

Marshall University

## Marshall Digital Scholar

---

Theses, Dissertations and Capstones

---

2021

### "Our Women Are Made of the Right Stuff": Gender, Politics, and Conflict in Civil War West Virginia

Amanda Romain Shaver  
shaver35@marshall.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://mds.marshall.edu/etd>



Part of the [Appalachian Studies Commons](#), [Race, Ethnicity and Post-Colonial Studies Commons](#), [United States History Commons](#), [Women's History Commons](#), and the [Women's Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Shaver, Amanda Romain, "'Our Women Are Made of the Right Stuff': Gender, Politics, and Conflict in Civil War West Virginia" (2021). *Theses, Dissertations and Capstones*. 1346.  
<https://mds.marshall.edu/etd/1346>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses, Dissertations and Capstones by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact [zhangj@marshall.edu](mailto:zhangj@marshall.edu), [beachgr@marshall.edu](mailto:beachgr@marshall.edu).

**“OUR WOMEN ARE MADE OF THE RIGHT STUFF”: GENDER, POLITICS, AND  
CONFLICT IN CIVIL WAR WEST VIRGINIA**

A thesis submitted to  
the Graduate College of  
Marshall University  
In partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

In  
History  
by

Amanda Romain Shaver

Approved by

Dr. Kevin Barksdale, Committee Chairperson

Dr. Michael E. Woods

Dr. Kat D. Williams

Marshall University  
May 2021

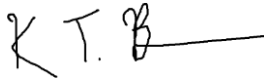
## APPROVAL OF THESIS

We, the faculty supervising the work of Amanda Romain Shaver, affirm that the thesis, "*Our Women Are Made of the Right Stuff*": *Gender, Politics, and Conflict in Civil War West Virginia*, meets the high academic standards for original scholarship and creative work established by the Department of History and the College of Liberal Arts. This work also conforms to the editorial standards of our discipline and the Graduate College of Marshall University. With our signatures, we approve the manuscript for publication.

Dr. Kevin Barksdale, Department of History

Committee Chairperson

Date

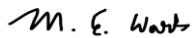


March 24, 2021

Dr. Michael E. Woods, University of Tennessee

Committee Member

Date



March 24, 2021

Dr. Kat D. Williams, Department of History

Committee Member

Date



March 24, 2021

© 2021  
Amanda Romain Shaver  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like raising a child, a thesis takes a village to write, and this work would not have been completed without the indispensable contributions of my own (largely female-based) kinship network. First, I would like to thank the History Department at Marshall University. From the first day I walked through the doors, I received all the support, encouragement, and enthusiasm I could have hoped for. I owe the most thanks to my thesis committee. My advisor, Dr. Kevin Barksdale, was always available for long, rambling stories about West Virginia women and was ever-ready to talk me off the ledge when I needed it. His corrections to my continued use of passive voice, his inspiration to push my arguments just a bit further, and his reassurance that I was on the right path did not go amiss. Dr. Michael Woods taught me to think critically about everything I read and never seemed to tire of being asked, “Where are the women?” I will forever appreciate his encouragement that my chosen topic of study was worthwhile and his belief that I was more than capable of bringing West Virginia women’s Civil War contributions to light. Last but not least, I thank Dr. Kat Williams, who taught me the importance of being a “killjoy” and to rightfully stand up for my place in academia. I am grateful for all the long conversations in her office, the sustained motivation, and the belief that it’s never too late to find your way.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to the “Mistresses of Marshall.” Meghan Mayo and Lexie Brooke took me in, taught me to read like a graduate student (even if I ignored their advice), and collected my tears in the jar as I worked my way through my first year. They taught me to be an unapologetic female historian and accompanied me on adventures I never would have undertaken without their support. Katie Stewart, Becca Henderson Rolley, and Tabby Locascio

were always there for a good rant, an appropriate pun, or a full-on vent session. I owe them all more than I could credit here.

Historians would be nothing without the archivists who support them. I thank the always-patient Lori Thompson for letting me hide in the Hoffman room, her faith in my abilities, and her willingness to help me fall down whatever rabbit hole I chose. She and all the staff at Morrow Library were my home away from home. Debra Basham at the West Virginia State Archives dove into the depths with me and found the exact pages which fleshed out my narrative. The staff at the West Virginia and Regional History Center in Morgantown, WV, were lifesavers during a period when in-person research was impossible, and their willingness to not only help me find my sources, but to quickly get the information into my hands is much appreciated. These archivists and researchers have my eternal thanks.

Finally, to my family, both chosen and born, thank you. You were always willing to listen to the latest story I had uncovered and let me explain why I thought it was important. Specifically, my sister Nikki was there with an encouraging word, a willing ear, or a needed distraction. Most importantly, my husband Tim has been my biggest fan and most ardent supporter. He booked historic hotels, stopped at road-side attractions, toured museums with a never-ending narrative in his ear, and attended more History Department events and conferences than any sane person should be subjected to. He provided all the meals, snacks, hot tea, and reassurance without which this project would never have come to fruition. I can't put into words all that he has done, but he knows and that is what matters.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Abstract.....   | vii |
| Introduction: “I Know We Will Suffer if Two Armies are in Virginia” .....                               | 1   |
| Chapter One: The Transformation of West Virginia’s “True Woman” and Her Role in the New State.....      | 17  |
| True Womanhood and the Women’s Rights Movement .....  | 18  |
| West Virginia Statehood Movement.....   | 28  |
| Chapter Two: The Political, Economic, and Social Lives of West Virginia Women During the Civil War..... | 42  |
| Kinship Networks .....  | 43  |
| West Virginia Women in Business .....   | 54  |
| West Virginia Women in Politics .....   | 60  |
| Chapter Three: “The Armor of Gender”: West Virginia Women and the Military.....                         | 70  |
| Conclusion: “I Have Lived in Stirring Times” .....  | 103 |
| Bibliography .....  | 113 |
| Appendix A: Office of Research Integrity Approval Letter .....  | 120 |

## ABSTRACT

“‘Our Women Are Made of the Right Stuff.’ Gender, Politics, and Conflict in Civil War West Virginia” examines the lives and contributions of white West Virginia women and argues that they were not merely victims of the war, but dynamic participants whose opinions were influential and whose actions determined the ability of both the Union and Confederate armies to wage war in Appalachia. Striking a balance between the antebellum standards of “True Womanhood” and the emerging ideals of the women’s rights movement, West Virginia women became politically engaged in both the statehood movement and the Civil War. They transformed their traditional domestic work into essential political and material support through the use of kinship networks and ladies’ aid societies. West Virginia women also participated in the economic lives of their communities through their engagement in both legal and illegal business practices. As the opposing armies occupied their state, West Virginia women relied upon assumptions about their feminine nature and acted outside of conventional gender norms to both support and resist invading forces. Regardless of their partisan loyalties, Unionist and Confederate West Virginia women shared similar experiences of hardship throughout the Civil War and learned to adapt their behavior and actions as their situations required in order to survive. This thesis contributes to the field of Civil War history by not only examining the effects of the war in Appalachia, but is of vital importance in comprehending the impact of Appalachian women on the outcome of the Civil War.



## INTRODUCTION: “I KNOW WE WILL SUFFER IF TWO ARMIES ARE IN VIRGINIA”

In the midst of the Civil War and just days after West Virginia’s declaration of statehood, sixteen-year-old Sirene Bunten wrote of her new state, “Oh what a glorious flag is ours, if I were only a man to help fight for it. I believe I could fight.”<sup>1</sup> Her desire to participate in the conflict was one shared by many West Virginia women, both Union and Confederate, who were forced into action as their communities, state, and nation were torn apart by the Civil War. Although they could not join either the Confederate or Union armies or the various extralegal guerilla units which occupied their state, nor cast votes for secession or statehood, West Virginia women did not sit idly by. Inspired by the pre-war emerging women’s rights movement and increasing opportunities for economic and political participation that surrounded the statehood movement and Civil War, Confederate and Union-supporting West Virginia women took advantage of the possibilities offered during this chaotic time to expand their traditional domestic spheres, take on influential roles within their communities, and become active participants in the war.

Antebellum women living in West Virginia were beholden to the ideals of “True Womanhood,” in which women across the United States were expected to be pious, pure, domestic, and submissive. Women’s advice literature reinforced these ideals, often combining them and associating them with the highest calling for women at the time: motherhood. Local West Virginia newspapers printed advice columns which promoted and strengthened these beliefs among the state’s citizens. As the women’s movement emerged in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, however, new ideas about women’s place in the world began appearing in West Virginia papers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Cresswell, “A Civil War Diary from French Creek: Selections from the Diary of Sirene Bunten,” *West Virginia History* 48, (1989): July 1, 1863.

The earliest articles often described the movement and its members in a derogatory manner, but in the years leading up to the Civil War, reports on the fledgling women's rights efforts became more positive in state newspapers. This change in reporting reflected evolving attitudes within the nation and the state regarding the women's rights movement, as well as the increased acceptance of women's ability to take on more public roles within their communities.<sup>2</sup>

The Civil War required women across the nation to confront political issues which divided their families and conscripted their loved ones to fight and die on distant battlefields. As the Civil War began, however, West Virginia women were doubly drawn into the political world by debates over statehood. While the Civil War was a national conflict, issues surrounding statehood were more immediately accessible and consequential, and West Virginia women felt increasingly justified in publicly commenting on the problems presented by the state's western counties impending secession from Virginia. Women's support and influence became essential within the deeply divided state, and their attendance at political rallies, newspaper editorials, and participation in public partisan displays were vital to the success of the statehood movement.

In conjunction with their participation in the politics of the statehood movement, West Virginia women took advantage of the societal turmoil brought by the Civil War to expand their public roles within their communities through increased political and economic involvement. They drew upon existing kinship networks for both moral and material support when the men in their lives were absent and conventional communication methods were unavailable. They transformed their traditional domestic work into public political statements by converting their largely female-based kinship networks into ladies' aid societies which provided both Union and Confederate soldiers with essential materials like food, clothing, and hospital supplies. As the

---

<sup>2</sup> Sally Roesch Wagner, *The Women's Suffrage Movement* (New York: Penguin Books, 2019), 89, 135-136.

war continued to impact their lives, West Virginia women engaged in business transactions which would previously have fallen to their now-absent male kinfolk, and they developed and increasingly voiced their own influential opinions on the conflict between the Union and the Confederacy.

The deeply divided nature of and near continual presence of troops and war-related violence in West Virginia during the Civil War prevented the state's women from remaining outside the conflict. As the war shattered traditional gender norms, women took on new dynamic roles in relation to occupying military forces. Their domestic sphere invaded, West Virginia women confronted commanding officers who requisitioned household goods or searched their homes. While soldiers struggled to recognize them as potential enemies, West Virginia women quickly adapted to the chaos of war and used assumptions about their feminine nature to behave in conventionally non-feminine ways. Southern-sympathizing women defied Union authority at the risk of imprisonment and gave aid to the bands of Confederate guerrillas which roamed the state's mountains. Conversely, Union women resisted the Confederate bushwhackers and assisted the federal army in rooting out female Confederate smugglers. Although they advocated for opposite sides during the conflict, both Confederate and Union-supporting West Virginia women shared similar experiences and used the opportunities presented by the war to expand their traditional gender roles within their communities.<sup>3</sup>

This study of West Virginia women represents a much-needed expansion on conventional studies of West Virginia during the Civil War, which tend to focus almost exclusively on the

---

<sup>3</sup> "A Secession Amazon Again in Limbo-She Resists the Soldiers," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, June 2, 1862, accessed November 20, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1862-06-02/ed-1/seq-3/>; "The Reason Why Women are Employed to Search Female Rebels," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, September 4, 1861, accessed November 20, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1861-09-04/ed-1/seq-2/>.

statehood movement or the partisan mountain fighting which prevailed in the region, by examining the ways in which women were not only affected by the war, but used the societal turbulence which accompanied the conflict to act outside conventional norms. Wars are not fought exclusively by uniformed soldiers, and their effects are not felt exclusively by the men whose names were recorded on military rosters. This thesis examines how the Civil War impacted the communities, families, and individuals who are often excluded from traditional military and political histories and provides a broader understanding of the effects of the war on West Virginia's citizens and culture.

There is no dearth of scholarship on the Civil War. Analysis of the war's causes, battlefield strategies, and most famous participants began even before the war's last shot was fired, and its popularity as a historical topic of study has only grown.<sup>4</sup> In recent years, however, scholarly works on the Civil War have become more diverse as historians examined the larger social impact of the war on specific communities and people. This expansion has resulted in a wide variety of works on subjects such as the war in Southern Appalachia, the impact of guerrilla warfare, and the roles played by women during the Civil War, all of which enhance our understanding of "the most written-about event in American history."<sup>5</sup>

Although historical studies of Southern Appalachia, guerrilla warfare and women may not seem inherently connected, and indeed are rarely analyzed together, scholars of each subject frequently use similar methods in their research. Historians who study Southern Appalachia and guerrilla warfare often seek to dismiss the stereotypes and myths surrounding the people and

---

<sup>4</sup> As an example, George Junkin's *Political Fallacies: An Examination of the False Assumptions, and Refutation of the Sophistical Reasonings, which have Brought on this Civil War* was published mid-war in 1863.

<sup>5</sup> James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), ix.

places within the region, and they tend to use a similar approach as historians who dispel the traditional victimhood narratives which abound in early writings on women's experiences during the Civil War. Likewise, those who study female kinship networks often ask similar questions as scholars who study the ways in which guerrillas and bushwhackers were able to operate throughout Southern Appalachia during the war.<sup>6</sup> Examining the overlapping methods of recent analysis in these three fields allows common themes to emerge, and presents new routes of inquiry for future historical studies.

Over the last fifty years, the Southern Appalachian region of the United States has received increased attention from Civil War historians challenging long-held yet erroneous beliefs regarding the area and its people.<sup>7</sup> In their collection of essays entitled *The Civil War in Appalachia*, historians Kenneth Noe and Shannon Wilson dispel the belief that the area was entirely Unionist and instead argue that the region contained areas of both Confederate and Union sympathizers.<sup>8</sup> In his historiographical essay, "Feelin' Mighty Southern: Recent Scholarship on Southern Appalachia in the Civil War," historian Noel Fisher also claims that the Appalachian region did not have a single, unifying feature such as loyalty to the Confederacy or Union, but that each area had its own nature, based on the specific location and the people who lived there.<sup>9</sup> West Virginia, which gained statehood and entered the Union in 1863, serves as a prime example of the conflicting allegiances within Southern Appalachia. Partisans on opposing

---

<sup>6</sup> An intense historical debate exists over the use of the terms "guerrilla," "bushwhacker," "partisan," and "insurgent" when used to describe the irregular warfare which took place during the Civil War. This thesis is not concerned with this specific issue, and so these terms are used interchangeably unless otherwise specified.

<sup>7</sup> The Southern Appalachian region encompasses the northern counties of Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia, stretches across the eastern portions of Tennessee and Kentucky, the western edges of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia, and contains the entire state of West Virginia.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth W. Noe and Shannon H. Wilson, eds., *The Civil War in Appalachia: Collected Essays* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997), xiv.

<sup>9</sup> Noel C. Fisher, "Feelin' Mighty Southern: Recent Scholarship on Southern Appalachia in the Civil War," *Civil War History* 47, no. 4 (December 2001): 334-346.

sides lived in the same communities, and sometimes even belonged to the same families. In his work, *A House Divided: Statehood Politics & the Copperhead Movement in West Virginia*, historian Richard Orr Curry argues that despite its emergence as a Union state, sentiment among the population of West Virginia was almost equally divided between the Union and Confederacy.<sup>10</sup>

Partisan allegiances among Southern Appalachian residents were by no means fixed during the Civil War. In *Contested Borderland: The Civil War in Appalachian Kentucky and Virginia*, historian Brian McKnight asserts that civilians within the disputed border region between Kentucky and Virginia would often change their loyalties as the occupying army of the area changed.<sup>11</sup> This malleable allegiance points to Southern Appalachians' extreme adaptability during the turbulent changes brought by the Civil War. Their professed loyalty was not as dear to them as their lives, and so they readily adjusted to their changing situation as a survival mechanism. Similarly, historian Laura Edwards finds that Southern women's loyalty was often just as pragmatically adaptable as men's war-time allegiances. Facing starvation and hardship, Southern women wrote to their elected officials and the Confederate government, begging the release of their husbands from service. While they dutifully surrendered their menfolk to the needs of the Confederacy at the beginning of the war, deprivation and need eventually outweighed their dedication to the larger cause.<sup>12</sup> The fact that both Southern Appalachian men

---

<sup>10</sup> Richard Orr Curry, *A House Divided: Statehood Politics & the Copperhead Movement in West Virginia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), 49.

<sup>11</sup> Brian D. McKnight, *Contested Borderland: The Civil War in Appalachian Kentucky and Virginia* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 4.

<sup>12</sup> Laura F. Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 88-90.

and women changed their allegiances throughout the war reveals their endurance of similar hardships and a common reaction among both sexes.

Like Appalachian Civil War Historians who have fought against stereotypes of monolithic regional Unionism, Women Historians who study white Southern women during the conflict have pushed back against conventional scholarship which portrayed their subjects solely as victims of the war. In her essay, “‘She-Rebels’ on the Supply Line: Gender Conventions in Civil War Kentucky,” Kristen Streater argues that Confederate-sympathizing women in Kentucky became politicized participants in the Civil War when they transferred their sense of duty to their families into a sense of duty to the Confederate nation by supporting the bands of guerrillas who operated in the region. She claims that this expanded their role beyond the domestic sphere and “into the realm of public patriotism.”<sup>13</sup> Catherine Clinton also finds that the Civil War offered Southern women the opportunity to step out of the home and into the public square during the war. In *Stepdaughters of History: Southern Women and the American Civil War*, Clinton argues that “particularly emboldened girls...uncouple[d] themselves from the harsh dictates of gender convention.”<sup>14</sup> These women, or “impermissible patriots” as Clinton labels them, not only expanded beyond their traditional gender roles but intentionally entered into the exclusive male sphere of combat.<sup>15</sup>

Scholars of Southern Appalachian women reach a variety of conclusions about regional women’s place within the Civil War. Although he dispels the myth of a unified and homogenous

---

<sup>13</sup> Kristen L. Streater, “‘She-Rebels’ on the Supply Line: Gender Conventions in Civil War Kentucky,” in *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation, and the American Civil War*, eds. LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009) 88-89.

<sup>14</sup> Catherine Clinton, *Stepdaughters of History: Southern Women and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016), 41.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

Appalachia, Noel Fisher frequently falls into an outdated depiction of women in his work on partisan fighting in East Tennessee. In *War at Every Door: Partisan Politics & Guerrilla Violence in East Tennessee 1860-1869*, Fisher acknowledges that Union-sympathizing women offered assistance to local bands of guerrillas and that Confederate women were often a nuisance to the Union army, but his depictions of women during the war repeatedly revert to a narrative of victimization as he describes the variety of tortures and sexual assaults local women were subjected to by occupying forces.<sup>16</sup> In *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War*, historians John Inscoe and Gordon McKinney take a more measured approach to western North Carolina women's participation in the Civil War, arguing that women became "caught up in the...patriotic fervor that swept the state and the region."<sup>17</sup> Rather than detail the atrocities committed against women or relegate them to the domestic sphere, Inscoe and McKinney profile women who dressed as men and fought on the battlefield, helped Union soldiers escaping from Confederate prisons to pass through the area safely, and assumed the role of provider for their families while their husbands and sons were at war.<sup>18</sup> Inscoe and McKinney's approach recognizes women's agency and contributions to the war effort as opposed to consigning them to the role of victimized bystanders.

Echoing historians who challenge the victimhood narrative of women and war, historians of guerrilla warfare have similarly worked to gain recognition for the significance of partisan fighting on the Civil War in Appalachia. Although conventionally viewed as a peripheral and insignificant aspect of the Civil War, these historians argue that the so-called Bushwhacker's

---

<sup>16</sup> Noel C. Fisher, *War at Every Door: Partisan Politics & Guerrilla Violence in East Tennessee 1860-1869* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 74, 89, 118, 138

<sup>17</sup> John C. Inscoe and Gordon B. McKinney, *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 188.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 189-198.



War was a “crucial part of the larger war.”<sup>19</sup> In his study of guerrilla warfare, *Punitive War: Confederate Guerrillas and Union Reprisals*, Clay Mountcastle argues that extralegal warfare played an integral role in how the Union army came to view the South and even influenced the nature of the war they waged there. Mountcastle claims that bushwhackers so frustrated the Union army that it made the decision to fight not only the Confederate army, but Confederate-sympathizing citizens as well.<sup>20</sup> While some guerrilla bands were sanctioned by the Confederate army, others dubbed “guerrillas” by the Union were merely unaffiliated Southern citizens who resisted federal encroachment.<sup>21</sup> Under a system of what Mountcastle calls “collective responsibility,” the Union army claimed private property, threatened to arrest and execute disloyal citizens, and burned entire towns to the ground when they suspected locals of supporting guerrillas. Mountcastle argues it was this type of “powerful and decisive” war against the Southern population which allowed the Union army to triumph.<sup>22</sup>

In areas like West Virginia, historians have revealed that guerrilla warfare and bushwhacking raids typified the war far more than pitched battles between Union and Confederate forces. Historian Karissa Marken claims that the secession of West Virginia from Virginia coupled with the lack of federal oversight in the region instigated a period of lawlessness which encouraged guerrilla operations.<sup>23</sup> This instability, along with mountaineers “intense localism,” led West Virginians to engage in guerrilla activity to protect their families,

---

<sup>19</sup> Daniel E. Sutherland, “Sideshow No Longer: A Historiographical Review of the Guerrilla War,” *Civil War History* 46, no. 1 (March 2000): 5.

<sup>20</sup> Clay Mountcastle, *Punitive War: Confederate Guerrillas and Union Reprisals* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 3-4.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-114.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 107, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Karissa A. Marken, “‘They Cannot Catch Guerrillas in the Mountains Any More Than a Cow Can Catch Fleas’: Guerrilla Warfare in Western Virginia, 1861-1865” (master’s thesis, Liberty University, 2014), 134.

homes, and communities.<sup>24</sup> West Virginia guerrillas fought for a variety of reasons, including political loyalty, personal advancement, and for self-preservation, and Union attempts to deal with the bushwhackers often failed because they did not take one or more of these motives into account.<sup>25</sup> As the war's focus shifted away from West Virginia, Marken claims that the region "deteriorated into anarchy," and citizens increased their use of guerrilla warfare in an effort to protect themselves and their families in the ensuing chaos.<sup>26</sup>

Many of the historical studies of guerrilla warfare are community-focused microhistories that utilize similar methods as those used by scholars who explore the formation and importance of women's kinship networks. In *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era*, Laura Edwards argues that middle- and lower-class women maintained extensive social networks through the marriages and connections of their children. These kinship networks allowed large families to share labor and surplus goods, providing added financial and material security to the entire extended family during the Civil War.<sup>27</sup> In *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South*, Stephanie McCurry examines another type of women's war-time kinship network, that of soldier's wives and women workers. She highlights the Richmond Bread Riot of April 1863 as well as other food riots throughout the South as examples of the centrality of informal kinship networks.<sup>28</sup> The women organizers of these food-riots were not bound by kinship, but banded together due to shared deprivation and hunger.

---

<sup>24</sup> Marken, "They Cannot Catch Guerrillas in the Mountains Any More Than a Cow Can Catch Fleas," 134.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-7.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>27</sup> Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, 41-42.

<sup>28</sup> Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 178-217.

While Appalachian historians have focused on regionally-based yet malleable loyalties to the Union and Confederacy during the Civil War, community-focused studies of guerrilla groups have demonstrated that kinship and neighborhood ties, rather than class or specific ideologies, were often what bound partisan groups together. Historian Kenneth Noe compared rosters from Camp Chase, a Union prison outside Columbus, Ohio, to western Virginia census records in order to draw conclusions about the men who were sent there under charges of bushwhacking and treason against the Union.<sup>29</sup> Noe argues that many of the men on the rosters were connected by family and community ties. Furthermore, the majority were not young men taking advantage of their war-torn surroundings to pillage their communities, but were older, land-owning local citizens. Noe finds that many of the men arrested for bushwhacking lived within close proximity to one another, “suggesting not just a county but a neighborhood response to Federal occupation.”<sup>30</sup> In his study of McNeill’s Rangers, a group of Confederate bushwhackers who operated in Hardy County, West Virginia, historian Richard Hulver found that the leader, Hanse McNeill, was born into a wealthy slaveholding family, and that many of the men who joined his partisan band were family members, friends, and neighbors.<sup>31</sup> The fact that Hanse McNeill’s son, Jesse, was a member of the band and took over leadership of the Rangers after his father’s death makes the familial ties among the group especially relevant.<sup>32</sup> The similarities between women’s kinship networks and bands of guerrilla fighters demonstrates that Appalachian men

---

<sup>29</sup> Kenneth W. Noe, “Who Were the Bushwhackers? Age, Class, Kin, and Western Virginia’s Confederate Guerrillas, 1861-1862,” *Civil War History* 49, no. 1 (March 2003): 12-13.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-20.

<sup>31</sup> Richard A. Hulver, “McNeill’s Rangers in the Public Memory of Hardy County, West Virginia” *West Virginia History* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 23-24.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

and women relied on close family ties and neighborhood connections in order to sustain themselves during the uncertainty of the Civil War.

By focusing on the experiences of West Virginia women during the Civil War, this thesis combines many of the approaches, themes, and arguments used by historians of Appalachia, women, and Civil War guerrilla warfare to demonstrate that the state's women were not victims but active participants in the war who used their ties to family and community in order to survive. While gender, race, and class each played an influential role in West Virginia women's ability to endure the hardships presented by the Civil War, the focus of this thesis remains on gender, and its accompanying restrictions and freedoms, as the dominant factor in West Virginia women's lives. Race and class cannot be ignored, however. The diaries, memoirs, and other examples used in this thesis come largely from middle- and upper-class white West Virginia women, and the conclusions which are drawn may not hold true for black or lower-class white women living within the state during the war.

The intersection and effects of race, class, and gender in Appalachia during the antebellum and Civil War years have been explored by a number of scholars. In his effort to debunk many of the myths typically associated with Appalachia, historian John Inscoe argues against the long-held belief that the region was free of slavery.<sup>33</sup> In his collection of essays, *Race, War, and Remembrance in the Appalachian South*, Inscoe contends that although plantation-style farming was not viable in the mountain South, slavery nevertheless existed in small scale farming and non-agricultural practices, and like loyalty to the Union or Confederacy, slavery was “adaptable, malleable, and always subject to the idiosyncrasies of local demand and

---

<sup>33</sup> John C. Inscoe, *Race, War, and Remembrance in the Appalachian South* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 2.

individual agendas.”<sup>34</sup> Wilma Dunaway finds that the same adaptability existed among antebellum Appalachian women, although she notes, “Poor white, nonwhite, and religious dissident females certainly did not share the same degree of access to political power, economic resources, and dominant culture as either elite slaveholding or middle-class white women.”<sup>35</sup> This lack of access prevented poor and nonwhite women from engaging in the prevalent ideology of the time which relegated women to the private, domestic sphere while men remained in control of the political and financial public sphere of society.<sup>36</sup> Dunaway’s work points to similarities in the experiences of free black and poor white women in Appalachia, but she also claims that racial separation was encouraged by mountain slaveholders in order to preserve control over the region’s enslaved and free black population.<sup>37</sup>

The lack of personal records left by black and poor white Appalachian women often requires Civil War historians to adopt methods used by social historians in order to accurately depict their lives and experiences.<sup>38</sup> Historian Victoria Bynum, whose work frequently examines the lives of these marginalized women, utilizes courthouse records and government petitions to illuminate their war-time experiences. Writing about women in North Carolina’s Quaker Belt during the Civil War, Bynum argues that black and lower-class white women were viewed as “dissipated and potentially dangerous,” and were thus more vulnerable to abuse by occupying soldiers than were upper-class white women.<sup>39</sup> Poor white women were also much less likely to

---

<sup>34</sup> Insoe, *Race, War, and Remembrance*, 61-62, 81-82.

<sup>35</sup> Wilma A. Dunaway, *Women, Work, and Family in the Antebellum Mountain South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>38</sup> Mary K. Anglin, “Lives on the Margin: Rediscovering the Women of Antebellum Western North Carolina,” in *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century*, eds. Mary Beth Pudup, Dwight B. Billings, and Altina L. Waller (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 190.

<sup>39</sup> Victoria E. Bynum, *The Long Shadow of the Civil War: Southern Dissent and Its Legacies* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 49-51.

openly voice their political opposition to the Confederate government, despite the economic devastation brought by the loss of their husbands and sons to military conscription, while the actions of black people were more heavily policed for fear they would incite insurrection.<sup>40</sup> Mary Anglin also applies methods used by social historians in her examination of antebellum western North Carolina women in her essay, “Lives on the Margin: Rediscovering the Women of Antebellum Western North Carolina.” Relying largely on census records and population, agriculture, and slave schedules, Anglin concludes that women in Yancey County were far more engaged in the economic and social lives of their community than is frequently acknowledged in historic scholarship.<sup>41</sup> They employed a combination of traditional agricultural practices and home manufacturing in order to both produce essential household goods and earn an income to purchase what they could not make themselves.<sup>42</sup> Despite the lack of sources left by black and poor white Appalachian women, both Bynum and Anglin have successfully found ways to reveal their experiences and provide a more informed and comprehensive description of women’s lives during the antebellum and Civil War years.

This study of the lives of middle and upper-class white West Virginia women during the Civil War contains three chapters.<sup>43</sup> The first chapter focuses on the changing societal expectations of women in the years leading up to the Civil War and compares the ideals of True Womanhood with those of the emerging women’s rights movement. The chapter also addresses women’s participation in the West Virginia statehood movement and demonstrates how their

---

<sup>40</sup> Bynum, *The Long Shadow of the Civil War*, 38-39.

<sup>41</sup> Anglin, “Lives on the Margin,” 188.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>43</sup> A conscious decision was made to arrange this work thematically, rather than chronologically, as it allows for a better opportunity to compare the experiences of Unionist and Confederate West Virginia women which might have taken place at different points throughout the war and would thus be interrupted by a strictly chronological approach.

opinions and support became influential in the movement's success. The combination of changing gender norms and increased local political participation allowed West Virginia women's political, economic, and social involvement in the Civil War. Chapter two analyzes women's use and transformation of kinship networks to provide material support for both Union and Confederate soldiers. The chapter also examines women's expanded participation in the previously male-dominated world of business, and the myriad of ways in which they developed and increasingly voiced their opinions on political matters concerning the war and statehood effort. Chapter three addresses West Virginia women's involvement with the military forces which occupied the state. Both Confederate and Unionist women challenged incursions by enemy troops and often used common perceptions about their gender to their advantage. The chapter reveals how women increasingly found ways to participate in the conflict through their resistance to and support of the Union and Confederate armies, bushwhacking bands, and government officials within the state. The chapter demonstrates that, despite their diverging loyalties, West Virginia women experienced similar hardships throughout the conflict.<sup>44</sup>

This thesis is an essential expansion of the historical scholarship which exists on the Civil War in and out of Appalachia. It utilizes sources from both Union and Confederate-supporting West Virginia women in order to examine the war and statehood movement using a gender-centric historical lens. The absence of gender, often found in military and political histories of

---

<sup>44</sup> Because the state of West Virginia emerged in the midst of the Civil War, historians of the statehood period will often find the terms "western Virginia," "West(ern) Virginia," and "West Virginia" contemporarily used to describe the same area. As demonstrated in the first chapter, divisions between the eastern and western halves of Virginia were prominent long before the Civil War or statehood movement, and many citizens who lived within the mountainous western portion of the state felt themselves to be a much different type of Virginian than their eastern neighbors. Bearing in mind this difference, as well as for the purposes of clarity and simplicity, the term "West Virginia" is used throughout this thesis when describing the area which would eventually form the state before its actual inception on June 20, 1863, and "West Virginians" to describe the people who lived there. References to specific areas of West Virginia, such as the Northwest, Valley, and Southwest, are more precisely defined where they are used within this work.

the region, encourages historians to ignore the opinions, actions, and influence of half the state's population, resulting in a depiction of the Civil War in West Virginia which is not reflective of the multi-faceted nature of the conflict. By examining the lives of West Virginia women and their involvement in the war and statehood movement, this work demonstrates that they were not simply the war's "other victims," but were critical participants who acted with agency, adaptability, and intent.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Anglin, "Lives on the Margin," 188. In a footnote, Anglin states that the phrase "other victims" comes from the title of Gordon McKinney's essay "The Other Victims: Women in Civil War Western North Carolina" which was presented at the Southern Historical Association in Norfolk, VA, in 1988.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE TRANSFORMATION OF WEST VIRGINIA'S "TRUE WOMAN" AND HER ROLE IN THE NEW STATE

West Virginia became a state in the third year of the Civil War, but many of the social and political changes which took place within the new state had their roots in the pre-war and early years of the conflict. During the antebellum period, societal views regarding the traditional gender roles of white women were challenged by women's rights advocates who argued that women should be allowed to participate in all realms of society and should possess the same rights as men. These emerging ideas contrasted with those who believed a woman's sole duty was to her home and family, where she should remain as an obedient helpmeet under the protection and control of her husband.<sup>46</sup> Advice literature on the subject abounded, offering women instruction on how to care for their families, as well as how they should comport themselves in public and private. West Virginia newspapers printed articles representing both sides of the gender argument, although editorial comments regarding the women's rights movement were often insulting and derogatory. Increased industrialization, changing population demographics, and the emergence of the statehood movement further influenced West Virginia women's gender roles. While public opinion was divided, the proliferation of newspaper articles, magazines, and books devoted to the subject of women's rights and roles clearly illustrates that common views regarding the social status of antebellum white West Virginia women were changing during the Civil War era.

Alongside the changing social opinions concerning women's traditional gender roles, the political and cultural landscape of the state was dramatically reshaped by the emerging and

---

<sup>46</sup> Wagner, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, xxvi-xxvii.

ultimately successful West Virginia statehood movement. Decades-long divisions between the eastern and western halves of Virginia came to a head during the antebellum period, as Westerners moved away from the use of slave labor and began demanding greater representation and consideration from the eastern-dominated state government. Virginia's decision to secede from the Union in 1861 propelled Westerners into action, leading them to denounce the old state government and form one of their own making. Despite arguments over the size of the new state and the future of slavery, West Virginia emerged as a vital ally in the Union war effort. During this tumultuous period in West Virginia history, the state's women became emboldened in their opinions about the government, and their support played an essential role in shaping the state's political environment. They attended political rallies, wrote newspaper editorials, and participated in political marches, offering vital assistance to the causes which they espoused. Through their support, West Virginia women influenced the actions and beliefs of the men in their families, who would ultimately fight and vote for those political causes. The convergence of women's shifting gender roles and the social and political upheaval brought by the Virginia secession and the West Virginia statehood movement, along with the general turmoil of the Civil War, opened the door for women's increased participation in the economic, political, and social conditions of life in West Virginia.

## **TRUE WOMANHOOD AND THE WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

Middle and upper-class antebellum West Virginia women were expected to embody the nineteenth century ideals of "True Womanhood." This set of concepts defined women's role in both society and the home, and focused on women's piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness. It was frequently espoused by religious figures as well as advice literature in the form of books, magazines, and newspaper columns. *Godey's Lady's Book* was a popular source

of women's advice literature in the mid-nineteenth century, and it was advertised in numerous West Virginia newspapers prior to and during the Civil War.<sup>47</sup> Along with dress patterns and music, *Godey's Lady's Book* published works of poetry and short fictional stories which encouraged women in their roles as dutiful wives, mothers, and caregivers.

The virtues of piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness were often intermingled in women's advice literature, showing that a true woman was expected to possess all four qualities in order to be considered as such. An article printed in the May 1862 edition of *Godey's Lady's Book*, under the heading of "Health Department," was taken from a recently published book by John Brown, M.D., entitled "Health: In Five Lay Sermons to Working People." The article illustrates just how the duties of motherhood and true womanhood were linked together during the mid-nineteenth century. Dr. Brown recommended that women who wanted to raise "happy, healthy, sober, truthful, affectionate, honest, and godly" children should themselves exhibit these characteristics. Brown claimed that the most important thing a woman could give her child was the act of prayer. Even poor and illiterate mothers were instructed to pray for their children and, in turn, to teach their children how to pray. Brown claimed that this act alone, "if real and humble, [is] worth more than silver or gold." Brown's article connected the domestic duties of women, in caring for their children, to their piety by asserting that a woman who prayed would nourish both the souls and bodies of her children, because prayer would "[bring] from our Father, who is in heaven...both money, and meat, and clothes, and all worldly good things."<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Advertisements for *Godey's Lady's Book* can be found in the *Spirit of Jefferson* (Charles Town), the *Shepherdstown Register*, the *Monongalia Mirror* (Morgantown), *Cooper's Clarksburg Register*, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, the *Kanawha Valley Star* (Charleston), and *The Weekly Register* (Point Pleasant).

<sup>48</sup> John Brown, "Children- And How to Guide Them," *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* (May 1862), 508-9.

Taken in the inverse, this meant that a woman who could not provide for her children failed not only in her domestic duties, but in her piety as well.

Many of the articles in *Godey's Lady's Book* focused on women's duties and obligations as mothers, as this was their primary role within society, but there were also articles which described the role women were meant to play in men's lives. Again, these articles frequently combined the virtues of the true woman. An excerpt from an 1862 lecture entitled simply "Woman" united the ideals of piety, purity, and domesticity when it claimed that women were "full of fidelity, untiring devotedness, and affection to the object of [their] love." Along with those of their children, women were expected to look out for men's spiritual lives, as well. Naturally assumed to be purer and more pious than men, the lecturer claimed that "[women's] influence restrained the evil passions of man" despite the fact that their "mental powers were inferior." The author further extolled feminine virtues by citing what he claimed were examples of how women treated Jesus Christ during his lifetime; examples which were clearly meant to show how women should treat the men in their own lives. "Woman never uttered a single word against Him; she tended Him in all His checkered life, and hung upon His lips as He spoke," the author claimed. Women did not harbor "suspicions" or "jealousy;" they did not speak "falsehood[s]" nor "slander." By their actions, women created a home where "man never entered it but he forgot the cares of a busy world; there he dwelt in happy confidence unmingled with remorse."<sup>49</sup> Woman's place within the world was thus confined to the domestic sphere of hearth and home and her role limited to that of subordinate attendant.

---

<sup>49</sup> "Woman," *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* (May 1862), 473. No information is given for where the lecture took place or who delivered it.

Advice for women also appeared in West Virginia newspapers and, like that printed in *Godey's Lady's Book*, praised the virtues of true womanhood. An article from the newspaper *The Greenbrier Era*, printed in 1854, contrasted the “home-mother” with the “frivolous [sic] butterfly of fashion.” The latter, described as “hollow and heartless,” neglected her duties to both God and family as she “flits from ball to opera and party” and left her children in the charge of others. The home-mother, or true woman, however, was content in her “daily routine of pleasant duties.” She was portrayed as the epitome of domesticity, and “her heart thrill[ed] with gratitude to her Creator” as she tended to every need of her children.<sup>50</sup> Fashionable women were frequently the target of ridicule and disdain by advice columnists. Their independence was a rejection of the subservient values inherent in the true woman. The *Shepherdstown Register* printed an article in its May 21, 1859 edition which attacked the fashionable woman, claiming that she “transgress[ed] the laws of women’s nature” and was “almost worthless for all the good ends of human life.” Fashionable women, the article stated, “dress nobody; they feed nobody; they instruct nobody; they bless nobody and save nobody...they set no rich examples of virtue and womanly life.” The author further claimed that a fashionable woman would die at a much earlier age than a slave woman, washerwoman, or kitchen-maid.<sup>51</sup> The virtues of true womanhood assumed that women were naturally inclined to dedicate their lives to the service of others, and, as shown by the advice literature of the time, this was the only way for women to be considered honorable and worthy.

---

<sup>50</sup> “The Home Mother,” *The Greenbrier Era* (Lewisburg), July 22, 1854, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85059651/1854-07-22/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>51</sup> “Fashionable Women,” *Shepherdstown Register*, May 21, 1859, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026824/1859-05-21/ed-1/seq-1/>.

Although advice literature praising the virtues of true womanhood was extremely popular in publications distributed throughout West Virginia during the Civil War era, the presence of a number of articles concerning the emerging women's rights movement shows that new ideals were also gaining traction. Beginning with the Seneca Falls Convention held in New York in 1848, an increasing number of women began to publicly vocalize their desire for social, economic, and political equality. Many of the most prominent women's rights leaders came from the northeastern part of the country, and they were often involved in the growing movement for the abolition of slavery.<sup>52</sup> As such, they were regularly viewed as radicals by those residing in the slaveholding state of Virginia.<sup>53</sup> Initial reports on the women's rights movement from West Virginia newspapers frequently painted the independent-minded women in a negative light and sought to discredit their efforts by contrasting them with the ideals of true womanhood.

Shortly after the first Seneca Falls Convention, the *Shepherdstown Register* reported on a women's rights convention held in Columbia County, Ohio, in 1850. The author claimed that Christianity had already elevated woman into her rightful position as man's equal, but that her "first transgression" (the original sin of eating the forbidden fruit) meant that she was prone to an "innate weakness" and "incapacity." Because of this, the author asserted that man was the "primus inter pares," first among equals, and that women should be relegated to the sphere of the home rather than the public life which they were demanding. The women of the convention, wrote the author, were guilty of "ungratefully abus[ing] the advantages that improved times have

---

<sup>52</sup> Wagner, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, xxvi.

<sup>53</sup> Henry Ruffner, *Address to the People of West Virginia*, (Lexington, VA: Printed by R. C. Noel, 1847), 9, accessed November 13, 2020, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/statehood/ruffner/ruffner02a.html>. Ruffner claims that abolitionists, who he argued were a "disgrace to the party which employs them," sought to "destroy the Federal Union."

given [them].”<sup>54</sup> The members of the women’s movement therefore violated all the ideals of true womanhood. They acted in an un-pious manner by seeking to elevate themselves beyond the position in which Christianity had placed them. By endeavoring to hold public office or possess equal rights under the law, they rejected their place within the domestic sphere and refused to accept their subordination to men. Finally, their desire to participate in the political and legal systems of government would risk their purity, for the issues discussed there “would be to the last degree revolting” and unfit for members of their sex.<sup>55</sup>

In the years leading up to the Civil War, West Virginia newspapers continued to print articles concerning women’s rights conventions and their attendees with varying degrees of ridicule and criticism. An article reprinted in the *Spirit of Jefferson*, in 1853, focused its disapproval largely on the appearance of women who sought equal rights. The author claimed that the women at a recent New York meeting “violat[e]d the rules of decency and taste” through their attire, which was described as hanging “loosely and irregularly upon their forms,” making them “object[s] of aversion and disgust.”<sup>56</sup> Mid-Nineteenth Century women were therefore placed in an almost impossible position when it came to fashion. Paying too much attention to current fashion trends meant that a woman was neglecting her family, but rejecting those trends opened her up to public ridicule as well.

A similarly condescending tone was taken by the *Cooper’s Clarksburg Register* in its description of Mrs. M. Farley Emerson, a traveling speaker who visited the city in June 1856 to deliver a lecture entitled “Woman’s Will, *its Subjugation and its Effect*.” The writer, who did

---

<sup>54</sup> “The Rights of Women,” *Shepherdstown Register*, May 7, 1850, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026824/1850-05-07/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>55</sup> “The Rights of Women,” *Shepherdstown Register*, May 7, 1850.

<sup>56</sup> “Women’s Rights Women,” *Spirit of Jefferson* (Charles Town), September 13, 1853, accessed June 17, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026788/1853-09-13/ed-1/seq-2/>.

not attend the speech but wrote about the reactions of others, claimed that Mrs. Emerson offered a “disjointed address...marked by...indelicate” which was embarrassing to her listeners. Rather than attack the subject matter of Mrs. Emerson’s speech, however, the writer focused his criticisms on her appearance and manner. Described as “coarse” with a “shrewish appearance,” the author stated, “we suppose we must call her a lady, though we very much doubt the propriety of it,” and despite referring to her as “Mrs.,” a title used for married women, the paper claimed that she had obviously “frightened away everything in the shape of a lover.” The author condemned Mrs. Emerson for not living up to the ideals of true womanhood through her “indelicate” (impure) speech and her lack of male companionship. Furthermore, he finished the article by stating, “The ladies of this place showed their good taste and womanly qualities by not going to hear her, or countenancing [accepting] her in any way whatever,” inferring that Mrs. Emerson herself possessed neither of those traits and therefore could not be considered by West Virginians as a true woman.<sup>57</sup>

It was a common tactic for West Virginia newspapers to deny the femininity and “womanly qualities” of members of the women’s rights movement, therefore denying them the designation of true women. The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* described the New York Women’s Rights Convention of 1858 as a scene of “mixed up fanaticism, vulgarity, and profanity,” attended by “beardless women in breeches, and bearded men in petticoats.” While much of the reporting was directed negatively towards the women and men who spoke at the convention, the article did offer slight praise for one woman, claiming that she showed “symptoms of common sense.” The paper noted that the woman, Mrs. Farnham, did not argue that woman was man’s

---

<sup>57</sup> “Woman’s Rights,” *Cooper’s Clarksburg Register*, June 20, 1856, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85059716/1856-06-20/ed-1/seq-2/>. Emphasis in original.



equal, but rather, she believed that a woman could not enter the male sphere without losing “her own physical and spiritual capacities.” Mrs. Farnham further claimed that motherhood was “the most sacred of rights, and women should enjoy the most perfect liberty in [that] sacred relationship.”<sup>58</sup> The paper’s claim that Mrs. Farnham displayed “common sense” was therefore based on her adherence to the values and beliefs of true womanhood. She asserted women’s superiority only within the realm of motherhood, and pleaded for women’s rights within that domestic capacity. She felt that women who stepped too far outside the domestic sphere risked violating the virtues of purity and piety (their “physical and spiritual capacities”).<sup>59</sup>

Despite their frequent derogatory descriptions of the women’s rights movement and its aims, West Virginia newspapers occasionally printed reports that were less blatantly gender-biased. In an 1855 article, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* informed its readers of a law recently passed in Wisconsin which gave married women the right to “transact business and to receive and collect [their] own earnings...for [their] own support and the support and education of such children” in cases where they had been neglected or been refused support by their husbands due to “drunkenness, profligacy [immorality], or from any other cause.” Although this law only applied to married women and was created on the assumption that women did not normally belong in the traditionally male economic sphere, it offered women facing hardship the ability to earn a living independent of their husbands. The title of the article, “A Just View of Woman’s Rights,” implied that the editors of the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* could at least

---

<sup>58</sup> “Women’s Rights Convention- What the Fanatics Want- Choice Specimens,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, May 18, 1858, accessed June 16, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86092535/1858-05-18/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>59</sup> “Women’s Rights Convention- What the Fanatics Want- Choice Specimens,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, May 18, 1858.

envision some circumstances in which women should be allowed a place in the world of business.<sup>60</sup>

Changes in attitude towards the women's rights movement were increasingly visible in newspapers throughout West Virginia, and they evidenced a burgeoning acceptance of women's place within the public sphere. In August 1859, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* published a short but encouraging piece on a women's rights convention which had recently taken place in Saratoga Springs, New York. The article stated that the convention "resolved that women, like men, have a right to do anything and everything which is in itself morally right." It seconded the opinion of another newspaper, the Massachusetts-based *Springfield Republican*, which claimed that women's abilities should determine their opportunities. The paper argued that "nobody denies" the rights of women like Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, the sculptor Harriet Hosmer, or the journalist Alice Cary to practice their professions, "for it is based on their ability." Although the paper bemoaned that women should "stop talking about it [women's rights]," the article concluded: "Women's rights are as women's abilities and wishes—nothing more, nothing less."<sup>61</sup> This article specifically illustrates West Virginians' developing views on the women's rights movement because it did not degrade the women it used as examples, but instead commended their abilities in their individual fields. It demonstrated a growing acceptance of women's increasingly public roles, and encouraged women to use their natural abilities to pursue the profession of their choice. Furthermore, it did not imply that the women were any less

---

<sup>60</sup> "A Just View of Woman's Rights," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, June 2, 1855, accessed June 25, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86092535/1855-06-02/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>61</sup> Untitled, *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, August 30, 1859, accessed June 16, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86092535/1859-08-30/ed-1/seq-1/>.

feminine for doing so, nor that they were abandoning their role as women to take up their chosen profession.

The degree to which women's progressively more public roles became normalized was influenced by factors like their location within the proposed new state, industrialization and internal improvement, and class. The city of Wheeling, located in the northern panhandle, had become a hub of manufacturing in antebellum West Virginia. Combined with its large immigrant population and lack of dependence on slave labor, Wheeling more closely resembled cities in the North and Midwest than it did those in eastern Virginia.<sup>62</sup> These industrial and demographic changes within the city's population help to explain the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer's* increasingly sympathetic view of the women's rights movement and its tendency to print articles which painted the movement in a more positive light.<sup>63</sup> Eastern panhandle cities like Shepherdstown and Charles Town, however, had closer geographic and political ties to Virginia, and articles on the women's rights movement from these cities were more reflective of the patriarchal and benevolently minded beliefs inherent in true womanhood. Finally, class divisions were highly influential in women's opportunities and choices within antebellum West Virginia. Poorer women were often unable to live up to the ideals of true womanhood, as they were frequently compelled to take on work outside the home to ensure their family's financial

---

<sup>62</sup> Ken Fones-Wolf, "Caught Between Revolutions: Wheeling Germans in the Civil War Era," in *West Virginia History: An Open Access Reader*, 6-7.

<sup>63</sup> Wagner, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 85. Wagner notes that the anti-slavery movement and the early women's rights movement were closely linked, stating that "many of the same people [were] active in both." The anti-slavery movement was based largely within Northern cities, and, as Wheeling was connected to the North through both manufacturing and population demographics, editors of Wheeling newspapers were more sympathetic to the women's rights movement.

stability. Alternatively, their lack of economic security also excluded them from the educational opportunities gained by the women's rights movement.<sup>64</sup>

West Virginians clearly did not have a monolithic view of women's rights nor of women's appropriate place within society during the antebellum and Civil War years. Instead, a complex and diverse set of beliefs existed in which new gender norms were adopted at varying degrees throughout the state. The traditionally feminine roles of mother and caretaker remained highly praised within the popular press, and true womanhood's combined values of piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness were held as the moral standard for the majority of West Virginia women. Despite the scorn often directed at them, the ideals of the women's rights movement became increasingly popular and normalized as well. Encouraged by expanding legal rights and educational opportunities, West Virginia women gradually took on more public roles within their communities. The turmoil brought by the Civil War and the statehood movement presented an opening for West Virginia women to build upon shifting gender norms and use their developing agency within the public sphere to influence the state's political future.

## **WEST VIRGINIA STATEHOOD MOVEMENT**

The divisions between traditional and progressive views about women were by no means the only divisions within Virginia, or indeed, within the counties which would eventually make up the state of West Virginia. Tensions between eastern and western Virginia had existed since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, but they became increasingly aggravated as economic transformation, new methods of transportation, and a growing population moved into western Virginia.<sup>65</sup> Economic

---

<sup>64</sup> Tiffany K. Wayne and Lois Banner, eds., *Women's Rights in the United States: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Issues, Events, and People*, vol. 1, *Moral Reform and the Woman Question (1776-1870)* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015), xxviii-xxix.

<sup>65</sup> William A. Link, "This Bastard New Virginia?: Slavery, West Virginia Exceptionalism, and the Secession Crisis," in *West Virginia History: An Open Access Reader*, 6.

transformation required regulated banks, and although the Virginia legislature established two such banks in the west in 1817, this did not entirely alleviate western frustrations.<sup>66</sup> Westerners also demanded internal improvements, such as better roads, railroads, and canals, which could more effectively transport western goods and natural resources to outside markets. While some areas, such as the middle Valley area and the Southwest, saw advancements, the Northwest, an emerging bastion of Republicanism, continued to feel neglected. Additionally, the Northwest improvements which were made, including the completion of the Cumberland Road and the connection to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, tended to cement economic ties between Northwesterners and New England states, rather than to Virginia and the South.<sup>67</sup>

The regional differences in funding internal improvements were relatively minor compared to a much larger division within antebellum Virginia: slavery. While westerners incorporated slavery into some industrial practices and used slave labor on small farms, it did not have the same hold on the economy, culture, and politics that it did in plantation-heavy eastern Virginia.<sup>68</sup> But, because slave numbers were included in representative appointment in the Virginia General Assembly, the interests of slave-heavy eastern counties were overrepresented in the Virginia government. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, western Virginians frequently petitioned their eastern counterparts for a fairer distribution of government

---

<sup>66</sup> Otis K. Rice and Stephen W. Brown, *West Virginia: A History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 85-86. The Northwestern Bank of Virginia at Wheeling and the Bank of the Valley of Virginia were created at this time.

<sup>67</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 21-23. The “Northwest” region of Western Virginia refers to present-day West Virginia’s northern panhandle (home of Wheeling) and many of the counties along the Ohio River to the west, and those which lay largely north of the Kanawha River. Unionist and Republican sentiments were strongest in this region. The “Valley” region refers to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, including the eastern panhandle and many of the eastern counties of present-day West Virginia. This region relied more heavily on agricultural slave labor and, as such, shared common political interests with the Richmond government. The “Southwest” refers to the southern counties of present-day West Virginia, rich in coal deposits and other natural resources.

<sup>68</sup> Scott A. MacKenzie, “The Slaveholders’ War: The Secession Crisis in Kanawha County, Western Virginia, 1860-1861,” in *West Virginia History: An Open Access Reader*, 4-5.

representation. By 1850, westerners had been granted their demands of universal (white) manhood suffrage, the election of governors, judges, and circuit court clerks by popular vote rather than appointment, and representation in the House of Delegates based on the white population, although appointments for Senators were still made on a “mixed” basis. These concessions could not make “good Virginians” out of westerners, however, and divisions between eastern and western Virginia continued to grow.<sup>69</sup>

The ongoing debates over the future of slavery which took place prior to the Civil War provided West Virginia women with an opportunity to both publicly and privately engage in the political discourse of the state. Keeping themselves informed through newspapers and the popular press, they used their influential position within their households as caretakers and educators to help shape the beliefs of their family members. The secession of Confederate states and the emergence of the statehood movement provided further openings for women’s political participation. Although they were excluded from voting or holding political office, they attended speeches, penned newspaper editorials, and took part in marches in support of their views, providing vital material and moral encouragement for the party or movement in which they placed their trust.

Prior to the Civil War, differences existed not only between eastern and western Virginians, but also within the counties that would eventually form the state of West Virginia. Northwestern counties were influenced by not only economic ties to Northern and Western states, but by cultural ties as well. In Wheeling, home of glass, iron, and textile factories, fewer than one percent of the population was African American. Instead, industrial labor was largely performed by European immigrants and their immediate descendants, as well as those who

---

<sup>69</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 21-22.

moved to the area from Northern states.<sup>70</sup> While both groups were relatively averse to the use of slave labor, they were not necessarily abolitionists. Rather, they resented slavery and the elite slaveholding class in eastern Virginia for the economic and political disregard to which they believed they had been subjected, and for the lack of equality among white men which they felt Virginia slaveholding encouraged.<sup>71</sup> Economic opposition to slavery was especially popular in West Virginia, and gradual emancipation advocates like Dr. Henry Ruffner, who himself owned slaves in West Virginia, claimed that “free labor promotes the growth and prosperity of the State, in a much higher degree than the system of slave labor.”<sup>72</sup> Religious institutions also divided inhabitants of the Northwest from the rest of the future state. After the Methodist Episcopal Church split into Northern and Southern denominations in 1844, Northern Methodists focused their attention on the counties in northwestern Virginia and advocated for their congregant’s loyalty to “God and the Union.”<sup>73</sup>

While the Northwestern counties were moving away from the use of slave labor and more firmly towards Republicanism and the maintenance of the Union, other future West Virginia counties, like Kanawha, continued to pledge their allegiance to Virginia. Kanawha’s salt industry relied heavily on slave labor, and by 1860, the county was home to one-sixth of the slave population of the future state. Slaveholders and non-slaveholders alike were connected to and benefitted from the salt industry. Local farmers supplied food for the workers, and free (paid) laborers were employed, alongside slaves, in the mining, transportation, and selling of Kanawha salt.<sup>74</sup> As was common in other areas of Appalachia, slaves were also leased through

---

<sup>70</sup> Fones-Wolf, “Caught Between Revolutions,” 6-7.

<sup>71</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 24; Link, “‘This Bastard New Virginia,’” 7-8.

<sup>72</sup> Ruffner, *Address to the People of West Virginia*, (Lexington, VA: Printed by R. C. Noel, 1847), 12.

<sup>73</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 25-26.

<sup>74</sup> MacKenzie, “The Slaveholders’ War,” 3-4.

contracts with larger slaveholders in eastern Virginia who acted as investors in Kanawha's salt industry.<sup>75</sup> These partnerships reinforced the Kanawha region's economic and political ties to Virginia. Kanawha's slaveholders owned most of the wealth within the county, and as a result, they, along with their male family members, were often elected to political positions within the county and state. They used their connections with the state government in Richmond to lobby for internal improvements, and in return, they pledged their loyalty to Virginia.<sup>76</sup> Although many of Kanawha's poorer residents supported remaining with the Union, wealthy slaveholding citizens formed politically-influential secessionist militias and later joined Confederate regiments when the Civil War broke out in 1861.<sup>77</sup>

Within the future counties of West Virginia, debates over slavery and its usage were not limited to men, but involved women as well. Women were often seen as the moral guardians of their families, a position which entitled them to voice their opinions on the social and cultural impacts of slavery.<sup>78</sup> The family was central to the argument of both pro- and anti-slavery women, and slavery was viewed as either a "polluting" force which brought "mental and moral degradation" to the household or, alternatively, a paternalistic institution in which it was women's duty to care for the slaves who depended on them.<sup>79</sup> After John Brown's unsuccessful raid on the Harper's Ferry arsenal in 1859, the *Shepherdstown Register* printed an article on its front page which lambasted the abolitionist women writers it claimed were responsible for

---

<sup>75</sup> John Stealey III, *The Antebellum Kanawha Salt Business and Western Markets* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2016), 134. For other Appalachian areas in which slave labor was leased out, see John C. Inscoe, *Mountain Masters: Slavery and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989).

<sup>76</sup> MacKenzie, "The Slaveholders' War," 6-11.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-14, 18-22.

<sup>78</sup> Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 337.

<sup>79</sup> Wagner, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 50; Robert E. Bonner, *Mastering America: Southern Slaveholders and the Crisis of American Nationhood* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 195.



leading men like Brown astray. Written by “a Woman,” the piece argued that female authors like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Lydia Maria Child were only concerned with the fame and money which their writings might bring, and not with the souls of those men who, believing their words, acted upon them and died in the process. “It was [Brown’s] belief in their courage and sincerity that led the old man into the crime which he must expiate on the gallows,” claimed the writer, “while the incendiary words which lured him and his followers to death, [were] coin for their writers fame and money, with which to purchase appliances for luxurious living.”<sup>80</sup> In printing the article, the *Register* recognized the power women’s words possessed to inspire men to action, and the ways in which they might sway sentiment in favor of anti-slavery and abolitionist views.

Slavery was not the only political debate in which West Virginia women voiced their sentiments. The Republican Party was becoming increasingly popular among West Virginia citizens, and excerpts from local newspapers offer evidence that women’s opinions regarding political party allegiance were sought after and even encouraged. As the elections of 1860 drew nearer, the *Shepherdstown Register* acknowledged that it was not just notable authors, but housewives as well who might have influence over men’s political decisions. A reprinted article in October 1860, entitled “A Political Lecture By a Pious Wife,” sought to portray the suffering a husband might bring upon his family through his affiliation with the Republican party. The fictional wife delivered a tirade upon her husband, who had come home in the early hours of the morning after spending the night marching with the Wide Awakes, a military-style organization

---

<sup>80</sup> “A Woman’s View of a Woman’s Duty in Connection with the John Brown Crime, etc., etc.,” *Shepherdstown Register*, January 28, 1860, accessed September 12, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026824/1860-01-28/ed-1/seq-1/>.

comprised of mostly young men who supported Abraham Lincoln's bid for election.<sup>81</sup> Despite being originally printed in a northern newspaper, where Republicanism was more popular, the wife decried her husband's support for the "lazy man in Illinois who is trying to be President."<sup>82</sup> By republishing the article, the *Shepherdstown Register* intended to show West Virginia women that although they might not be able to vote in the upcoming election, they still possessed avenues through which they could make their voices heard.

While the *Shepherdstown Register* prompted its female readers to denounce the Wide Awake Movement and other supporters of Abraham Lincoln's presidential bid, another West Virginia paper reported more positively on the women who encouraged such men. In a small piece printed in the same month as the *Shepherdstown Register*'s "Political Lecture," the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* noted that a Wide Awake march which took place in Bridgeport (Harrison County) had received overwhelming support from a local Republican ladies association. Having convened at the home of a local woman, Mrs. Bone, the ladies greeted the marchers with "beautiful bouquets and garlands," listened to speeches, and "cheered for Lincoln" alongside the spectators and Wide Awake members.<sup>83</sup> Although short, the article was demonstrative of the ways in which West Virginia women might show their support in political matters, and reiterated the idea that such support was valuable and influential.

Abraham Lincoln's election in November 1860, followed by the secession of southern states, and the beginning of the Civil War brought the political, economic, and social differences

---

<sup>81</sup> Jon Grinspan, "'Young Men for War': The Wide Awakes and Lincoln's 1860 Presidential Campaign," *The Journal of American History* 96, no. 2 (September 2009): 357, JSTOR.

<sup>82</sup> "A Political Lecture By a Pious Wife," *Shepherdstown Register*, October 20, 1860, accessed September 12, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026824/1860-10-20/ed-1/seq-1/>.

<sup>83</sup> Untitled, *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, October 9, 1860, accessed September 12, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1860-10-09/ed-1/seq-3/>.

which existed between eastern and western Virginia to a climax. When Virginia legislators debated secession in early 1861, some Northwesterners saw it as an opportunity to obtain more political concessions from the eastern half of the state. Others, loyal to the Union, declared that if Virginia seceded, Westerners had a right to separate themselves and form their own state. Concession talks quickly deteriorated though, and despite the objections from Northwestern counties, the Secession Ordinance was passed in April of 1861, to be decided by Virginia voters the next month. Although some advised caution until the final vote on secession was taken, many Northwestern delegates immediately returned to their counties and began to rally their constituents for the creation of West Virginia.<sup>84</sup>

When Virginia voters ratified the Ordinance of Secession in May 1861, twenty-four of the fifty future West Virginia counties voted in support of secession.<sup>85</sup> The vast majority of these counties lay in the southeast portion of the future state, geographically and politically closer to the Virginia government in Richmond than their northwestern counterparts. Regardless of what appeared to be a physical line of division between pro-Secessionists and their Union counterparts, most future West Virginia counties were composed of a mixture of the two groups. West Virginia statehood historian Richard Orr Curry calculated that Secessionists comprised as much as forty percent of the population in some Union counties, while Unionists could be found in Rebel counties in similar proportions. Thus, sentiment in the future state was split on a slim 60-40 margin, with Unionists holding only a slight advantage over Secessionists.<sup>86</sup> A similar division would eventually be seen in the number of West Virginia men who enlisted in either the Union or Confederate army; approximately thirty thousand joined with the Union, while around

---

<sup>84</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 30-34.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

eleven thousand fought for the Confederacy.<sup>87</sup> These widespread divisions in West Virginia broke down the typically gendered barriers of political participation, and obtaining women's support became increasingly essential in such contested territory.

In the days immediately following the vote for secession, Federal troops poured into West Virginia in an attempt to secure the state as a Union stronghold.<sup>88</sup> A number of relatively small skirmishes ensued, but the Union was largely successful in its aims. Northwestern Virginia served not only as a physical barrier between the Confederacy and northern states like Ohio and Pennsylvania, but also as a supply line, via the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, for Union troops and provisions.<sup>89</sup> West Virginia women's support for the Union became especially vital, and newspapers began printing appeals for women's help in recruiting soldiers. The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* relied on a combined call to patriotism and motherly duty in an 1861 article which asked women to "lead [their sons] to the altar of our beloved country." The writer claimed that many young men wanted to join the army, but were held back by the opposition of their mothers. "The woman who, at this day stands between her son and her country should blush for shame," the paper asserted, arguing that these "unpatriotic mothers" were not only neglecting their duty to their country, but losing the respect of their children as well. The paper called upon West Virginia women to emulate their "revolutionary mothers" who "dispatched [their sons] to the war with fervent prayers and cheerful hearts."<sup>90</sup> Appeals such as these combined women's traditional gender role, that of mother, with their influential position of political supporter.

---

<sup>87</sup> Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 125.

<sup>88</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 55.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-67.

<sup>90</sup> "Unpatriotic Mothers," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, September 4, 1861, accessed September 12, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1861-09-04/ed-1/seq-2/>.

While Union control of the region was a strategic military necessity for the federal government, it was also essential for the progress of the statehood movement. Under federal protection, delegates convened at Wheeling in June 1861 to establish the Reorganized Government of Virginia, in which all previous offices of the state government were declared vacant and new officials elected. This new government, loyal to the Union, was then recognized as the true Virginia government by the Lincoln administration in July. Many delegates, including John Carlile, an original advocate for West Virginia's creation, felt this to be a necessary step in legitimizing the move towards statehood, as the new state would be able to secure permission for dismemberment from the Reorganized Government rather than from the now seceded Virginia government.<sup>91</sup>

Deliberations continued throughout the months of July and August 1861. Delegates eventually adopted a plan that would include thirty-nine counties within the new state, which they dubbed "Kanawha," while offering the option for seven more, along the eastern most edge, to be included if approved by voters of those counties.<sup>92</sup> Although women remained entirely excluded from these deliberations, a September letter to the editor of the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* reveals just how engaged West Virginia women were with the proceedings of the Wheeling Conventions and the progress of the statehood movement. Signed by "Many Ladies," the letter claimed that while women "have no voice in public bodies," they felt justified in speaking on what they claimed was a matter of "taste and preference:" the future name of the new state. "We have no foolish prejudice against being separated from the aristocracy of Eastern Virginia," said the women, "but we were born on Virginia soil, and our attachment for the *name*

---

<sup>91</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 71-73. This reorganization occurred at the Second Wheeling Convention. The First Wheeling Convention occurred in May 1861 and was largely ceremonial.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 84-85.

is strong.” The women argued that the region had long been known as Western Virginia and it was appropriate that it should remain so, concluding that if “they [Eastern Virginia] do not choose to be identified by the same name, let them find another.”<sup>93</sup> Although the women who wrote to the paper were claiming to speak on “taste and preference,” a traditionally suitable matter for women to concern themselves with, their words instead betrayed a political understanding that went beyond mere concern over the name of the future state. Written before the dismemberment vote had taken place, the women had already made up their minds that the eastern and western halves of the state should and, furthermore, *would* separate. By using the term “aristocracy” to describe Eastern Virginians, the women invoked the memory of the Revolutionary-era fight against royal tyranny and, in turn, justified their desire for a separate state. Additionally, the women’s allusion to the Revolutionary War demonstrated their understanding that, while men might use the reference as a way to elicit women’s sacrifice of their sons to the war, women could also use it to encourage men to do their duty in creating the new state.

The “Many Ladies” represented in the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* letter proved correct, and the men of the state, sharing the women’s rejection of the “aristocracy of Eastern Virginia,” voted overwhelmingly in favor of dismemberment in October, 1861, although the results from some formerly pro-secessionist counties were obviously influenced by federal occupation.<sup>94</sup> Disputes continued over the state’s borders, as well as over the eventual fate of slavery in the

---

<sup>93</sup> “What Some of the Ladies Think of the Name ‘Kanawha’,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, September 18, 1861, accessed June 5, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1861-09-18/ed-1/seq-2/>. Emphasis in original.

<sup>94</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 86. Curry notes that returns for Raleigh County were 32-0, Braxton County: 22-0, Clay County: 76-0, and Hardy County: 15-0 in favor of dismemberment despite these counties having much higher populations, indicating that secessionists either did not vote, or were intimidated by the occupying Federal army.

new state. During the Constitutional Convention in November 1861, which followed the dismemberment vote, opponents of statehood strategically argued for a larger state which would include counties with high slave populations, making West Virginia a “slave” state and unlikely to be approved by the Union government. Others, like John Carlile, felt that the citizens, rather than the Republican-led Congress, should decide whether or not West Virginia would be a “slave” state, and so were opposed to any ratification of statehood which included Congressional dictations about slavery.<sup>95</sup>

While federal occupation afforded delegates in Wheeling the ability to safely ponder the questions surrounding statehood, it did not prevent Confederate supporters from wreaking havoc in other parts of the state. Bands of rebel guerrilla fighters, known as “bushwhackers,” roamed the mountainous counties, and conducted quick raids on Union troops and supply lines before disappearing into the surrounding rough country. The same rugged terrain which allowed the bushwhackers to operate also made it difficult for the Union army to find them after the raids had taken place. Bushwhackers operated in West Virginia throughout the Civil War, terrorizing both Union troops and Union-supporting citizens with their attacks.<sup>96</sup> Union women often felt especially vulnerable to these attacks, as many of the male protectors in their family (fathers, husbands, and sons) had joined the Union army and were serving elsewhere.

As the war surrounded West Virginians on all sides, the statehood bill wound its way through the Senate and the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. A proposal, known as the Willey Amendment, was added to the bill which would allow for gradual emancipation following approval by both the Constitutional Convention and the voters of West Virginia.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>95</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 88, 96-97.

<sup>96</sup> Mountcastle, *Punitive War*, 104.

<sup>97</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 103.

The Senate approved the statehood bill with the attached Willey Amendment on July 14, 1862, followed by the House on December 10<sup>th</sup>. President Lincoln signed the bill on December 31<sup>st</sup>, noting that “we can scarcely dispense with the aid of West-Virginia [sic] in this struggle.”<sup>98</sup> The fate of West Virginia was thus left to its future citizens. Despite attempts by opponents of statehood to discourage voting, the new state constitution containing the Willey Amendment was approved by West Virginians on March 26, 1863, and West Virginia was admitted to the Union on June 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>99</sup>

The world surrounding West Virginia women during the late 1850s and early 1860s was undergoing monumental changes. Women’s rights advocates challenged traditional gender roles, and although they were often ridiculed in West Virginia newspapers, their ideas were gaining popularity. The emergence of the statehood movement and its eventual federal approval transformed West Virginia from a small theater of operations into an essential Union border state. West Virginia women took advantage of both shifting gender norms and the political turmoil surrounding statehood to expand their participation in the public sphere, and their support and influence became essential within the divided region. These changes, along with the chaos brought by the Civil War, presented both Union and Confederate-supporting West Virginia women with increased opportunities for participation in the economic, political, and social realms of their state. The next chapter will detail how individual women across West Virginia dealt with these changes. As their men left to fight in local skirmishes or on far-off battlefields, West Virginia women eagerly stepped into the formerly male-dominated world of business, establishing themselves as competent managers of their household economies and

---

<sup>98</sup> Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 147-150; Curry, *A House Divided*, 124.

<sup>99</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 127-129.



forming a vital link in the supply chains of both the Union and Confederate armies. During the Civil War and the simultaneous statehood movement, they developed and increasingly voiced their own independent political opinions regarding the causes of the war and the validity of West Virginia's creation. Women also strengthened their ties to one another through an expanded reliance on kinship networks to keep them informed of war developments and safe when the fighting came too close. The highly contested nature of the Civil War within West Virginia meant that both Confederate and Union supporting women faced many of the same challenges and found similar opportunities to expand their roles within their communities.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL LIVES OF WEST VIRGINIA WOMEN DURING THE CIVIL WAR

The Civil War presented a variety of social, political, and economic challenges to West Virginia women. In many parts of the new state, Confederate and Union-sympathizing citizens were neighbors, and women quickly learned to adapt to the ever-changing environment as the two armies swapped control of their town or county. Despite their competing ideologies and allegiances, West Virginia women, whether they supported the Union or the Confederacy, had more in common than not. Both groups of women took advantage of tightly knit kinship networks composed of friends and family members to connect themselves with those who shared their sentiments and to transmit both news and supplies throughout the war. They also relied on these kinship networks for shelter and refuge when local fighting became too intense. Women on both sides mustered their networks into ladies' aid societies, which had their roots in traditional women's sewing circles. These groups provided Confederate and Union soldiers with food, clothing, bandages, and other necessities which their governments were unable to adequately supply, acts which transformed women's traditional domestic work into physical statements of political support. The war disrupted all facets of society, and women often used this uncertain time to expand the limits of their traditional gender roles within the state's political economy. With many of their male kinfolk absent, they engaged in business transactions which would have traditionally fallen to their husbands, fathers, brothers, or sons to conduct. They rented and sold property, loaned money, and helped shape their family financial fortunes with a spirit of independence. West Virginia women also forged their own opinions on the political developments of the state and nation as the war increasingly shaped their lives. They became

vocal proponents for both the Union and the Confederacy, and increasingly voiced their political views in the public arena. Through their utilization and preservation of kinship networks, economic participation, and political advocacy, West Virginia women took advantage of the general turmoil which accompanied the war to become more engaged and active members of their communities.

## **KINSHIP NETWORKS**

As the war began, West Virginians saw their state heavily divided between Unionists and supporters of Southern secession and the Confederacy. Groups of men from the same town or county often joined the army together or formed local Union Home Guard or Confederate guerrilla units to protect their communities.<sup>100</sup> For their part, West Virginia women relied on their pre-existing kinship networks, formed of like-minded relatives and friends, for support during the war. These types of networks existed throughout Appalachia, and often had their origins in churches, where specific religious beliefs bound congregants together, or in families and communities, where women pooled their resources and labor to supplement household economies.<sup>101</sup> During the Civil War, West Virginia women used their networks as a means of keeping themselves informed on both regional and national developments when fighting disrupted traditional methods of communication such as newspapers or the mail. They also relied on their networks as a source of emotional strength and encouragement when surrounded by neighbors whose views opposed their own.

---

<sup>100</sup> Noe, "Who Were the Bushwhackers?" 19-20; Kenneth W. Noe, "Exterminating Savages: The Union Army and Mountain Guerrillas in Southern West Virginia, 1861-1862," in *The Civil War in Appalachia*, 108-109. Home Guard units, composed of local men and supplied with weapons by the Union army, served as self-defense forces and were frequently used to hunt Confederate bushwhackers in West Virginia.

<sup>101</sup> Jean E. Friedman, *The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South 1830-1900*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); Anglin, "Lives on the Margin," 196-198.

Sallie Smith lived in the highly disputed area of Guyandotte during the war, and regularly corresponded with her cousin, Julia Sprague, who lived in Washington County, Ohio.<sup>102</sup> Mail service was frequently disrupted throughout West Virginia during the conflict, and Sallie directed Julia to send her letters to a family friend in Union-controlled “Proctors Ville Lawrence County Ohio,” just across the Ohio River from Guyandotte, so she could be sure to receive them.<sup>103</sup> Along with letters, Sallie and Julia sent each other newspapers, cloth and patterns for dresses, flower seeds, and even pictures of family members who were killed during the conflict.<sup>104</sup> Sallie, a Union supporter, also shared her fears about the war and the threat of invasion by Confederate troops. In the spring of 1861, she wrote to Julia about divisions which had emerged in the town. “The Secessionists raised a flag last Saturday,” she wrote, “...things are in a desperate way here[,] I am a fraid [sic] to open my mouth.” Sallie begged Julia not to mention her fears to anyone though, noting, “some people have gotten themselves into trouble by not saying half as much as I have said to you.” She closed her letter by asking Julia to “tell me how you all feel about the war up your way.”<sup>105</sup> Written just days after the war’s opening shots at Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, Sallie’s letter reveals that she was already concerned with preserving her ties to Julia. Although she felt surrounded by Secessionists, writing to Julia allowed Sallie to maintain a connection to another Union sympathizer and helped her cope with her fears during the war. The photographs, seeds, and dress materials served as physical reminders of these emotional connections.

---

<sup>102</sup> Guyandotte, located near present-day Huntington, West Virginia, was a hotbed of Confederate support throughout the Civil War and was approximately one hundred miles southwest of Washington County.

<sup>103</sup> Sallie P. Smith to Julia Sprague, April 22, 1861, Smith Family Letters 1857-1866, 1997/05.0662, Special Collections, Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr, a Jackson County widow living along the Ohio River in the town of Ravenswood, used her local network of Confederate-sympathizing friends and family to deal with the uncertainty she faced during the war, and her diary featured frequent entries about visits she made and received with her Confederate acquaintances. Newspapers were sometimes hard to obtain, especially the “southern papers” which she felt reported the results of battles more accurately than the “proverbially false” Union papers.<sup>106</sup> Nonetheless, Henrietta and her neighbors shared what papers they were able to come by and scoured them for news of Confederate victories. “The Lincoln papers are very careful in suppressing all discouraging accounts of battles,” she wrote. “...the inference we draw from their silence is favorable to our cause.”<sup>107</sup> Henrietta and her network of Confederate sympathizers spent countless hours convincing themselves that newspaper reports of Union victories were actually smokescreens for Confederate successes. In August 1862, Barr wrote that the local Union commander in Ravenswood, Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Frost, had ordered all “‘secesh’ to quit visiting and stay quietly at home.”<sup>108</sup> Barr and her friends ignored the proclamation, though, and continued to host dinners where they could share the latest rumors of Confederate triumphs. Like those in Guyandotte, local mail services in Ravenswood were often interrupted, and so news from visiting friends and family members helped women like Barr to keep their spirits up and stay informed of the war’s progress. When the mail was available, Henrietta received newspapers, letters from her brothers who were serving in the war, and, like Sallie, flower seeds for her

---

<sup>106</sup> Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr, 1862-1863*, ed. Sallie Kiger Winn (Marietta: Marietta College, 1963), 5-6.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 11. “Secesh” was a term frequently used to describe Secessionist-sympathizing Confederate citizens. Colonel Daniel Frost served with the Union 11<sup>th</sup> (W) Va. Infantry Volunteers. Delmer R. Hite, “Colonel Daniel Frost,” Jackson County Historical Society, July, 1972, accessed December 30, 2020, <https://jchswv.org/upload/files/ColonelDanielFrost.pdf>.

garden. Complicating her access to mail, however, was the fact that the Post Master of the town, who Henrietta called a “Republican of the blackest sort,” knew of her support for the Confederacy and occasionally declined to sell she or her sister stationery and stamps.<sup>109</sup> At other times, Henrietta noted that her mail was opened and read, presumably in search of treasonous correspondence, before she received it.<sup>110</sup> Because of these interferences by the Union army and its supporters, Henrietta frequently sent her mail with friends or family members traveling through the area, using her established kinship network to combat the chaotic effects of the Civil War on conventional means of communication and to maintain her connections to fellow Confederates.<sup>111</sup>

West Virginia women who supported the Union also held dinners where they shared news of troop movements and war developments. A young woman in the Upshur County town of French Creek, Sirene Bunten, wrote of such gatherings in her war-time diary. Meeting at a neighbor’s house in May 1863, she noted, “There were a great many there...we had a splendid time.”<sup>112</sup> The gathering included soldiers who were home on leave, as well as a local commander, Captain Gould. From this meeting, Sirene gathered not only news about the movements of local regiments, but also the results of larger battles taking place across the nation.<sup>113</sup> Like Sallie Smith and Henrietta Barr, Sirene Bunten used her kinship network to stay informed about the progress of the war and to connect herself with others who shared her beliefs.

---

<sup>109</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 14. “Black Republican” was a slur used during the Civil War period to describe members of the Republican Party and insinuate that they radically supported African American rights and freedoms.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 17, 21, 24.

<sup>112</sup> Cresswell, “A Civil War Diary from French Creek,” May 29, 1863.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

While visits and letters maintained emotional connections and kept West Virginia women informed on the developing events of the war, they relied on their friends and family for material support as well. Throughout the South, either during periods of intense fighting or when they felt their current circumstances were untenable, women depended on their kinship networks to provide refuge and material assistance. While some women moved frequently and over long distances, others moved temporarily and only stayed away until the immediate danger passed.<sup>114</sup> West Virginia women were no exception to this, and they often relied on their kinship networks for physical shelter and support in times of need.

In Buckhannon, just nine miles north of Sirene Buntin in French Creek, Marcia Phillips moved in with family friends, the Morgans, in the summer of 1861. Her husband Sylvester had left to command his Union regiment, Company E of the Virginia Volunteers. Marcia was a cousin of Sirene Buntin, and although Sirene and Marcia did not mention each other by name in their diaries, Marcia often wrote of visits with Sirene's mother, Fanny. Marcia suffered from poor health when the war began, and Sylvester worried that keeping a house on her own with two young children would be too taxing. She wrote in her diary that the Morgans had "a very large family, but it is a great castle of a house, and there is room for all."<sup>115</sup> Marcia's mother and father also lived nearby, as did the Buntens, and she frequently relied on this network for news and help caring for the children while her husband was away.<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>114</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 32-33.

<sup>115</sup> Marcia Phillips, "Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War," West Virginia and Regional History Center, West Virginia University Libraries, A&M 1846, July 9-19, 1861.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, July 4, 1861, September 1, 1861, September 15-17, 1861, October 3, 1861, November 11, 1861.

Further south, in the Kanawha County town of Coalsmouth, Victoria Hansford relied on her own kinship network for safety when the war came too close to home.<sup>117</sup> Threatened by the fear of an imminent battle in the fall of 1861, twenty-three-year-old Victoria traveled to her uncle's house in nearby Paint Creek, where she and other Confederate-sympathizing women sheltered in an adjacent office building until the fighting was over. Victoria incorrectly hailed the Battle of Scary Creek a victory for the Confederacy, but the Southern army withdrew from the area in the days following the skirmish, leaving the Union to seize control of the small valley in which she lived.<sup>118</sup> She saw the Confederates pass by her uncle's house on their way out of the region, and she worried that "the Yankees would not be far behind." She and the other women feared that the Union soldiers would retaliate against the local Confederate sympathizers. A cousin, Martha Jane Smith, who lived five miles from Paint Creek, volunteered to shelter Victoria and the other women, as well as a "[rail] carload full of women, children, and nurses," until the partisan threat passed. Smith's husband was the superintendent of a coal and oil company, and they lived in the large company house which afforded plenty of room for the refugees. Within a few days, the Federal Army had moved on as well, and Victoria was able to return home.<sup>119</sup> Months later, when the nearby Coal River flooded, Victoria and her father stayed with other family members until the water subsided.<sup>120</sup> The ability of both Marcia and Victoria to find safety and shelter during such trying times was solely due to their ability to tap into pre-existing kinship networks they maintained throughout the war.

---

<sup>117</sup> The town of Coalsmouth was renamed St. Albans in 1871.

<sup>118</sup> The Battle of Scary Creek occurred on July 17, 1861. Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 127.

<sup>119</sup> Mollie Hansford and Victoria Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, ed. William D. Wintz (Charleston, WV: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1989), 25-26.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.



West Virginia women also used their kinship networks for more than just support for themselves and their families. In towns and cities throughout the state, women mustered their networks in order to form ladies' aid societies to support soldiers. These organizations mirrored the larger, urban-centered groups formed across the country in both the Union and the Confederacy to raise desperately needed money and supplies for troops. In the North, these groups were chiefly overseen by the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC), which was formed at the beginning of the war in an effort to control and direct the distribution of aid coming from the homefront.<sup>121</sup> In the early years of the war, the USSC relied upon the voluntary labor of northern women, under the guise of national and patriotic duty, to supplement the needs of a haphazardly mobilized and ill-equipped federal force. Based on deeply ingrained cultural assumptions associated with true womanhood, the USSC branded this form of women's work as a natural extension of their household duties while also using women's support to encourage widespread Union loyalty.<sup>122</sup> In the Confederate South, women formed Ladies Gunboat Societies in order to raise money for the purchase of ironclad warships necessary to defend the coastline, and women's associations held concerts, fairs, and dramatic performances to promote their fund-raising efforts.<sup>123</sup> Lacking a national organization like the USSC and with a much larger rural population, Southern women's aid efforts were often associated with a particular state or city. Elite white women formed the core constituency of these groups, and their efforts represented as much a social obligation as a patriotic duty.<sup>124</sup>

---

<sup>121</sup> Jeanie Attie, "Warwork and the Crisis of Domesticity in the North" in *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*, eds. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 249.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 249-251

<sup>123</sup> Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 25-28.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-25.

In West Virginia, Union women answered the pleas of the USSC for donations, while Confederate women formed their own smaller benevolent aid societies to supply troops with necessities. The reliance upon the labor of women was necessary during the initial chaos of the war, as West Virginia men rushed to join local regiments and women sought to equip them with uniforms, blankets, and other provisions.<sup>125</sup> As their work continued, Union and Confederate West Virginia women used their kinship networks to expand beyond their traditional domestic sphere and enter into the war-time political economy. Their previously undervalued domestic work was transformed into a political statement of fealty for their cause, and they organized their kinship networks into aid organizations which mirrored corporations by nominating board members and publishing records of their meetings.<sup>126</sup>

The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* printed an editorial from the “Benevolent Ladies of Wheeling and Vicinity” in October 1861 urging women of all classes to answer the call of the USSC. The editorialist opened with the statement, “This great and good Government expects all its loyal children- not less its daughters than its sons-...to consider themselves, each one, personally addressed in the appeals which are made to them.”<sup>127</sup> The writer then called on women’s sense of “patriotism, justice, and gratitude” in their plea for blankets, clothing, bandages, pillows, woolen socks, and “carpet-slippers” for soldiers recovering in hospitals.<sup>128</sup> In evoking the images of wounded soldiers yearning for the comforts of home, the writers reminded women of the sacrifices their loved ones had made, and, reflecting the domestic ideals of true

---

<sup>125</sup> Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 124.

<sup>126</sup> R.M. Hosis, “Bell District- Meeting of the Ladies Knitting Association,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, October 15, 1861, accessed November 13, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1861-10-15/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>127</sup> Editorial, “We the Benevolent Ladies of Wheeling and Vicinity,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, October 11, 1861, accessed November 13, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1861-10-11/ed-1/seq-2/>.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

womanhood, called upon women to act as care-givers not only for their family, but for the nation as well. While sewing, knitting, and nursing fell distinctly within women's traditional sphere of home and hearth, the language of the appeal ("loyalty," "patriotism," and "justice") expanded West Virginians' understanding of women's place within war-time society by associating it with political obligations.

Not all Union women's groups contributed to the USSC. In the Bell District of Ohio County, women organized a Knitting Society with the goal to "prepare stockings and mittens for the soldiers of Western Virginia, who have gone forth to offer their lives a[s] sacrifice in defence [sic] of our beloved country, our homes, and our lives."<sup>129</sup> The women appointed a chair, secretary, and treasurer, two of whom shared the same last name, indicating that the group may have sprung from an already established kinship network. The founders of the Knitting Society recognized that not all women in their district could afford to purchase the necessary wool for making socks and mittens, and so they also nominated a small group of women to a committee in charge of obtaining materials and monetary donations from the local community. Because of their charitable efforts, the members expected "each family in the District [to] furnish at least one pair of woolen stockings, and as many more as their circumstances would permit."<sup>130</sup> Again, the duties they were performing placed the women's actions distinctly within the domestic sphere, but the language used in the newspaper notice they published, along with the manner in which their first meeting was conducted, created explicit ties to the male-dominated worlds of business and politics. The meeting was "convened, pursuant to notice," and motions were "resolved,"

---

<sup>129</sup> Hosis, "Bell District- Meeting of the Ladies Knitting Association." Districts were used to divide counties into political sections.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

“made,” and “carried” by the members.<sup>131</sup> The use of such business-centric and governmental language and protocol lent a tone of legitimacy and seriousness to their actions. It showed that the Society was more than just a casual ladies’ sewing circle; it was a trustworthy volunteer organization, properly managed in order to make an essential contribution to the war effort.

Combining nationalism with traditionally domestic work, West Virginia ladies’ aid societies frequently sewed flags and banners for regiments leaving home for distant battlefields. The presentation of such flags, which became a social ritual for communities throughout the nation early in the war, was used as a means of motivating soldiers who might be reluctant to leave their families behind, as well as a way of garnering public support for the war.<sup>132</sup> The Union ladies of Buckhannon presented Marcia Phillips’ husband, Sylvester, with a “beautiful flag” in May 1861 when his volunteer company was preparing to leave the area.<sup>133</sup> As they marched out of town, Marcia wrote, “the women and girls came out in groups by the road side and bid them good-bye and to offer beautiful boquets [sic].”<sup>134</sup> On the Winfield road, just outside of Coalsmouth, Sarah Frances Young wrote of presenting Company F of the 8<sup>th</sup> Virginia Volunteers with their own flag. She later heard that it was the only flag in the Regiment, and she hoped that “the gallant officers and brave soldiers of that company rally around it, and vow that the traitors shall never trail it in the dust so long as they have strength to sustain it!”<sup>135</sup> Along with the contributions of ladies’ aid societies, these demonstrations helped cement women’s

---

<sup>131</sup> Holic, “Bell District- Meeting of the Ladies Knitting Association.”

<sup>132</sup> Wayne K. Durrill, “Ritual, Community and War: Local Flag Presentation Ceremonies and Disunity in the Early Confederacy,” *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 4 (Summer 2006): 1107-1109.

<sup>133</sup> Phillips, “Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War,” May 26, 1861. Marcia underlines the phrase “Union ladies of Buckhannon” in her journal, indicating that these women were likely part of a ladies’ aid society.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, June 25, 1861.

<sup>135</sup> Sarah Frances Young, “Diary of Sarah Frances Young, 1861-1862,” Young Family Civil War Papers, Roy Bird Cook Collection, West Virginia and Regional History Center, West Virginia University Libraries, Box 27, Volume: Notebook 31, September 9, 1861.

place within the political discourse by directly associating their domestic duties with the war effort. As the men carried the flags into battle, they served as constant reminders of the women who had made them and the community they had left behind.

Flowers and flags were popular offerings of support from Confederate women, as well, and, like their Union counterparts, they reinforced women's political roles within the Confederacy. Flags and the ceremonies that accompanied them were especially important among secessionists living in heavily partisan areas like West Virginia, as they rallied community support for the Confederate cause, which often proved to be a more successful recruiting tactic than calls to protect states' rights or defend slavery.<sup>136</sup> In Coalsmouth, Victoria Hansford wrote that she and other ladies of her town held a small ceremony where they presented Confederate Captain Albert G. Jenkins and his troop of Border Rangers with a flag which had been "carefully made of the best material."<sup>137</sup> A speech, written by Miss Sallie Lasley, was delivered by her sister, Allie, and Victoria wrote that the women "stood on the lawn...with arms full of flowers in abundance which were showered over the officers and soldiers at the end of the ceremony."<sup>138</sup> Victoria and her friends also frequently visited the nearby Confederate training facility, Camp Tompkins, taking food and supplies to the camp to make life easier for the soldiers. Many of the soldiers hailed from Kanawha County, and Victoria wrote that, "our friends and relatives were all among them, and we went to and fro taking the things that would make their camp life more comfortable."<sup>139</sup> These patriotic demonstrations of support combined women's domestic duties with their expanded position as

---

<sup>136</sup> Durrill, "Ritual, Community and War," 1109-1110.

<sup>137</sup> Jenkins was a Cabell County slaveholder who joined the Confederacy at the outbreak of the Civil War. Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 134.

<sup>138</sup> Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 22.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

active and necessary contributors to the war effort, thus politicizing their traditional household tasks.

During the social and political upheaval surrounding the Civil War, Union and Confederate-sympathizing West Virginia women relied heavily on their pre-established and largely female-based kinship networks as both a means of support and as a way to push the boundaries of their traditional gender roles within the state's evolving political economy. Kinship networks offered women living in the deeply partisan region the ability to maintain emotional and physical connections with those who shared their beliefs, and they provided a protective escape during periods of intense fighting or other war-related dangers. The networks also became essential systems for transmitting news of war developments when traditional methods of communication broke down. While West Virginia women used their kinship networks to strengthen the bonds between themselves, they also took advantage of the opportunity to expand their roles within society. The war necessitated the transformation of kinship networks into ladies' aid societies, which women then used to insert themselves into the economic and political spheres of their communities and become active members of the war effort.

### **WEST VIRGINIA WOMEN IN BUSINESS**

Ladies' aid societies were not the only way in which the chaos of the war offered West Virginia women opportunities to expand into the male-dominated realm of business and politics. The death or deployment of husbands, fathers, and other male family members, as well as the heightened confusion brought by large numbers of disorderly troops converging on their neighborhoods, allowed and sometimes forced many West Virginia women to take on financial duties which previously would have fallen to men. While the activities of ladies' aid societies

and benevolent groups often centered around traditional domestic work, individual West Virginia women engaged in a variety of business transactions, including selling property, lending money, contributing to family finances, and even participating in illegal activities.

In January 1863, Henrietta Barr, who had moved in with her mother and sister when the war broke out, sold her house to “Mr. Robt Brown of Wirt County” for the sum of \$1,000. Recording the transaction in her diary, Henrietta noted that the house had become a burden, “a source of more trouble than profit,” and that she had no regrets in selling it. “This is the most expensive business transaction I have ever engaged in,” she wrote.<sup>140</sup> Although it may have been her largest business transaction, it was neither the first nor last business deal which Barr would conduct during the course of the war. Her war-time diary shows that she arranged for repair work to be done on the family’s well in early 1862, traveled to Parkersburg “to attend a piece of business” in April 1863, and, two months later, negotiated the sale of iron from the family mill which had been destroyed by Union troops the previous year.<sup>141</sup> While she had male friends in Ravenswood who she trusted in other matters, Henrietta chose to remain in total control of these business transactions. Furthermore, many of the financial arrangements she engaged in, such as selling her house and the scrap iron, were only made necessary by the turmoil which the war brought to her community.

In the northern part of the state, Marcia Phillips developed her own financial acumen. When her Union soldier husband, Sylvester, fell ill in the fall of 1861, she traveled to Camp Flatwoods, in Braxton County, where his regiment was stationed in order to care for him. His weakened condition, which she attributed to “lung fever” (now known as pneumonia), prevented

---

<sup>140</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 19.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 21, 25.

him from carrying out his duties as captain.<sup>142</sup> While she nursed him back to health, Marcia took over some of these duties, including writing furloughs and making out the company pay-rolls. Marcia called the furloughs “a very particular business,” which required attention to detail.<sup>143</sup> She worked for days on the pay-rolls, and seemed quite satisfied with herself when she noted in her diary that on November 12<sup>th</sup>, she was able to send them with the courier, “one to the Adjutant General of the U.S. and the other to the Pay Master. 2 [sic] rolls in each envelope and S[y]lvester] keeps a duplicate.”<sup>144</sup> There were many men stationed at Camp Flatwoods who likely could have completed the pay-rolls and furloughs, but the fact that Marcia was the one who ultimately submitted the essential documents reveals the increasing importance and prominence of West Virginia women in the war effort.

Her work on the company records may have boosted Marcia’s confidence in her clerical abilities, and prompted her to engage in familial business matters usually reserved for men. She, her husband, and their two children had moved back into their house in Buckhannon by early 1862. Marcia’s health had improved, and this, combined with her recuperated husband’s frequent absences with his regiment, resulted in Marcia developing a more independent financial presence within the community. In March 1862, she lent family friend and Union soldier Jasher Brooks \$200 in gold, and noted that in return, she received his word for the loan to be paid “‘six months after date, with interest’.”<sup>145</sup> She also made decisions about an office space which the family owned. When the nearby town of Beverly was under threat of Confederate invasion in May of that same year, she allowed a Beverly merchant to store his goods in the building to

---

<sup>142</sup> Phillips, “Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War,” October 27, 1861.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., October 31, 1861.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., November 12, 1861.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., March 20, 1862.



prevent them from being stolen.<sup>146</sup> The next month, a local Union commander approached Marcia about renting the office as temporary lodgings for a couple of Confederate women from Webster County whose husbands had been killed. Marcia felt sorry for the women, one of whom she noted was only seventeen. “Within the last few months, she has lost her child, husband, father, and [three] brothers,” she wrote. She agreed to rent the office.<sup>147</sup> Marcia frequently wrote of her correspondence with her husband, but she does not mention speaking with him about either the loan or the use of the office building. It appears that these business transactions were not influenced by him, but rather matters which Marcia undertook of her own accord. Having acquired experience largely due to her husband’s military deployment and his war-related illness, Marcia continued to use her financial abilities independently within her war-torn community. Her activities reveal the variety of opportunities afforded by the Civil War for West Virginia women to expand outside their traditional roles within society and take on new responsibilities.

Eugenia Thackston, affectionately known to her husband as Jenkie, was another woman who engaged in the male-dominated realm of business during the war. A native of West Virginia, she lived in Barboursville until 1861 when she moved to Prince Edward County, Virginia, to be closer to her husband, Ben, who worked for the Confederate government in Richmond. In a letter to him, dated April 27, 1863, Jenkie wrote, “Knowing that you wished to purchase some cattle, I have made inquiries, but can hear of none on reasonable terms.” She then listed the prices of cattle which had been sold recently, and informed him of one that she

---

<sup>146</sup> Phillips, “Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War,” May 17- June 7, 1862.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, June 7, 1862.

had found for sale, asking “How high a priced cow will you take?”<sup>148</sup> Although her surviving records do not indicate if she went on to purchase the cow, the letter to her husband shows that Jenkie had every intention of being involved in the family finances.

The individual experiences of Henrietta Barr, Marcia Phillips, and Jenkie Thackston represent some of the ways in which West Virginia women expanded their traditional domestic roles to engage in the typically male-dominated world of business during the Civil War. Henrietta Barr’s status as a widow allowed her the legal ability to engage in business transactions independently, but it was the turmoil brought by the war which required her to do so.<sup>149</sup> For many married women, such as Marcia Phillips and Jenkie Thackston, the absence of their husbands seemed to encourage increased self-reliance when it came to economic matters. The war created an environment in which West Virginia women could, either by choice or necessity, step outside the domestic sphere and act with individual agency in the economic sector of their communities. The fact that these women wrote about their business transactions reveals the importance with which they viewed their actions. Henrietta was proud of her ability to personally handle such a large transaction when she wrote about the sale of her house, and Jenkie’s letter to her husband indicates that she acted preemptively, rather than on his instructions. Marcia’s self-confidence in her skills increased when she learned to write furloughs and pay-rolls during her time at Camp Flatwoods, leading her to trust her own judgement when it came to loaning money and renting property. The records left by these women show that they felt their actions to be worthy of note, and that they handled their new responsibilities with pride and confidence.

---

<sup>148</sup> Eugenia Miller Thackston to Ben Thackston, April 27, 1863, Miller-Thackston Family Papers 1843-1874, MS 38, Special Collections, Morrow Library, Marshall University, Huntington, WV.

<sup>149</sup> Henrietta’s husband died prior to the start of the Civil War.

While Henrietta, Marcia, and Jenkie engaged in lawful business transactions to support their families during the war, other West Virginia women resorted to extralegal methods of making money. Across the country, prostitution and the sale of illegal alcohol flourished in areas where large numbers of soldiers were stationed, as men from both sides sought to relieve the boredom, fear, and loneliness which accompanied their time in service.<sup>150</sup> In West Virginia, the mayor of Wheeling attempted to control prostitution within the city, and instructed police to raid the houses of “disreputable women” in May 1862. The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* reported that over twenty arrests were made in one night in raids across the city’s various districts. Among those arrested were one married couple, three women with the surname “Brady,” and two women with the surname “Archie,” indicating the presence of kinship networks even within illegal activity.<sup>151</sup>

Following reports of drunkenness among soldiers which resulted in fines and imprisonment, the practice of selling liquor to “any person wearing the uniform of a soldier, even if such person is known not to be a soldier” was banned in Wheeling in October 1861.<sup>152</sup> This did not stop soldiers’ demand for liquor, however, and some enterprising women found creative ways to circumvent the ban. Their efforts were eventually detailed in a piece by the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, published in the fall of 1863. Women had long been smuggling alcohol across the Potomac River, the paper noted, using a combination of “artifice and chicanery...to evade military surveillance.” Whiskey had been found hidden in hollowed-out eggs and shipped

---

<sup>150</sup> Gary W. Gallagher and Joan Waugh, *The American Civil War: A History of the Civil War Era* (State College, PA: Flip Learning, 2015), 72, 154.

<sup>151</sup> “Arrest of a Number of Disreputable Women,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, May 26, 1862, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1862-05-26/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>152</sup> “Selling Liquor to Soldiers,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, October 17, 1861, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1861-10-17/ed-1/seq-3/>.

across the border, and women had been arrested for hiding alcohol underneath their large hoop skirts. The most “novel” scheme detailed by the paper, however, was employed by a woman who created a pair of breasts made of “*gutta percha*,” a hard, plastic-like substance derived from the sap of the gutta-percha tree, and filled them with bourbon. The unnamed woman wore the false breasts while walking through the soldier’s camp and, according the paper, calling out “10 cents a suck.” “From these,” the paper claimed, “the soldiers, like babies, quaff[ed] rich and copious draughts.” She also carried a pillow, again made of the same material and filled with alcohol, on which rested her baby, “which is fortunately not gutta percha.”<sup>153</sup> While this was no doubt an extreme case, her actions show the lengths to which West Virginia women would go to provide for themselves during the war, as well as one of the myriad of ways that women could take financial advantage of the chaos war brought to their communities.

## **WEST VIRGINIA WOMEN IN POLITICS**

Along with financial matters, the war and its accompanying chaos also provided West Virginia women with new opportunities in the political sphere. Women across the country, including those in West Virginia, felt the Civil War’s call to patriotism and duty justified their increased attention to the political arguments and legislative action which were made during the war. Influenced in part by the burgeoning women’s rights movement, begun in the 1840s and 1850s, and also by calls to emulate their “Revolutionary mothers” with displays of patriotism and sacrifice, women on both sides of the partisan divide began to develop their own political opinions, independent of their husbands or other male family members.<sup>154</sup> The continued government requests for women’s assistance, either through their labor with ladies’ aid

---

<sup>153</sup> “A New Way to Sell Liquor,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, October 17, 1863, accessed June 14, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1863-10-17/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>154</sup> Nina Silber, *Gender and the Sectional Conflict* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008) 37-40.

associations or the sacrifice of their menfolk into military service, further validated women's belief that their political opinions were worthy of consideration.<sup>155</sup> Although they could not vote nor hold political office, West Virginia women developed their own views on the legality of Confederate secession from the Union and on the validity of the new state of West Virginia.

Just fourteen years old at the start of the war, Sirene Bunten was already an ardent Unionist and the war intensified her political engagement. She noted in her diary that she celebrated Independence Day in 1864, along with other Union supporters in French Creek, by reading aloud the Declaration of Independence and reciting toasts to the nation.<sup>156</sup> While she occasionally questioned Lincoln's military decisions, writing in January 1863, "I think the President ought to know better than to keep changing commanders so often," her diary shows that she was devastated to learn of his assassination in April, 1865. "To think that Abraham Lincoln our President, who has for four years governed us well and wisely, was deliberately shot this morning...I can hardly realize this great loss it was so sudden," she wrote.<sup>157</sup> Sirene was also a supporter of West Virginia's independence from Virginia, and wrote shortly after the declaration of statehood, "Lots of rebels are trying to destroy it, but...it will shine as bright as any of the thirty-five after a while. Oh what a glorious flag is ours, if I were only a man to help fight for it."<sup>158</sup> Her support of both the Union and the state was clear in a passage she copied from the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* newspaper on July 7, 1863, "'The 20<sup>th</sup> of June, 1863, is the natal day of this last born of the ever glorious galaxy of states constituting the American union."<sup>159</sup> Sirene lost two brothers and countless neighborhood friends who fought for the

---

<sup>155</sup> Attie, "Warwork and the Crisis of Domesticity in the North," 252-253.

<sup>156</sup> Cresswell, "A Civil War Diary from French Creek," July 4, 1863.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, April 15, 1865.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, July 1, 1863.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, July 7, 1863.

Union during the war, and her writing makes it clear that she felt she had a personal stake in both the war and the new state.<sup>160</sup> Living in such a divided region, the Civil War opened a new world of political engagement for young women like Sirene. As she noted, “everything is swallowed up in the all absorbing topic war,” and discussions regarding military tactics or the outcome of the statehood movement happened often within her home.<sup>161</sup> The chaos brought by the war, as well as its “all absorbing” nature, suspended notions of what were deemed proper topics of conversation for women, including young women like Sirene.

In nearby Buckhannon, Sirene’s cousin Marcia Phillips also supported both the Union and West Virginia’s creation. Her father, husband, and brother all fought for the Union, and Marcia closely followed the developments of West Virginia’s emerging statehood. She wrote that she had no pity for captured members of the local Confederate volunteer company, the Upshur Grays, accusing them of having “threatened the Union people and tried to overthrow the government.”<sup>162</sup> Marcia felt that the Confederate supporters in West Virginia had been deceived by their leaders regarding the war. In relating some of the stories Sylvester told her from his service in Calhoun County in the fall of 1861, she wrote that the “country people” he encountered were surprised that the Union soldiers “did not kill women and children, and free the negroes among them,” as they had been led to believe would happen.<sup>163</sup> She also followed local elections closely, and noted with pleasure that in May 1861, “Our Secession County

---

<sup>160</sup> Cresswell, “A Civil War Diary from French Creek,” January 4, 1863, December 14, 1864.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, January 26, 1863.

<sup>162</sup> Phillips, “Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War,” July 2, 1861. The Upshur Greys were a Confederate regiment from Upshur County, WV.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, September 17, 1861.

Officers, Sheriff, Clerk, &&& [sic] have been deposed, and we are to have good Union men in their place.”<sup>164</sup>

Her support for the West Virginia statehood movement was also evident in her diary. Marcia attended a rally in October 1861, where she eagerly listened to two candidates for the proposed Wheeling convention speak in support of West Virginia.<sup>165</sup> Later, in August 1862, she watched as soldiers and citizens from Buckhannon paraded an effigy of Clarksburg politician John S. Carlile, blindfolded and sitting in a coffin, through the town’s streets. Marcia agreed with their sentiments, calling Carlile a “traitor to the new state.”<sup>166</sup> When Brigadier General John D. Imboden and his Confederate forces occupied Buckhannon in April 1863, Marcia recorded in her diary that she had met with the general and boldly told him of her Union sentiments and loyalty to the emerging state, writing, “I told the General that I loved West Virginia and hoped that I could make it my home, while I lived, and that I hoped and prayed it might remain in the Union.”<sup>167</sup> Although Imboden vehemently disagreed with her, she wrote that the general “told me that I had a perfect right to my opinion and that I should not be disturbed on account of my principles.”<sup>168</sup> Marcia continued to closely follow the political developments of the state, and wrote that her husband attended the Constitutional Union Party

---

<sup>164</sup> Phillips, “Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War,” September 30, 1861.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., October 16, 1861. The convention she referenced was the First Constitutional Convention of West Virginia, which took place from November 26, 1861 to February 18, 1862. Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 140.

<sup>166</sup> Phillips, “Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War,” August 2, 1862. John S. Carlile was a U.S. Senator from Harrison County, (West) Virginia who voted against Virginia’s secession from the Union. He went on to advocate for the creation of West Virginia, but disagreed over the adoption of a gradual emancipation clause (the Willey Amendment) to the new state’s constitution, and as such, voted against statehood in July, 1862. Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 147-149.

<sup>167</sup> Brigadier General John D. Imboden, along with Brigadier General William E. Jones, led Confederate raids (known as the Jones-Imboden raids) in northwestern West Virginia during April and May 1863. Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 136.

<sup>168</sup> Phillips, “Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War,” April 29, 1863.

convention in Parkersburg the next month.<sup>169</sup> She noted that although the convention feared an attack by Confederate forces, “they remained and did nobly,” and she approved their nomination of Arthur Boreman for governor.<sup>170</sup> While Marcia no doubt received some of her political information through newspapers and neighbors, her ability to keep abreast of developments within the state was largely due to her husband and his important position as a regimental leader. His willingness to discuss political issues with Marcia indicates that he valued his wife’s opinion and encouraged her interests in such matters.

Sylvester’s confidence in Marcia’s political acumen was not unique among West Virginia husbands and wives. When Francis Pierpont was elected Governor of Virginia by the Reorganized Government in June 1861, his wife Julia was one of the first people with whom he shared the news.<sup>171</sup> “Though I do not claim that I was the original mover for the convention,” he wrote to her the day he was elected, “...I have chalked at the chart for its guidance and have helped direct it.” He confided in Julia his feelings on the occasion. “Tho[ugh] to all around it seemed as tho[ugh] they looked upon it as the hour of my triumph,” he wrote, “yet to me it was the most trying day of my life.”<sup>172</sup> Following the creation of West Virginia and Arthur Boreman’s election as the state’s first governor, Pierpont continued to serve as governor for the remaining Virginia counties which lay under the control of the Restored Government.<sup>173</sup> He

---

<sup>169</sup> The Constitutional Union Party, a renewed version of the Whig Party, convened 235 delegates in Parkersburg in May 1863 to choose candidates for elective state offices. James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 689; Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 152.

<sup>170</sup> Phillips, “Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War,” May 16, 1863. Emphasis in original.

<sup>171</sup> As West Virginia was not yet an independent state, Pierpont’s governorship included the territory which would later become West Virginia. The Reorganized, or Restored, Government was created after Virginia’s secession and was loyal to the Union government. Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 121-122.

<sup>172</sup> Francis H. Pierpont to Julia Pierpont, June 20, 1861, Francis Harrison Pierpont (1814-1899) Papers, A&M.0009, West Virginia Regional History Center, Morgantown, WV.

<sup>173</sup> Curry, *A House Divided*, 129. Boreman, an attorney from Parkersburg in Wood County prior to the war, served as president of the Second Wheeling Convention in June 1861 and was elected governor of the state in May 1863. Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 121, 152. The remaining counties of the Restored Government were Alexandria,



wrote frequently to Julia, who remained in Fairmont, West Virginia, for much of the war, discussing how he struggled with his powerful position and his understanding of the reasons behind the continued fighting. Sent to Fortress Monroe, on the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia, Pierpont wrote to Julia in May 1863, “When I left home I had no expectation of coming to this part of the state...but there are subjects and matters connected with this whole thing (and that comprehends a great deal) that require my personal observation.”<sup>174</sup> He went on to explain,

In this section, the state is still in revolution. The question of the negro and his destiny and the destiny of the white master- are deeply exciting subjects. Prejudices like mountains rear themselves- and those who- up to the commencement of the rebellion were considered good patriots and citizens in niggerdom- seem to cling with a death grasp the nigger and hang to him though the country goes to the Devil.

My Dear it is my duty to throw myself into the breach and break the grasp, and sever the master from the slave for ever[sic] if I can.<sup>175</sup>

Pierpont valued his wife’s opinion on such serious matters as slavery, the prosecution of the war, and his political duties, telling her “we will ta[l]k it all over when I get home.”<sup>176</sup> This indicates that his letters were more than just informative; they were the openings for much deeper political discussions which took place between husband and wife. Along with her opinion, Pierpont also longed for his wife’s reassurance as he navigated the bureaucratic maze of the secession, the Civil War, and West Virginia statehood. Writing again from Fort Monroe in

---

Fairfax, Loudoun, Accomack, Northampton, and Norfolk. “Restored Government,” Library of Virginia, accessed January 3, 2021, <https://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/civil-war/Restored-Government.htm>.

<sup>174</sup> Francis H. Pierpont to Julia Pierpont, May 22, 1863, Francis Harrison Pierpont (1814-1899) Papers, A&M.0009, West Virginia Regional History Center, Morgantown, WV. Emphasis in original.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in original.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

August 1863, Pierpont pleaded with Julia to write to him more frequently. “I have to meet with so many unpleasant things now of days,” Pierpont lamented. “But a word of encouragement from you would do me good.” He had become frustrated with the “perpetual political suggestions and plottings [sic] after power” by men, who he claimed, “care for me so far as they may be able to use me [to] make a simple machine for their own purposes to be thrown away when done with.”<sup>177</sup> Pierpont’s letters reveal that he viewed his wife as a confidant and relied heavily on her emotional support, as well as her practical judgement in political matters.

Confederate-sympathizing West Virginia women also freely and publicly expressed their political opinions. In Ravenswood, Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr extolled the inauguration of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, and wrote in February 1862, “With such an able and great man at the head of our government we will never have occasion to give up.”<sup>178</sup> Although Confederate newspapers were difficult to come by, she was able to obtain a copy of Davis’ inaugural address a few days later, and wrote, “I was much pleased with the pious tone of it.”<sup>179</sup> Henrietta noted that she often engaged in political discussions with her neighbors and acquaintances, even those who she knew were Unionists. Some, like Ben Davenport, she deemed “reasonable,” although she was unable to “convince him of his errors.”<sup>180</sup> Others, such as Dick Cotton, she called “one of the most ‘out and out’ Lincoln men I ever met,” and wrote that she suspected his wife was “just as warm as he is.” She called them both “Black Republicans” and claimed that because they had not felt the “horrors” of war, they were

---

<sup>177</sup> Francis H. Pierpont to Julia Pierpont, August 27, 1863, Francis Harrison Pierpont (1814-1899) Papers, A&M.0009, West Virginia Regional History Center, Morgantown, WV. Emphasis in original.

<sup>178</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 5.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

unsympathetic to the suffering of their Confederate friends.<sup>181</sup> Henrietta did not mince her words when it came to her opinions on Abraham Lincoln. “Everything like law, order or decency is subverted under the Lincoln Government,” she wrote in December 1862.<sup>182</sup> When Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation took effect the following January, she referred to it as “a new act of tyranny” by “meddling abolitionists...[who] have failed in their efforts to produce servile insurrections.”<sup>183</sup> Henrietta, like many other Confederates, felt that the Union placed too much power in the federal government, and she believed that “all who can lay any claim to intelligence and refinement go for states [sic] rights.”<sup>184</sup>

Henrietta also took issue with the new state of West Virginia. Calling it “the most laughable joke Lincoln ever was guilty of,” she felt that the true desires of those living within the state’s boundaries were being ignored. “There are no expressions of the voice of the people,” she wrote in reference to the November 1862 elections for the Wheeling legislature. She viewed the creation of West Virginia as unconstitutional, and noted that, “Even the Union people are a little dubious for the same reason but are in favor of it, as one of them said ‘because it is a military necessity.’”<sup>185</sup> When the first round of elections for the new state took place in the spring of 1863, Henrietta called them “a ridiculous farce,” and claimed that all the candidates were “uniform in their sentiments, i.e., they are all Black Republicans.” She called the two candidates for state senate, Ed Mahan and Andy Flesher, “as mean as gas broth,” and when the election results were announced, Henrietta marked the event by saying, “The Union ticket for

---

<sup>181</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 21-22.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Gov. etc. were, of course, elected as there was no opposition.”<sup>186</sup> Henrietta’s diary entries show that she was concerned not only with the conflict between the Union and Confederacy, but also with the validity and functioning of her state and local government. Her inability to vote did not limit her interest in elections; she closely followed the nominations and understood the workings of party politics.

Henrietta and other pro-Confederate West Virginia women were instrumental in keeping Confederate support alive within the state as it moved closer to the Union. Despite her inability to participate directly in the machinations of government, she and others like her served as unofficial mouthpieces for the Confederacy by promoting its ideology among friends and neighbors whose beliefs might be wavering. Southern women often subscribed more heavily than northern women to the traditional gender divisions inherent in the public and private social spheres and were less likely to espouse their political beliefs outside their homes.<sup>187</sup> In a deeply divided state such as West Virginia, however, the political endorsement of women like Henrietta was necessary for maintaining support to the Confederate cause.

The societal upheaval which accompanied the Civil War created new opportunities and responsibilities for many West Virginia women, like their counterparts across the country, to expand the confines of their traditional gender roles, no matter which side of the ideological spectrum they supported. They took advantage of their established kinship networks for protection and emotional support; sharing vital information, provisions, and shelter when the war deprived them of access to these essential needs. They also expanded these networks, forming ladies’ aid societies that contributed necessary support in the form of both fundraising and

---

<sup>186</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 21-23.

<sup>187</sup> Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 10-12.

supplies for Confederate and Union troops. They expanded their engagement in business matters out of necessity, but with a sense of independence and pride in their newfound abilities. They maintained family finances and took advantage of opportunities, both legal and illegal, offered in the war-time economy. Finally, West Virginia women closely followed and participated in the political developments in both the nation and their new state. They established their own opinions on the legality of actions taken by the federal government, and they followed local elections and statehood developments with increasing interest, feeling that they had a personal stake in the results of both. They used their political knowledge to influence both friends and family members, encouraging husbands and sons to enlist in either the Union or Confederate army, and convincing indecisive neighbors to support their cause.

The Civil War and resulting regional bushwhacker's campaigns also brought the military into all facets of West Virginia women's lives. Just as they refused to shy away from business or political matters, West Virginia women who sympathized with both the Union and the Confederacy found themselves becoming more and more involved with the soldiers and armies who occupied the state. Both groups of women challenged soldiers from opposing forces and provided material aid to their own side. They became active participants in the military effort and their support was vital to the ability of both armies to wage war within West Virginia.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **“THE ARMOR OF GENDER”: WEST VIRGINIA WOMEN AND THE MILITARY**

As the Civil War continued, West Virginia women took on increasingly dynamic roles within the state’s ongoing military conflict, including direct interaction and confrontation with both Union and Confederate military forces which occupied the state. Conventional gender divisions broke down as West Virginia women found themselves unable to remain outside the conflict and were instead pulled into the traditionally masculine world of warfare. Finding their domestic sphere disrupted by the war, they challenged commanding officers over the impressment of goods and livestock and the searching of their houses for contraband materials. West Virginia women viewed these military actions as encroachments on their rights as white women and civilians. Local commanders struggled to follow orders from their superiors while also maintaining their traditionally masculine roles as protectors of women. As the Union army fought to preserve their control of the state, West Virginia women’s participation in the conflict increased. Confederate-sympathizing West Virginia women defied Union authority by refusing to take the oath of allegiance to West Virginia and the Union at the risk of being jailed, while Unionist women assisted the federal army by volunteering to search suspected female rebels for treasonable correspondence. West Virginia women risked their freedom and their lives by smuggling illegal mail and intelligence across enemy picket lines, and women on both sides of the conflict defended themselves from and gave essential support to partisan guerrilla bands which roamed the mountains during the war. Some West Virginia women were ultimately jailed for their actions, but others were able to use soldiers’ traditional assumptions about their nature as women to escape punishment. While in other areas of the country, overwhelming support for

either the Union or the Confederacy offered widespread community-based protection for women, the deeply divided nature of the war in West Virginia resulted in both Union and Confederate women sharing similar experiences of hardship and threats of violence.

Across the nation, both the Union and Confederate armies seized supplies including food, livestock, and other goods from citizens and communities, a practice which was known as impressment. These intrusions marked a change in how the war affected West Virginia women, moving the conflict from far-off battlefields and into the domestic sphere of their kitchens, pantries, and gardens. In the Kanawha County town of Coalsmouth, Victoria Hansford and her fellow Confederate-sympathizing neighbors were often forced to turn over household goods to the occupying Union army. “If it was known that any Rebel had more than he needed to keep body and soul together,” she wrote in her memoir, “they [the Union army] came boldly and took it with guns in hand. They took all our corn, the best of our meal, 18 large hams, middlings [wheat flour], all our coal, chickens, turkeys, pigs, and everything else they could get hold of.” Many of her neighbors felt they had little recourse for fear they would be arrested and sent off to Union prisons if they complained too much.<sup>188</sup>

In Ravenswood, Confederate-sympathizing Henrietta Barr experienced similar acts of impressment by the Union army. In the summer of 1862, Henrietta wrote that after the arrival of Union soldiers in town, she noticed missing chickens and eggs from her “poultry yard,” and her garden was plundered of lettuce and onions. “It is no use to complain of these things,” she noted. “They say we ‘Secesh’ must feed the ‘Union.’ It is no idle boast with them.”<sup>189</sup> When she awoke just a week later to find that “a sow and seven pigs, five or six hens[,] and nearly all

---

<sup>188</sup> Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 46.

<sup>189</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 7.

of our onions” had been taken, Henrietta was no longer willing to stay silent. She confronted the local Union Captain in the street and was “treated with such cool contempt it was almost ridiculous.” She continued, “I feel assured from the man’s looks he had just consumed one of our little porkers for his breakfast and there was another in course of preparation with a couple fowls stuffed with onions for his dinner.”<sup>190</sup> When Confederate women like Henrietta Barr confronted Union officers, they relied upon socially constructed gender roles which placed men, both northern and southern, in the position of protector rather than aggressor. Union officers themselves frequently confirmed these assumptions through their reluctance to harm middle- and upper-class white women. Even in war, they desired to remain “gentlemen.”<sup>191</sup>

While Henrietta was willing to publicly challenge the Union captain over the loss of her garden vegetables and livestock, she was much less comfortable confronting lower ranking soldiers who entered her home. Following a short calvary raid to destroy and capture Union supplies by Confederate General Albert G. Jenkins in early September 1862, the Union army increased their encroachment upon the Barr family.<sup>192</sup> Henrietta believed that they were taking revenge on the town’s Confederate sympathizers, who had fed and supplied General Jenkins’ troops when he had swept through the area. Rather than raid the garden for food, though, Henrietta wrote that six armed Union soldiers entered her home one evening, insulted her mother “in the grossest manner,” and demanded that “she should cook for as many of them as she had done for Jenkins.” Realizing that the men would not leave unless they were fed, Henrietta ordered one of the family’s slaves, Winny, to prepare food for the soldiers. As soon as they had eaten, however, six more soldiers arrived and demanded food, followed by a group who searched

---

<sup>190</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 8.

<sup>191</sup> Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 198-200.

<sup>192</sup> Rice and Brown, *West Virginia*, 134.



the house for “‘flags and arms,’” and then an additional twelve soldiers who insisted upon being fed.<sup>193</sup> Henrietta felt compelled to obey their demands. For days following this incident, the family was forced to feed varying numbers of Union troops as they passed through the area.<sup>194</sup> Henrietta recorded her resentment in her diary rather than vent her anger at the soldiers themselves. She had become accustomed to their presence in her yard, but their invasion of her home represented a distinct departure from their previous behavior. Southern women especially relied on the accepted rules of “civilized warfare,” which dictated that men waged war while women remained outside “the tented field.”<sup>195</sup> When the soldiers entered Henrietta’s home, the façade of separate spheres during war was exposed and broken. As the barriers between battlefield and home continued to diminish, however, West Virginia women became increasingly assertive of their rights when confronting occupying enemy forces.

Aside from household goods, the army’s impressment of family horses was a common cause for resentment among West Virginia women. Horses provided transportation for troops and supplies, and so were in high demand by both the Union and Confederacy throughout the war. But in the rural regions of West Virginia, horses were also essential for farming and travel, and their requisition was the impetus for many West Virginia women to take a more confrontational approach towards enemy forces.<sup>196</sup> As the war forced rural women to take on more active roles in maintaining their farms, the impressment of horses was particularly impactful on their lives. Prior to the summer of 1863, Victoria Hansford had adopted an attitude of appeasement towards the Union troops who occupied her town and demanded resources from

---

<sup>193</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 14.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>195</sup> Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 197.

<sup>196</sup> Gervase Phillips, “Warhorses of the U.S. Civil War,” *History Today* 55, no. 12 (December 2005): 11-13.

her family and neighbors. In June, however, she changed her mind when she heard from a relative living near Charleston that her riding horse, Old Boston, which had been requisitioned the previous year, had been spotted in a field where the Union army was keeping its herd of horses. Charleston was approximately fourteen miles from Coalsmouth, but Victoria's father was reluctant to try to retrieve the animal. He worried about the risk of retaliation from Union soldiers stationed in the area. Old Boston had belonged to Victoria though, not her father, and she decided to try for herself. Alone, she made her way to Charleston and asked the commanding officer to return her horse. She found him surprisingly amiable, and he eventually gave her an order to take possession of Old Boston. When she found her horse in the Union stables, however, the man who ran them "cursed and swore and said that he was not my horse...and that I could not have him back." Undaunted, Victoria returned to the commanding officer in Charleston for help. Together, they went back to the stables, where the hostler in charge of the horses had replaced Old Boston with a different, younger horse. "[He] had put him in the same stall," she wrote, "thinking I would claim the better horse and [he] could prove to the contrary." Undeterred, she "boldly stated that this was a finer horse[,] but it was not mine." The commanding officer then ordered the man to bring Hansford her horse, and she left the stables in triumph with Old Boston in tow.<sup>197</sup>

Like Victoria in Coalsmouth, Henrietta's family found that their horses were subject to impressment as well. As Federal troops continued to move through the area over the next month, a local Union commander, Lytle, took a horse belonging to Henrietta's sister-in-law, Susan, claiming that he "was commanded to [im]press all secesh horses." When Henrietta heard of this, she and her sister, Anne, immediately went to Lytle and demanded the return of the horse.

---

<sup>197</sup> Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 46-47.

He seemed to consent, but once the horse was back in the possession of a family slave, Lytle changed his mind and again took the horse, along with another that was being stabled at a neighbor's farm. "He would not be persuaded to return either of them," Henrietta complained. Lytle and his men, who Henrietta referred to as "his band of thieves," left for Parkersburg the same day, taking the horses with them. Henrietta's diary does not indicate if the animals were ever recovered.<sup>198</sup> While Henrietta was ultimately unsuccessful in retrieving her family's horses, the experiences of both she and Victoria Hansford largely confirm the idea that Union officers attempted to maintain traditional gender roles which placed men in the position of protectors and providers for women, even when those women supported the enemy.

While Henrietta Barr claimed that the Union commander told her he was under orders to take the horses of Confederate supporters, Sarah Frances Young's experience shows that the same practice was true concerning Union horses in the Kanawha Valley, albeit with a slight variation. "They [the Confederates] have taken out, or rather stolen, every horse from the Union men that they could find," she wrote on October 10, 1862. Although the Confederate generals stated that "taking horses is positively against the orders," Sarah noted that they made it exceedingly difficult for Union citizens to reclaim their animals. "When a man goes to the Commanders for his horse[,] they tell him if he can find the horse and the man who took it, he can have it," she explained. "And, perhaps, if he finds the horse, which is a seldom occurrence, they say 'If you had some of the prominent Secessionists from your neighborhood to prove it to be yours, you could have it.'" The divisions which existed in the community made this a practical impossibility, one which the Confederate commanders recognized and of which they took advantage. Sarah understood this when she observed, "this is the way the Generals have

---

<sup>198</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 17.

their orders obeyed.” The horses could not be proven to belong to Union residents because the town’s Secessionists would not support their claims, and so the Confederate commanders were not required to return them.<sup>199</sup> Sarah’s family attempted to keep their own horse hidden in the woods to prevent it being taken, but this seems to have failed as a subsequent diary entry mentions the family using a horse which was lent to them by a neighbor.<sup>200</sup> While Unionist women like Sarah Frances Young no doubt relied on many of the same assumptions as their Confederate counterparts regarding conventional gender roles, the occupying Confederate commanders were able to shift the blame onto the citizens of the town, rather than themselves, for failing to assist people in retrieving their property.

Aside from having their goods and livestock requisitioned, the domestic spheres of West Virginia women were further invaded by soldiers who searched their homes for contraband or prohibited items. For Confederate-sympathizing women, this contraband often included Confederate flags and letters from their relatives (dubbed “treasonous correspondence”), while Union-sympathizing women were searched by Confederate troops looking for stashed federal supplies and weapons. When the Confederate army occupied Buckhannon in the spring of 1863, Marcia Phillips found her house subject to search by Rebel soldiers looking for “Government property” which they could confiscate. Having been informed by some of the secessionist women in town that she was the wife of a Union captain, Marcia reported that “a squad of soldiers led by an officer” arrived at her house looking for any federal goods she might possess. Marcia offered to retrieve some crackers and cartridge boxes which she had, but the soldiers were determined to search for themselves.<sup>201</sup> “I was distressed,” she admitted on April 29, 1863.

---

<sup>199</sup> Young, “Diary of Sarah Frances Young,” October 10, 1862.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, October 21, 1862.

<sup>201</sup> The crackers were probably government-issued hardtack, part of a soldier’s rations.

“All over the house they went, peering into closets, under beds, etc., but little did they find to reward their search.” In the dining room, the soldiers came across boxes containing some of her husband’s clothes. “They broke open every box and examined [the contents] but found nothing of any Government property,” she said of the soldiers’ search. “They ripped open a bag of tobacco...but I assured them it was private property, and it passed unmolested, except one small piece taken by a Rebel more hungry for the weed than his companions.”<sup>202</sup> Marcia was upset by the Union soldiers’ intrusion into her home, but she did not attempt to argue or stop them. She likely relied upon the protection offered by both her gender and her status as the wife of a Union captain, and assumed, correctly, that when the Confederates found no government supplies, they would leave her unmolested.

On the Winfield road near Coalsmouth, the home of Sarah Frances Young and her family was often subjected to searches by Rebel soldiers. Her father, Union Captain John Valley Young, commanded Company G of the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment, (W.) Volunteers, and Sarah wrote in her diary that the Rebels had threatened to arrest him and send him to prison in Richmond, the Confederate capital.<sup>203</sup> Unmarried, Sarah still lived at home with her mother, and Confederate soldiers would regularly arrive to search the house, looking for her father. In one such incident in September 1862, Sarah wrote that her father and three men from his Company had only just managed to escape the house and hide in nearby bushes when the Confederates arrived. Seeing the men’s horses still tied outside, the Rebels waited in the house, hoping to capture the men when they returned. “I never felt so much like abusing men in my life,” Sarah confessed. The

---

<sup>202</sup> Phillips, “Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War,” April 29, 1863.

<sup>203</sup> Roy Bird Cook, “The Civil War Comes to Charleston,” *West Virginia History* 23, no. 2 (January 1962): 153-167. Accessed January, 2019. [http://www.wvculture.org/history/journal\\_wvh/wvh23-1.html](http://www.wvculture.org/history/journal_wvh/wvh23-1.html); Young, “Diary of Sarah Frances Young,” February 11, 1862.

Rebels questioned Sarah, her mother, and a friend, Emilie, who happened to be at the house that evening, but Sarah proudly noted that none of the women gave them any information. Instead, they took a defiant tone with their intruders. When asked why the horses were tied outside, Sarah wrote, “Ma told them...that it was an unfair question, and she would not tell them.” As the men searched the house by candlelight, Emilie pretended to help while, as Sarah noted, “laughing all the time at them.” Sarah referred to their leader, James Nounnan, as “notorious horse thief, and blood-thirsty Rebel,” and smugly told him, “I would not tell him who came here, and if I knew where they were[,] I would not tell him.”<sup>204</sup> After waiting for approximately two hours, during which time they were unable to find Captain Young or his men, the Rebels departed.<sup>205</sup> Within days, however, they returned and searched the house for weapons. “They did not find any,” she declared, “but seemed to think we had some hidden somewhere.”<sup>206</sup> Like Marcia Phillips, Sarah and the other women in her house relied on their privileged status as women, as well as their familial connection to the Union army, to protect them from assault, and although guerrilla fighters like Nounnan often operated outside the authority of the Confederate army, they subscribed to many of the same gender ideals as traditional soldiers and rarely harmed women or children.<sup>207</sup>

Due to its location as a border state and its affiliation with the Union even before it seceded from Virginia, West Virginia was frequently occupied and controlled by Union forces. They regularly searched the homes of Confederate sympathizers, including women, and the

---

<sup>204</sup> Young, “Diary of Sarah Frances Young,” September 12, 1862. Major James H. Nounnan was a well-known Confederate guerrilla fighter and raider with the 16<sup>th</sup> Virginia Calvary. Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 40

<sup>205</sup> Young, “Diary of Sarah Frances Young,” September 12, 1862.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, September 29, 1862.

<sup>207</sup> Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 200.

results of these searches could be much more serious than they were for Union sympathizers like Sarah Frances Young or Marica Phillips. Correspondence between Secessionists was considered treasonous, and Confederate women risked arrest and imprisonment if they were caught with such letters.<sup>208</sup> On October 8, 1861, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* reported that a young woman from Wheeling, Ella Poole, was suspected of engaging in “reasonable correspondence” by the local United States Marshal. Her home was searched, and although it seems no such correspondence was found, the Marshal ordered that Ella be detained. The article continued, “the lady not being in good health, it was decided to place a guard in the house and allow her to remain there.” Ella must have exaggerated her ill-health however, because during the night, she succeeded in “escaping from the house and eluding the vigilance of the guard.” When her escape was discovered, her mother and sister were taken into custody and charged with “aiding and abetting the escape of the first party named [Ella Poole].”<sup>209</sup> The next day, the paper reported that the mother and sister had been released by the Governor, “the evidence not being sufficient to hold them longer.”<sup>210</sup> While West Virginia women relied on their gender to protect them from soldiers who entered their home, Ella’s story reveals that they also used gender-based assumptions to evade punishment. Her Union captors took Ella’s honesty and vulnerability, tenets of true womanhood, for granted and confined her to her own home from which she escaped. Her mother and sister likely benefitted from the same gendered protections. Although

---

<sup>208</sup> Stephanie McCurry, *Women’s War: Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019), 37-38.

<sup>209</sup> “Arrest of a Lady Upon Suspicion of Treason,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, October 8, 1861, accessed November 13, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1861-10-08/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>210</sup> “Released,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, October 9, 1861, accessed November 13, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1861-10-09/ed-1/seq-3/>.

jailed overnight, the two were quickly released, rather than being held for assisting in Ella's escape.<sup>211</sup>

In Ravenswood, Henrietta Barr found that her own correspondence resulted in her sister, Anne, being questioned by Union authorities. Henrietta recounted the incident in April 1863 in which Anne received "an order from headquarters...to appear before 'Justice of the Peace and answer such questions as may be put to her'." A family friend and fellow Confederate sympathizer, Mrs. Hoyt, had also been arrested. The women were questioned over a letter that Anne had written to Mrs. Hoyt in which she mentioned some correspondence between Henrietta and a "Dr. H" (presumably Dr. Hoyt, who had joined the Confederate army as a surgeon). Henrietta wrote that when a local Union commander, Captain Gilpin, heard of Anne's letter, he traveled to the nearby town of Ripley to retrieve it from the Post Office, thinking it might contain evidence of treasonable correspondence. Gilpin turned the letter over to his senior officer, Colonel Dan Frost, who, Henrietta scathingly noted, "thought he would gratify his little petty malice by punishing [the women]." Finding nothing to hold them on, however, the women were released.<sup>212</sup> While this incident did not result in the arrest of those involved, it represents the lengths to which the Union army was able to reach into the lives of Confederate women under its control in West Virginia. The opening and reading of women's mail indicates the Union army's acknowledgement that women's correspondence might impact their success within the region, showing that women were viewed as more than just bystanders, but as participants whose opinions could sway public sentiment regarding the war's aims and achievements. Henrietta's

---

<sup>211</sup> "Released," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, October 9, 1861.

<sup>212</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 22, 28.



story also reveals women's growing frustration with Union intrusions and their increasing willingness to challenge such encroachments.

Rumors concerning treasonable correspondence or the possession of contraband materials were often the only justification needed to warrant a search by the Union army. In the spring of 1862, Victoria Hansford was home alone in Coalsmouth when she found herself the subject of such a search. "I was sitting by the fire reading some old Dixie letters," she wrote. "I also had a small silk flag draped over the back of the chair...It was what we then called 'The Eleven Starred Banner,'" she continued, referring to the flag which was a symbol of the Confederacy. Upon hearing the slam of her gate, Victoria looked out of her window and saw "four Yankee soldiers armed to the teeth headed for the front door. The orderly sergeant in front wore a sword, a red sash, pistols, etc...Behind him were three men with muskets." She knew that the possession of either the letters or the flag could easily lead to her arrest, but she had the presence of mind to act swiftly. In a matter of seconds, she threw the letters into the fire and thrust the flag into the bosom of her dress before meeting the soldiers at the door. They entered without knocking. "The sergeant said he had been told that I had a Rebel Flag which they had come for," Victoria explained. "I knew I would never give it up so I looked him straight in the eye and said, 'If you can find one here you can have it.'"<sup>213</sup>

She welcomed the soldiers to search the house, a willingness which left the sergeant "standing abashed." As they looked through her belongings, she berated the man, telling him "it was not necessary to have brought so many men with muskets, swords, and pistols when there was only one woman in the house to contend with." Victoria recognized the protection her gender offered. Her next words purposefully played on men's beliefs in the purity and

---

<sup>213</sup> Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 40.

submissiveness of women. “I became more polite and entertaining,” she wrote. “I told him that I did have some flags he was welcome to,” and she pointed to a framed picture of past United States presidents which hung on the wall. “There were four small stars and stripes in each corner but he was so ignorant he had a hard time telling them from ‘Stars and Bars’.” Finally realizing that these were not the Confederate flags which he was searching for, the sergeant told Victoria that she could keep them, and he and his men eventually left. While this encounter ended in her favor, she vowed afterwards to be much more careful with her most prized possessions. “We learned to be very discrete [sic],” she said, “but we also learned to be very cunning.”<sup>214</sup>

The exchanges between West Virginia women and occupying army officials represent one of the fundamental societal breakdowns which the Civil War produced between men and women, namely that it forced them to question their roles within the conflict and society. Men had traditionally felt that wars were entirely male-dominated events, but the demands of the Civil War turned this notion on its head. In many parts of West Virginia the lines between the homefront and the field of battle were blurred, if not completely obliterated.<sup>215</sup> Women were no longer victims of the war, as they had conventionally been viewed, but active participants as well as potential enemies.<sup>216</sup> While many West Virginia women adapted to this new role quickly, the change was noticeably more difficult for men to grasp, as shown in Victoria’s case by the sergeant’s behavior. He had been told that she was a Rebel in possession of contraband, and he came to her house with a clear plan of attack. When Victoria presented him instead with the picture of a vulnerable woman at the mercy of four well-armed soldiers, he saw in her a woman

---

<sup>214</sup> Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 40.

<sup>215</sup> Lorien Foote, “Rethinking the Confederate Home Front,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 3 (September 2017): 447.

<sup>216</sup> McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 86.

whom it was his duty to protect. Her portrayal of innocence about the type of flags she had in her possession conformed to his belief of her purity. In turn, Victoria found a freedom and independence that pre-war society had denied her. She broke from the traditional ideals of the pure and submissive woman through her lies and confrontation of the soldiers. While the sergeant's notions of masculinity prevented him from seeing the truth, Victoria took advantage of her femininity to manipulate the situation to her benefit.

In federally controlled areas of West Virginia, however, the Union recognized the advantage that traditional gender roles gave to Confederate women who sought to engage in treasonous behavior, and they took steps to rectify this situation. Despite their being labelled as Secesh, Rebels, or Southern sympathizers, Confederate-supporting women were still, above all, women. This afforded them a certain amount of protection, or what historian Drew Gilpin Faust has termed the "armor of gender." Social perceptions of morality, Faust argues, would have made it inconceivable for any man, even a soldier during war-time, to invade a woman's privacy by searching her person.<sup>217</sup> In order to maintain propriety but still address the threat that Confederate women posed, the Union army began to recruit Union-sympathizing women to search suspected Confederates. An article printed in the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* on September 4, 1861, entitled "The Reason Why Women are Employed to Search Female Rebels," explained why the practice was necessary, and also presented it in a flattering light for Union women who might find the idea indecent. "The petticoat loses all its sanctity," the article read, "when its corded expansion is spread over the correspondence of rebels and public enemies." Women "who lend themselves to the purposes of treason and rebellion" were entitled to no more consideration than their male counterparts, and not to be spared by "motives of delicacy."

---

<sup>217</sup> Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 198-199.

Perhaps because the author could not entirely explain *why* such an invasion of personal privacy, even by a woman, was not indelicate, the focus of the article rested instead on women's familiarity with female clothing construction. "No man could ever find the pocket of a woman's dress," the author stated. To illustrate this problem, the article related the story of a man and his unfaithful wife. Although the man watched his wife place a letter of "clandestine correspondence" in a pocket of her dress, he was unable to find it though he "turned the silk inside and outside" and "examined all the folds." The ability was simply beyond his power. "But any woman," the article concluded, "would have put her hand into the faithless pocket with her eyes shut."<sup>218</sup> The "corded expansion," or hoopskirt, referred to in the *Intelligencer* article was the physical manifestation of woman's separate sphere, and represented the private, domestic world in which she should remain protected from the war. In recruiting other women to search suspected female Confederates, the Union army upheld their masculine virtue and refrained from "making war on women," but also acknowledged that women could influence the war's outcome, either through clandestine mail smuggling or by offering their assistance in rooting out such smugglers.<sup>219</sup>

In Buckhannon, Union loyalist Marcia Phillips was called upon to search a woman accused of carrying treasonable correspondence. On the afternoon of June 10, 1863, Marcia and three other Union women were summoned by a local man, Mr. Poundstone, to search a woman who had been captured by soldiers and arrested as a "female spy." Poundstone also told Marcia, "he wanted me to give her a real talking-to," presumably as a warning about the risk of such activities. Marcia noted sarcastically that they found the woman to be "an ideal specimen of the

---

<sup>218</sup> The Reason Why Women are Employed to Search Female Rebels," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, September 4, 1861.

<sup>219</sup> Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 223; McCurry, *Women's War*, 41.

‘female Southern Confederacy,’” but they were unable to find any letters, “as she had been running about town for along [sic] time before she was arrested, and had probably dealt out her rebel mail.” The woman “raved and foamed and said she expected to be shining in glory while we were burning in hell,” and despite a long conversation, could not be convinced to change her ways. “There are none so blind,” Marcia wrote, “as those who will not see.”<sup>220</sup> Marcia felt no shame in searching the suspected woman, and even tried to warn her of the dire consequences her speech and actions might have. The Confederate woman’s brazen language and refusal to cooperate reveal that she too was comfortable in her actions. Both Marcia and the woman were readily performing their respective duties in assisting the war effort, but also subverting conventional gender norms through their willingness, in Marcia’s case, to assist the army in violating a woman’s privacy, and in the woman’s, by speaking profanely and engaging in treasonous acts.

Despite the risk of being searched by soldiers or Unionist women, Confederate women in West Virginia often engaged in the act of ferrying Rebel correspondence when normal mail service was interrupted. Both the Union and Confederacy operated official post offices throughout West Virginia during the war, but the Confederate service was frequently disrupted or stopped entirely as the Union army gained control of the state. When the official post was unavailable, Confederate-sympathizing citizens passed letters from person to person until they reached their destination.<sup>221</sup> In the Kanawha Valley town of Coalsmouth, Victoria Hansford was regularly involved in delivering mail she received through what she called the “Underground

---

<sup>220</sup> Phillips, “Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War,” June 10, 1863. Emphasis in original.

<sup>221</sup> Boyd B. Stutler, “The Confederate Postal Service in West Virginia” *West Virginia History Journal* 24, no. 1 (October 1962): 32-41.

Railroad,” a covert network which smuggled letters from Southern soldiers through the Union blockade.<sup>222</sup>

In the winter of 1863, Victoria and some friends attempted to retrieve a cache of contraband letters from “Dixie,” delivered through her “Underground Railroad,” which they were told had been stashed at a home on the other side of a well-guarded Union picket line. “Our plan,” she wrote, “was to try to pass the guards as if we had not the slightest idea of being halted and if we were, to try and talk our way through.” When they arrived at the guard post, it became clear they would have to resort to the second option. “I told [the guard] we were going down the road to see a sick girl and take her something to eat,” Victoria said, informing the sentinel that the house they intended to visit was visible from his post. He refused to allow the women to cross the line, telling her, “I would not even let my own mother pass through here to see anybody.” Rather than accept his decision, Victoria asked to speak with his sergeant. When he arrived, she saw that he was “a weak looking man,” and she offered to send him a pie for his supper if he would allow the group through. “I saw him begin to weaken and went on piling up excuses why we should pass,” she recalled. “We also kept piling up promises of the good things to eat we would bring him.” The sergeant finally relented, and the girls hurried to the house.<sup>223</sup>

When Hansford and her compatriots arrived, however, the letters were not there. They visited with the sick girl, but, as their true mission had been the retrieval of the letters, they did not stay long. “We returned to Thenie Wilson’s house,” Victoria wrote, “and lo, we found the bundle of letters had been left there while we were gone.” The girls celebrated their good

---

<sup>222</sup> Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 47. While the conventional use of the term “Underground Railroad” refers to the network of people who helped slaves escape north to freedom before and during the Civil War, Victoria Hansford appears not to have been aware of this and uses the term solely to denote this mail-smuggling operation.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

fortune, and quickly forgot all their promises to the sergeant in the excitement of news from friends and family. The next day, however, Victoria learned that their trip through the line had not gone unnoticed. The soldiers at the picket line had been confined to the guard house as punishment. “Seemed like they had let some girls go through the lines the day before,” she snidely recorded in her memoir, before finishing the anecdote with, “The way to a man’s heart is through his stomach is the moral of this story.”<sup>224</sup> Victoria relied on the soldiers’ assumptions about the domestic nature and innocence of women in their role as nurses and cooks in order to achieve her aims, and her unabashed response to the soldier’s punishment reveals her understanding and intentional manipulation of these expectations.

While Victoria was never caught smuggling illegal mail, some West Virginia women were not so fortunate. Mary Jane Green, a seventeen-year-old Confederate sympathizer from Braxton County, was arrested by federal officers in early 1862 and charged with “carrying her skirts full of letters to the rebel army.”<sup>225</sup> The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* reported that Mary Jane “was engaged in carrying a mail between Sutton, the county seat of [Braxton] county, and the rebel camp on the Gauley.” Arrested with the rest of her family, the newspaper noted that the illiterate Mary Jane “cursed and swore like a professional blackleg, or horse racer, declaring she would have the hearts blood of every ‘Lincoln pup’ in Western Virginia.” While her brother seemed to see the error of his ways and volunteered to take the oath of allegiance to the Union, Mary Jane refused, calling her brother a coward and swearing that the Union would not make her into a “d--d Abolitionist.” As she was transported to Clarksburg to be imprisoned, her guard claimed that “her language was such...as to almost disgust him with the sex.” The paper noted

---

<sup>224</sup> Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 47

<sup>225</sup> A Secession Amazon Again in Limbo-She Resists the Soldiers,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, June 2, 1862.

that while she was in prison, Mary Jane harassed passers-by, shouting her support for Jefferson Davis and the Confederacy. She was eventually taken to Wheeling, where she was “treated with the greatest kindness,” and “neatly clad” with clothing donated by “refined and intelligent” Secessionist ladies of that city. Finally, a promise was obtained from her “that she would try to do better” and Mary Jane was released.<sup>226</sup>

The stories of illegal mail smuggling by both Victoria Hansford and Mary Jane Green illustrate some of the ways in which West Virginia women challenged and utilized traditional gender roles during the Civil War. Victoria’s postscript to her narrative (“the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach”) indicated that she felt no remorse when she did not follow through on her promises, but was instead proud of herself for outsmarting the enemy. She was aware of the gender norms which painted women as domestic care-givers, and she was more than willing to use these assumptions to her advantage. She risked serious repercussions if caught participating in this activity as martial law had been declared in West Virginia, and civilians who acted against the Union army risked being charged with treason in a military court.<sup>227</sup> In the case of Mary Jane Green, her captors held fast to the belief that women were inherently submissive and naive, and that words of kindness, along with the proper feminine attire, would be enough to persuade the young woman to give up her support of the Confederacy. Her vulgar language was repeatedly decried because it conflicted with the purity and gentility with which men expected women to behave. Indeed, her guard was so offended as to be “disgust[ed]...with the sex.”<sup>228</sup> Her captors were determined to force Mary Jane to conform to their ideals of femininity and

---

<sup>226</sup> “Leib’s Book,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, June 12, 1862, accessed November 20, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1862-06-12/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>227</sup> Noe, “Exterminating Savages,” 119.

<sup>228</sup> “Leib’s Book,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, June 12, 1862.



womanhood, and she was able to use this to her benefit. She adapted her dress, language, and behavior to their expectations, and they believed her promise that she would “do better” in exchange for her freedom.<sup>229</sup>

Mary Jane’s promises were short-lived, however. Within months, she was again arrested and imprisoned at Wheeling. The *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* reported in June 1862 that she had returned to Braxton County and, having “fall[en] in with some Secessionist friends,” had destroyed telegraph wires erected by the Union army.<sup>230</sup> Described as a “malignant virago,” the paper noted that she managed to break away from a soldier during her arrest and “struck one of the guards in the breast with a brick.” According to the paper, Mary Jane acted so violently that she had to be restrained in order to be transported to the jail. Although only a teenager, she was referred to as “one of the most determined and violent rebs that has turned up in these parts since the breaking out of the rebellion.”<sup>231</sup> Five months later, in November 1862, Mary Jane’s name once again appeared in the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, when she was accused of “treasonable practices.” She and another woman from Braxton County, Kate Brown, were charged with “cutting the telegraph wires and carrying rebel letters.”<sup>232</sup> While the newspaper articles show that Mary Jane was frequently arrested for her actions in 1862, she was also released even though she was considered a violent and repeated offender. These accounts reveal that her gender affected how she was treated, and that assumptions about women and societal beliefs in

---

<sup>229</sup> “Leib’s Book,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, June 12, 1862.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> “A Secession Amazon Again in Limbo-She Resists the Soldiers,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, June 2, 1862. A “virago” is defined as a domineering, violent, or bad-tempered woman.

<sup>232</sup> “The County Jail- Its Prisoners,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, November 12, 1862, accessed November 20, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1862-11-12/ed-1/seq-3/>.

their inherently feminine characteristics of purity and submissiveness prevented her captors from viewing her as an enemy combatant.

The article which describes the November 1862 imprisonment of Mary Jane Green and Kate Brown mentions another woman, “Miss Peck,” from Marshall County who was accused of “uttering treasonable language and refus[ing] to take the oath of allegiance.”<sup>233</sup> Early in the war, both Union and Confederate prisoners of war were required to take oaths of allegiance when they were released or exchanged, but as the war continued, the Union army recognized the threat posed by enemy citizens, including women, and began requiring them to take the oath as well.<sup>234</sup> Public refusal to take the oath landed many Confederate-sympathizing West Virginia women in jail during the autumn of 1862. Especially for women, taking the oath constituted an act of submission, both to the Union and to their male superiors. Those who refused to do so, or who did so only under threat of fines, arrest, and imprisonment, were actively engaged in expanding the limits of what Victorian society deemed proper feminine behavior. Furthermore, as Union commanders began requiring women to take the oath, they were acknowledging women’s increasingly public role and threat in the war. As historian Stephanie McCurry notes, oath-taking represented a significant change in the government’s view of women in terms of their “political significance and standing in relation to the state.”<sup>235</sup> Thus refusal to take the oath

---

<sup>233</sup> “The County Jail- Its Prisoners,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, November 12, 1862.

<sup>234</sup> James R. Neal, “Surrendered: The Prisoner-of-War Condition in the American Civil War” (PhD diss., University of Nevada, Reno, 2015), 121-122, accessed January 29, 2021, ProQuest Dissertations & Thesis; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the War of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), ser. 2, vol. 3, p. 52. The oath of allegiance to the Union read: “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, protect and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States against all enemies, whether domestic or foreign, and that I will bear true faith, allegiance, and loyalty to the same, any ordinance, resolution, or law of any State, convention or legislature to the contrary notwithstanding; and further, that I do this with a full determination, pledge and purpose, without any mental reservation or evasion whatsoever: So help me God.”; McCurry, *Women’s War*, 30.

<sup>235</sup> McCurry, *Women’s War*, 30.

represented Confederate women's increasing assertion of their own independence, while the government's insistence that they do so recognized that such an independence existed.

Between August 12 and September 2, 1862, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* reported that at least seventeen women were detained in some manner for their Confederate-inspired sympathies or actions and made to take the oath of allegiance. The Provost Marshal for the state of Virginia, Major Joseph Darr, Jr., had declared his intention to administer the oath to any person suspected of Confederate sympathies, male or female, and especially those who had family members serving in the Confederate army. "Those who refuse," the notice claimed, "will be arrested."<sup>236</sup> While two of the women were detained with their husbands, and another with her father and brother, the remainder were either single or in the company of other women. Some were citizens of Wheeling, while others were extradited from neighboring counties or had traveled there and were forced to take the oath upon their arrival. On August 20, 1862 for instance, seven women who had taken the train from Parkersburg to the city were jailed when, immediately after arriving, they refused to take the oath. They eventually conceded and were released after paying an undisclosed bail.<sup>237</sup> Others, like Miss Peck, continued to refuse to take the oath, and so remained in jail.<sup>238</sup>

While women in and around Wheeling were frequently jailed for refusing to take the oath of allegiance, Henrietta Barr of Ravenswood experienced similar pressure, but with less drastic consequences. On September 13, 1862, during the same period women were being arrested in

---

<sup>236</sup> "Taking the Oath," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, August 29, 1862, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1862-08-29/ed-1/seq-3/>. A Provost Marshal's duties included policing rear areas in war and handling prisoners of war.

<sup>237</sup> "Lady Visitors From Parkersburg," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, August 20, 1862, accessed December 4, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1862-08-20/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>238</sup> "The County Jail- Its Prisoners," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, November 12, 1862.

Wheeling, Henrietta wrote that she, her sister, and their mother were visited by two local Union commanders who attempted to force them to take the oath. Captain Gilpin and an unnamed Lieutenant, described by Henrietta as “a most important cut-throat looking thing,” arrived at the Barr house that morning on the orders of their superior, Colonel Dan Frost, leader of the Union army in Ravenswood. When the women refused to comply, Henrietta complained, “We are threatened with the consequences, which are— that we shall be taken to Wheeling in the morning, receive horrid treatment, and then we ‘shall be glad to take the oath’.” Their threats did not have the desired effect, though, and the two men left to harass other Confederate-sympathizing women in the town. “At every house but one, where they made the attempt, they met with similar success,” Henrietta proudly declared. “Our women are made of the right stuff.” Over the next few days, the Barr family was forced to feed Union soldiers who were passing through town, but the threatened arrests never materialized.<sup>239</sup> While Wheeling remained a Union stronghold throughout the war and consequently would have been equipped with both the manpower and accommodations for the arrest of women who refused to take the oath, Henrietta’s experience reveals that in more contested or loosely-held areas, Confederate women could act with greater impunity in the face of local Union authority.

Both Union and Confederate sympathizing West Virginia women expanded their traditional gender roles during the Civil War through acts of resistance, such as Confederates who refused to take the oath, or those who verbally abused or actively misled soldiers who searched their houses and impressed their goods and livestock, but women also took on more direct roles within the military efforts through their interaction with guerrilla fighters. In the largely pro-Union state of West Virginia, guerrilla insurgents were most often Confederate

---

<sup>239</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 15.

sympathizers who fought using quick hit-and-run attacks which destroyed supplies or disrupted the movement of federal troops. Known as bushwhackers, Confederate guerrillas were a constant threat to the Union army because they frequently targeted railroad and telegraph lines in the state, making it harder for the Union to coordinate troops or share information.<sup>240</sup> Although Confederate-sympathizing bushwhackers were often not officially connected to the Confederate army, they received a certain amount of legitimacy through the Partisan Ranger Act of 1862, in which the Confederate government authorized the creation of independent guerrilla units.<sup>241</sup> The Union recognized the impact of bushwhackers on its ability to wage war, and in 1863, issued General Order No. 100, known as Lieber's Code, which rewrote the long-held military distinctions between combatants and non-combatants, soldiers and civilians. The Order called for a "hard war" to be waged not only against bushwhackers, but also against the citizens who sheltered, fed, and assisted them.<sup>242</sup>

The autonomous nature of Confederate bushwhackers in West Virginia meant that they relied heavily on material support and assistance from civilians in order to continue their campaigns. Historian Kenneth Noe found that the majority of West Virginia bushwhackers were not young, dispossessed outsiders, but instead were local men, often middle-aged land owners who were respected members of their communities.<sup>243</sup> Family members frequently fought together in bushwacker bands, and they often returned to their homes to seek refuge after their raids.<sup>244</sup> The bushwhackers easily hid in West Virginia's rugged mountain terrain, so federal

---

<sup>240</sup> Mountcastle, *Punitive War*, 104.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>242</sup> LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long, eds., *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation, and the American Civil War*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 7.

<sup>243</sup> Noe, "Who Were the Bushwhackers?" 6.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.

soldiers engaged in retaliatory practices against the neighborhoods and civilians they suspected of harboring the guerrillas. The commander of the Mountain Department, General John C. Frèmont, encouraged his federal troops to “fight them in their own style,” and engage in fast, aggressive attacks which included reprisals against civilians who assisted them.<sup>245</sup> Because many West Virginia men joined the war effort by enlisting in official regiments, the assistance Frèmont referred to frequently came from women. Both Union and Confederate women from West Virginia wrote of their interactions with bushwhackers. Union women kept themselves informed about local bushwacker raids, and often noted both their fear and defiance of the bushwhackers who came through their towns and into their houses. Conversely, Confederate women boasted of the encouragement they gave bushwhackers and described the material assistance they offered. Stories of West Virginia women who supported bushwhackers also appeared in local newspapers. While some bushwhackers were officially mustered soldiers in the Confederate army and others were members of loosely affiliated, roughly organized bands of local Confederate-sympathizing citizens, Union and Confederate West Virginia women did not typically differentiate between the two groups and treated them with the same contempt or veneration as they would the Confederate army.

In Buckhannon, Unionist Marcia Phillips regularly wrote about bushwhackers who operated in the northern part of the state. Her worry was twofold: as a citizen, she feared bushwacker raids in town, but she was also concerned for her husband Sylvester, a Union Captain and frequent target for capture by the bushwhackers.<sup>246</sup> In May 1862, Marcia noticed

---

<sup>245</sup> Noe, “Exterminating Savages,” 104-105. The Mountain Department, created on March 11, 1862, comprised the land between of the Department of the Potomac (to the east) and the Department of the Mississippi (to the west). “President’s General War Order, No. 3,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, March 13, 1862, accessed January 30, 2021, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1862-03-13/ed-1/seq-3/>.

<sup>246</sup> Sylvester Phillips served as captain of Company E, Third Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiment.

that the bushwhackers “seem to be uncommon[ly] active lately,” and that merchants from nearby towns were moving their goods to Buckhannon for safety. She recorded the experience of Mr. William Hyre, who lived with his family outside of town and had recently been the victim of a bushwhacker raid. The bushwhackers “robbed him of everything they [the family] possessed,” she bemoaned, “not even sparing the great hoopskirts, rings and breast pins, and even their stockings and garters. They also took several fine horses.” As the bushwhackers ransacked the house, however, they were challenged; not by Mr. Hyre but, as Marcia recorded, by his daughter, Minerva. Marcia described her as “a girl of excellent mind and great courage” who remained “unflinching...when the Guerillas [sic] held a loaded gun at her bosom and commanded her to give up her money if she had any.” “She had some on her person,” Marcia boasted, “but utterly refused to give it up, and defied him.” The gang of bushwhackers, led by “Old Wat Cool, the king of Webster [County] Bushwhackers,” was captured within a few days following the raid on Mr. Hyre’s farm.<sup>247</sup> Minerva provided key testimony against Cool, who was tried by a military commission in nearby Clarksburg. After the trial, Cool and other “notorious bushwhackers” captured with him were jailed in Wheeling while they awaited sentencing.<sup>248</sup> Minerva’s gender likely protected her from assault by the bushwhackers when they invaded her home, but her defiance and willingness to testify in court reveal the ways in which the war forced West Virginia women to expand beyond their traditional domestic spheres and take on more active roles in defense of their communities, homes, and families. Her father could do nothing during the bushwhacker raid, yet Minerva, a young woman, was able to act in ways her father could not,

---

<sup>247</sup> Phillips, “Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War,” May 17, 1982, May 24, 1862; Daniel E. Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 97.

<sup>248</sup> “In Town,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, August 5, 1862, accessed December 4, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1862-08-05/ed-1/seq-3/>.

and protect at least some of the family's assets. Her testimony in Cool's military trial demonstrates another way in which women could publicly participate in the war and influence its outcome.

Cool was only one of many bushwhackers operating in the northern part of the state. The "notorious Secessionist" and "vile wretch" Ben Haymond from Braxton County frequently appeared in Marcia's war-time diary. She claimed that Haymond had threatened to kill her husband Sylvester following an exchange between the two men which took place in the early months of the war. Haymond had agreed to turn himself in if Sylvester would guarantee that he would not be sent to Camp Chase, the Federal prison located near Columbus, Ohio. Sylvester refused his offer, unable to make the assurance because, as Marcia noted, Haymond "had once taken the oath [of allegiance], and had since been guilty of murdering U.S. soldiers." Marcia wrote that Haymond and his gang had "been dodging about, doing all manner of mischief, stealing horses, & [sic], and have so far eluded our scouts in their endeavor to catch him."<sup>249</sup> In March 1862, Virginia's governor John Letcher recruited Haymond and his followers to join the Virginia State Rangers, a collection of companies organized to regulate the bands of bushwhackers and use them to the Confederate army's advantage.<sup>250</sup> Just three months later, however, Marcia recorded that Haymond, along with fellow bushwhackers Perry Hays and George Silcott, had been captured and taken to Camp Chase. "I regret that our men did not shoot them," she lamented, "...and not give themselves the trouble of bringing them into camp."<sup>251</sup> Marcia's focus on the exploits of the bushwhackers was common among West Virginia women

---

<sup>249</sup> Phillips, "Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War," October 20, 1861.

<sup>250</sup> Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 91.

<sup>251</sup> Phillips, "Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War," June 7, 1862.



who, due to the highly contested nature of the state, experienced occupation by both the Union and Confederate armies and threats from bushwhackers, any of whom might requisition essential supplies or attack enemy citizens.

In the Kanawha Valley, Sarah Frances Young feared for her father's life, as he, like Sylvester Phillips, served as a Captain in the Union army and was a target for capture by the bushwhackers.<sup>252</sup> When Union troops arrived in the area in July 1861, Sarah noted, "The secessionists are running with their guns to bushwhack them. They are mad because my father doesn't raise arms against our Government."<sup>253</sup> Her father, John Valley Young, was a well-known Union supporter, and Sarah described repeated incidents of bushwhackers arriving at her house to search for him. In October 1861, she recorded that a "notorious" guerrilla fighter named Herndon had sent two men in search of Captain Young, and the leader of the men who searched her house in September 1862, James Nounnan, was a raider with the 16<sup>th</sup> Virginia Calvary.<sup>254</sup> Sarah used the terms "guerrilla" and "Rebel" interchangeably when speaking of Confederate troops and bushwhackers, indicating that both groups represented the same threat to her and her family.<sup>255</sup>

In nearby Coalsmouth, Confederate supporter Victoria Hansford also wrote of James Nounnan, as well as other bushwhackers who were active in the area. "[They] often made their appearances in the most unexpected places," she recalled, "remaining only an hour or two at any one place." Victoria and the other Confederate women in Coalsmouth made every effort to

---

<sup>252</sup> Sarah's father, John Valley Young, was captain of Company G, 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment, (W.) Cook, "The Civil War Comes to Charleston," 153-167.

<sup>253</sup> Young, "Diary of Sarah Frances Young," July 13, 1861.

<sup>254</sup> Young, "Diary of Sarah Frances Young," October 6, 1861, September 12, 1862; Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 40.

<sup>255</sup> Young, "Diary of Sarah Frances Young," October 5-6, 1861. On October 5, Sarah refers to a "party of Guerilla," and the next day, calls the men "the Rebels."

supply the bushwhackers with clothing and much-needed bags of salt, essential for preserving meat. “We did all we possibly could for them,” she claimed, “and we all hoped on and they fought on.”<sup>256</sup> Victoria wrote of one specific incident which occurred in the spring of 1862. She and “several girls” were staying together overnight and heard a boat slowly traveling up the Coal River, just outside of the house. “We found out the next morning that James Nounnan and ‘Peter Slick,’ with portions of their companies, had assembled at Mrs. Lasley’s and she had given as many as she could a hot supper,” Victoria remembered. “They...cross[ed] the river as Wise had burned the bridge after the Battle of Scary [sic]. They were on a raid into Yankee lines and daylight found them far away and we did not get to see them.”<sup>257</sup> She seemed to regret that she had been able to do nothing for them herself. Victoria held the same respect for the bushwhackers as she did Confederate soldiers, feeling that both groups of men deserved what help and support she could offer.

While Victoria offered aid to Confederate guerrillas through supplies of food and clothing, a West Virginia woman named Mary Briggs went one step further when, in April 1864, she attempted to help bushwhacker George Dusky break out of the Wheeling jail.<sup>258</sup> George was the son of Daniel Dusky, a justice of the peace and well-known leader of a band of bushwhackers. George had also led his own company, which had been recruited by the Virginia

---

<sup>256</sup> Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 40.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 40. Captain Peter M. Carpenter, or “Peter Slick,” lived in Coalsmouth and commanded a company of local men who fought in southern West Virginia. The company were eventually incorporated into the official Confederate army under Swann’s Battalion Virginia Cavalry in 1864.

<sup>258</sup> “A Romantic Adventure With a Dismal Ending- A Young Widow Woman Attempts to Give Aid and Comfort to the Enemy and Breaks Her Leg in the Act,” *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, April 15, 1864, accessed December 4, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026845/1864-04-15/ed-1/seq-3/>; “Daring Attempt to Rescue a Guerrilla,” *Wheeling Daily Register*, April 15, 1864, accessed December 4, 2019, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn86092517/1864-04-15/ed-1/seq-3/>. The *Daily Register* incorrectly reported that it was Dan Dusky, rather than George, who Mary attempted to help escape. The father and son both led bands of bushwhackers in the area, and both were jailed for their actions.

State Rangers in 1862.<sup>259</sup> Local newspapers reported that while he was jailed in Wheeling, George had become acquainted with Mary, who would often bring him small gifts. While this had originally been allowed by the jailer, at some point Mary had attempted to pass George contraband materials, and she was barred from any further visits. Far from defeated, Mary continued in her efforts to help the bushwhacker, and on the night of April 13, 1864, she used a ladder to scale the south wall of the jail. She then attached a small package to the end of a long pole, and was attempting to push the package through the window of George's cell when the jailer heard a noise and discovered Mary atop the wall. Rather than climb back down the ladder and try to escape, Mary jumped from the fifteen-foot wall onto the jailer's back, breaking her leg in the process. Mary fought violently with the jailer and tried to prevent him from taking the package that she had brought for George. During the struggle, a bottle from the package broke, splashing Mary and the jailer with nitric acid and burning them both. When Mary was finally subdued, the jailer found that along with the acid, the package contained chloroform and a chisel; presumably tools for George to use in his escape. It also contained love letters from Mary to George, one of which was printed in full by the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*. In it, she professed her devotion to George, writing, "Darling, I assure you I will accede to your demands, no matter what," and claiming that she would rather die than find his affection unreturned.<sup>260</sup> The escape thwarted, Mary was jailed and her bond set at two thousand dollars.<sup>261</sup>

---

<sup>259</sup> Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 31, 91.

<sup>260</sup> "A Romantic Adventure With a Dismal Ending- A Young Widow Woman Attempts to Give Aid and Comfort to the Enemy and Breaks Her Leg in the Act," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, April 15, 1864.

<sup>261</sup> "A Romantic Adventure With a Dismal Ending- A Young Widow Woman Attempts to Give Aid and Comfort to the Enemy and Breaks Her Leg in the Act," *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, April 15, 1864; "Daring Attempt to Rescue a Guerrilla," *Wheeling Daily Register*, April 15, 1864.

Mary Briggs was not the only West Virginia woman who took extreme risks to support bushwhackers and the Confederacy. Sixteen-year-old Nancy Hart was a well-known spy and acted as a guide to Perry Conley and his Moccasin Rangers, who targeted Union railroads and supply lines, as well as Union-sympathizing citizens, in the counties just north of Charleston.<sup>262</sup> According to Marion Kerner, a telegrapher attached to the 9<sup>th</sup> West Virginia Infantry under Lieutenant-Colonel William Starr, Nancy was captured in July 1862. Kerner, Starr, and a few of Starr's men had been scouting near Summersville for supplies when Starr recognized Nancy from the description given on a government reward sheet. Nancy and another young woman were taken into custody and held in the "dilapidated" Summersville jail. Recording Nancy's story in 1910 for *Leslie's Weekly*, Kerner wrote, "...here were two young women, untutored and uncultured, it is true, but still they were women, and their condition in this miserable old building excited my sympathy." Even though the two were Confederates, the fact that they were women entitled them to a higher quality of treatment. Kerner convinced Starr to house the women in the attic of Starr's headquarters, a two-story house which had been abandoned by its Confederate owners when the Union army occupied the area. Starr reluctantly agreed, and Kerner stated that he supplied the women with various niceties, such as sewing materials, "dainties" from the supply wagon, and newspapers, which he noted they were unable to read, although they "eagerly studied the pictures."<sup>263</sup>

---

<sup>262</sup> Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 31, 89. The Moccasin Rangers were originally formed as a Confederate Home Guard Unit, but the group split when some members began brutally targeting Union-sympathizing citizens as well as the Union army. Half of the group continued to follow Daniel Dusky, father of the above-mentioned George Dusky, while the other more violent group followed Perry Conley. While Dusky was eventually captured and served a lengthy jail sentence, Conley was beaten to death by soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> [West] Virginia Infantry.

<sup>263</sup> Jim Comstock, "The Lady Guerrilla and the Telegrapher" *The West Virginia Hillbilly* 23, no. 50 (December 1982). This article contains a reprint of Marion H. Kerner's article which Comstock notes appeared in *Leslie's Weekly* on May 26, 1910.

The women were kept under constant watch, and Kerner wrote that although the guards were not allowed to enter the attic, the door was kept open and “no restriction was placed upon conversation with the girls.” Nancy charmed the guards with tales of her hunting prowess and persuaded one of them to allow her to hold his musket, as Kerner claimed, “in order to convince him that she could shoulder it as well as she had ever shouldered her rifle.” With the musket in hand, Nancy immediately fired upon the soldier. “Her guard fell dead at his post,” wrote Kerner, “and Nancy, jumping over his body, rushed downstairs and out to the barn, where she mounted Colonel Starr’s horse, and, without saddle or bridle, fled away before the sleeping officials could possibly realize what had happened.” Nancy was not content with merely escaping her captors, however. Kerner reported that she returned to the house where she had been imprisoned one week later, but this time, she rode at the head of a five-hundred-man Confederate battalion that proceeded to capture the entire Union force stationed at Summersville.<sup>264</sup>

Despite recognition by the Union government of the vital support which Confederate-sympathizing women offered bushwhackers, the stories of Nancy Hart and Mary Briggs illustrate the reluctance of Union soldiers to necessarily view such women as threats. The soldier allowed Nancy to hold his musket, no doubt believing she was ignorant of how to use it. This was despite Nancy being arrested as a bushwhacker spy and the fact that she had told the man she frequently hunted game on her family’s land. Mary had often been allowed to bring small offerings to George Dusky while he was in jail, showing that the guards did not perceive her as a danger. Although Nancy’s escape was successful while Mary’s was not, both cases serve as examples of the ways in which women’s abilities were often misjudged because of societal expectations concerning their gender.

---

<sup>264</sup> Comstock, “The Lady Guerrilla and the Telegrapher.”

While the outcomes they sought may have differed, West Virginia women who supported either the Union or the Confederacy had much in common. Their experiences during the Civil War show that they did not shy away from engaging, often in dramatic and dangerous ways, with the soldiers and bushwhackers who occupied their state. They did not sit idly by and wait for the war to end; instead, both groups of women offered vital moral and material support to the armies with which they sided. When their livestock and goods were impressed and their houses searched, they frequently defied those who would take their property. Confederate-sympathizing women refused to submit to Union officers who insisted they take the oath of allegiance, risking fines, detainment, and jail for failing to comply. Union sympathizers confronted bushwhackers who threatened their families and assisted the federal army by searching suspected Confederate women for contraband. If defiance was not possible, West Virginia women on both sides often resorted to the “armor of gender,” purposefully cloaking themselves in the protection afforded to women by Victorian society. They used traditional assumptions about their gender to their advantage, either to engage in illegal activity or to keep themselves from harm. Although they may have found themselves on opposite sides of the conflict, West Virginia women actively fought the war in their own way, through their acts of resistance and support.

## **CONCLUSION: “I HAVE LIVED IN STIRRING TIMES”**

As the Civil War came to a close in the spring of 1865 and West Virginians began the arduous work of piecing their lives, families, and communities back together, the status of women within the new state had yet to be decided. The societal chaos which had accompanied the war in West Virginia had presented women with increased opportunities for political participation through their advocacy for the statehood movement and their support for both the Union and Confederacy. As their men were increasingly absent, women had also taken over family financial decisions and expanded their roles within the economic spheres of their communities. The necessities of war transformed women’s traditional domestic work into integral military support, and they had mobilized their female-based kinship networks into ladies’ aid societies which provided both armies with vital supplies. West Virginia women had relied upon but also subverted conventional gender norms in order to act with increased agency as they resisted enemy forces and aided their chosen sides. With the Civil War over, West Virginia women frequently found themselves relegated back into the domestic sphere, but they also found ways to continue living in the more independent roles which they had developed for themselves.

Perhaps unsurprisingly in a state almost equally divided between Union and Confederate support during the conflict, West Virginia women’s experience in the years immediately following the Civil War was characterized by both progress and regression regarding their rights and status within the state. While they did not entirely abandon the freedom and independence they had found during the war, their postbellum roles within society often remained restricted. Some West Virginia women were pulled back into the traditional domestic sphere, but others discovered ways to retain the elevated level of social engagement which they had acquired

during the conflict. As women worked to navigate their standing within the post-war state, West Virginia lawmakers, influenced by legal codes from both northern and southern states, made efforts to enshrine women's rights into West Virginia's constitution through expanded property and divorce laws. Although these laws represented some advancements for women, they did not offer full equality with men.<sup>265</sup> Ultimately, West Virginia women who lived during the post-Civil War period, like those who had survived the conflict, were frequently restrained by social norms and accepted codes of behavior, but they nevertheless found ways to become active participants within their communities and state.

During the years immediately following the Civil War, West Virginia lawmakers working to write the new state's Legal Code addressed issues which specifically concerned women, including property and divorce laws. As a border state with connections to both the North and South, the state's laws often contained a combination of traditional and progressive views towards women's rights. Looking to New York rather than Virginia for inspiration, property laws passed in West Virginia in 1870 granted married women control of their personal property, rights to the profits from such properties, and prevented husbands from using wives' properties for the payment of debts. These new property laws did not, however, allow women to sell their own property without their husband's permission.<sup>266</sup> Still, as historian Allison Fredette argues, these new laws acknowledged women's existence within the legal system and

---

<sup>265</sup> Allison Fredette, "The View from the Border: West Virginia Republicans and Women's Rights in the Age of Emancipation" in *West Virginia History: An Open Access Reader*, 24-25.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.



represented a transformation for women from the status of *feme covert* to a more independent existence under the law.<sup>267</sup>

While West Virginia's divorce laws were largely based upon pre-existing Virginia statutes, lawmakers made changes which reflected an increased acceptance of women's rights. In 1867, West Virginia legislators expanded the divorce law to include new reasons for divorce, such as a husband's "licentious" behavior, and revoked the Virginia statute which allowed the court to prevent adulterous individuals from remarrying.<sup>268</sup> West Virginia's post-war property and divorce laws are representative not only of lawmakers' attempts to distinguish the new state from Virginia, but also reflective of the growing acceptance of Northern progressive views regarding gender roles.<sup>269</sup> Despite these advancements however, West Virginia lawmakers were reluctant to place women on entirely equal standing with men when it came to legal issues, and many lawmakers maintained conservative beliefs which largely relegated women to the domestic sphere.<sup>270</sup>

The combination of progressive and conservative beliefs regarding women's gender roles can not only be seen in the laws passed by West Virginia legislators following the Civil War, but also through the post-war experiences of the state's women. While most West Virginia women left few, if any, records of their lives after the war, the writings of those whose post-war activities can be traced often demonstrate their efforts to strike a balance between the domestic and public spheres. West Virginia women who participated in the Civil War and went on to

---

<sup>267</sup> Fredette, "A View from the Border," 10, 14. The term *feme covert*, based on English common law, refers to the legal doctrine in which a married woman's identity was subsumed by that of her husband upon marriage, and, with few exceptions, gave him legal rights to her property, profits, and wages.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-16.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.

marry and raise families often expressed frustration with the limitations of their gender and traditional roles. At least one of the women, Victoria Hansford, directed her efforts towards activism, joining women's groups such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Women's Christian Temperance Union.<sup>271</sup> Groups like these offered women the opportunity for public participation within their communities and, while they often focused on socially acceptable female domestic concerns, they also encouraged the continued expansion of women's gender roles and rights.<sup>272</sup>

Although she left immensely detailed records of her life in Buckhannon during the war, little is known of Marcia Phillips' life after her last diary entry on June 12, 1863. Records from the French Creek Presbyterian Church, where she and her family were members, show that Marcia died shortly after the war on March 25, 1871.<sup>273</sup> Henrietta Barr's war-time diary also ends mid-war, on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1863. Family records show that shortly after her last entry, she moved from Ravenswood to Charleston, West Virginia, to be closer to her sister, Sarah, and Sarah's husband, Dr. John Thomas Cotton, as well as other southern-sympathizing friends. Henrietta wrote to a friend that she had no regrets in giving up her family home, stating "It was more trouble than profit."<sup>274</sup> The war had been hard on Henrietta, as the family's slaves had fled via the Underground Railroad across the nearby Ohio River, and Henrietta and her sister, Anne, had to take on the bulk of the household domestic work. During the war, Henrietta and Anne had taken in sewing in order to support themselves, but when they learned that their brother

---

<sup>271</sup> Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 68.

<sup>272</sup> Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 253.

<sup>273</sup> Lois M. Pinnell, *French Creek Presbyterian Church: A Memorial to the 150 Years of Service of the French Creek Presbyterian Church* (Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Company, 1971), 98. This information comes from the Member list of the church. Marcia is identified as both "Martha Phillips" (p.98) and "Marcia Sumner" (p.97), but both names are used in relation to her husband, Sylvester Phillips, and so the usage of "Martha" can be assumed to be a mistake.

<sup>274</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 28.

Henry had died and left them an inheritance, they immediately laid down the work, proclaiming “We will never take another stitch.”<sup>275</sup> While Henrietta’s former reliance on the family slaves no doubt influenced her dislike and low-opinion of domestic work, it is also probable that the independent spirit which she developed during the war remained with her, and her desire to live in a more self-determined manner was a result of her war-time experiences. Henrietta Barr died on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 1893, and was buried in the Ravenswood City Cemetery.

Sirene Bunten turned eighteen years old just as the war ended, and within a year, she found herself in the “housekeeping business.”<sup>276</sup> She had been recruited by her family to help wash, cook, and clean for her brother Watson and other workmen as they re-built the French Creek Presbyterian Church, which had been burned to the ground during the war.<sup>277</sup> While she wrote that she found the work “tolerable” at first, her outlook quickly soured as she realized the extent of labor involved.<sup>278</sup> “It is Breakfast, wash dishes, milk, make beds, dinner, wash dishes, sweep house, get supper, wash dishes, milk, go to bed & sleep,” she wrote. “I do not think I shall ever envy anyone the position.”<sup>279</sup> During the war years, Sirene had found personal freedom and excitement. She had spent her days scouring local papers for news and reading novels, and she aspired to become a schoolteacher once the war was over.<sup>280</sup> Her post-war life offered her none of the exhilaration or independence which the war had brought. She found domestic work dull, and lamented, “one has no time to read or think above household matters. A schoolroom suits me better than this work.”<sup>281</sup> Age and experience appear to have settled Sirene,

---

<sup>275</sup> Barr, *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr*, 28.

<sup>276</sup> Cresswell, “A Civil War Diary from French Creek,” April 11, 1865, May 7, 1866.

<sup>277</sup> Cresswell, “A Civil War Diary from French Creek,” May 7, 1866; Pinnell, *French Creek Presbyterian Church*, 170.

<sup>278</sup> Cresswell, “A Civil War Diary from French Creek,” May 7, 1866.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, May 16, 1866.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, February 16, 1863.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, May 23, 1866.

however. Despite her assertion that she had “no particular desire to get married if my work here is a specimen of what I would have to do after the ceremony,” she eventually wed an old schoolmate, J. S. Reger, and the couple had three boys together.<sup>282</sup> In her final diary entry, Sirene marveled at how much the world had changed around her, and hoped that the twentieth century would bring “improvements yet greater, more wonderful than any we know.”<sup>283</sup> Reflecting on the years which had passed since she began her diary, she concluded, “I will not live as long in this new century, yet I have lived in stirring times and times that have made much history.”<sup>284</sup> Sirene died in Buckhannon, West Virginia, on May 30, 1912.<sup>285</sup>

The most extensive post-war records left by a woman in West Virginia come from Victoria Hansford, the young, steadfast Confederate who had smuggled mail and confronted Union soldiers during the war. In the years immediately following the Civil War, Victoria remained at home in Coalsmouth managing the house for her father and brothers. Her increased involvement in her community during the war continued to influence her actions afterwards, and although Victoria eventually married an ex-Confederate Lieutenant, Thomas Teays, and had two children, she found ways to remain publicly engaged.<sup>286</sup> A founding member of the Coalsmouth Baptist Church in 1860, Victoria continued her membership in the church through its post-war reorganization in 1866 and beyond. Writing of her forty-year history with the church, Victoria noted her pride in seeing the congregation grow from five founding members, including herself

---

<sup>282</sup> Cresswell, “A Civil War Diary from French Creek,” May 16, 1866, April 5, 1901.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., April 5, 1901.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid.

<sup>285</sup> W. B. Cutright, “The History of Upshur County West Virginia From its Earliest Exploration and Settlement to the Present Time,” U.S. Data Repository, West Virginia, last modified January 29, 2014, accessed February 12, 2021, [http://www.us-data.org/wv/upshur/bios/reger\\_joseph-s\\_1847-1914.txt](http://www.us-data.org/wv/upshur/bios/reger_joseph-s_1847-1914.txt).

<sup>286</sup> Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 68.

and her father and uncle, to over three hundred.<sup>287</sup> She also joined the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), both organizations which became increasingly popular after the Civil War.<sup>288</sup> The UDC attempted to restore the honor of Confederate veterans through Lost Cause ideology, and as her brothers and husband had served in the war, Victoria would have found their message especially poignant.<sup>289</sup>

Victoria's membership in the WCTU also stemmed from personal experience as well as a desire to help her community. Her brother Carrol, who had spent time in a Union prisoner-of-war camp, had become an alcoholic when he returned home, and there are indications that her husband may also have been an "imbiber of strong drink."<sup>290</sup> Victoria took an active role in the WCTU in the 1890s, serving as president of the St. Albans chapter as well as the state "Superintendent of Press Works."<sup>291</sup> She published a variety of articles concerning temperance and the WCTU, both under her own name and anonymously. Her war-time experiences led her to understand the influential power of women, and she called upon her fellow WCTU members to act accordingly. "Men may plan," she wrote, "but their plans must come to naught unless they have the cooperation of women."<sup>292</sup> She believed that women had not yet achieved their rightful place in life, as their influence did not wield "executive power." "It is not enough that they should be what their mothers were," she stated. "They must be more."<sup>293</sup> Her calls for women's

---

<sup>287</sup> W. S. Laidley, *History of Charleston and Kanawha County West Virginia and Representative Citizens*. (Chicago: Richmond-Arnold Publishing Co., 1993), 255-256.

<sup>288</sup> Hansford and Hansford, *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*, 68.

<sup>289</sup> The Lost Cause ideology claims that Confederates fought valiantly against impossible odds, and discourages the idea that the Civil War was about slavery. Instead, believers argue that "states' rights" and the Confederate defense of the Constitution were the causes of war. Gallagher and Waugh, *The American War*, 237.

<sup>290</sup> Hester M. Graham, "The Prose and Poetry of a Southern Woman: Victoria F. C. Hansford Teass 1837-1903" (master's thesis, University of Texas, 1994), 64.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 7, 67. The town of Coalsmouth was renamed St. Albans in 1871.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

empowerment echoed those of other WCTU members, including President Frances Willard, who called for women's suffrage and joined organizations such as the American Woman Suffrage Association.<sup>294</sup> Although it is unknown whether Victoria herself was a member of the AWSA, her writing reveals that she envisioned a larger role within society for women and spent many years after the war working towards that goal. Following a short illness from the flu, Victoria died on September 6, 1903 and was buried with her husband, who had passed two years earlier, in Teays Hill Cemetery.<sup>295</sup>

The post-war experiences of West Virginia women demonstrate a combination of continued political activism and an acceptance, albeit sometimes reluctantly, of their traditional domestic roles. Their blend of progressive and conservative behavior mirrors many of their war-time experiences and shows that, even after the war, West Virginia women remained adaptable in their personal and public lives. They frequently complied with societal expectations, but also pushed the boundaries of conventional gender norms and behaviors in order to advocate for the causes in which they believed. While many West Virginia women married and raised families after the war, they did not entirely abandon their independent nature or their desire to participate more fully in their communities. The frustrations expressed by women like Sirene Bunten and Henrietta Barr reveal that their war-time experiences remained with them even after the conflict ended, and that they longed for a more fulfilling existence than was provided by their traditional domestic roles. Participation in women's associations such as the UDC and WCTU offered those like Victoria Hansford and many others the opportunity to remain socially and politically

---

<sup>294</sup> Wagner, *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, 315.

<sup>295</sup> Graham, "The Prose and Poetry of a Southern Woman," 8; Robert Fitch, contributor, "Victoria C Hansford Teays," Find A Grave, last modified on July 2, 2010. Accessed February 12, 2021, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/54413539/victoria-c-teays#view-photo=30247664>.

active. As they adjusted to their post-war lives, West Virginia women continued to determine their own futures and establish their place within society.

In the years leading up to the Civil War, West Virginia women struck a balance between conforming to the virtues of “True Womanhood” and espousing the beliefs of the emerging women’s rights movement. As the West Virginia statehood movement and arguments surrounding secession took shape, the state’s women became politically engaged and their support became vital to the success or failure of both movements. During the war, West Virginia women further espoused their political beliefs regarding the Union and Confederacy, and they transformed women’s traditional domestic work into essential political and material support through the use of kinship networks and ladies’ aid societies. Women also participated in the economic lives of their communities through their engagement in both legal and illegal business practices.

As the opposing armies occupied their state, West Virginia women relied upon assumptions about their feminine nature and acted outside of conventional gender norms to both support and resist invading forces. Confederate women defied Union authority and risked imprisonment for refusing to take oaths of allegiance and aiding the bands of guerrillas which roamed West Virginia’s mountains. Unionist women offered their assistance to the federal army by volunteering to search suspected Confederate women for contraband, and they actively opposed the Confederate bushwhackers who terrorized their communities. While both Confederate and Union West Virginia women took advantage of men’s conventional gender expectations to escape difficult situations, they also played upon assumptions about their gender to engage in activities like mail smuggling and intelligence gathering. Regardless of their partisan loyalties, both Unionist and Confederate West Virginia women shared similar

experiences of hardship throughout the Civil War and learned to adapt their behavior and actions as their situations required in order to survive.

The study of West Virginia women's experiences during the Civil War is not only essential to understanding the effects of the war on Appalachian women but is of vital importance in comprehending the impact of Appalachian women on the outcome of the Civil War. West Virginia women's contributions and involvement in the conflict cannot be relegated to a footnote in larger political or military studies of Civil War history because they were not merely a marginalized group of people victimized by the war and its combatants. The material support they offered compensated for government deficiencies, and their moral encouragement was essential in persuading soldiers to enlist for the fight. They engaged in activities and exploits which succeeded where men could not, and they undermined traditional gender roles and assumptions to accomplish their goals. The examination of their lives and experiences during the Civil War reveals that West Virginia women were dynamic participants whose opinions were influential and whose actions determined the ability of both the Union and Confederate armies to wage war in Appalachia. By placing West Virginia women in their proper context as independent actors with agency and courage, historians can gain a more complete understanding of the roles played by Appalachian women in the greatest conflict in American history.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

#### Manuscripts

Marshall University Archives and Special Collections  
Smith Family Letters  
Miller-Thackston Family Papers

West Virginia and Regional History Center  
Marcia Louise Sumner Phillips, *Journal of an Upshur County Resident Regarding the Civil War*  
Roy Bird Cook Collection, Young Family Civil War Papers  
Francis Harrison Pierpont (1814-1899) Papers

West Virginia State Archives  
William D. Wintz Collection

#### Newspapers

*Cooper's Clarksburg Register*

*The Greenbrier Era* (Lewisburg, WV)

*Point Pleasant Weekly Register*

*Shepherdstown Register*

*Spirit of Jefferson* (Charles Town, WV)

*Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*

*Wheeling Daily Register*

#### Published Primary Sources

Barr, Henrietta. *The Civil War Diary of Mrs. Henrietta Fitzhugh Barr (Barre) 1862-1863*. Edited by Sallie Kiger Winn. Marietta: Marietta College, 1963.

Brockett, L.P., and Mary C. Vaughan. *Woman's Work in the Civil War: A Record of Heroism, Patriotism, and Patience*. Philadelphia: Zeigler, McCurdy & Co., 1867.

Cresswell, Stephen. "A Civil War Diary From French Creek: Selections from the Diary of Sirene Buntin." *West Virginia History* 48, (1989): 131-141, accessed October, 2018, [http://www.wvculture.org/history/journal\\_wvh/wvh48-1.html](http://www.wvculture.org/history/journal_wvh/wvh48-1.html).

*Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine*, 1862.

Hansford, Mollie, and Victoria Hansford. *Civil War Memoirs of Two Rebel Sisters*. Edited by William D. Wintz. Charleston: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1989.

Ruffner, Henry. *Address to the People of West Virginia*. Lexington, VA: Printed by R. C. Noel, 1847.

United States War Department. *War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.

## **Secondary Sources**

### Articles

Ambler, Charles H. "The Cleavage between Eastern and Western Virginia." *American Historical Review* 15, no. 4 (July 1910): 762-780.

Brewer, W. M. "Lincoln and the Border States." *Journal of Negro History* 34, no. 1 (January 1949): 46-72.

Brown, Alexis Girardin. "The Women Left Behind: Transformation of the Southern Belle, 1840-1880." *Historian* 62, no. 4 (Summer 2000): 759-779.

Butler, Judith. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1988): 519-531.

Cashin, Joan E. "American Women and the American Civil War." *Journal of Military History* 81, no. 1 (January 2017): 199-204.

Cook, Roy Bird. "The Civil War Comes to Charleston." *West Virginia History Journal* 23, no. 2 (January 1962): 153-167.

Cutright, W. B. "The History of Upshur County West Virginia From its Earliest Exploration and Settlement to the Present Time." U.S. Data Repository West Virginia. Last modified January 29, 2014. Accessed February 12, 2021. [http://www.us-data.org/wv/upshur/bios/reger\\_joseph-s\\_1847-1914.txt](http://www.us-data.org/wv/upshur/bios/reger_joseph-s_1847-1914.txt).

Durrill, Wayne K. "Ritual, Community and War: Local Flag Presentation Ceremonies and Disunity in the Early Confederacy." *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 4 (Summer 2006): 1105-1122.

Faust, Drew Gilpin. "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War." *Journal of American History* 76, no. 4 (March 1990): 1200-1228.

Fisher, Noel C. "Feelin' Mighty Southern: Recent Scholarship on Southern Appalachia in the Civil War." *Civil War History* 47, no. 4 (December 2001): 334-346.

- Fones-Wolf, Ken. "Caught Between Revolutions: Wheeling Germans in the Civil War Era." In *West Virginia History: An Open Access Reader*.
- Foote, Lorien. "Rethinking the Confederate Homefront." *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 3 (September 2017): 446-465.
- Grinspan, Jon. "'Young Men for War': The Wide Awakes and Lincoln's 1860 Presidential Campaign." *The Journal of American History* 96, no. 2 (September 2009): 357-378.
- Hogeland, Ronald W. "'The Female Appendage': Feminine Life-Styles in America, 1820-1860." *Civil War History* 17, no. 2 (June 1971): 101-114.
- Hulver, Richard A. "McNeill's Rangers in the Public Memory of Hardy County, West Virginia." *West Virginia History* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 21-38.
- Lady, Claudia Lynn. "Five Tri-State Women During the Civil War: Views on the War." *West Virginia History Journal* 43, no. 3 (Spring 1982): 189-226.
- Link, William A. "'This Bastard New Virginia': Slavery, West Virginia Exceptionalism, and the Secession Crisis." In *West Virginia History: An Open Access Reader*.
- MacKenzie, Scott A. "The Slaveholders' War: The Secession Crisis in Kanawha County, West Virginia, 1860-1861." In *West Virginia History: An Open Access Reader*.
- Noe, Kenneth W. "Who Were the Bushwhackers? Age, Class, Kin, and Western Virginia's Confederate Guerrillas, 1861-1862." *Civil War History* 49, no. 1 (March 2003): 5-31.
- Phillips, Gervase. "Warhorses of the U.S. Civil War." *History Today* 55, no. 12 (December 2005): 10-17.
- Stutler, Boyd B. "The Confederate Postal Service in West Virginia." *West Virginia History Journal* 24, no. 1 (October 1962): 32-41.
- Sutherland, Daniel E. "Sideshow No Longer: A Historiographical Review of the Guerrilla War." *Civil War History* 46, no. 1 (March 2000): 5-23.

### Books

- Andre, Richard, Stan Cohen, and Bill Wintz. *Bullets & Steel: The Fight for the Great Kanawha Valley 1861-1865*. Charleston: Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Inc., 1995.
- Bonner, Robert E. *Mastering America: Southern Slaveholders and the Crisis of American Nationhood*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

- Bynum, Victoria E. *The Long Shadow of the Civil War: Southern Dissent and Its Legacies*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010.
- *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- Campbell, Jr., Edward D. C., and Kym S. Rice, eds. *A Woman's War: Southern Women, Civil War, and the Confederate Legacy*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia: 1996.
- Clinton, Catherine. *Stepdaughters of History: Southern Women and the American Civil War*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016.
- *The Plantation Mistress: Woman's World in the Old South*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1982.
- and Nina Silber, eds. *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Curry, Richard Orr. *A House Divided: Statehood Politics & the Copperhead Movement in West Virginia*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964.
- Dannett, Sylvia G. and Katherine M. Jones. *Our Women of the Sixties*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission, 1963.
- Dunaway, Wilma A. *Women, Work, and Family in the Antebellum Mountain South*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Edwards, Laura F. *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000.
- Faust, Drew Gilpin. *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Fisher, Noel C. *War at Every Door: Partisan Politics and Guerrilla Violence in East Tennessee 1860-1869*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Foster, Gaines M. *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South 1865 to 1913*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988.
- Frank, Lisa Tendrich and LeeAnn Whites, eds. *Household War: How Americans Lives and Fought the Civil War*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2020.

- Freehling, William W. *The South Vs. the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Friedman, Jean E. *The Enclosed Garden: Women and Community in the Evangelical South 1830-1900*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- Gallagher, Gary W. and Joan Waugh. *The American Civil War: A History of the Civil War Era*. State College, PA: Flip Learning, 2015.
- Giesberg, Judith. *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- Glymph, Thavolia. *The Women's Fight: The Civil War's Battles for Home, Freedom, and Nation*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020.
- Groce, W. Todd. *Mountain Rebels: East Tennessee Confederates and the Civil War, 1860-1870*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999.
- Hedrick, Charles Embury. *Social and Economic Aspects of Slavery in the Transmontane Prior to 1850*. [Nashville, TN?]: George Peabody College for Teachers. 1927.
- Inscoe, John C. *Race, War, and Remembrance in the Appalachian South*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009.
- and Gordon B. McKinney. *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- and Robert C. Kenzer, eds. *Enemies of the Country: New Perspectives on Unionists in the Civil War South*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001.
- Laidley, W. S. *History of Charleston and Kanawha County West Virginia and Representative Citizens*. Chicago: Richmond-Arnold Publishing Co., 1993.
- Lowry, Thomas P. *Confederate Heroines: 120 Southern Women Convicted by Union Military Justice*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006.
- Massey, Mary Elizabeth. *Bonnet Brigades*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966.
- McCurry, Stephanie. *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010.
- , *Women's War: Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2019.

- McKnight, Brian D. *Confederate Outlaw: Champ Ferguson and the Civil War in Appalachia*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2011.
- *Contested Borderland: The Civil War in Appalachian Kentucky and Virginia*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2006.
- McPherson, James M. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Mountcastle, Clay. *Punitive War: Confederate Guerrillas and Union Reprisals*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009.
- Noe, Kenneth W. and Shannon H. Wilson, eds. *The Civil War in Appalachia: Collected Essays*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997.
- O'Brien, Sean Michael. *Mountain Partisans: Guerrilla Warfare in the Southern Appalachians, 1861-1865*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1999.
- Phillips, Christopher. *The Rivers Ran Backward: The Civil War and the Remaking of the American Middle Border*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Pinnell, Lois M. *French Creek Presbyterian Church: A Memorial to the 150 Years of Service of the French Creek Presbyterian Church*. Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Company, 1971.
- Pudup, Mary Beth, Dwight B. Billings, and Altina Waller, eds. *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Rice, Otis K. and Stephen W. Brown. *West Virginia: A History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1993.
- Scott, Joan Wallach. *Gender and the Politics of History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Silber, Nina. *Gender and the Sectional Conflict*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
- Stealey, John. *The Antebellum Kanawha Salt Business and Western Markets*. Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2016.
- Stutler, Boyd B. *West Virginia in the Civil War*. Charleston: Education Foundation Inc., 1963.
- Sutherland, Daniel. *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- *American Civil War Guerrillas: Changing the Rules of Warfare*. Westport: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2013.

-----, ed. *Guerrillas, Unionists, and Violence on the Confederate Home Front*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999.

Varon, Elizabeth R. *We Mean to Be Counted: White Women & Politics in Antebellum Virginia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Wagner, Sally Roesch, ed. *The Women's Suffrage Movement*. New York: Penguin Books, 2019.

Wayne, Tiffany K. and Lois Banner, eds. *Women's Rights in the United States: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Issues, Events, and People*. Vol. 1, *In Moral Reform and the Woman Question (1776-1870)*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015.

Weaver, Jeffrey C. *Thurmond's Partisan Rangers and Swann's Battalion of Virginia Cavalry*. Lynchburg: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1993.

White, Deborah Gray. *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1985.

Whites, LeeAnn and Alecia P. Long, eds. *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation, and the American Civil War*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009.

#### Theses and Dissertations

Fredette, Allison. "The View from the Border: A Study of Gender and Women's Rights in West Virginia During the Age of Emancipation." Master's thesis, West Virginia University, 2008.

Graham, Hester M. "The Prose and Poetry of a Southern Woman: Victoria F. C. Hansford Teass." Master's thesis, University of Texas at Dallas, 1994.

Marken, Karissa A. "'They Cannot Catch Guerrillas in the Mountains Any More Than a Cow Can Catch Fleas': Guerrilla Warfare in Western Virginia, 1861-1865." Master's thesis, Liberty University, 2014.

McMillan, John Martin. "'Impractical, Inhospitable, and Dismal Country': An Examination of the Environmental Impact on Civil War Military Operations in West Virginia." Master's thesis, Marshall University, 2018.

Moore, George Ellis. "West Virginia and the Civil War, 1861-1863." PhD diss., West Virginia University, 1957.

Neal, James R. "Surrendered: The Prisoner-of-War Condition in the American Civil War." PhD diss., University of Nevada, Reno, 2015.

**APPENDIX A: OFFICE OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY APPROVAL LETTER**



Office of Research Integrity

March 18, 2021

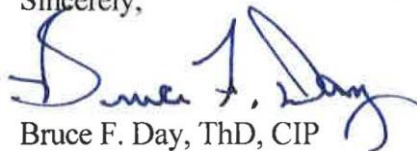
Amanda Shaver  
448 Norway Avenue  
Huntington, WV 25705

Dear Ms. Shaver:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract entitled " 'Our Women Are Made of the Right Stuff: ' Gender, Politics, and Conflict in Civil War West Virginia. " After assessing the abstract, it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study does not involve human subjects as defined in the above referenced instruction, it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,



Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP  
Director

**WE ARE. MARSHALL.**

One John Marshall Drive • Huntington, West Virginia 25755 • Tel 304/696-4303  
A State University of West Virginia • An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer