedmen's Bureau School, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1866-1870* (Richmond: The Library of Virginia, 1996), 15.

from the perspective of an African-American woman. Shepherd, a former slave who lived in Norfolk in 1937, described her former owner as a "pretty good master," but then went on to discuss some of the ill treatment that had taken place in the community during her childhood. In recounting a slave auction that she had witnessed in Norfolk, Shepherd delivered her own commentary on the Lost Cause: "The auction block where the sale took place was right down there between the Portsmouth Ferry and the Monument. And let me tell you one thing that Lee's Monument stands for all the devilment and cruelty that was done to the Negro during the days of slavery." Shepherd's unsolicited remark reveals that she made a direct connection between commemoration of the Confederacy and the suffering that took place under slavery.⁵¹

In memoirs of her childhood, civil rights activist Pauli Murray also made note of the significance of the iconography that represented competing histories of the war: "If the Rebels had their monuments and symbols, we had ours. Under Grandfather's bed lay his musket and rusty saber, his bayonet and cavalry pistol, an 1856 Springfield model." Murray movingly described her family's efforts to hold onto its Unionist affiliation in the "Rebel atmosphere" of Durham, North Carolina, during the early twentieth century. She

⁵¹Perdue, *et al.*, eds., *Weevils*, 257. From a different perspective, a postwar letter written by Mildred Lee, a daughter of Robert E. and Mary Custis Lee, further illustrates the depth of emotion that public monuments to an historical foe could evoke. While on a visit to the Massachusetts coast, Lee wrote: "The library in the village has an inscription in memory of the downfall of the Rebellion! And on tablets & tombs, one reads--'Died in Rebel prisons'--Killed by the Rebels--etc! Would to God we had killed more!" Mildred Lee to Mary and Lelia Cocke, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Mass., n.d., Cocke Papers, UVA. See also the discussion of Mamie Garvin Fields and other African-Americans' antipathy toward the statue of John C. Calhoun in Charleston, South Carolina, in Karen Fields, "What One Cannot Remember Mistakenly," in Fabre and O'Meally, eds, *History and Memory in African-American Culture*, 156-158.

repeatedly emphasized the importance to her family of her maternal grandfather's service in the Union army and his work as a missionary teacher among freedpeople in Virginia and North Carolina. She remembered that when her aunts would tell her about their father's service, they would seem to become empowered to face segregation. After her grandfather died in 1919, young Murray honored him by tending his grave and decorating it on Memorial Day with an American flag, "just outside the iron fence which separated it from the Confederate banners waving on the other side."⁵²

Black Southerners did not have the political power or the financial resources during the 1870s and 1880s to counter Lost Cause adherents' transformation of the landscape into a Confederate statement about history. The Freedmen's Memorial to Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D.C., by artist Thomas Ball, stands as one of the few permanent public representations of the wartime experience of slaves, and it was the brainchild of a freedwoman born and raised in Virginia.⁵³ Unveiled by President Ulysses S. Grant on 14 April 1876, the fourteenth anniversary of abolition in Washington, D.C., and the eleventh anniversary of the assassination of President Lincoln, the granite and

⁵²While researching her book, it appears that Murray visited Amelia Court House, Virginia, where her grandfather had been a freedmen's teacher in 1866-1867. She pointed out that a Confederate monument stood in the court house square. Pauli Murray, Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family, rev. ed. (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1978; repr., Perennial Library, 1987), x, 24, 157, 112, 175, 275-276.

⁵³During the 1880s, Norfolk City Councilman James E. Fuller, a black Union veteran, lobbied to have a monument to black Civil War soldiers placed in the Potter's Field cemetery and requested that the name of the cemetery be changed to West Point. In 1886, the Common Council agreed to his proposal; twenty years later, the base of the monument was set into the ground. The monument, which shows a Union soldier holding a rifle, was finished in 1920. Newby, "The World Was All Before Them," 277, 283.

bronze monument portrays Lincoln holding the Emancipation Proclamation in one hand. His other hand is held over the head of a crouching male slave who is looking intently into the distance and whose wrist shackles have been broken. As an inscription on the front of the monument makes clear, the memorial was wholly paid for by contributions from freedpeople. The inscription further indicates that Charlotte Scott, a former slave born in Campbell County, Virginia, made the first donation when she contributed five dollars. This sum was said to have been the first money she had made as a freedwoman.⁵⁴

The Freedmen's Memorial to Abraham Lincoln also credits Charlotte Scott with the idea for the statue and may be the only public monument in the United States to acknowledge the citizenship of freedwomen. As a slave, Scott had originally been owned by Thomas H. Scott and then became the property of his daughter, Mrs. William P. Rucker. William Rucker was a Unionist, and he took his family and slaves to Marietta, Ohio, during the war. According to William Rucker, when Charlotte Scott

⁵⁴The organizing committee decided not to hold the unveiling on the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation because it fell on a Sunday. Norfolk's Joseph T. Wilson was a member of the unveiling committee. The pedestal for the monument was donated by Congress. Leon Litwack, "Many Thousands Gone: Black Southerners and the Confederacy," in Harry P. Owens and James J. Cooke, eds., The Old South in the Crucible of War (Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1983), 51; Joseph T. Wilson, Emancipation: Its Course and Progress, From 1491 B.C. to A.D. 1875, With a Review of President Lincoln's Proclamations, the XIII Amendment, and the Progress of the Freed People Since Emancipation With a History of the Emancipation Monument (Hampton, Va.: Normal School Steam Power Press Print, 1882), 163-166, 176; Inaugural Ceremonies of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, Washington City, April 14, 1876 (St. Louis: Levison & Blythe, 1876), 3, 6-7, 9-11, 27; Southern Workman 5 (May 1876): 39. For private veneration of Lincoln among black residents of Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1876 see Orra Langhorne's descriptions of homes with "pictures of Lincoln and Grant and often John Brown on the walls." Southern Workman 5 (July 1876): 54.

learned of the assassination of President Lincoln, she said to her former mistress: "The colored people have lost their best friend on earth; Mr. Lincoln was our best friend, and I will give five dollars of my wages toward erecting a monument to his memory." After consulting with William Rucker, she gave the money to the Reverend C.D. Battelle so that he could begin a fund for the monument. He then forwarded the money to the Western Sanitary Commission of St. Louis, which sponsored the monument.⁵⁵

The unveiling ceremony, presided over by John Mercer Langston, who later served as Virginia's only black Congressman, featured a poem entitled "Lincoln" by Miss Cordelia Ray of New York. Read by William E. Matthews of Baltimore, the poem emphasized the transformative power of the Emancipation Proclamation: "A race set free! The deed brought joy and light!//It bade calm justice from her sacred height,//When faith, and hope, and courage slowly waned,//Unfurl the stars and stripes at last unstained!" Frederick Douglass then gave the keynote address. He stressed the historic nature of the memorial, pointing out that it marked the first time that black citizens had so honored an American statesman. Douglass went on to enumerate Lincoln's limitations as a leader of African Americans, including his hesitant steps toward support for emancipation. Douglass then added that despite Lincoln's shortcomings, black Americans had never lost faith in him: "We came to the conclusion that the hour and the man of our redemption had somehow met in the person of Abraham Lincoln." He then reviewed Lincoln's positive qualities and his policies that had benefited black

⁵⁵Battelle's middle initial may have been "H.," and there is a hint that he was a black minister. Wilson, Emancipation, 163-165, 176; Inaugural Ceremonies, 6-7, 11.

Americans.⁵⁶

Although the inscription on the memorial describes Charlotte Scott's involvement, it is highly unlikely that anyone ever even considered using a female figure to represent the emancipated slave. The form of Scott's contribution to the monument would be repeated again and again over the next century. In the first half of the twentieth century, while black men predominated among literary interpreters of history and culture, women filled key roles in preservation and dissemination by teaching children, curating collections, maintaining archives, and fund-raising. And, like Charlotte Scott, the women involved in commemorating black history have tended to reinforce the dominant theme of the black freedom struggle in the United States: the idea that freedom signifies the fulfillment of manhood.⁵⁷

⁵⁶Douglass, "Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln, delivered at the Unveiling of the Freedmen's Monument in Memory of Abraham Lincoln, in Lincoln Park, April 14, 1876," in Philip S. Foner, ed., The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass, vol. 4, Reconstruction and After (N.Y.: International Publishers, 1955), 309-319; Inaugural Ceremonies, 5, 8, 14-15. The Southern Workman identifies Miss Ray as Cornelia. Southern Workman 5 (May 1876): 39. Douglass later became critical of the monument because it portrayed slaves as passive participants in the struggle for freedom. Interestingly, sculptor Thomas Ball had altered his original model to make the slave appear as a more active agent in his liberation. Litwack in Owens and Cooke, eds., Old South, 51.

⁵⁷Frederick Douglass's house, Cedar Hill, in Washington, D.C., was maintained by the National Association of Colored Women and then the National Council of Negro Women, until the latter group sold the house to the National Park Service in 1963, during centennial celebrations of the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War. The transaction gave Cedar Hill the distinction of becoming the first black historic house in the United States to enter the national preservation system. Ruffins argues that even as women have achieved leadership roles within public history institutions, they have rarely viewed gender issues as significant aspects of the black past to be analyzed and interpreted. Fath Davis Ruffins, "Lifting as We Climb": Black Women and the Preservation of African American History and Culture," Gender and History 6 (Nov. 1994), 376-396.

In postbellum Virginia, both black and white women contributed to the creation of cultural heritages related to the Civil War. Although Lost Cause adherents left more lasting memorials, between 1865 and 1890 they did not monopolize the public interpretation of the war and antebellum life. Amid the pageantry of ceremony, women in both groups affirmed their communal identities and honored male leaders. As participants--and occasionally active ones--in Emancipation Day celebrations, black women publicly proclaimed their devotion to freedom and experienced the empowerment associated with the recreation of history. Dedicated to immortalizing the bravery of both deceased soldiers and surviving veterans, white women experienced similar empowerment by arranging Lost Cause commemorations, but they then relinquished their leadership role in public.

By participating in civic rituals related to the war and emancipation, women of both races momentarily transcended the limitations placed on them as citizens. They had not fought on the battlefield, but they raised money to honor those who had and cheered on parades of veterans. They participated in commemorations of the past as symbols of such ideals as liberty, freedom, and honor. They could not vote, but at Emancipation Day celebrations and Lost Cause commemorations they publicly expressed their political allegiances. Through their participation in civic rituals, both black and white women demonstrated that the war had changed their lives forever, and they encouraged the development of communal histories which emphasized racial solidarity and national or regional allegiances. Although they ultimately confirmed male authority within their post-emancipation communities, these women contributed to the orchestrated transition

from slavery to freedom within civic space even as they waged their own private struggles to define emancipation within individual households. How black and white women's participation in commemorative activities affected their interactions with each other as workers and employers remains a tantalizing question for further research.

Conclusion

A "peculiar hopefulness"

In his two months as a visitor to Farmville, Virginia, during the summer of 1897, W.E.B. Du Bois found a "peculiar hopefulness" among local African-Americans. He encountered a persistent optimism that black citizens would attain their full rights one day and that the race would be given the credit due to it as one of "the earth's great peoples." He concluded: "Perhaps this simple faith is, of all products of emancipation, the one of the greatest social and economic value."¹

Surely the residents of Farmville had experienced their share of suffering, sorrow, and disappointment during the transition from slavery to freedom since 1861. What, then, inspired their resilient hope? The study of Virginia women's experiences during this tumultuous period suggests several answers.

To state the obvious, most freedwomen had greater liberty and agency in their daily lives than they had had as slaves. Americans today sometimes lose sight of this:

¹That Du Bois made these observations only a few years before the state constitutional convention that would disfranchise most black Virginians lends particular poignancy to his remarks. W.E. Burghardt Du Bois, "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study," Bulletin of the Department of Labor 3 (Jan. 1898): 38. Eighty years later, Willie Lee Rose offered a similar assessment of emancipation, despite her knowledge of the political and economic setbacks of the post-Reconstruction years: "The revolution, such as it was, was a revolution of hope and expectation." Rose, "Jubilee and Beyond: What Was Freedom?" in What Was Freedom's Price?, in David G. Sansing, ed. (Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1978), 19.

Virginia women, both black and white, who lived from 1861 to 1890 never did. While female slaves had long used various tactics to influence labor conditions, the advent of war, emancipation, and federal occupation increased African-American women's ability to make decisions about their labor and to implement changes in their working lives. They could move from job to job, work part-time, or reject wage labor altogether. Certainly, these were difficult decisions, and the opportunity to make them was severely restricted by poverty, violence, and intimidation, and by the demands of caring for young children. That women's options were limited should not overshadow the fact that most women in the 1890s had more choices than they had had as slaves.

In addition, the growth of independent community institutions among black Virginians, particularly in cities and towns, continued through the 1890s and beyond. Women played an active role in the development of schools, churches, mutual-aid organizations, and benevolent groups. The presence of these institutions gradually enabled freed families to become less dependent on maternalistic former owners and current employers. This change was particularly important for those women who continued to work in white households as domestic servants. In a situation that in some important ways recalled the relations of slavery, household workers highly valued the opportunities offered by community institutions. These women struggled mightily to keep their non-work lives as private as possible and to limit white women's participation in their personal affairs.

The reality of victories great and small during and immediately after the war still echoed in the 1890s. As former slaves and their descendants understood it, the Yankees

had whipped the Rebels. Whether actively or silently, most Virginia freedpeople had been on the winning side, and they knew it. The temporary, if partial, role reversal of former slaves and former owners was seared into the memories of all Virginia residents during the immediate postwar period.

While few ex-slave women may have seen their wartime resistance to slavery as a contribution to Confederate defeat, many quickly took advantage of the postwar federal presence to ensure that freedom would prevail over slavery. The experiences of delivering a Freedmen's Bureau order to a former owner or receiving payment from a current employer in court surely enhanced former slave women's consciousness of themselves as free persons. These victories may seem minor in retrospect, but they were far from trivial, especially for former slaves who had not had the experience of Union military service to demarcate slavery and freedom. After the demise of the Freedmen's Bureau, pensions and Southern Claims Commission reimbursements continued to link a small number of African-American women to the federal government in a positive way. The testimonies required to apply for these meager tokens of federal restitution gave women the opportunity to shape, slightly but significantly, the recorded history of the war and emancipation and to express their identities as citizens. In doing so, they made sure that federal officials would register their past and present suffering.

While the defeats of radical Republicanism and Readjusterism created widespread disillusionment with the political system, they did not bring despair or disaffection, as Emancipation Day and Independence Day celebrations held in the 1880s make clear. By 1890, white Virginians who had supported the Confederacy had not yet

succeeded in monopolizing the public interpretation of the war and emancipation. Communal citizenship characterized freed life in postwar Virginia. The public celebration of emancipation and Union victory occurred in churches and courthouse squares during and after the war as black residents marked Independence Day, regional anniversaries of emancipation, and legislative victories. Certainly, women filled secondary roles in these celebrations, which focused on military companies and political leaders. Even so, women's participation as fund-raisers, readers, symbols, marchers, and witnesses constituted an important means for them to make real the differences between slavery and freedom.

Three years after Du Bois completed his research in Farmville, Orra Langhorne addressed the American Social Science Association in Washington, D.C., on the topic of "Changes of a Half-Century in Virginia." Like Du Bois, Langhorne presented an optimistic view of the future. In particular, she celebrated the end of slavery: "In truth, at last in this second century of our republic is found liberty for all, when in former times there was but a semblance thereof." Yet, while Langhorne mentioned the significance of land ownership and education among former slaves, she focused on the benefits that emancipation had brought to former slaveholding women. She emphasized that their minds had been freed because they no longer had to manage large retinues of slaves. They had more time to pursue education, join female associations, and carry out missionary work.²

Langhorne's interpretation of emancipation was more positive than that embraced

²Orra Langhorne, "Changes of a Half-Century in Virginia," Journal of Social Science 38 (Dec. 1900): 167-176.

by many former slaveholding women in Virginia between 1861 and 1890. While relieved to be rid of the responsibility of slave management, Langhorne's contemporaries were more likely than she to associate emancipation with social upheaval, Confederate defeat, increased drudgery for themselves and their families, and reduced control over their household workers. Langhorne was keenly aware of these sentiments, which is why she preached reconciliation and progress. And, while like her contemporaries she indulged in considerable nostalgia for the past, she refused to become obsessed with what might have been.

Even former slaveholding women who did not share Langhorne's view that emancipation had been a form of national redemption had reasons for optimism in 1890. They too had shaped the form that black freedom would take in Virginia. Like freedwomen, former slaveholding women had succeeded in drawing on elements of the past to make the transition to a free society. Some had revitalized maternalism, using gifts and assistance with life-passage rituals to manage workers and, more significantly, to attempt to retain favored servants. And, through their Lost Cause activities, former slaveholding women who had supported the Confederacy had reclaimed public spaces that had been dominated by United States army forces and freedpeople during the federal occupation of Virginia communities. In the view of many former slaveholding women, the threatening ascendancy of Yankees and ex-slaves had thankfully been arrested by 1890. Former mistresses had helped to tame the social revolution of emancipation and could focus on the task of Confederate redemption.

Indeed, by 1890, both freedwomen and former slaveholding women had achieved

limited successes at the expense of each other. That neither black nor white women were fully satisfied with the results of emancipation would influence the substance and tenor of their personal lives and associational activities into the next century. As a legacy of slavery, the struggle to shape black freedom had really only just begun for the women of Virginia.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Manuscript Collections

Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Southern Historical Collection,
University of North Carolina.

Catherine Barbara Broun Papers.
Elizabeth Seawell Hairston Papers.
Hairston and Wilson Family Papers.
Manuel J. Thoustan Letter (1865).

Charlottesville, Virginia. Special Collections Department, University of Virginia.

Ada P. Bankhead Collection.
James Bruce Family Papers.
Brunswick County Papers.
Cocke Family Papers (Cocke Deposit and Moore Deposit).
Mrs. J.H. Fultz Letters.
Indenture (19 August 1865).
Miscellaneous Letters (1839-1891) from Virginians.
George Neville-Nellie Newman Collection.
Samuel Pannill Wilson Papers.

Durham, North Carolina. Special Collections Library, Duke University.

George Y. Bradley Letters.
George Gage Papers.
Louis Malsherbes Goldsborough Papers.
Sarah A. Rootes Papers.
James M. Willcox Papers.

Richmond, Virginia. Library of Virginia.

Mrs. M.C. Carmichael Letters.
Christ Church (Norfolk City) Vestry Book.
Freemason Street Baptist Church (Norfolk City) Minute Book.

Richmond, Virginia. Library of Virginia.

Galt Family Papers.

Gravely Family Papers.

Walter G. Hudgins and William Houlder Hudgins Papers.

Northwest Baptist Church (Norfolk County) Minute Book.

Frances Bouldin Raine Papers.

Emma Wood Richardson Reminiscences.

Mrs. William B. Taliaferro Diary (typescript).

Richmond, Virginia. Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy.

Letters Written at the End of the War--Virginia Folder.

Miscellaneous African-American Materials.

Miscellaneous Southern Women Materials.

New York Southern Relief Association Papers.

Prints and Photographs Collection.

Mildred Lewis Rutherford United Daughters of the Confederacy Scrapbooks.

Richmond, Virginia. Virginia Historical Society.

Allen Family Papers.

Allmand Family Papers.

Bailey Family Papers.

Baskervill Family Papers.

Bruce Family Papers.

Sarah S. Carter Diary.

Coleman Family Papers.

Comfort Family Papers.

Caroline Kean (Hill) Davis Diary.

Ellet-St. Catherine's Alumnae Association Papers.

Hugh Blair Grigsby Papers.

Gwathmey Family Papers.

Hankins Family Papers.

Emmeline Allmand Crump Lightfoot Memoir.

Lomax Family Papers.

Lizzie Jackson Mann Memoir.

Katherine Spiller (Graves) Moses Papers.

Virginia S. Camp Norfleet Memoir.

Sarah P. Payne Letterbook (typescript).

Marie Gordon Pryor Rice Reminiscences.

Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary.

Seddon Family Papers.

Shepherd Family Papers.

Washington, D.C. Library of Congress.

John S. Anglin Letters.

Colored Methodist Episcopal Church in America, Virginia Annual Conference Minutes, 1871-1900.

Alfred Mordecai Papers.

Flora Morgan McCabe Collection.

John McAllister Schofield Papers.

Williamsburg, Virginia. Archives and Records Department,
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Eliza Baker Memoir.

Williamsburg, Virginia. Department of Special Collections,
College of William and Mary.

Galt Family Papers.

Warner Throckmorton Jones Papers.

William B. Taliaferro Papers.

Tucker-Coleman Collection.

Virginia Cities Collection--Williamsburg Papers.

Watkins Papers.

Federal Documents (Unpublished) in the National Archives

United States. Court of Claims. Records of the Court. Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, 1884-1943. Record Group 123.

United States. Department of the Interior. Records of the Veterans' Administration. Pension Case Files. Record Group 15.

United States. Department of the Treasury. Records of the Accounting Officers. Case Files for Approved Claims. Record Group 217.

United States. Department of War. Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. Records of Subordinate Field Offices in Virginia. Record Group 105.

State Documents (Unpublished) in the Library of Virginia.

Virginia. Records of the Auditor of Public Accounts. Reports of Escaped Slaves. 1863.
Record Group 48.

Virginia. Records of the Office of the Governor. Letters Received. Record Group 3.

Newspapers and Magazines

American Missionary

Danville Daily Post

Danville Register

Norfolk Journal

Southern Workman

True Southerner

Selected Virginia Newspapers on American Centennial Newspapers Microfilm, Reel
397, Library of Virginia

Published Primary Sources

Books

Addresses Delivered at the Unveiling of the Monument to Confederate Soldiers of
Charles City County, Va., at Charles City Court House, Nov. 21, 1900.
Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, Printers, 1901.

Andrews, Sidney. The South Since the War. 1866. Reprint, N.Y.: Arno Press & The New
York Times, 1969.

Avary, Myrta Lockett. A Virginia Girl in the Civil War. N.p.: c. 1902.

Avary, Myrta Lockett. Dixie After the War: An Exposition of Social Conditions Existing
in the South, During the Twelve Years Succeeding the Fall of Richmond. N.Y.:
Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1906. Reprint, N.Y.: Da Capo Press, 1970.

Berlin, Ira, Barbara J. Fields, Thavolia Glymph, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland,
eds. Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867. Series 1,
Vol. 1. The Destruction of Slavery. N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986.

Berlin, Ira, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds. Freedom: A
Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867. Series 1, Vol. 2, The Wartime
Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South. N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993.

- Berlin, Ira, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds. Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867. Series 2, The Black Military Experience. N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982.
- Blassingame, John W., ed. The Frederick Douglass Papers. Series 1, Vol. 2, Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, 1847-54. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1982.
- Burr, Virginia Ingraham, ed. The Secret Eye: The Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 1848-1889. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- Burwell, Letitia M. [Page Thacker, pseud.] Plantation Reminiscences. N.p., 1878.
- Chase, C. Thurston. A Manual on School-Houses and Cottages for the People of the South. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1868.
- Coleman, Mrs. George P. [Mary Haldane (Begg) Coleman], ed. Virginia Silhouettes: Contemporary Letters Concerning Negro Slavery in the State of Virginia. Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1934.
- Concklin, Edward F., comp. The Lincoln Memorial [in] Washington, D.C.. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1927.
- Douglass, Frederick. Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself: His Early Life as a Slave, His Escape from Bondage, and His Complete History. Rev. ed. 1892. Reprint, N.Y.: Collier Books, 1962.
- Emancipation Celebration: Souvenir Program Booklet. Norfolk: Norfolk Emancipation Association, 1925.
- Equal Suffrage. Address from the Colored Citizens of Norfolk, Virginia, to the People of the United States. New Bedford, Ma.: 1865. Reprinted in Afro-American History Series. Vol. 3, The Black Intellectual. Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc., n.d.
- Fleming, Walter L., ed. Documentary History of Reconstruction: Political, Military, Social, Religious, Educational, and Industrial, 1865 to the Present Time. Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1906-1907. Reprint (in 1 volume), N.Y.: Peter Smith, 1950.
- Flournoy, H.W., ed. Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts from January 1, 1836, to April 15, 1869; Preserved in the Capitol at Richmond. Vol. 11. 1893. Reprint, N.Y.: Kraus Reprint Corp., 1968.

- Foner, Philip S., ed. The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass. Vol. 2, Reconstruction and After. N.Y.: International Publishers, 1955.
- Gaines, R.V., comp. Hand-Book of Charlotte County, Virginia. Richmond: Everett Waddey, 1889.
- Harper, Frances E.W. Complete Poems of Frances E.W. Harper. Edited by Maryemma Graham. N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988.
- Harper, Frances E.W. Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted. 1892. Reprint, with an introduction by Frances Smith Foster, N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988.
- History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South. N.p: Confederated Southern Memorial Association, 1904.
- Hoole, William Stanley, and Addie Shirley Hoole, eds. Confederate Norfolk: The Letters of a Virginia Lady to the Mobile "Register," 1861-1862. University, Ala.: Confederate Publishing Co., 1984.
- Horst, Samuel L., ed. The Fire of Liberty in Their Hearts: The Diary of Jacob E. Yoder of the Freedmen's Bureau School, Lynchburg, Virginia, 1866-1870. Richmond: The Library of Virginia, 1996.
- Langhorne, Orra. Southern Sketches from Virginia, 1881-1901. Edited by Charles E. Wynes. Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1964.
- Leigh, Frances Butler. Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War. London: 1883. Reprint, N.Y.: Negro Universities Press, 1969.
- McDonald, Cornelia Peake. A Woman's Civil War: A Diary, with Reminiscences of the War, from March 1862. Edited by Minrose C. Gwin. Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1992.
- Miller, Randall M., ed. "Dear Master": Letters of a Slave Family. Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1978.
- Paige, T.F., Twenty-Two Years of Freedom.... Norfolk: Barron's Presses and Bindery, 1885.
- Perdue, Charles L., Jr, Thomas E. Barden, and Robert K. Phillips, eds. Weevils in the Wheat: Interviews with Virginia Ex-Slaves. Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1976.

- Pollock, Edward. Illustrated Sketch Book of Danville, Virginia: Its Manufactures and Commerce. Petersburg: E.R. Waddill & Bros., 1885. Reprint, Danville: Womack Press, 1976.
- Proceedings of the Gloucester Monument Association at the Unveiling of the Monument at Gloucester Court House, Virginia, on Wednesday, September 18, 1889. West Point, Va.: West Point Virginian Print, 1890.
- Pryor, Mrs. Roger A. [Sara Agnes (Rice)]. Reminiscences of Peace and War. N.Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1904.
- Reid, Whitelaw. After the War: A Tour of the Southern States, 1865-1866. N.Y.: Moore, Wilstach & Baldwin, 1866. Reprint, N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1965.
- Robins, Sally N. History of Gloucester County, Virginia, and Its Families. Richmond: West, Johnston, & Co., 1893.
- Sterling, Dorothy, ed. The Trouble They Seen: The Story of Reconstruction in the Words of African Americans. 1976. Reprint, N.Y.: Da Capo Press, 1994.
- Swint, Henry L., ed. Dear Ones at Home: Letters from Contraband Camps. Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1966.
- Trowbridge, J.T. The South: A Tour of Its Battle-Fields and Ruined Cities... Hartford, Ct.: L. Stebbins, 1866.
- Wallace, Elizabeth Curtis. Glencoe Diary: The War-Time Journal of Elizabeth Curtis Wallace. Edited by Eleanor P. Cross and Charles B. Cross, Jr. Chesapeake, Va.: Norfolk County Historical Society, 1968.
- Wallace, Katie Darling. Child of Glencoe: Civil War Journal of Katie Darling Wallace. Edited by Eleanor P. Cross and Charles B. Cross, Jr. Chesapeake, Va.: Norfolk County Historical Society, 1983.
- West, George Benjamin. When the Yankees Came: Civil War and Reconstruction on the Virginia Peninsula. Edited by Parke Rouse, Jr. Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1977.
- Wilson, Joseph T. Emancipation: Its Course and Progress From 1491 B.C. to A.D. 1875... Hampton, Va.: Normal School Steam Power Press Print, 1882.
- Woodward, C. Vann, ed. Mary Chesnut's Civil War. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981.

Articles

Abbott, John C. "The Military Hospitals at Fortress Monroe." Harper's New Monthly Magazine (Aug. 1864): 306-322.

Berlin, Ira, Steven F. Miller, and Leslie S. Rowland. "Afro-American Families in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom." Radical History Review 42 (Fall 1988): 89-121.

"Diary of Miss Harriette Cary, Kept by Her From May 6, 1862, to July 24, 1862." Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine 9 (1927-28): 104-115; 12 (1930-31): 160-173.

Du Bois, W.E.Burghardt. "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia: A Social Study." Bulletin of the Department of Labor 3 (Jan. 1898): 1-38.

Morton, Richard L., ed. "Life in Virginia by a 'Yankee Teacher,' Margaret Newbold Thorpe." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 64 (April 1956): 180-207.

Pierce, Edward L. "The Contrabands of Fortress Monroe." Atlantic Monthly 8 (Nov. 1861): 626-640.

Tinsley, Fanny [Fanny W.Gaines]. "Mrs. Tinsley's War Recollections, 1862-1865." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 35 (Oct. 1927): 393-404.

Government Documents

United States. Congress. House. Africans in the Fort Monroe Military District: Letter from the Secretary of War, in Answer to Resolution of the House, Transmitting a Report of Major General Wool, on the Number, Age, and Condition of the Africans in his District. 37th Cong., 2d sess., 1862. H. Exec. Doc. 85. Serial 1135.

United States. Congress. House. First General Report of the Commissioners of Claims. 42d Cong., 2d sess., 1872. H. Misc. Doc. 16. Serial 1524.

United States. Congress. House. Fourth General Report of the Commissioners of Claims. 43d Cong., 2d sess., 1875. H. Misc. Doc. 18. Serial 1653.

United States. Congress. House. Tenth General Report of the Commissioners of Claims. 46th Cong. 2d sess., 1879-1880. H. Misc. Doc. 30. Serial 1929.

United States. Congress. House and Senate. Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction. 39th Cong., 1st sess., 1866. H. Rept. 30 and Part 2 of appended testimony. Serial 1273.

- United States. Congress. House. Riot at Norfolk: Letter from the Secretary of War, in Answer to a Resolution of the House of December 10, calling for Information Relative to the Riot at Norfolk. 39th Cong., 2d sess., 1867. H. Exec. Doc. 72. Serial 1293.
- United States. Congress. House. Southern Claims Commission Barred Claims, 1871-1880. National Archives Microfiche Publication M1407.
- United States. Congress. House. Southern Claims Commission Disallowed Claims, 1871-1880. National Archives Microfiche Publication M1407.
- United States. Court of Claims. Docket Cards for Congressional Case Files, 1884-1943. National Archives Microfilm Publication M2007.
- United States. Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. Negro Population, 1790-1915. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918.
- United States. Department of the Interior. Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864.
- United States. Department of the Treasury. Records of the Commissioners of Claims (Southern Claims Commission), 1871-1880. National Archives Microfilm Publication M87.
- United States. Department of War. Records of the Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands: Virginia, 1865-1869. National Archives Microfilm Publication M1048.

Secondary Sources

Books

- Abbott, Shirley. Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South. N.Y.: Ticknor & Fields, 1983.
- Alexander, Adele Logan. Ambiguous Lives: Free Women of Color in Rural Georgia, 1789-1879. Fayetteville: Univ. of Arkansas Press, 1991.
- Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. Revised Edition. London: Verso, 1991.
- Andrews, Matthew Page, comp. The Women of the South in War Times. Rev. ed. Baltimore: 1923.

- Aptheker, Bettina. Woman's Legacy: Essays on Race, Sex, and Class in American History. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1982.
- Ash, Stephen V. When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Bentley, George R. A History of the Freedmen's Bureau. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania, 1955.
- Bradley, Chester D. Dr. Craven and the Captivity of Jefferson Davis at Fort Monroe. Ft. Monroe, Va.: The Casemate Museum, [1973].
- Brewer, James H. The Confederate Negro: Virginia's Craftsmen and Military Laborers, 1861-1865. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1969.
- Brown, Kathleen M. Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Clark-Lewis, Elizabeth. Living In, Living Out: African American Domesticity in Washington, D.C., 1910-1940. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994.
- Clinton, Catherine. The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South. N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1982.
- Clinton, Catherine, and Nina Silber, eds. Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War. N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992.
- Crofts, Daniel W. Old Southampton: Politics and Society in a Virginia County, 1834-1869. Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1992.
- Culpepper, Marilyn Mayer. Trials and Triumphs: Women of the American Civil War. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1991.
- Dill, Bonnie Thornton. Across the Boundaries of Race and Class: An Exploration of Work and Family Among Black Female Domestic Servants. N.Y.: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880. As Black Reconstruction, N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace, 1935. Reprint, with an introduction by David Levering Lewis, N.Y.: Touchstone by Simon & Schuster, 1995.

- Ellison, John Malcus. Negro Organizations and Leadership in Relation to Rural Life in Virginia. Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, 1933.
- Engs, Robert Francis. Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861-1890. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1979.
- Fabre, Geneviève, and Robert O'Meally, eds. History and Memory in African-American Culture. N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994.
- Faust, Drew Gilpin. The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South. Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1988.
- Faust, Drew. Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Fields, Barbara Jeanne. Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland During the Nineteenth Century. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1985.
- Foner, Eric. Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1983.
- Foner, Eric. Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877. N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1988.
- Foster, Gaines M. Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913. N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987.
- Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1988.
- Franklin, John Hope. The Emancipation Proclamation. N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963.
- Frederickson, George M. The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism, and Social Inequality. Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1988.
- Fry, Gladys-Marie. Stitched From the Soul: Slave Quilts from the Antebellum South. N.Y.: Dutton Studio Books, 1990.
- Gaspar, David Barry, and Darlene Clark Hine, eds. More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1996.

- Genovese, Eugene D. Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made. N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1974.
- Gerteis, Louis S. From Contraband to Freedman: Federal Policy Toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865. Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1973.
- Gilmore, Glenda. Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Heaps, Willard A. and Porter W. The Singing Sixties: The Spirit of Civil War Days Drawn from the Music of the Times. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1960.
- Highlights of Black History at Fort Monroe. The Casemate Papers. Fort Monroe, Va.: Fort Monroe Casemate Museum, [1972].
- Hobsbawm, Eric, and Terence Ranger, eds. The Invention of Tradition. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983.
- Holmes, Anne Middleton. The New York Ladies' Southern Relief Association, 1866-1867. N.Y.: The Mary Mildred Sullivan Chapter, UDC, 1926.
- Holub, Robert C. Jurgen Habermas: Critic in the Public Sphere. N.Y.: Routledge, 1991.
- Jackson, Luther Porter. Negro Office-holders in Virginia, 1865-1895. Norfolk: Guide Quality Press, 1945.
- Jones, Jacqueline. Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present. N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1986.
- Jordan, Ervin L. Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia. Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1995.
- Katzman, David. Seven Days A Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America. N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978.
- Klingberg, Frank W. The Southern Claims Commission. Univ. of California Press, 1955. Reprint, N.Y.: Octagon Books, 1978.
- Kobelski, Jane H., ed. Readings in Black and White: Lower Tidewater Virginia. Portsmouth, Va.: Portsmouth Public Library, 1982.
- Kolchin, Peter. First Freedom: The Responses of Alabama Blacks to Emancipation and Reconstruction. Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1972.

- Lebsock, Suzanne. The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860. N.Y.: W.W. Norton & Co., 1984.
- Lewis, Earl. In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth-Century Norfolk. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1991.
- Litwack, Leon. Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery. N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1980.
- McCardell, John. The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism. N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 1979.
- McConnell, John Preston. Negroes and Their Treatment in Virginia, 1865-1867. Pulaski, Va.: B.D. Smith & Brothers, 1910.
- McDaniel, George W. Hearth and Home: Preserving a People's Culture. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1982.
- McDonough, James L. Schofield: Union General in the Civil War and Reconstruction. Tallahassee: Florida State Univ. Press, 1972.
- McFeely, William S. Yankee Stepfather: General O.O. Howard and the Freedmen. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1968.
- McPherson, James. The Negro's Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted During the War For the Union. N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1965.
- Massey, Mary Elizabeth. Ersatz in the Confederacy: Shortages and Substitutes on the Southern Homefront. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1952. Reprint, with an introduction by Barbara Bellows, 1993.
- Massey, Mary Elizabeth. Women in the Civil War. As Bonnet Brigades, N.Y.: A.A. Knopf, 1966. Reprint, Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1994.
- Mills, Gary B. Southern Loyalists in the Civil War: The Southern Claims Commission. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1994.
- Moger, Allen W. Virginia: Bourbonism to Byrd, 1870-1925. Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1968.
- Morgan, Lynda J. Emancipation in Virginia's Tobacco Belt, 1850-1870. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1992.

- Morgan, Philip, ed. "Don't Grieve After Me": The Black Experience in Virginia, 1619-1986. Hampton, Va.: Hampton Univ. 1986.
- Murray, Pauli. Proud Shoes: The Story of an American Family. Rev. ed. N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1978; Perennial Library, 1987.
- Nichols, Charles H. Many Thousands Gone: The Ex-Slaves' Account of Their Bondage and Freedom. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963.
- Owens, Harry P., and James J. Cocke, eds. The Old South in the Crucible of War. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1983.
- Parramore, Thomas C., with Peter C. Stewart and Tommy L. Bogger. Norfolk: The First Four Centuries. Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1994.
- "... Past is Prologue": Gloucester County, Virginia. Gloucester County Historical Committee, 1973.
- Quarles, Benjamin. The Negro in the Civil War. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1953.
- Rable, George C. Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism. Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989.
- Rachleff, Peter J. Black Labor in Richmond, 1865-1890. As Black Labor in the South: Richmond, Virginia, 1865-1890, Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1984. Reprint, Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1989.
- Rabinowitz, Howard N. Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890. N.Y.: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978.
- Richardson, Joe M. Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861-1890. Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1986.
- Rollins, Judith. Between Women: Domesticity and Their Employers. Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1985.
- Rose, Willie Lee. Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment. N.Y.: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1964.
- Salmon, John S. and Emily J. Franklin County, Virginia, 1786-1986: A Bicentennial History. Rocky Mount, Va.: Franklin County Bicentennial Commission, 1993.
- Salmon, Lucy Maynard. Domestic Service. 1897. Reprint, N.Y.: Arno Press, 1972.

- Sansing, David G., ed. What Was Freedom's Price? Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1978.
- Saville, Julie. The Work of Reconstruction: From Slave to Wage Laborer in South Carolina, 1860-1870. N.Y.: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994.
- Scott, Anne Firor. The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Scott, James C. Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990.
- Seidman, Steven, ed. Jurgen Habermas on Society and Politics: A Reader. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.
- Sefton, James E. The United States Army and Reconstruction, 1865-1877. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1967.
- Simkins, Francis Butler, and James Welch Patton. The Women of the Confederacy. Richmond: Garrett & Massie, Inc., 1936.
- Skocpol, Theda. Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1992.
- Sutherland, Daniel E. Americans and Their Servants: Domestic Service in the United States from 1800 to 1920. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1981.
- Taylor, Alrutheus Ambush. The Negro in the Reconstruction of Virginia. Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1926.
- Thomas, Emory. The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971.
- Tucker, Susan. Telling Memories Among Southern Women: Domestic Workers and Their Employers in the Segregated South. N.Y.: Schocken Books, 1988.
- Wallace, David H. John Rogers: The People's Sculptor. Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1967.
- Wertenbaker, Thomas J. Norfolk: Historic Southern Port. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1931.
- Wheat, Ellen Harkins. Jacob Lawrence: American Painter. Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1986.

- White, Deborah Gray. Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South. N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 1985.
- Wiggins, William H., Jr. O Freedom! Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations. Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1987.
- Wolfe, Margaret Ripley. Daughters of Canaan: A Saga of Southern Women. Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1995.
- Wood, Forrest G. Black Scare: The Racist Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1968.
- Wood, Peter H., and Karen C.C. Dalton. Winslow Homer's Images of Blacks: The Civil War and Reconstruction Years. Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1988.
- Wynes, Charles E. Race Relations in Virginia, 1870-1902. Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1961.

Articles

- Ash, Stephen V. "Poor Whites in the Occupied South, 1861-1865." Journal of Southern History 57 (Feb. 1991): 39-62.
- Bailey, Fred Arthur. "Free Speech and the Lost Cause in the Old Dominion." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 103 (April 1995): 237-266.
- Baker, Paula. "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920." In Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History. Edited by Ellen Carol DuBois and Vicki L. Ruiz. N.Y.: Routledge, 1990.
- Blair, William A. "Justice Versus Law and Order: The Battles over the Reconstruction of Virginia's Minor Judiciary, 1865-1870." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 103 (April 1995): 157-180.
- Blassingame, John W. "Using the Testimony of Ex-Slaves: Approaches and Problems." Journal of Southern History 41 (Nov. 1975): 473-492.
- Brown, Elsa Barkley. "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom." Public Culture 7 (1994): 107-146.
- Chambers, Lenoir. "Notes on Life in Occupied Norfolk, 1862-1865." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 73 (April 1965): 131-144.

- Cimprich, John. "Slave Behavior During the Federal Occupation of Tennessee, 1862-1865." In The Day of the Jubilee: The Civil War Experience of Black Southerners. Edited by Donald G. Nieman. N.Y.: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Clinton, Catherine. "Bloody Terrain: Freedwomen, Sexuality, and Violence During Reconstruction." In Half Sisters of History: Southern Women and the American Past. Edited by Catherine Clinton. Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1994.
- Cox, John and LaWanda. "General O.O. Howard and the 'Misrepresented Bureau.'" Journal of Southern History 19 (Nov. 1953): 427-456.
- Crouch, Barry A., and Larry Madaras. "Reconstructing Black Families: Perspectives from the Texas Freedmen's Bureau Records." In Our Family, Our Town: Essays on Family and Local History Sources in the National Archives. Compiled by Timothy Walch. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1987.
- Dailey, Jane. "Deference and Violence in the Postbellum Urban South: Manners and Massacres in Danville, Virginia." Journal of Southern History 63 (Aug. 1997): 553-590.
- Dietz, Mary G. "Context Is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship." In Learning About Women: Gender, Politics, and Power. Edited by Jill K. Conway, Susan C. Bourque, and Joan W. Scott. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan, 1989.
- Drago, Edmund L. "Militancy and Black Women in Reconstruction Georgia." Journal of American Culture 1 (Winter 1978): 838-844.
- Edwards, Laura. "Sexual Violence, Gender, Reconstruction, and the Extension of the Patriarchy in Granville County, North Carolina." North Carolina Historical Review 68 (July 1991): 237-260.
- Escott, Paul D. "The Context of Freedom: Georgia's Slaves During the Civil War." In The Day of the Jubilee: The Civil War Experience of Black Southerners. Edited by Donald G. Nieman. N.Y.: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Escott, Paul D. "The Uses of Gallantry: Virginians and the Origins of J.E.B. Stuart's Historical Image." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 103 (Jan. 1995): 47-72.
- Evans, Sara M. "Women's History and Political Theory: Toward a Feminist Approach to Public Life." Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism. Edited by Nancy A. Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsack. Urbana and Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1993.

- Faust, Drew Gilpin. "'Altars of Sacrifice'" Confederate Women and the Narratives of War." Journal of American History 76 (March 1990): 1200-1228.
- Faust, Drew Gilpin. "Race, Gender, and Confederate Nationalism: William D. Washington's Burial of Latané." Southern Review 25 (Spring 1989): 297-307.
- Faust, Drew Gilpin. "'Trying to Do a Man's Business': Slavery, Violence, and Gender in the American Civil War." Gender and History 4 (Summer 1992): 197-214.
- Fellman, Michael. "Emancipation in Missouri." In The Day of the Jubilee: The Civil War Experience of Black Southerners. Edited by Donald G. Nieman. N.Y.: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Fields, Barbara Jeanne. "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America." New Left Review 181 (May/June 1990): 95-118.
- Forsythe, Harold S. "'But My Friends Are Poor': Ross Hamilton and Freedpeople's Politics in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, 1869-1901." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 105 (Autumn 1997): 409-438.
- Glymph, Thavolia. "Freedpeople and Ex-Masters: Shaping a New Order in the Postbellum South, 1865-1868." In Essays on the Postbellum Southern Economy. Edited by Thavolia Glymph and John J. Kushma. College Station: Texas A&M Univ. Press. 1985.
- Gulley, H.E. "Women and the Lost Cause: Preserving a Confederate Identity in the American Deep South." Journal of Historical Geography 19, no. 2 (1993): 125-141.
- Hartzell, Lawrence L. "The Exploration of Freedom in Black Petersburg, Virginia, 1865-1902." In The Edge of the South: Live in Nineteenth-Century Virginia. Edited by Edward L. Ayers and John C. Willis. Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1991.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race." Signs 17 (Winter 1992): 251-274.
- Hills, Patricia. "Eastman Johnson's The Field Hospital: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women in the Civil War." Minneapolis Institute of Arts Bulletin 65 (1981-1982): 66-81.
- Hine, Darlene Clark. "Black Women's History, White Women's History: The Juncture of Race and Class." Journal of Women's History 4 (Fall 1992): 125-133.

- Hucles, Michael. "Many Voices, Similar Concerns: Traditional Methods of African-American Political Activity in Norfolk, Virginia, 1865-1875." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 100 (Oct. 1992): 543-566.
- Hunter, Tera. "Domination and Resistance: The Politics of Wage Household Labor in New South Atlanta." Labor History 34 (Summer 1993): 205-220.
- Johnson, Guion Griffis. "Southern Paternalism Toward Negroes After Emancipation." Journal of Southern History 23 (Nov. 1957): 483-509.
- Johnson, Ludwell H., III. "Blockade or Trade Monopoly: John A. Dix and the Union Occupation of Norfolk." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 93 (Jan. 1985): 54-78.
- Jones, Kathleen B. "Citizenship in a Woman-Friendly Polity." Signs 15 (Fall 1990): 781-812.
- Kerber, Linda K. "A Constitutional Right to be Treated Like American Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship." In U.S. History as Women's History: New Feminist Essays. Edited by Linda K. Kerber, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Kathryn Kish Sklar. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Kierner, Cynthia A. "Genteel Balls and Republican Parades: Gender and Early Southern Civic Rituals, 1677-1826." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 104 (Spring 1996): 185-210.
- Kondert, Nancy T. "The Romance and Reality of Defeat: Southern Women in 1965." Journal of Mississippi History 35 (May 1973): 141-152.
- Larson, Sarah. "The Records of the Southern Claims Commission." In Our Family, Our Town: Essays on Family and Local History Sources in the National Archives. Compiled by Timothy Walch. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1987.
- Lowe, Richard. "The Freedmen's Bureau and Local Black Leadership." Journal of American History 80 (Dec. 1993): 989-998.
- Lowe, Richard. "Local Black Leaders During Reconstruction in Virginia." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 103 (April 1995): 181-206.
- Lowe, Richard. "Testimony From the Old Dominion Before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 104 (Summer 1996): 373-397.

- Mohr, Clarence L. "Before Sherman: Georgia Blacks and the Union War Effort, 1861-1864." In The Day of the Jubilee: The Civil War Experience of Black Southerners. Edited by Donald G. Nieman. N.Y.: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994.
- Moore, James T. "Black Militancy in Readjuster Virginia, 1879-1883." Journal of Southern History 41 (May 1975): 167-186.
- Moore, John Hammond. "Getting Uncle Sam's Dollars: South Carolinians and the Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880." South Carolina Historical Magazine 82 (July 1981): 248-262.
- Moore, John Hammond. "The Norfolk Riot, 16 April 1866." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 90 (April 1982): 155-164.
- Moore, Louis. "The Elusive Center: Virginia Politics and the General Assembly, 1869-1871." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 103 (April 1995): 207-236.
- Morton, Richard L. "'Contrabands' and Quakers in the Virginia Peninsula, 1862-1869." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 61 (Oct. 1953): 419-429.
- Parrott, Angie. "'Love Makes Memory Eternal': The United Daughters of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia, 1897-1920." In Edward Ayers and John C. Willis, eds., The Edge of the South: Life in Nineteenth-Century Virginia. Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1991.
- Quarles, Benjamin. "Historic Afro-American Holidays." Negro Digest 16 (Feb. 1967): 14-19.
- Rapport, Sara. "The Freedmen's Bureau as a Legal Agent for Black Men and Women in Georgia: 1865-1868." Georgia Historical Quarterly 73 (Spring 1989): 26-53.
- Robertson, James I., Jr. "Danville Under Military Occupation, 1865." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 75 (July 1967): 331-348.
- Robinson, Armstead. "Beyond the Realm of Consensus: New Meanings of Reconstruction for American History." Journal of American History 68 (Sept. 1981): 276-297.
- Robinson, Armstead L. "The Difference Freedom Made: The Emancipation of Afro-Americans." In The State of Afro-American History: Past, Present, and Future. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1986.

- Robinson, Armstead L. "'Worsen dan Jeff Davis': The Coming of Free Labor during the Civil War, 1861-1865." In Thavolia Glymph and John J. Kushma, eds., Essays on the Postbellum Southern Economy. College Station: Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1985.
- Ruffins, Fath Davis. "'Lifting as We Climb': Black Women and the Preservation of African American Culture." Gender and History 6 (Nov. 1994): 376-396.
- Ryan, Mary P. "Gender and Public Access: Women's Politics in Nineteenth-Century America." In Craig Calhoun, ed., Habermas and the Public Sphere. Cambridge, Ma.: The MIT Press, 1992.
- Schwalm, Leslie A. "'Sweet Dreams of Freedom': Freedwomen's Reconstruction of Life and Labor in Lowcountry South Carolina." Journal of Women's History 9 (Spring 1997): 9-38.
- Shepard, E. Lee, comp. "'This Being Court Day': Courthouses and Community Life in Rural Virginia." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 103 (Oct. 1995): 459-470.
- Sutherland, Daniel E. "A Special Kind of Problem: The Response of Household Slaves and Their Masters to Freedom." Southern Studies 20 (Summer 1981): 151-166.
- Titus, Mary. "'Groaning tables' and 'Spit in the kettles': Food and Race in the Nineteenth-Century South." Southern Quarterly 30 (Winter/Spring 1992): 13-21.
- Toppin, Edgar A. "Emancipation Reconsidered." Negro History Bulletin 26 (May 1963): 233-236.
- Walker, Cam. "Corinth: The Story of a Contraband Camp." In Donald G. Nieman, ed., The Day of the Jubilee: The Civil War Experience of Black Southerners. N.Y.: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994): 333-350.
- Washington, Reginald. "The Southern Claims Commission: A Source for African-American Roots." Prologue: Quarterly of the National Archives 27 (Winter 1995): 374-382.
- Watkinson, James D. "William Washington Browne and the True Reformers of Richmond, Virginia." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 97 (July 1989): 375-398.
- Weisberger, Bernard A. "The Dark and Bloody Ground of Reconstruction Historiography." Journal of Southern History 25 (Nov. 1959): 427-447.

Wish, Harvey. "Slave Disloyalty Under the Confederacy." Journal of Negro History 23 (Oct. 1938): 435-450.

Zornow, William Frank. "Aid for the Indigent Families of Soldiers in Virginia, 1861-1865." Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 66 (Oct. 1958): 454-458.

Unpublished Theses and Dissertations

Alderson, William T. "The Influence of Military Rule and the Freedmen's Bureau on Reconstruction in Virginia, 1865-1870." Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1952.

Davies, Emily R. "'What Sorrows and What Joys': The Civil War Diaries of Cloe Tyler Whittle, 1861-1866." M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1993.

Edwards, Laura Frances. "The Politics of Manhood and Womanhood: Reconstruction in Granville County, North Carolina." Ph.D. diss., Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1991.

Hunter, Tera. "Household Workers in the Making: Afro-American Women in Atlanta and the New South, 1861 to 1920." Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ., 1990.

Krug, Donna Rebecca Dondes. "The Folks Back Home: The Confederate Homefront during the Civil War." Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Irvine, 1990.

Mainwaring, W. Thomas, Jr. "Community in Danville, Virginia, 1880-1963." Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1988.

Newby, Cassandra. "'The World Was All Before Them': A Study of the Black Community in Norfolk, Virginia, 1861-1884." Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1992.

Pitzer, Elizabeth Neal. "Sallie and Elizabeth Galt: Compliance and Resistance to the 'Southern Lady' Role in Antebellum Williamsburg." M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1985.

Regosin, Elizabeth Ann. "Slave Custom and White Law: Ex-Slave Families and the Civil War Pension System, 1865-1900." Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Irvine, 1995.

Schwalm, Leslie Ann. "The Meaning of Freedom: African-American Women and Their Transition from Slavery to Freedom in Lowcountry South Carolina." Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, 1991.

Sibley, Martha A. "William Booth Taliaferro: A Biography." M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1973.

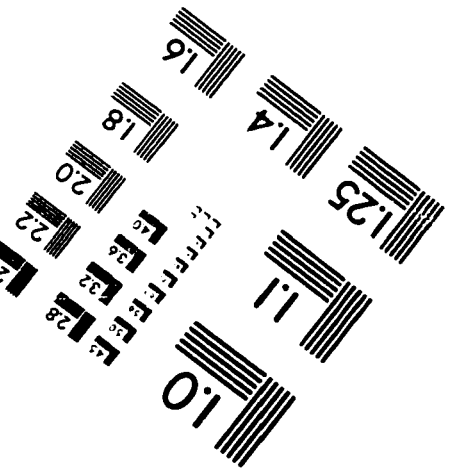
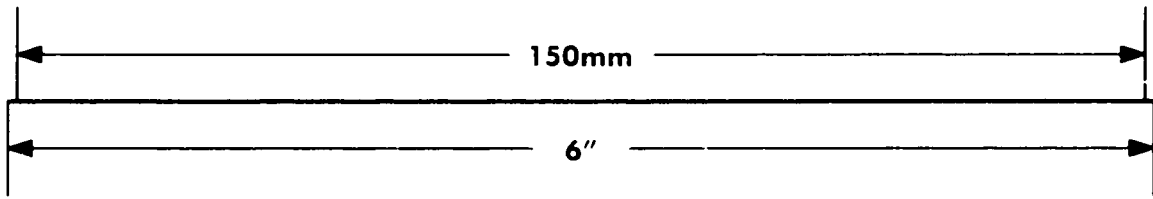
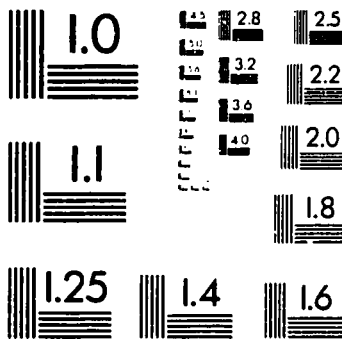
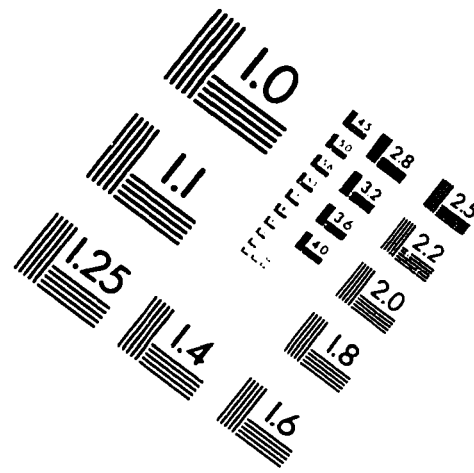
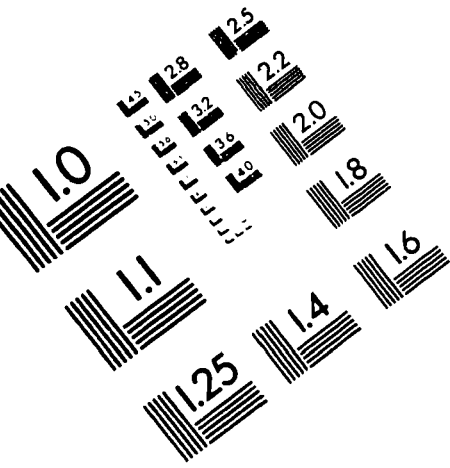
- Smith, James Douglas. "Virginia During Reconstruction, 1865-1870: A Political, Economic, and Social Study." Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Virginia, 1960.
- Soto, Melissa M. "African-American Women's Gender and Political Identities in Reconstruction South Carolina and Georgia, 1865-1870." M.A. thesis, Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison, 1994.
- Sturzenberger, Doris C. "The Southern Lady Ideal in the Life of Cynthia Beverley Tucker, 1840-1870." M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1979.
- Tripp, Steve Elliott. "Restive Days: Race and Class Relations in Lynchburg, Virginia, 1858-1872." Ph.D. diss., Carnegie Mellon Univ., 1990.
- van Zelm, Antoinette G. "Chloe Tyler Whittle: Religion, Gender, and Identity in Norfolk, Virginia, 1865-1876." M.A. thesis, College of William and Mary, 1992.
- Varon, Elizabeth Regine. "'We mean to be counted': White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia." Ph.D. diss., Yale Univ. 1993.
- Weiner, Marli Frances. "Plantation Mistresses and Female Slaves: Gender, Race, and South Carolina Women, 1830-1880." Ph.D. diss, Univ. of Rochester, 1986.
- Weis, Tracey M. "Negotiating Freedom: Domestic Service and the Landscape of Labor and Household Relations in Richmond, Virginia, 1850-1880." Ph.D. diss., Rutgers, 1994.
- Wilson, Spencer. "Experiment in Reunion: The Union Army in Civil War Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia." Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Maryland, 1973.

VITA

Antoinette Gray van Zelm

Born in Winter Park, Florida, February 18, 1966. Graduated from Mount Greylock Regional High School in Williamstown, Massachusetts, June 1984. B.A., Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont, May 1988. M.A., College of William and Mary, August 1992. Admitted to Ph.D. candidacy, March 1994. Has worked on the Dictionary of Virginia Biography in the Publications Division at the Library of Virginia since August 1997.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved

