NEVERTHELESS, SHE PERSISTED: ANTEBELLUM WOMEN'S EDUCATION AND SHIFTING GENDER ROLES IN THE SOUTH

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by
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Abstract

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During the Civil War, elite, southern families faced financial difficulties, and this prompted women to enter the workforce on an economic basis, which unintentionally instigated a social transformation of traditional gender roles. The most practical way an elite, southern, white woman could enter the workforce was as a teacher. To become a teacher, a woman needed to be educated. For wealthy, southern women the nineteenth century was a turning point in their educational background. No longer attending school just to take courses in needlework, women were sent to boarding schools to learn diverse subjects such as English, Mathematics, Geography, and French. The transition from eighteenth to nineteenth century educational standards for women can be seen in their school samplers. Although new subjects were added to the school curriculum, needle working was a foundational course because of its practical uses. Young school girls completed samplers to learn basic sewing techniques and marking; however, the patterns stitched onto the samplers related to other courses. Practicing the alphabet or the geography of the United States, samplers were a way for young girls to reinforce lessons learned in other classes. Samplers are a unique blend of a household chore

and education. A form of material culture, samplers are the perfect physical evidence for how antebellum women were educated. Through this material culture evidence of education, the following chapters will connect schoolgirl samplers to women acquiring teaching positions during the Civil War, as evidenced in correspondence, and will argue that this contributed to the overall shift in the South's gender roles.

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Dedication

To my parents Mark and Lynn Maslowski,

for providing me with every opportunity to succeed in my education.

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Introduction

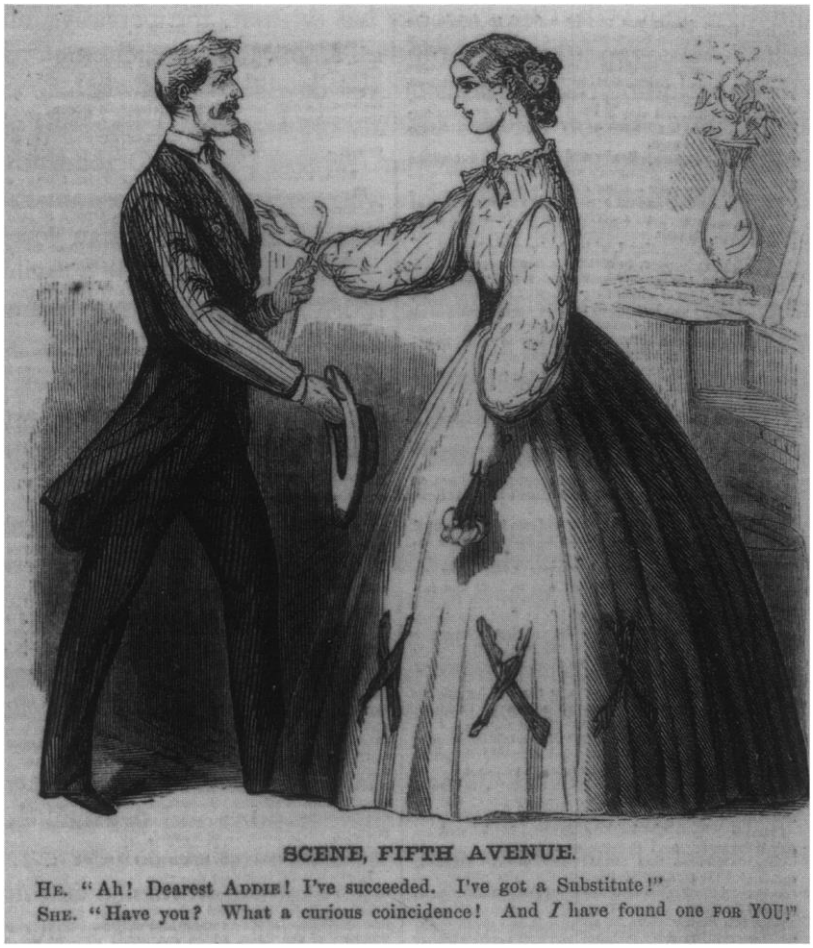

Figure 1. Southern Substitution Cartoon

Declaring he has found a substitute, a husband exclaims in joy to his wife that he will not have to enlist in the Confederate war effort after all. With a tone of condescension for his lack of patriotism, the wife counters back that she has enlisted a substitute for him as well! Although humorous and witty, this pro-enlistment cartoon clarified women's appropriate wartime role. A form of southern propaganda, the cartoon promotes the Confederate ideology of self-sacrifice. Women were called on to sacrifice their men for the greater good of the South. In this way, the Confederacy fostered the idea that suffering and sacrifice were forms of patriotism and reassured women that this was a vital contribution to the war effort. The

professionalization of sacrifice, however, was not enough to keep southern women satisfied throughout the war.

The ideology of sacrifice was in direct tension with the preconceived culture of the South. In Drew Gilpin Faust's opinion, "the system of reciprocity central to this understanding of social power had been violated by the wartime failure of white Southern males to provide the services and support understood as requisite to their dominance."[1] Men and women were assigned specific roles to play in southern society. Traditionally known as the ideology of separate spheres, men were expected to assimilate themselves into the public sphere or workforce, while women were confined to the household or private sphere. Alexis Girardin Brown argues that, "the private sphere of women embraced femininity, beauty, simplicity, and submissiveness; the highest roles to which a southern woman could aspire were those of nurturing mother, dutiful wife, and social moral pillar."[2] The metaphor of the "sphere" has allowed historians to categorize women's roles throughout American history. The notion of separate spheres also allows for the visualization of a timeline where private and public spheres intertwine.

How, why, and when did men and women's roles intertwine in the South? What were the consequences of elite, white, southern women stepping out of the private sphere and into the public sphere? These are the driving questions behind the following research. The importance of the above questions is pertinent to explaining and examining women's history. The twentieth century women's movement has been explored in great depth; however, what

[1] Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," *Journal of American History* 76, no. 4 (Mar. 1990): 1227.
[2] Alexis Girardin Brown, "The Women Left Behind: Transformation of the Southern Belle, 1840-1880," *Historian* 62, no.4 (Summer 2000): 759.

built up to that? What led women to fight for their right to vote? What influenced women to advance their education? Specifically in the South, how did women break away from the southern belle stereotype? These questions can be answered by studying the antebellum, southern woman, and the impact of the Civil War on elite, southern society.

During the Civil War, elite, southern families faced financial difficulties, and this prompted women to enter the workforce on an economic basis, which unintentionally instigated a social transformation of traditional gender roles. The most accepted way an elite, southern, white woman could enter the workforce was as a teacher. To become a teacher, a woman needed to be educated. For wealthy, southern women the nineteenth century was a turning point in their educational background. No longer attending school just to take courses in needlework, women were sent to boarding schools to learn diverse subjects such as English, Mathematics, Geography, and French. The transition from eighteenth to nineteenth century educational standards for women can be seen in their school samplers. Although new subjects were added to the school curriculum, needle working was a foundational course because of its practical uses. Young school girls completed samplers to learn basic sewing techniques and marking; however, the patterns stitched onto the samplers related to other courses. Practicing the alphabet or the geography of the United States, samplers were a way for young girls to reinforce lessons learned in other classes. Samplers are a unique blend of a household chore and education. A form of material culture, samplers are the perfect physical evidence for how antebellum women were educated. Through this material culture evidence of education, the following chapters will connect schoolgirl samplers to women acquiring teaching positions during the Civil War, as evidenced in correspondence, and will argue that this contributed to the overall shift in the South's gender roles.

Material culture is the physical evidence of a people, and is collected to understand elements of society such as, history, culture, race, gender, politics, economics, and literacy.[3] In order to tell a more complete story of nineteenth century women's education, resources are needed to demonstrate what young girls learned in boarding schools. Combining both the written record and material artifacts are foundational to a public historian's effort to articulate a compelling story to the public. Public history as a profession is a relatively new career pathway. Looking forward from Ann Pamela Cunningham and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association in 1853, public history has become much more than the preservation of a president's home. The field encompasses a wide range of disciplines from historic preservation, to museum studies, and archival work. The term itself is as ambiguous as the professions it covers. According to the National Council of Public History (NCPH), "public history describes the many and diverse ways in which history is put to work in the world. In this sense, it is history that is applied to real-world issues."[4] In Alison Clarke's 1999 study *Tupperware: The Promise of Plastic in 1950s America*, she explores the importance of material culture to the field of public history. Blurring the boundaries of domesticity and commerce, work and leisure, women from all backgrounds gathered around kitchen tables to take part in the latest 1950s trend: the Tupperware Party. Shifting away from Depression economics and male dominated door-to-door sales practices, the Tupperware Party was deemed the "Modern Way to Shop" in the 1950s.[5] Combining domesticity and consumption to form a modern twist

[3] Maureen Daly Goggin, "Introduction: Threading Women," in *Women and the Material Culture of Needlework and Textiles 1750*-1950, eds. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin, 1-10 (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), 5.
[4] National Council on Public History Website. "What is Public History?" http://ncph.org/cms/what-is-public-history/
[5] Alison J. Clarke, *Tupperware: The Promise of Plastic in 1950s America* (Washington & London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 82.

on direct sales, the Tupperware Party provided women with the perfect setting to socialize and earn an income. Clarke is able to explore the cultural history of Tupperware along with the process of how mass consumption products became meaningful artifacts of everyday life. By utilizing material culture Clarke connects with the public through a daily household object. What Clarke has done is taken an ordinary product and told an extraordinary story with the public in mind.

The intention of this project is to follow Clarke's example by utilizing an ordinary group of schoolgirl samplers to tell an extraordinary story of antebellum southern women's education and connect the results to shifting gender roles in the South. Chapter 1 provides a historiography of nineteenth century women's education that explains southern culture and why the southern belle was educated. This historiography is important because it provides a background to the South's school system before the Civil War, and the attitudes of elite, southern families in regards to courtship, marriage, education, and employment of women in the public sphere as teachers. Chapter 1 also delves into the connection between nineteenth century women's culture and the twentieth century women's movement. Literature from notable historians such as Anne Firor Scott, Christie Anne Farnham, Drew Gilpin Faust, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Giselle Roberts, and Mary Elizabeth Massey contributed to the body of scholarship in this period. Chapter 2 explores the importance of material culture and the relevance of schoolgirl samplers. Eight samplers from the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA) will be analyzed using the Prownian method in order to provide an illustrative narrative of these young girls. Chapter 3 will be the story of Elizabeth Grimball and her ability to utilize her education as a teacher in Union, South Carolina. With intimate details about her life in correspondence and her mother Meta Grimballs' diary, both acquired from the

Grimball Family Papers, a picture of a struggling elite southern family is painted. Through the progression of needlework samplers to Elizabeth, a story of education and shifting gender roles is told against the backdrop of the Civil War.

Chapter 1

Scarlett O'Hara: The Southern Belle and Education

With her charm and quick wit, Scarlett O'Hara has dominated popular understanding of the quintessential southern belle.[1] While Margaret Mitchell's charismatic heroine from the novel, and later movie adaptation, *Gone With The Wind* has captured the attention of a wide audience; Scarlett actually represents the antithesis of female honor and gentility suitable for a southern belle. Her charming, cunning, and tenacious behavior possesses neither piety nor gentility, which would have been required traits for a proper southern belle. Although this lavishly dressed heroine has enthralled the gaze of modern readers and viewers, Scarlett's stronghold on the image of the southern belle can be attributed to the one-dimensional depiction of southern women in popular culture. Notable historians such as Anne Firor Scott, Christie Anne Farnham, Drew Gilpin Faust, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Giselle Roberts, and Mary Elizabeth Massey have published an impressive amount of work on the southern belle and present a more complex narrative of who these women were. Thoroughly educated in the classics and accomplished in the arts of dancing and music, southern belles increased their family's honor by advancing their social status through marriage. This ingrained social system shifted during the Civil War as many young belles struggled to connect to the Confederate wartime ideology. Desiring to do more for the war effort on the homefront, women began to move into the public sphere. This southern belle narrative offers a more intricate understanding of these women; what is lacking in the above scholarship however, is the story of women's education. By understanding how and why southern women received an education, broader

[1] Giselle Roberts, *The Confederate Belle* (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 13.

themes such as shifting gender roles and job opportunities for nineteenth century southern women can be explained. For the southern belle education was the foundation of courtship and marriage; however, through opportunities presented during the Civil War, southern belles were able to utilize their education to acquire positions in the previously male dominated field of teaching, which would ultimately begin a shift in gender roles.

The shift in gender roles during the Civil War was not sudden or unexpected for women who had been paying attention. To illustrate the direct correlation between education and shifting gender roles, however requires an examination of the Liberal Feminism Movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. In *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction,* Rosemarie Tong examines different types of feminist thought including: liberal, radical, Marxist/socialist, psychoanalytical, care-focused, existentialist, postmodern, women of color, global, postcolonial, transnational, and ecofeminism. Liberal Feminism is where Tong begins her exploration of the Feminist Movement because it was the predecessor to the United States twentieth century women's movement and push for women's right to vote. Liberal Feminism focused on eliminating female subordination, which is rooted in politics because the institution blocks women's entrance into the public sphere.[2] Since women tend to be barred from the academy, the answer to equality was to make the rules fair and allow the same opportunities between genders, although, to be clear, the Liberal Feminism Movement was more prevalent in the North than the South.[3] Far less southern women agreed with this concept;

[2] Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998), 10-44.

[3] William W. Freehling, *Road to Disunion, Vol. I: Secessionists at Bay 1776-1854* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 17. For the purpose of this thesis, the South will be defined by using Freehling's description. In his book the South is broken up into Border, Middle and

however, those who completed their education in the North were exposed to this way of thinking.

Very few southern belles of the pre-war period would have called themselves feminists, and it is more likely not the correct explanation to express how white, southern women of the nineteenth century experienced their lives. A better term, according to Ellen DuBois, would be women's culture. DuBois notes, "the term 'women's culture' has been used by historians to refer to the broad-based commonality of values, institutions, relationships, and methods of communication, focused on domesticity and morality and particular to late eighteenth- and nineteenth- century women."[4] Like slave culture, women's culture has been ignored in favor of perceived stereotypes. To investigate women's culture is to see how women create and perceive themselves rather than someone else, usually male, creating the concept for them. It is important to not confuse women's culture and feminism; however, at what point does one movement end and the other begin? In *The Bonds of Womanhood: Woman's Sphere in New England, 1780-1835* Nancy Cott suggests that the "women's sphere [was] the basis for a subculture among women" in the 1830s.[5] This instrumental development led to women's consciousness of themselves as a group, and was a necessary prerequisite for the formation of

Upper/Deep South. The categorizations are as follows: Deep or Lower South (South Carolina, Florida, and Georgia on the east through Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas on the west), Border South (Delaware and Maryland on the east through Kentucky and Missouri on the west), and Middle South (Virginia and North Carolina on the east and Tennessee and Arkansas on the west).

[4]Ellen Dubois, Mari Jo Buhle, Temma Kaplan, Gerda Lerner, and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Politics and Culture in Women's History: A Symposium," *Feminist Studies* 6, no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 29.

[5] Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 197-206.

the feminist movement.

Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, in "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in the Nineteenth-Century America," explores women's culture through female relationships. Smith-Rosenberg states that, "the ties between mothers and daughters, sisters, female cousins and friends, at all stages of the female life cycle constitute the most suggestive framework for the historian to begin an analysis of intimacy and affection between women."[6] By examining the female network through a cultural and social setting, Smith-Rosenberg suggests an alternative view of friendship in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By analyzing female friendships based on family structure, gender role divisions, and male-female relations, the concluding argument is that female friendships are central to southern society. Particularly for white, wealthy, southern women female relationships were experienced on a different level as opposed to other races and social classes in the South. Letters sent between sisters, cousins, mothers, aunts, and school friends reveal women's emotional connections to one another, and how accepted this love was in southern society. Rigid gender roles contributed to the emotional segregation between men and women, and a specifically female world emerged in the social framework due to the inequality between men and women. A woman's sphere and female network was created out of shared experiences and equality among each other. School helped girls form their own network of friends apart from their mothers' aide, and marriage was ultimately seen as a traumatic removal of a girl from her mother and network.

[6] Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs* 1, no. 1 (Autumn, 1975): 3.

To understand the feminist movement, women's culture must be explained, and to explain women's culture, historians must analyze female relationships. Instead of placing emphasis on internal family dynamics, the focus needs to be on general culture patterns in order to understand broad social norms and behaviors. By studying women's interactions with one another, historians can begin to "untangle the intricate relation between the female world and the economic and institutional power structure of the 'external world.'"[7] Gerda Lerner argues further that the exploration of the female world and, in large part, women's culture, is not complete until the concept of separate spheres is understood. Women's culture and women's sphere are not the same concept. In Lerner's opinion women's culture is the redefining of women's activities in their own terms, and a "woman's sphere" "is a nineteenth-century term, denoting those aspects of activity and function men determined appropriate to women."[8] Therefore to further understand women's culture, the ideology of separate spheres needs to be defined in relation to men and women's roles in the Antebellum South.

In Linda Kerber's article "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," Kerber studies the ideology of separate spheres through the prism of women's culture in a social and economic context.[9] She argues that the ideology of republican womanhood was an effort to recreate the traditional version of separate spheres in the South. Republican womanhood traditional values include: moral influence over husband,

[7] Ellen Dubois, Mari Jo Buhle, Temma Kaplan, Gerda Lerner, and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Politics and Culture in Women's History: A Symposium," *Feminist Studies* 6, no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 59.
[8] Ibid, 52.
[9] Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (Jun., 1988): 9-39.

importance of the maternal role, piety, purity, and submissiveness.[10] This ideology provided a role for women that influenced social and political culture but did not actively allow them to participate outside of the private sphere. Overall, Kerber analyzes the physical spaces to which women were assigned and how they dealt with the constricting limitations of their gender. Southern women's traditional place was in the home and this created a power struggle between the sexes in which spaces they could occupy. Relying heavily on works from notable historians such as Nancy Cott, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Mary Kelley, and Alice Kessler-Harris, Kerber outlines the specific roles assigned to the gendered spheres, and how the metaphor of the "sphere" has allowed historians to categorize women's roles throughout American history. The notion of separate spheres also allows for the visualization of a timeline where private and public spheres intertwine. Kerber also makes a connection between the ideology of separate spheres and Smith-Rosenberg's article "The Female World of Love and Ritual." Kerber's asks, "how can we understand the nature of the emotionally intense and erotic friendships between eighteenth- and nineteenth- century married women and society's benign approval of such relationships?"[11] Separate spheres made it possible for women to have such intense friendships with one another because of the physical and emotional barrier between men and women.

This concept of separate spheres comes from a deeply ingrained social structure in America.[12] Specifically in the South's semi-unique culture, the ideology of separate spheres

[10] Linda Kerber, "The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment – An American Perspective," *American Quarterly* 28:2 (Summer 1976), 187-205.
[11] Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *The Journal of American History* 75, no. 1 (Jun., 1988), 14.
[12] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1840. Model of separate spheres is taken from Tocqueville's observations of the American class system. He alludes to the separation of male and female spheres, and is one of a few authors at the time that examined the situation of

still remained highly relevant. In order to fully grasp what influences the ideology of separate spheres to be present in the South, southern culture must be explored. Southern culture varies across sub-regions; however, there are a few authors who have attempted to explain the South as a general entity. Numan Bartley, in his book *The Evolution of Southern Culture*, compiles articles based on trends in writing southern history.[13] Articles written by Immanuel Wallerstein, Eugene D. Genovese, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, and Bertram Wyatt-Brown analyze and discuss what being "southern" means and how antebellum women viewed themselves in this society. Wallerstein argues that southern culture is a socially constructed idea that is fluid and flexible. Eugene D. Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese agree with this assessment, and further argue that Christianity was the moral foundation of southern society. Women were viewed as moral compasses, and quick to use religion to enforce gender-specific roles. Wyatt-Brown adds to the argument that the southern code of honor also enforced the notion of separate spheres. Therefore, women were considered to be the moral and social arbiters of southern culture and society. The connection between separate spheres ideology and Christianity is clear in the way women were looked to as the moral leaders of the household. Quick to berate their children and husbands for not following the proper guidelines set forth by the church, women viewed their role as vital to the functioning of southern society.

In Carol Bleser's book, *In Joy and In Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South, 1830-1900*, Bleser presents an in-depth account of Victorian southern

women in America.

[13] Numan V. Bartley, *The Evolution of Southern Culture* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1988).

women.[14] The study looks at the lives of southern women during the cotton era right through the Civil War and its aftermath. Bleser analyzes marriage, family relationships, and the female identity through first hand accounts in diary entries and letters. The central theme of women and the home are interconnected through the institution of slavery and the negative impacts it had on family. Supposedly, the principal beneficiary, the planter elite, experienced negative consequences of slavery that have previously been unexplored by other historians.

Ellen K. Rothman furthers the discussion of the South by examining courtship in her book *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America*.[15] Through diaries and letters Rothman charts the history of courtship in America. Specifically focusing on the upper class and how educated men and women experienced courtship. Education was seen as a tool for women to increase their desirability. As men aspired to higher career heights, women were expected to continue to match them intellectually. This idea was most common in the South, demanding that women receive better education that would help them in their future marriages, while also coincidentally opening the door for better job opportunities during the Civil War.

Steven Stowe examines the lives of pre-Civil War elite men and women in his book *Intimacy and Power in the Old South*.[16] The images of the honorable southern man and the genteel woman dominate fiction and history. Stowe explores these images, and attempts to reconcile the South's projected cultural ideology with real actions. The mythical idea of the

[14] Carol Bleser, *In Joy and In Sorrow: Women, Family, and Marriage in the Victorian South, 1830-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
[15] Ellen K. Rothman, *Hands and Hearts: A History of Courtship in America* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1950).
[16] Steven M. Stowe, *Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1987).

South has dominated popular thought and has skewed many into believing in a harmonious picture. However, the South was full of ideological contradictions that can be proven through letters and diary entries of southern men and women. Stowe notes, though, that appearances in the South contributed more towards upholding family honor than quiet words written in a diary could do.

Overall, the correlation between understanding the eighteenth and nineteenth century Liberal Feminism Movement, women's culture, ideology of separate spheres, and the cultural context of the South leads to the explanation of how education was connected to shifting gender roles during and after the Civil War. Influential scholarship by historians such as Rosemarie Tong, Ellen Dubois, Gerda Lerner, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Linda Kerber, Numan Bartley, Carol Bleser, Ellen Rothman, and Steven Stowe lead to this conclusion through increased mention of women's education. Never specifically focusing on how or why women received an education, these historians nevertheless continuously bring up the subject in relation to women's culture, the ideology of separate spheres, and a woman's place in southern society. This connection between education and women therefore needs to be explored further in relation to the larger topic of overall shifting gender roles in the South. Before discussing women's education specifically through, a discussion of the public school system in the South as a whole is required.

During the antebellum period, the South lacked an effective public school system.[17] According to a study conducted by Soltow and Stevens, the overall illiteracy rate at the

[17]*Encyclopedia of the Antebellum South*. 1st ed. s.v "Education." There was a very rudimentary public school system in the South. Compared to the North, which had a more established school system, the South lacked cohesiveness due to terrain and amount of rural areas.

beginning of the nineteenth century in the North was about twenty-five percent, while in the South it was between forty to fifty percent.[18] However, these rates varied considerably on the state level due to urbanization, terrain, and lifestyle choices. Due to the rural landscape and southern way of life, common schools were sparse in the southern states, and children were not able to attend school regularly if they belonged to a poor family that relied on collective labor. Conversely, numerous wealthy, southern families believed that poor whites would never understand the benefits of education and would not utilize public schools. Therefore, children who belonged to prominent, white, aristocratic families were sent to private institutions or instructed by private tutors who were typically from the North. Approximately 360,000 northerners moved to the South before 1860 in order to work as teachers.[19] Public education reform was never a notable concern for southern families because most opposed the institution. For example, the public school system in South Carolina was not well established during this time, and only a few charity schools were available to poor white children. Respectable academies funded by wealthy, white families, were only accessible to their children. The push for public education reform originated in the North, and before the Civil War about fifty percent of white children attended school regularly in the North.[20] The South's dependence on the North for teachers and textbooks led to increased caution against northern influence and, ultimately, regret as circumstances leaned towards the possibility of a Civil War.

Before the beginning of the Civil War, only four southern states and various local

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[18] Catherine Hobbs, *Nineteenth-Century Women Learn to Write* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 11.
[19] Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 97.
[20] *Encyclopedia of the Antebellum South*. 1st ed. s.v "Education."

communities had established common school systems.[21] Within these schools, both girls and boys were allowed to attend; however, they were taught separately. The southern elites believed that educating girls for vocations was unnecessary because their primary goal as young ladies was to obtain a husband, produce children, and run a household. The cultural construction of separate spheres barred women from respectably entering into any work outside the home. Therefore, their education was limited to subjects such as music, painting, and French. Additionally, only daughters of planters and prosperous families were allowed to continue their education long enough to advance to seminary or college training. In historian Laura Edwards's opinion, young women belonging to the planter class, defined as a household owning twenty or more slaves, enjoyed a greater deal of freedom in their education than daughters of poor whites.[22] In Edwards's book, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era*, she argues that young ladies' education was erratic, and focused on the obligations of overseeing house slaves and conforming to strict standards of subordination to their husbands. For instance, the ideology of womanhood allowed for certain limitations in property ownership, wages, and parental rights. Therefore, women's education mirrored their future roles as subordinate wives and mothers in the household. According to Edwards, "both the law and southern social conventions assumed that household heads were adult, white, propertied males."[23]

Furthermore, fathers never expected their daughters to work outside the home.

[21]Ibid.
[22] Laura Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 17.
[23] Ibid, 3.

According to historian Christie Farnham, "a college education became emblematic of class, a means to a type of refinement that labeled one a lady worthy of protection, admiration, and chivalrous attention."[24] The objective of educating women in the South, in Farnham's opinion, was to develop young ladies' minds and mold them into morally pure individuals. The South criticized independent-thinking and strong-willed women. Education was an attempt to offer women correct instruction on their proper role in southern society. Additionally, the hierarchical system of the slave South was incorporated into every aspect of southern life. Education for young ladies was seen as a way to better a family's status in society. Higher education was seen as a mark of gentility, which signified the highest type of refinement because it rationalized the natural structure of elevation over others.[25] The southern belle represented a romanticized and idealized picture of white domination in the South. Also, education brought honor to one's family. Farnham suggests that this was a gateway into finding a husband, which led to children and the fulfillment of the cult of domesticity ideology. Women were seen as the ultimate symbol of piety, and this was expressed through benevolence. Benevolence was understood as, "the pain and suffering of others on an individual level without concern for the inequalities in the social structure that brought such pain and suffering into being."[26] Maternalism, the core structure of the household, was based on the practice of benevolence.

Moreover, education of young ladies was viewed as reinforcing the cult of domesticity. Previously, women prepared to become wives and mothers through apprenticeships to their

[24] Farnham, *Education of the Southern Belle,* 3.
[25] Ibid, 28.
[26] Ibid, 30.

own mothers. With the acknowledgment of education as a class symbol and a requirement for women to fulfill their moral obligations and social services to the household, more southern families began allowing their daughters to attend school. By permitting young women to attend school, families demonstrated the need to equip their daughters with appropriate skills in order to attract suitable husbands. Through marriage alliances, women moved from the authority of their fathers to the equally powerful authority of their husbands.[27] Young women had virtually no legal standing in the South, and for many daughters of the planter class, wealth was the primary goal of a marriage contract.[28] Therefore, women became more appealing to suitors if they had a higher education. It was generally assumed that a higher education correlated with the ability to become a good wife and mother. Also, men presumed that an educated woman would better appreciate the intelligence of her husband, and was more suited to groom their children into good citizens. By recognizing women's role in the home through education, Farnham argues that women were given a unique chance to study the classics and disprove the previous colonial belief that women's brains were inferior to men's.[29] This inferior thinking shifted during the late nineteenth century into valuing the importance of preserving the home and the civic duty of women as educators to their children. Men, who viewed education as a refinement and a necessary quality in a wife and future mother, encouraged this shift.

Throughout the Civil War, elite southern families viewed education as a way to reinforce class boundaries that had been lost by the absence of slaves and other symbols of wealth. According to Giselle Roberts, women clung to education as a means to assert their elite

[27]*Encyclopedia of the Antebellum South*. 1st ed. s.v "Courtship and Marriage."
[28] Ibid.
[29]Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle*, 15.

identities when they "struggled to navigate their way through a world that pitted patriotic sacrifice against marriage, and wartime practicality against gentility."[30] Education for women had always been seen as an opportunity to socialize and not as vocational training leading to a wage earning position. However, the Civil War forced women to shift their traditional opinions on work outside the home. Roberts argues that the Confederate ideology of womanhood that supported the war effort contradicted women's well-established antebellum role.[31] Consequently, many women were forced into difficult situations that opposed well-established precedents of marriage and gender roles. Elite women found education as a way to balance new ideas presented to them by the Confederate government with longstanding views of social status.

In *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States*, Alice Kessler-Harris argues that southern society found it acceptable for elite women to continue their education in order to pursue social status and traditional means of courtship, if the family had the means to do so. Kessler-Harris affirms that southern families believed that a higher degree of education meant that women would become better mothers who were suited to educate their children within the household when she states that, "women had of course always taught children within the family and in small dame schools."[32] The role of governess was considered

[30] Roberts, *The Confederate Belle*, 93.
[31] Ibid, 90.
[32] Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 56. Kessler-Harris is R. Gordon Hoxie Professor of American History at Columbia University, in New York City. She is also the former president of the Organization of American Historians, and is a renowned scholar for her work on gender and labor history. Therefore, her extensive work on women and labor presents a unique perspective on higher education for women during the antebellum era.

a suitable job for women to enhance their moral sensibilities before marriage. Although education signified membership in a wealthy family and furthering women's ability as future mothers, there were limited career options besides marriage. Kessler-Harris argues that, "a taste of education led some women to seek more- to reject the family option entirely and to select a profession instead."[33] Some families, specifically mothers, were horrified at the prospect of their daughters entering into the workforce. Many young women during the Civil War began to reject the moral code that permitted them to receive an education but denied them legitimate wage work outside of the household.[34]

Additionally, it should be noted that many women viewed access to education as an opportunity for personal growth. Although most southern women still recognized their submissive place in society, education allowed women to begin closing the gap of inequality between men and women. In Alexis Girardin Brown's award winning article, "The Women Left Behind: Transformation of the Southern Belle, 1840-1880," she argues that women found intellectual satisfaction through schooling. Education was an outlet for the "limited identity women gained through marriage, as mistress of the plantation, mother of her husband's children, and as [a] wife."[35] The restrictive roles accorded to women left them with no social mobility outside the household, thus education became an equalizer.

Within the South, teaching was a male-dominated profession throughout the nineteenth century up until the Civil War. It was believed that teaching required discipline and a strong

[33] Ibid, 57.
[34] Ibid, 56.
[35]Alexis Girardin Brown, "The Women Left Behind: Transformation of the Southern Belle, 1840-1880," *Historian* 62, no.4 (Summer 2000): 759. Received the undergraduate Oppenheim Award for Excellence in Research and Writing in History.

initiative that only a male could provide. Due to the lack of educated adults in the South, teachers were imported from the North. This led to uncomfortable situations where northern teachers expressed strong opinions against the southern way of life.[36] Women who entered into this male-dominated field were often pitied. Although teaching was seen as a respectable profession, any women who inserted themselves into the public sphere were obviously in dire financial need. In Thomas Woody's opinion, this assertion contradicted the social understanding that women were natural teachers and that "teaching was, in fact, the best preparation for the office of mother."[37] Woody argues that women used the role of a teacher as a transition into marriage and motherhood. Women, who took on the task of a teacher, found it easier to educate their own children.[38] In the South, however, any wealthy woman who entered the public sphere in search of a job was an embarrassment to her family. A woman working outside of the home signified financial misfortune and the inability of a father or husband to provide for his family. Therefore, in Farnham's opinion, "most teachers in the South were men, there being more schools for males than females and women being considered incapable of disciplining boys and teenage males."[39] Even though the cult of domesticity ideology illustrated the southern belle as a well-educated mother whose duty it was to teach her children, women were still not seen as educators in the public sphere.

The workforce was considered to be a part of the male's sphere whereas the home was a woman's domain. By entering into the workforce, southern women challenged the ideology

[36] *Encyclopedia of the Antebellum South*. 1st ed. s.v "Teachers."
[37] Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States* (New York: Octagon Books Inc. 1966), 483.
[38] Ibid, 483.
[39] Farnham, *The Education of the Southern,* 98.

of separate spheres. During the Civil War, the profession of teaching rapidly shifted from a male dominated to a female dominated field. Woody notes that in the years after the Civil War, data shows the influx of women teachers in 1888 to be sixty-three percent and male teachers to be thirty-seven percent.[40] However, in Mary Elizabeth Massey's opinion, the war should not be credited "with opening the profession to women, since thousands were already teaching in 1861, [although] it did greatly enhance their opportunities when male teachers enlisted or took more remunerative jobs in industry and business."[41] Nevertheless, the incursion of women into the public sphere was still seen as an encroachment on male territory, even though men were off fighting in the war.

Therefore, when southern women began to rapidly enter the workforce during the Civil War, employers justified paying women low wages because they were only supplementing their husband or father's income. Consequently, up until the end of the nineteenth century, women were paid about one third to one half of a man's wage.[42] This was hardly a sufficient wage to live on; however, many employers assumed that a woman would rely on her family to make up the difference. Additionally, women who entered into the workforce were seen as less respectable than women who stayed in the household. Kessler-Harris states that, "their presence in the labor force placed them outside the ranks of respectability and subjected them to all the exploitation of the industrial wage earner."[43] Respectable women knew their place, and stayed in the home where they could prove their virtue and morality through their families.

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[40] Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, 483.
[41] Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Bonnet Brigades* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1966), 109.
[42] Kessler-Harris, *Women Have Always Worked*, 63.
[43] Ibid, 63.

Furthermore, Massey argues in *Bonnet Brigades* that, even though women's greatest opportunity in the workforce was teaching, many women faced discrimination based on their gender. "Male teachers were generally preferred," according to Massey, "especially as instructors of boys."[44] The only reason women were allowed to even enter into the profession was because they received smaller salaries than men. Massey also contends that, "the public assumed that no woman would teach school unless dire poverty drove her, and she was therefore an object of pity."[45] Consequently, women teachers found themselves in an unusual predicament. Teaching inside the private sphere was allowable and respectable, but not many families had the means during the Civil War to hire a governess. Teaching in common schools in the public sphere was not acceptable, looked on with pity, and only allowed because of lower wages. The Civil War forced wealthy, southern women to abandon social norms and challenge gender stereotypes, which subsequently left women in a state of social limbo during and after the Civil War.

Additionally, Massey claims that, "the best teachers are women, not because they performed their duties more satisfactorily, however, but because they demanded less pay and considered teaching a 'prime vocation' and not merely a stepping stone to a better job like most men."[46] Massey argues that many southern towns encountered difficulty in hiring male teachers for common schools. Compared to the North, the South was slow in the development of public education due to the less densely populated regions. The North was considerably more urban than the South. Also, many southerners were opposed to the idea of tax-supported

[44] Massey, *Bonnet Brigades*, 11.
[45] Ibid, 11.
[46] Ibid, 108.

schools. The Civil War prompted the idea in the South that women were better suited to teach. Men increasingly abandoned teaching positions and enlisted in the war. With the constant disturbance in the teaching curriculum, many southerners begrudgingly turned towards women to fill the open positions. In return, southern women pursued the opportunity to reconstruct public opinion of women teachers.

During the Civil War southern women repeatedly faced with conflicting ideologies and moral codes. The Confederacy developed an ideology based on sacrifice to encourage women to support the war effort. However, this clashed with the long held antebellum social obligation of marriage and child rearing. Education for women before the Civil War was designed as a way for women to learn how to become better mothers and socialize with their peers. There was no expectation that education would allow for further career opportunities other than becoming a wife and mother. When the war commenced, southern women found themselves without steady financial support, and began entering the workforce--the male dominated sphere--to support their families. Teaching had been viewed as a suitable profession for women only if it was inside of the home, the female dominated sphere. Teaching in the public sphere had been considered unsuitable because it was an encroachment on male territory. With the many challenges women encountered with shifting gender roles and their place in society, more research needs to be done on the evolution of the wage gap between men and women. Before the Civil War, teaching was a male dominated profession in the South. This changed with the onset of the war and the need for men on the frontline. Women filled the gaps men left, and were subsequently paid less because of the longstanding view that women were expected to stay in the home.

In the article "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," Drew Gilpin Faust argues that changing gender roles for Confederate women ultimately led to the South's loss in the Civil War. Although Faust's conclusion is debatable, there is no denying that the Confederacy placed an unrealistic burden on women. The ideology called on women to sacrifice their sons, husbands, brothers, and uncles, as well as their lifestyles, in order to benefit the Confederate cause of independence. Faust argues that, "the system of reciprocity central to this understanding of social power had been violated by the wartime failure of white Southern males to provide the services and support understood as requisite to their dominance."[47] Women struggled to reconcile antebellum ideals with wartime realities. The institution of marriage and the way parents raised their daughters to become proper southern belles was inconsistent with the Confederate wartime ideology. This led to a breakdown in southern culture. Women invaded the public sphere because they were left with no choice but to do so when the male figures in their life left to fight in the war. This unprecedented shift in social power required women to adjust their behavior and reliance on male financial support. Although the Confederate government attempted to make "use" of women on the homefront by shaping an ideology professionalizing sacrifice and valorizing their passive waiting by outlining specific roles a women could acquire it was not enough to stop the shifting of gender roles.

According to Faust, the Confederacy viewed teaching as a way to limit war-born behavioral changes because they expected the profession to have little postwar impact.[48] The

[47] Drew Gilpin Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War," *The Journal of American History* 76, no. 4 (Mar., 1990): 1221.
[48] Ibid, 1216.

feminization of the teaching profession had started at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the North, but had yet to influence the South. The shortage of male teachers in the South left the Confederacy no choice but to employ women. The Confederate government assumed that, once they won the war and established independence from the Union, the southern way of life would revert back to traditional gender roles and spheres. According to Faust, however, "the romance of the 'battle piece' had disappeared before the pressing realities of war."[49] The romanticism and patriotism that categorized the beginning of the Civil War began to erode as the war continued on longer than expected. Idealistic assumptions about war gave way to harsh reality. Women started to question the Confederate ideology of sacrifice and lost their idealistic assumptions of war. This led to the breakdown of the Confederate ideology that had not given women large enough roles in the war effort and forced them to embrace their new roles in the public sphere.

Giselle Robert's book, *The Confederate Belle*, further strengthens the proposal that an unrealistic Confederate ideology led to the breakdown of traditional antebellum ideals. Roberts argues that elite southern women were brought up in a society where the primary goal was to marry. In marriage a woman would find financial security and purpose. According to Roberts, however, "wartime necessity had refashioned an ideal of womanhood into one that supported the war effort while contradicting the underpinnings of the antebellum role."[50] Therefore, women were challenged to simultaneously abide by the notions that women must marry and become financially supported by their husbands, but also gladly sacrifice their male

[49] Ibid, 1227
[50] Roberts, *The Confederate Belle*, 91.

counterparts for the war effort. Consequently, women found that they needed to enter the workforce to gain financial support and independence. The subsequent rejection of gender roles by women is demonstrated in the shift from male to female teachers. Ultimately, the progression from the development of a women's culture in the South to the gender shift that took place during the Civil War is connected through women's education. Education is the overall key to explaining women's roles in the South.

Chapter 2

Stitch by Stitch: Nineteenth Century Needlework and Samplers

According to James Deetz, "it is terribly important that the 'small things forgotten' be remembered. For in the seemingly little and insignificant things that accumulate to create a lifetime, the essence of our existence is captured."[1] Through ordinary objects a person's life is exposed, cultures are revealed, and a better understanding of everyday life is captured. The study of material culture is important because the reliance solely on the written record perpetuates a skewed perspective, and can sometimes blur the line between past and present. To gain a "true understanding of the very fundamental differences between ourselves and our forebears of two centuries ago," Deetz argues, historians must look towards the small things forgotten.[2] Material culture and the written record can be mutually complementary and, when fused together in an argument, are able to produce a more complete and complex narrative. For instance, when focusing on the narrative of southern, elite, white, women the material culture that was most produced and circulated were textiles. Acquiring the skill for needlework started at a young age for girls with the production of samplers.[3] Completed either at boarding school or at home with a tutor or female relative, samplers as a decorative art form held both a manifest and latent function. Pleasing to the eye and a status symbol, a family displayed samplers in

[1] James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 259.
[2] Ibid, 256.
[3] Susan Burrows Swan, *A Winterthur Guide to American Needlework* (New York: A Winterthur Book/Rutledge Books Crown Publishers Inc., 1976), 10. A Sampler is defined as "needlework intended to record stitches, and designs, to serve either as a sort of reference notebook or as a 'sample' statement of ability. Some needlework, clearly intended for this purpose, lacks dates and even names."

order to boast about a daughter's education and how she was turning into a proper southern belle. This is the manifest function of a sampler, while the latent function is utilizing this needlepoint exercise as an educational tool. Advantageous for instruction in English, Literature, Geography, and Genealogy, samplers held dual roles in educating young girls while also creating refined young ladies ready for marriage. With the changes in gender roles perpetuated by the Civil War, schoolgirl samplers were instrumental in young girls' education, providing them with more than just a useful household skill.

Needlework is a generic and comprehensive term that includes every piece of work that can be completed by using a needle.[4] Samplers, embroidery, quilting, and patchwork are all forms of needlework, and are covered by this blanket term. According to the *Encyclopedia of Victorian Needlework*, "from the most remote ages the employment of the Needle has formed a source of recreation of remunerative work, and no less of economy the useful occupation of time and charity, amongst all classes of women, in all parts of the world."[5] Needlework, as a form of women's work and material culture, in relation to broader social, economic, class, and gender issues, has largely been unexplored by historians. Few historians have dedicated books to the topic of needlework. In *English Domestic Needlework 1660-1860*, Therle Hughes argues that, although the topic of needlework as a broad subject has been largely ignored, the study of samplers is extensive.[6] Needle working was an extraordinarily valuable skill that pierced the social, political, economic, and cultural facets of daily life. Termed "women's work" in the

[4] Margaret Vincent, *The Ladies' Work Table: Domestic Needlework in Nineteenth-Century America* (London and Hanover: University Press of New England, 1988), xiv.
[5]S.F.A. Caulfeild, *Encyclopedia of Victorian Needlework*, Vol. II M-Z, 354.
[6]Therle Hughes, *English Domestic Needlework 1660-1860* (London: Abbey Fine Arts, 1961), 154.

seventeenth century and galvanized as such by the nineteenth century, needlework was "simultaneously a site of cultural production and personal expression." [7] Stitching a sampler was considered the most appropriate leisure activity for a woman, but at the same time doing so created a tangible object that demonstrated a woman's hard work, skill, and pride. Therefore, the history of needlework is fundamentally entwined with the history of women.

As an embroidery form, more samplers have been preserved than any other form of needlework because of their monumental value to women who passed them on from generation to generation as family heirlooms. The oldest sampler found in the United States was actually made in England in 1610 by Anne Gower, wife of Governor John Endecott.[8] This seventeenth century sampler made its way to the New World and was passed down through the Endecott family until it was given to the Essex Institute in Salem, Massachusetts. Sixteenth-century embroiderers in Italy, Germany, and England set the precedents for samplers made in America. Anne Gower's sampler was influenced by English embroideries because of the natural white thread in cross-stitch that was popular at the time. An 8-by-18 inch exercise in white needlepoint lace combined with embroidery, Gower's sampler is an example of

[7] Aimee E. Newell, "Tattered to Pieces: Amy Fiske's Sampler and the Changing Roles of Women in Antebellum New England," in *Women and the Material Culture of Needlework and Textiles 1750*-1950, eds. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin, 51-68 (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), 62; Mary E. Wiesner, "Spinsters and Seamstresses: Women in Cloth and Clothing Production," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discovery of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers, 191-205 (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), 205. Women's work is defined as an ideological construct that according to Mary Wisener is the epithet for the boring, mundane, domestic tasks beneath the dignity of a man.

[8] Virginia Churchill Bath, *Needlework in America: History, Designs, and Techniques* (New York: The Vikings Press, 1979), 11.

conventionalized floral patterns in filet and a technique that is now called drawnwork.[9] The primary purpose of a sampler was to teach and reinforce basic sewing and marking skills; this purpose transitioned however, with the evolution of the American style samplers. Samplers "first came into use during the sixteenth century, on account of the great scarcity and high price of Lace pattern books… [and] at a later date, when lace was not so much made, and designs of all kinds were more abundant, Samplers were still worked, no longer with the object of perpetuating a pattern, but to exhibit the skill of the embroiderer."[10] The transition from practicality to performance art can be seen in the overall evolution of the American colonies in the New World. From the emergence of the colonies in the seventeenth-century, to the American Revolution in the eighteenth-century, and to the eve of the Civil War in the nineteenth-century, samplers transitioned along with the ever changing political, economic, and class climate. In Beatrice Levin's opinion, original "needlework designs and ideas reflected the national characteristics of the embroiderer's homeland. After 1750, imagination, design, and special stitches contributed to a distinctly American sampler, which was less formal and symmetrical than British needlework at the time."[11] By losing a British identity, women provided an American one.

During the eighteenth century, the formatting of samplers shifted from the long, narrow shape, demonstrated by Gower, to a rectangle. Naturalistic motifs and gentler, pastel

[9] Ibid, 303. Drawnwork, previously known as cutwork, is a technique where embroidery worked into an area of cloth from which threads have been withdrawn in one direction only. Origin of drawnwork is Italian.

[10] S.F.A. Caulfeild, *Encyclopedia of Victorian Needlework*, Vol. II M-Z, 433.

[11] Beatrice Levin, "American Schoolgirl Needlework." *Antiques & Collecting Magazine* 109, no. 12 (February 2005): 46. *Publisher Provided Full Text Searching File*, EBSCO*host* (accessed March 3, 2016), 47.

colors became the norm and the age of a sampler maker lowered. According to Ethel Stanwood Bolton and Eva Johnston Coe, the average age of a sampler maker was thirteen, which indicates that this became an activity for young girls.[12] These overall changes indicate a distinctly American look and this evolution continued throughout the eighteenth century to include a biblical tone, with bible verses as well as natural elements such as hillocks and trees gracing the samplers. The predominant stitches of this period were tent and cross, counted satin, and line stitches.

Moving into the nineteenth century there was a renewed interest in thread-counted samplers, usually worked into cross-stitch, and the motifs became more static because of the change in subject matter.[13] It became increasingly more common in America to favor text over motif, creating the defining distinction between English and American samplers. The early nineteenth century experienced a shift in subject matter due to the changes in young girls' education. Boarding schools became more widely available and tutors were increasingly hired specifically for young girls. Subject matter and content also became more equal to the schooling young boys received. Therefore English, Literature, Mathematics, and Geography became more commonplace classes. This shift is demonstrated in the samplers young girls stitched. Weave linen, which was popular in the eighteenth century, became less common material due to the rise in popularity of linen scrim, "a meshlike fabric that made stitches easy to count."[14] Cheaper and more pliable, young girls preferred linen scrim when working on samplers meant for their school projects.

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[12] Bath, *Needlework in America: History, Designs, and Techniques*, 189.
[13] Ibid, 195.
[14] Ibid, 201.

Rozsika Parker argues that needlework linked childhood and womanhood, and was meant originally to teach obedience and patience by sitting long hours with a bowed head.[15] This gendering of the needle started at a young age and was always a part of young girls' education in America. Girls often made their first sampler with a female relative, usually their mother, at the age of five or six. The original purpose was to practice working with numerals and the alphabet in order to recreate the stitch on household items because etiquette dictated that proper housekeeping included the marking of all clothing and linens.[16] The simplest form of marking required the initials in a cross stitch, but sometimes a more formal marking was required with full names, dates, and an identification number for each item. The necessity for marking possessions in this fashion came from the need to recognize items in community washing areas, "when it was important to identify household and personal linens that were otherwise plain and without identifiable characteristics."[17]

If a young girl were fortunate enough and her family financially able, her early formal education began at a dame school. The dame school was prevalent in the late eighteenth century, and girls attempted to learn reading and mathematics. The most common activity in a dame school was "practicing plain sewing stitches and knitting that they were likely to have begun learning at home from their mothers."[18] Every girl in a dame school worked a sampler where she demonstrated her ability with a needle. If a young girl could not attend dame school,

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[15] Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: The Women's Press, 1984), 82-83.
[16] Swan, *A Winterthur Guide to American Needlework*, 13.
[17] Vincent, *The Ladies' Work Table: Domestic Needlework in Nineteenth-Century America*, 7-8.
[18] Susan Burrows Swan, *Plain and Fancy: American Women and Their Needlework, 1700-1850* (New York: A Rutledge Book, 1977), 46.

which was sometimes the case for those in the South who lived in rural, less populated areas, wealthy fathers who could afford to educate their daughters connected with other wealthy families to subsidize a tutor. After dame school, a young girl might have been sent off to a sewing class. Also common in all towns and cities in America, needlework schools expanded after the 1750s to include other subjects such as music, English, and French. Sewing schools evidently became the predecessor to boarding schools in the nineteenth century. After sewing school, only the wealthiest families were affluent enough to send their daughters to a finishing school where courses widely varied between curtsying, table arrangement, reading, painting, music, and of course needlework.

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century began a new chapter for women's education as boarding schools became increasingly common. Courses mirrored that of men's schooling; however, the art of needlework never left women's schools. Sampler making was essential to a young girl's education because she produced works such as embroidered maps, genealogical tables, memorial pictures, and scenes from contemporary and classical literature.[19] One of the earliest established boarding schools for women was the Moravian School in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Founded in the early 1740s, the school was originally intended for Moravian girls only. Due to lack of attendance, in 1786 church leaders opened the school's doors to non-Moravians. Daughters from some of the most prominent and wealthy families attended the school: Lees from Virginia; Sumpters, Hugers, and Alstons from South Carolina; Bayards and Elmendorfs from New Jersey; Bleeckers, Lansings, Livingstons, and

[19] Bath, *Needlework in America: History, Designs, and Techniques*, 157.

Roosevelts from New York.[20] Entering the boarding school as young as five or six, a young girl took courses in reading, writing, English, German, arithmetic, geography, history, botany, music, drawing, plus intensive needlework training.

As boarding school education advanced, the perception of why young girls were sent to be educated did not. The dominant reason most wealthy southern belles were sent to boarding school was to become educated and groomed to find a husband. Even though samplers were utilized to help young girls practice their reading, writing, geography, and genealogy, their original purpose was to learn basic sewing and marking skills and to create a beautiful picture that could be framed and hung in a parlor.[21] Samplers demonstrated a girl's ability with a needle and the gentility of her family, because only families of wealth could afford to send their daughter to boarding school and have her learn decorative needlework. According to Aimee Newell, "samplers may also have functioned as conversation pieces, designed to provoke questions and guide genteel conversation allowing the family, as well as their guests, to show taste, sensibility, and discernment."[22] Equated with femininity, samplers, although intended to be an exercise in stitching for practical reasons, were nevertheless vital to young girl's education. This type of learning eventually became useful to women outside of marriage.

In order to study material culture, more specifically nineteenth century schoolgirl

[20] Swan, *Plain and Fancy: American Women and Their Needlework, 1700-1850,* 59-60.
[21] Aimee E. Newell, "Tattered to Pieces: Amy Fiske's Sampler and the Changing Roles of Women in Antebellum New England," in *Women and the Material Culture of Needlework and Textiles 1750*-1950, eds. Maureen Daly Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin, 51-68 (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), 55.
[22] Ibid, 56.

samplers, the Prownian Method is the most practical and helpful way to go about researching these objects. This five-step approach includes: description, deduction, speculation, research, and interpretive analysis.[23] The first step, description, is the examination of the visual attributes of the object, and the second step, deduction, explores the object's relationship and interaction with the examiner.[24] The third step, speculation, is similar to some of E. McClung Fleming's operations in his five-fold classification study, namely the cultural analysis step. In Fleming's opinion, the cultural analysis step "seeks to examine in depth the relations of the artifact to aspects of its own culture."[25] Moving beyond the description of the object, the examiner should be able to see links between the object and human behavior. Discovering the function of the object in its own culture and analyzing its importance should also reveal questions for the examiner to research further. By placing the object in its own culture, questions arise about who the maker was, the purpose of the object, why certain materials were used, why these materials were chosen over others, class status, gender, and use. These inquires then prompt the examiner to conduct research and examine further the intertextual relationships of the object. In the fourth step of the Prownian Method, the research "prospectus should be detailed enough to give a clear sense of what *in your object* has given rise to interpretation."[26] The research should go beyond a synopsis of findings, and pose an argument to support the interpretation of the object. The fifth step in the Prownian Method is interpretive analysis.

[23] Kenneth Haltman, and Jules David Prown, *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), 8.
[24] Ibid, 5-6.
[25] E. McClung Fleming, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," in *Material Culture Studies in America*, edited by Thomas J. Schlereth (Lanham: Altamira Press, 1999), 169.
[26] Haltman and Prown, *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture*, 7.

Combining this Prownian step with the suggestions on interpretation by Fleming, the concluding examination of the object is a clear argument supported by the evidence. In Fleming's opinion, "interpretation focuses on the relation between some fact learned about the artifact and some key aspect of our current value system, and relation must be sufficiently intense or rich to have self-evident meaning, significance, or relevance."[27] Interpretation of an object should not be about stating facts, but about exploring the relationships the object has created with others.

According to Haltman, "analysis should digest, develop, and present perceptions generated from these exercises, but differ from them in being structured by an argument, a clearly worded *claim* defended through detailed references to both the object and its context."[28] The final analysis of the object should not be about restating findings, but by using these findings to form an argument. This "student-centered" learning tool is the best comprehensive method for examination, and guides the following research in this paper. By incorporating Kenneth Haltman's suggestion of key phrases or words to describe the material and the fundamental human reaction to the object, the Prownian method will successfully help to examine, research, and interpret nineteenth century schoolgirl samplers.

[27] Fleming, "Artifact Study: A Proposed Model," in *Material Culture Studies in America*, edited by Thomas J. Schlereth, 172.
[28] Haltman, and Prown, *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture*, 7.

Figure 2. Elizabeth Gould Sampler 1807

Figure 3. Ann Gould Sampler 1807

Sisters Elizabeth and Ann Gould from Queen Anne's County Maryland worked samplers in 1807 with a medium of silk on linen. In Figure 2 is Elizabeth Gould's sampler which is made of "two-ply silk on plain weave linen; stitches: chain, counted, cross, outline, rice, satin, singe, and split."[29] The central portion of the sampler has one partial and one complete alphabet. There is also a faint inscription with Elizabeth's name along with a house, trees, flowers in pots, and a dog. The border is composed of individual boxes containing a unique set of flowers. This style of border was distinctive to Leah Bratten Galligher Maguire's school in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, therefore it can be deduced that Elizabeth's teacher learned to embroider at that school before opening up her own in Queen Anne's County, Maryland.[30] Figure 3 is Ann Gould's sampler. Five years younger than her sister Elizabeth, Ann's sampler is made of the same medium and stitches as Elizabeth's and also contains a partial and complete alphabet. The sampler also contains Ann's name along with a house, trees, and a variety of flowers. In noticing the differences between the sisters work, Elizabeth's shows a greater attention to detail and needle precision than her sister Ann's. This is most likely due to the girls age difference and skill level. Elizabeth also uses a brighter color palate than Ann, with shades of pink, yellow, green, and blue, while Ann uses more muted shades of green, yellow, and blue. According to the needlework researcher Gloria Allen at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA), "these samplers were worked at a school in Queen Anne County, Maryland on the Eastern Shore as there are six almost identical samplers from that area, between 1807 and 1811."[31]

[29] "Elizabeth Gould Sampler 1807," Museum of Early Decorative Arts, Accession #4042.2.
[30] Ibid.
[31] "Ann Gould Sampler 1807," Museum of Early Decorative Arts, Accession #4042.1.

Figure 4. Mary Elizabeth Hartt Sampler 1820

Figure 4 is an 1820 map sampler created by Mary Elizabeth Hartt of York District, South Carolina.[32] The medium is silk on silk map needlework with chenille and silk thread embroidery.[33] The silk thread is black-brown in color (outlines of rivers, tributaries, and text) and the chenille thread (outlines of states) is in shades of greens, yellows and reds. The map shows the eastern portion of America as well as a few midwestern states. The states on the map are: Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey, New York, Vermont, Delaware, Michigan, Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut. Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia are also represented. Additionally, multiple bodies of water are included: Great

[32] "Mary Elizabeth Hartt Sampler 1820," Museum of Early Decorative Arts, Accession #4977.1.
[33] Ibid.

Lakes, Gulf of St. Lawrence, Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. Along the right and bottom border of the sampler are the coordinates for longitude and latitude, and in the bottom right corner is a painted floral wreath with the text "United States by M.E. Hartt 1820." Born in 1804 in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina to David Hartt (1776-1812) and Dinah McRee Hartt (1778-1823), Mary was sent to school at Steel Creek Female School located in York District, South Carolina in 1820.[34] She was under the direction of Dorcas J. Alexander, and worked the above sampler while she attended this institution.[35]

[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid.

Figure 5. Emily Louisa Harper Sampler 1824-1826

Created by Emily Louisa Harper of Baltimore, Maryland between 1824-1826, figure 5 exhibits another example of a map sampler.[36] The medium of this map sampler is silk chenille and silk thread on silk gauze, slightly different from the material Mary Elizabeth Hartt used on her map sampler.[37] Surrounded by a floral border in blues, golds, reds, and greens, the map depicts the United States including Oregon, the Internal Provinces of Mexico, and unexplored territories west of the Missouri Territory, the Arkansas Territory, and Lower Canada. The boundaries of states and territories are outlined in chenille while the waterways are in black silk. Black silk thread is also used in a cross-stitch to indicate the names of states, capitals, and territories. Near the Gulf of Mexico, in the bottom center of the sampler, the scale of miles is

[36] "Emily Louisa Harper Sampler 1824-1826,"Museum of Early Decorative Arts, Accession #4278.
[37] Ibid.

indicated to be 7/8-100 miles. In the lower right corner the following text is stitched: Map of the U. States.

According to MESDA, "the map sampler descended in the family of Charles Victor Pennington von Luttichau, a German-born historian whose mother was a member of the Harper-Pennington family of Baltimore and a direct descendant of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, one of Maryland's Signers of the Declaration of Independence."[38] Emily Harper was the daughter of U.S. Senator Robert Goodloe Harper of Baltimore and his wife, Catherine Carroll, a daughter of Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Emily's early education began at St. Joseph's Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland.[39] The map sampler however, was completed between 1824-1826, indicating that Emily would have been twelve to fourteen years old and no longer a student at the academy. She most likely completed this sampler at home with a female relative or under the instruction of a tutor.

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

Figure 6. Sarah and Phoebe Vanpelt Sampler 1827

The above 1827 sampler has a unique and compelling backstory. Figure 6 displays a sampler created by both Sarah and Phoebe Vanpelt from Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Virginia.[40] Silk on linen, this sampler is part of a group of related works known as the "Yellow House" samplers from Shenandoah and Rockingham Counties in Virginia.[41] Stitched onto the top half of this sampler is multiple sets of letters, both in uppercase and lowercase. Notice that the border and letters appear to be stitched by the same hand but, halfway through the work, there is a shift in the maker's style and tone. MESDA textile researcher Jenny Garwood speculates that this change in style and tone is due to the death of Phoebe in 1827. According

[40] "Sarah and Phoebe Vanpelt Sampler 1827," Museum of Early Decorative Arts, Accession #5829.5.
[41] Ibid.

to Garwood, “Phoebe and Sarah Vanpelt were the daughters of Benjamin Vanpelt (1786-1862) and Mary “Polly” Ragan (1791-1879), who were married in Rockingham County, Virginia in 1808.”[42] Both girls would have attended needlework lessons together, and, with the sudden death of her sister, Sarah turned Phoebe's half completed sampler into a memorial for her. The Yellow House samplers are unique because the group is based on the mourning motif and bouquet of flowers. Each sampler in the Yellow House series also has, of course, a yellow house with a fence, tall trees, and a strawberry border. Less common in the series however, is the verse Sarah stitched in the middle of the sampler: “A friend this verse besto [sic] ws [sic] hr [sic] honour led. Who loved the livin [sic] and laments the dead.” This verse, combined with the sorrowful lady weeping over a gravestone, contributes to the somber and mournful tone Sarah stitched in memorial to her lost sister.

[42] Ibid.

Figure 7. Sarah Hatton McPhail Sampler 1828

Born to John Blair McPhail, a prominent landowner and slaveholder, and Mary Wilson in 1820, Sarah Hatton McPhail lived in Norfolk, Virginia with her three sisters and four brothers.[43] As she grew up on a sprawling plantation, Sarah completed this sampler, pictured in figure 7, in 1828 at the age of seven.[44] On the top portion of the sampler, Sarah practiced stitching the alphabet in upper and lower case letters. After each completed alphabet, she included the date. The bottom section of the sampler is a water scene completed with silk threads in colors of blue, yellow, pink, green, brown, navy, and black. The border surrounding the sampler is a floral design with large roses that divide the top scene, alphabet and numbers, from the bottom water scene. At the very bottom of the sampler Sarah has included the

[43]Carrington Family Papers, 1744-1940, Virginia Historical Society.
[44] "Sarah Hatton McPhail, 1828."Museum of Early Decorative Arts, Witmer Southern Needlework Gallery, Accession #4439.

following text: "Wrought by Sarah Hatton McPhail in the 8th year of her age. Jan 28th 1828." Silk on linen, Sarah's sampler is almost identical to her sister Lilias Blair McPhail's sampler. Lilias's sampler is at the Baltimore Museum of Art. According to Jenny Garwood, "the Lilias Blair McPhail needlework picture depicts an almost identical scene [to Sarah's needlework] surrounded by a border of roses. At the bottom is stitched the following 'Wrought by Lilias Blair McPhail in the 10th year of her age. Norfolk Va.'"[45] From the similarities between the two sisters samplers, it can be deduced that they worked together to complete their needlework at either the same school or shared a private tutor. It is unclear from the Carrington Family Papers if the McPhail sisters attended a boarding school; the family papers do indicate, however that Sarah's two older brothers John Jr. and George Wilson, attended Yale Law School in 1825 and 1834 respectively.[46]

[45]Ibid.
[46] Carrington Family Papers, 1744-1940, Virginia Historical Society.

Figure 8. Margaretta Waller Gant 1847 Sampler

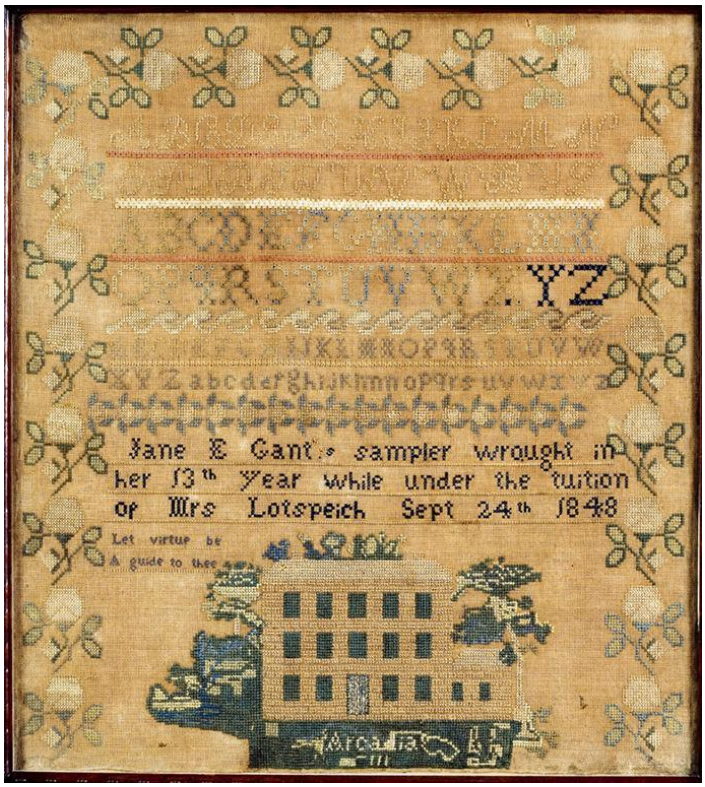

Figure 9. Virginia "Jane Ellen" Gant 1848 Sampler

Margaretta Waller Gant and Virginia "Jane Ellen" Gant completed the above samplers, in figure 8 and figure 9, when they were twelve years old in 1847 and 1848, respectively.[47] From Hopkinsville, Kentucky, both girls completed their samplers at the Hopkinsville school of Sophia Lotspeich.[48] Silk on linen, Margaretta's sampler depicts six lines of alphabet practice. She switches between upper and lower case lettering with each line and experiments with different text formats. After her last line of lettering, Margaretta included the following text: "Margaretta W. Gant's Sampler Wrought in her 13th year while under the tuition of Mrs. Lotspeich. April the 21st 1847." Below this line of text, on the bottom of the sampler, is a building with nine windows, two chimneys, and the word "home." Four large flowers surround the building. Two names are stitched on the left side of the building with the following verse: Sarah A. Means, Juliet E. Washan, and "Forget me not." On the right side of the building are the following numbers and verse: 1234567, 89101112X, and "Forget me not."

Jane's sampler is similar to her sister's, using silk on linen and the same general format. There are six lines of lettering that alternate between upper and lower case and different styles of text format. Following the alphabet, Jane stitched the following text: "Jane E. Gant's Sampler Wrought in her 13th Year while under the tuition of Mrs. Lotspeich Sept 24th 1848, Let virtue be A guide to thee." At the bottom of the sampler Jane stitched a similar building to

[47] "Margaretta Waller Gant 1847 Sampler," Museum of Early Decorative Arts, Accession #5402.2.; "Virginia "Jane Ellen" Gant 1848 Sampler," Museum of Early Decorative Arts, Accession #5402.3. Margaretta and Jane were the fifth and sixth children of Archibald Gant (1789-1854) and Rebecca Kinkead (1801-1874), born only twenty months apart. Their father, a native Virginian who arrived in Christian County, Kentucky by 1816, soon became wealthy creating $10 rabbit hats. He was widely known as "Gant, the Hatter" throughout southwestern Kentucky. In the last decade of his life, the sisters father started a mercantile business named "Kinkead and Gant" with the girl's mother's brother.

[48] Ibid.

that of her sister's sampler. The major difference, though, is that Jane's building is larger, with sixteen windows, and shows the name "Arcadia."

The Gant sister samplers show a rare phenomenon in needle working. Most samplers depict generic houses; the Gant sisters decided to stitch their own home however, showing the remodeling of their family house. According to Jenny Garwood, "to accommodate their expanding family size and wealth, the Gant family considerably enlarged their home in 1848, adding an extra floor and a wing to the front portion. This larger, remodeled image of the building is clearly evident in the sampler made the same year by sister, Jane Ellen."[49]

Ultimately, the relationship between the eight mentioned nineteenth-century schoolgirl samplers and education is the unique way each girl incorporated basic sewing techniques with lessons learned in other school courses. The primary purpose of samplers was to practice sewing and marking; however, nineteenth-century education standards altered this expectation. Elizabeth Gould and Ann Gould demonstrate the beginning of this shift in educational standards. The sisters' samplers include a repeated alphabet that was not particularly common for eighteenth-century samplers. The trend of multiple lines of lettering and then eventual lines of numbering is showcased in the progression of the Sarah and Phoebe Vanpelt Sampler 1827, the Sarah Hatton McPhail Sampler 1828, the Margaretta Waller Gant 1847 Sampler, and the Virginia "Jane Ellen" Gant 1848 Sampler. Each girl progressively focused more on the

[49] Ibid. "Jane titled the house "ARCADIA" and surrounded the building by trees and an extensive blue-green lawn. The name choice is an interesting one: Arcadia is a type of Kentucky bluegrass. The home remained in the family until 1913, and it survives today on reduced property size on 13th and Main Streets in Hopkinsville. The girls would be amazed to know that their samplers are the only images of a remodeling job completed over a century and a half ago."

stitching of the alphabet, classical and biblical verses, and numbering. It can be inferred that courses in english, literature, reading, and mathematics became increasingly important in the curriculum of young girl's schooling. Furthermore, as exhibited in the Mary Elizabeth Hartt Sampler 1820 and the Emily Louisa Harper Sampler 1824-1826, geography courses also became regular subjects taught to young girls.

Instrumental to young girls education, samplers were used as a basic foundation for instilling and furthering girls' understanding of school courses. Proving to be more than a simple household skill, needlework perpetuated young girls' education, and gave them a physical product to demonstrate their knowledge. Up until the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, southern women had limited options on how to decide what they stitched onto their samplers, other than in marking and household chores. When war did break out however, and men left to fight in the Confederate army, southern women were presented with the opportunity to finally put their education to use. This would eventually contribute to an overall change in stereotypical southern gender roles.

Chapter 3

With or Without Your Blessing: Elizabeth Grimball's Story

"I have received your ultimatum…and have made up my mind to one thing. I will hereafter act upon my own judgment…I will not be a dependent old maid at home with an allowance doled out to me while I could be made comfortable by my own exertions."[1]

Written in the heat of anger, Elizabeth Grimball sent these scathing words to her mother, Meta. Perturbed over her parent's insistence meddling in her life as a teacher, Elizabeth finally confronted her mother about their difference in opinion over the "proper" place of an honorable, southern woman. She argued that the teaching profession had become a noble prospect for women with her pedigree and begged her mother to see reason. The Civil War had just concluded and South Carolina was hardly a place of wealth and prosperity. Elizabeth questioned why she needed to return home and become a financial burden. There was no place for Elizabeth at her father's house. She would become another shadow ingrained into the burnt plantation her family once called home. With the South lacking good teachers or proper guidance in education, Elizabeth felt that her place was in Union, South Carolina, with her students. Elizabeth wanted to help rebuild her home state of South Carolina by educating their youth, so she replaced her false pride with a sense of accomplishment. Elizabeth Grimball, like so many other young, elite, southern, white women, found that teaching provided her with independence. The Civil War cleared a pathway for elite, southern, women to finally utilize their education and become teachers, which would in turn contribute to a shift in gender roles in the South.

A curious and bright young girl, Elizabeth was born to Margaret (Meta) Ann Morris

[1] Elizabeth Grimball to Meta Morris Grimball, September 11, 1866, GFC.

and John Berkley Grimball on July 14, 1831 in New York. Meta and John Grimball had nine children: Elizabeth, Berkley, Lewis, William, John Jr., Arthur, Gabriella, Charlotte, and Harry.[2] Elizabeth, being the eldest of nine, was the only child born in New York. Berkley was born in North Carolina, and the remaining seven children were born in South Carolina. The combination of northern and southern influences eventually revealed themselves in Elizabeth's personality. She did not agree with her siblings, notion of South Carolina secession and the possibility of war. However, the early years of the Grimball family were of peace and prosperity as members of a thriving Charleston elite society.

John Grimball was a wealthy plantation owner and planter who inherited property in St. Paul's Collection District, South Carolina, and in other nearby areas that are not entirely clear from his diary entries. At one point John mentions that he managed his mother's property on the Stono and Dawho Rivers, located southwest of Charleston, until her death on July 27, 1844. The childhood of the Grimball children was spent in the bustling city of Charleston, South Carolina where John purchased the Grove Plantation from the Morris family, his wife's relatives from the North, with funds from selling his Slann's Island Plantation and his mother's Stono River Plantation.[3] The Grove Plantation was combined with the nearby Pinebury Plantation, land John previously owned. During the fall and winter seasons the Grimball family occupied the plantations where John managed the planting of rice. At one point the plantation was bustling with the cultivation of cotton, corn, and rice; around 1852 however, John committed to only planting rice. In the summers, the family moved further into the town of

[2] See Appendix 1 for a genealogy of the Grimball Family.
[3] See Appendix 2 for a map of South Carolina pre-Civil War.

Charleston to escape the dangers associated with the swamps such as "country fever," commonly known as malaria.[4] Additionally, the Grimball family made frequent trips to Charleston in all seasons for social events. These trips often resulted in John buying and selling properties to earn an extra income.

From letters and diary entries written by John and Meta Grimball, the early education of the Grimball children appears to have been from either private schools or at the homes of private tutors in Charleston. Some of the elder boys attended Willington in the Abbeville District and the Military Academy in Columbia. The eldest son, Berkley, trained in the office of H. A. DeSaussure & Son, while Lewis went on to study medicine in Dr. Gedding's office in Charleston, and John Jr. went to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1854. Elizabeth attended Montpellier Institution near Macon, Georgia in 1847. An all female school founded by Stephen Elliot Jr., the Montpellier Institution was the second oldest school for girls in Georgia. Elizabeth finished her education in New York with one of her favorite aunts, her mother's sister.[5]

Meta took great pride in raising her children and running an efficient household. Born May 11, 1810 in St. Lawrence County, New York, Meta was a descendant of Lewis Morris, a

[4] Jill Dubisch, "Low country fevers: Cultural adaptations to malaria in antebellum South Carolina," *Social Science & Medicine* 21, no. 6 (1985): 641. William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion Volume I: Secessionists at Bay*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 216. Freehling notes that malaria infested mosquitoes descended on the swamps of Charleston in April and the frostbite killed them off in October.

[5] Elizabeth Bryant Johnston, *Lineage Book: National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution Volume IV* (Washington D.C.: Harrisburg Publishing Co., 1897), 8. The continual interest in New York by Elizabeth and Meta may be in part due to Elizabeth being the great great granddaughter of Lewis Morris. Morris was a New York delegate to the Continental Congress and signer of the Declaration of Independence.

signer of the Declaration of Independence.[6] She and John married in 1830 in South Carolina, and soon after Meta took on the role of a southern plantation mistress. Encouraged by her new southern surroundings, she raised her daughters to be proper, southern belles. Meta often remarked in her diary about appropriate customs and manners, and how Elizabeth was turning into a young, polite, Christian lady. Before the Civil War began in 1861, she regularly wrote in her diary about how she preferred her oldest children to marry. It seems to have given her much concern that none of her children showed any interest in pursuing or being pursued by suitors. Meta wrote, "it seems to me all the world are getting married except my children. I wish a suitable offer would come in Elizabeths [sic] way & that it would please her to accept it & that Berkley could find some nice girl with a little money to get married to. John will be obliged to resign & then he must try something else. - All this troubles me."[7] Frequently attending social events, such as weddings, Meta felt that her oldest children should be settling down, especially Elizabeth. When rumors of war began, Meta was more adamant than ever that her four oldest children needed to be married in order to fulfill traditional roles of men and women. "I wish they, the elder ones, could be settled, married well, it is for the happiness of a woman & for that of a man. I could wish that Elizabeth was well married and Berkley & Lewis. William might wait a little longer but if anyone very desirable should offer I would not object. I cannot alter this, and I think it better so, than married in an unsuitable way."[8] Unfortunately for Meta, Elizabeth did not marry until after the Civil War.

In November 1860 the Republican Abraham Lincoln was elected president, and the

[6] Ibid.
[7] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, December 15, 1860, Grimball Family Collection (GFC).
[8] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, March 15, 1861, GFC.

South exploded with fury. John had not been an active member in politics, but soon became an advocate for secession and the defense of southern rights. He wrote, "the prospect before us in regard to our Slave property, if we continue in the Union, is nothing less than utter ruin."[9] John owned somewhere between seventy to eighty slaves before the start of the Civil War, and meticulously kept track of their persons in his work logs.[10] With the election of a Republican president, southern slaveholders feared the destruction of the slave system. Therefore on December 20, 1860, South Carolina became the first southern state to secede from the Union. John remarked on the occasion that, "the people have therefore with unexampled unanimity resolved to secede and to dare any consequence that may follow the act."[11]

Elizabeth was in Philadelphia with her aunt when news came of the secession. She saw no justification for the secession of South Carolina for she had experienced no hostility or aggression towards herself or the South. Elizabeth regularly traveled to the North to visit her mother's family. Meta alludes in her diary to the fact that Elizabeth spent much time with her aunt in the North, and that she had a strong relationship with her. Moreover, Elizabeth felt that South Carolina had acted irrationally and without cause to call for secession from the Union. The overall threat and then act of South Carolina secession indicates Elizabeth's dissenting opinion and an independence from her family.

For Elizabeth to form a different opinion from her father and demonstrate a political view exemplifies her active questioning of societal gender norms. Her brothers were all pro-

[9] John Berkley Grimball Diary, December 17, 1860, GFC.
[10] See Appendix 3 for a comprehensive log of slaves John Grimball owned prior to the Civil War.
[11] John Berkley Grimball Diary, December 17, 1860, GCF.

secession, and, in particular, William, Lewis, and Berkley took it upon themselves to reprimand Elizabeth for her anti-secessionist views.[12] They believed Elizabeth was wrong in criticizing South Carolina's decision, and may have felt that because she was a woman, she should not have a political opinion. On November 13, 1860 William wrote:

> You, at the North cannot comprehend the irritation and hatred which animate without exception every man here. There have been two tremendous meetings here, which were addressed by Barnwall [sic] Rhett, Magrath [sic], James Conner and others, all declaring that our safety, our honor demanded from us as freemen no longer to submit to their insults and sneers, no longer to own as country-man men whose highest which is to invade the sacred rights of our homes with poison in one hand and the incendiary's [sic] torch in the other. We are fighting for existence.[13]

William was particularly adamant that southern honor was at stake, and that the only possible option to retain the southern lifestyle was to fight for their right to own slaves. He believed that the North had oppressed the southern people by restricting access to their property. On November 20, 1860, he again wrote to Elizabeth emphasizing the need to protect the family from dishonor and the wrongs suffered by the South:

> It is nothing to yell about that we are prevented from carrying our property into the common territory of the United States. It is nothing to yell for that the government is to be in the hands of men pledged to carry on the irrepressible conflict against us. It is nothing that they send incendiaries to stir up the slaves to poison & murder us? It is nothing that our brothers at the North robb [sic] us of our property and beat us when we reclaim it?[14]

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[12] Order of brother's names will follow the timeline of letters Elizabeth received, and how this thesis individually addressed them. It should also be made clear that much of the correspondence between Elizabeth and her brothers is one sided. The Grimball Family Collection only contains letters addressed to Elizabeth from William, Lewis, and Berkley on the matter of South Carolina secession. Elizabeth's response to her brother's letters can not be found in this collection, and more than likely were not saved by her brothers in the first place. Therefore, any of Elizabeth's opinions on the topic of South Carolina secession are deduced from her brother's letters.

[13] William H. Grimball to Elizabeth Grimball, November 13,1860, GFC.

[14] William H. Grimball to Elizabeth Grimball, November 20, 1860, GFC.

William was enraged that the North had the audacity to attempt to take the South's property. He viewed secession as the only viable option to condemn the abuse southerners had faced. He also believed that South Carolina had a right to secede from the Union. To him secession did not mean a revolution, but rather a legitimate action of a sovereign state. If southerners' rights were being challenged, then the plight of southern men was both honorable and lawful. Elizabeth did not agree with her brother's argument. She believed that with the Democrats holding a majority in Congress, the Republicans had little opportunity to pass any bills further restricting slavery in the South. She still saw no evidence in Philadelphia suggesting that the North was actively moving to restrict southerner's rights. Lewis responded to her rebuttal, arguing, "every one at the North, who does not own slaves, is opposed to the Institution. They are all enemies of Slavery and hope for its extinction."[15] In his letter Lewis states that everyone in the North is a "frantic fanatic." He genuinely believed that because the majority of those in the North supported the anti-slavery Republican party, there could never be a compromise between the North and South on the issue. Individuals who had corrupted justice were running the North and promoting the notion of an irrepressible conflict:

> We will have no more Compromises, and we will have our rights. If there be a man in South Carolina, who proposes delay in action, and a further continuance in this Union, he is a vile traitor and should be hung to the first limb that he can be dragged to. Aye hang him higher than Haman. South Carolina must go now, is she goes alone. There is no step backward, but to disgrace-wile submission and slavish chains.[16]

Lewis firmly believed that there was no alternative solution but secession, and South Carolina

[15] Lewis M. Grimball to Elizabeth Grimball, November 27, 1860, GFC.
[16] Ibid.

needed to rise up and meet the challenge presented to them by the North.

Elizabeth, however, believed that, by seceding, South Carolina looked ungrateful to the Union. The states had worked together for many years, and to abandon the institution now seemed ignorant. She firmly attested to the strength of the national government, and warned Lewis that South Carolina would make no friends by seceding. Lewis continued to admonish her by saying, "My God Lizzie! What are you writing? You speak as if we are the aggressors, and would dissolve the union on Blood shed, upon a mere abstract principle, when the fact is we are oppressed and are contending for all that we hold dear- our Property- our Institution- our Honor- aye and our very lives!"[17] Additionally, Berkley Grimball wrote a letter to his sister on December 8, 1860, where he championed the secession of South Carolina. "I hope it will end in establishing a Southern Confederacy who will have among themselves slavery a bond of union stronger than any which hold the north together."[18] Berkley, too, was adamant that the institution of slavery was being contested with the election of Lincoln. Seceding was the logical next step to a strong and united slave South. John, Berkley, Lewis, and William closely followed the convention that was to decide the fate of South Carolina. Before South Carolina seceded on December 20, 1860, Elizabeth still held out hope for the Union to remain intact. Nevertheless, this was not the case, and when she returned to South Carolina in January 1861 it was to whispers of excitement and preparations for an upcoming war.

After secession, the Grimball sons wasted no time in enlisting themselves in service to South Carolina and its cause. John Jr. offered his services to the governor for active duty while

[17] Ibid.
[18] Berkley Grimball to Elizabeth Grimball, December 8, 1860, GFC.

Berkley, William, and Lewis applied to serve in military companies. Although Elizabeth was not in agreement with secession and opposed to the upcoming war, she did take great pride in her state. Meta notes in her diary that Elizabeth went to town with John to see her brothers involving themselves with the war effort. Elizabeth was proud that her brothers were becoming brave soldiers who represented the great state of South Carolina and exclaimed, "anyone who says the Carolina troops would run, should be shot."[19] Moreover, Meta also notes the excited state Elizabeth was in at the intention of Berkley gaining military exposure at Fort Sumter. Elizabeth may have opposed the war, but she would not abandon her family and South Carolina.

Meta showed less enthusiasm for the impending war. At the beginning of 1861 she seemed to still hope for a peaceable solution between the North and South. However, as a dutiful Confederate lady should, she encouraged her boys to enter into military service, and sacrificed her happiness for the good of the state. "They must do their duty to their State; and I put my trust in my God & their God, my Savior & their Savior,- and I Pray for them & and for myself.- The Government at Washington seem full of duplicity and in looking back to the conduct of the seceding States, there seems to have been a truthful and noble faith, actuating them."[20] The same day Meta wrote this diary entry, the first shot was fired and Fort Sumter was under attack with her son Berkley in the middle of the battle.

At the beginning of May 1861, the Grimball family left the Grove and Pinebury Plantations, and moved further into the city of Charleston. Here they resided for some time in

[19] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, January 12, 1861, GFC.
[20] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, April 12, 1861, GFC.

their family home. The war did not affect the Grimballs' social lives, as their home was frequented with visitors. For example, Elizabeth consistently entertained a Miss Aiken, the Manigaults [sic], Mrs. Vanderhorst [sic] and Mrs. Wayne for tea. Also, Elizabeth made repeated trips with Ann Barnwell who, according to Meta, "pour[ed] out her discontent with life, herself, and all the world to Elizabeth."[21] Elizabeth and her younger sister Charlotte were also busy working with relief societies for wounded soldiers, and sewing clothes for them for the upcoming winter months. The official titles of the societies were: Relief of the Wounded and Clothing for the Troops. Meta seemed pleased with the way Elizabeth conducted herself in the early part of the war. She was immensely satisfied that Elizabeth was going to Miss Drayton's twice a week to learn how to cut and sew, a proper skill for a lady to know.[22] Meta was consistently preparing her two daughters for married life, and believed that aiding in the war effort demonstrated a mature, southern lady to society.

Unfortunately, as the war slowly progressed during 1861, the Grimballs faced financial difficulties. In Meta's opinion, the separation between the North and South was the right course of action, "but to us as a family it was just ruin."[23] Forced to sell their property in the North, the Grimballs were from this point forward continuously aware of the state of vulnerability the war left their land holdings in. Although they received a fair price for the plot of land in the North, this opportunity of financial gain did not a set precedent the length of the war. Furthermore, to add to the Grimball family's financial straits, the older sons were placed in a difficult employment situation. Before the war when John owned a vast amount of property in

[21] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, July 11, 1861, GFC.
[22] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, August 10, 1861, GFC.
[23] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, October 19, 1861, GFC.

the North and South, the oldest Grimball sons helped their father in managing the multiple properties. When the war began the boys were all eager to obtain commissions. This placed a burden on John who had to continue to maintain his duties as head of the household, but also add to his workload the jobs his son's had previously done. However, Lewis had difficulty in obtaining a position in the military at the start of the war. Therefore, he attempted to help his father with running his plantations near Charleston. Unfortunately for John, when he ventured out to the Grove and Pinebury Plantations to see how his son and slaves fared in November 1861, he was stunned to see that it had turned into a military station, and John was expected to entertain the officers at his home.

As the war continued into the New Year, Meta was struck with worry about the enemy invading Charleston and Savannah. "Things are very dark now & for ourselves ruin seems pretty certain. The whole Country seems to be abandoned to the enemy."[24] Furthermore, around eighty of John's slaves fled the plantations, and made their way to Edisto. In an attempt to secure the rest of his property, John removed the remaining enslaved people to the plantation of Dubose Porcher at Monck's Corner. In May 1862, Charleston was nearly deserted, according to Meta, "since the Fall of New Orleans and the Giving up of Nolfork [sic] I expect to hear of all sorts of dreadful things and it will be only necessary for the Gun boats to come here to have them take possession of the Town."[25] By May 16, 1862 the Grimballs had fled to Spartanburg, South Carolina to avoid the attacks on the coast. Here they acquired accommodations at St. John's College where they remained until the end of the war.

[24] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, February 27, 1862, GFC.
[25] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, May 12, 1862, GFC.

Spartanburg, South Carolina is where Elizabeth taught two children named Lotty and Harry. Her mother recorded that "through her kindness they are not left in perfect ignorance. I am afraid it tries her temper greatly."[26] John and Meta considered Elizabeth's tutoring sessions with the two children to be a highly respectable use of Elizabeth's time. She was still working within the private sphere and bringing no embarrassment to the family by venturing out into the workforce. Elizabeth committed her mornings to instructing Lotty and Harry. She presented herself to be a very competent and dedicated teacher, and Meta praised her highly saying:

> I know no one so cultivated and elegant in her manners as Elizabeth, or accomplished, she has a disciplined, and highly improved mind, and it is the help to her parents & her brothers & sisters, and the adoring attraction of the family circle…Lotty will be very handsome when she is fully developed and through E's care she will be a cultured & elegant young woman.- Harry is naturally clever but is not steady enough to do very hopefully. [27]

Elizabeth showed intentions of working outside the home when she began to teach privately. Exposed to ideas of independence and the ability of women to obtain jobs with her frequent trips to the North to visit her favorite aunt, Elizabeth strived to do more with her life than waiting to become married and a plantation mistress. Although Elizabeth held deep connections to the North, she was a southern belle who had no means or opportunity to act upon these idealistic notions. However, with the outbreak of the Civil War, employment in the public sphere became a reality for women. Men left to fight, leaving their jobs vacant. However, Elizabeth had to wait for the opportune moment to leave the private sphere and enter the public. With the war still in the early stages, Elizabeth had to bide her time and wait.

[26] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, July 23, 1862, GFC.
[27] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, September 2, 1862, GFC.

Eventually, as the war continued, her father slowly lost more of his property and the Grimball financial support dwindled.

As 1862 progressed, the Grimball family fell into further dire financial straits. According to Meta, the family had "no income, and are in a fair way of getting to the end of what we have, in this state of things, he [John] earnestly desires to subscribe to the free Market, to other demands upon the liberality of the public, but I tell him he has first to consider his own family."[28] Elizabeth may have seen this moment as a time when she could slowly influence her parents' opinion on women working outside the home. Teaching in a public school was a logical next step to help the family through difficult financial times. In December 1862, she began to bring her friends Miss Butler, Miss Clemy [sic] Leggy, and Miss Palmer to her family's temporary home. Miss Butler's mother was a teacher at the local district school, and Meta found her polite and charming. Elizabeth took some time off from teaching Lotty and Harry to go on an excursion with Miss Palmer and Miss Leggy to the Iron Mills. Meta notes that "the iron of this district is very fine, and they saw the process of preparing the Iron and brought home some specimens. The ride was a pleasant one, and as they carried a lunch, E. returned home very much pleased."[29] As casual and polite conversations go, Elizabeth was inclined to inquire about the daily activities of her two female companions. With Miss Leggy being active within her school, Elizabeth was exposed to the life of a public school teacher. The three women may have even spoken on the merits of financial independence and perhaps women's roles in educating the southern youth. The war had taken men away from their usual

[28] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, October 24, 1862, GFC.
[29] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, December 14, 1862, GFC.

roles and the field of teaching was left wide open for women to step into. Having the ability to consult and confide in Miss Leggy and Miss Palmer was of great comfort to Elizabeth. It gave her the encouragement needed to step into the public sphere and ultimately shaped her attitude towards women in the workforce.

Elizabeth spent the Christmas of 1862 with her friends Miss Leggy and Mrs. Dawkins in Union, South Carolina. Meta recounts Elizabeth's day:

> She was invited to spend the day with Mrs. Dawkins, at Union, where there is a very nice Episcopal Church, the only difficulty was the rising so early to go by the cars. E. was up in time, and came back in the evening, unexpectedly accompanied by her father, who got a furlough, and is now with us. E. had a charming day. Mrs. D is an energetic woman, and having no children her self, take great interest in other peoples children. There was a plentiful breakfast on their arrival, and then the Christmas tree for the children, with little gifts made by kind hands. After the tree they practised [sic] the Church Music, then went to church, where E. took her place in the Choir, they returned to Mrs. D's, had a real Christmas dinner, and came home by the cars in the afternoon.[30]

Elizabeth had spent most of the melancholy winter with Miss Leggy, and become thoroughly interested in her friend's views on working and making an independent living separate from her family. With the war still going strong, Elizabeth felt that she needed to ease the burden she placed on her family. Finding a husband was difficult given the circumstances, and an educated woman like Elizabeth saw teaching as a way to utilize her talents.

Early in 1863, the Grimball family's misfortune continued. On March 10, 1863 John was forced to sell the remainder of his slaves. This effectively ended his career as a planter. Meta wrote in her diary, "we are living on what little ready money we have & no income to be expected. Mr. G feels this proposed sell very much & I should not be surprised if he gave it up

[30] Meta Morris Grimball, December 31, 1862, GFC.

as he writes me word the price will only be 6 hundred round and there is no longer a hope of investing in 8 per cent Confederate bonds but the 7 per cent."[31]Although Meta held out hope that John would not have to sell his slaves and end his influential career, the war had taken its toll on the family and forced John's hand. Meta's father even advised John that he should sell the plantations along with his slaves. John not wanting to relinquish his planter status, did not follow his father in-law's advice and continued to hold onto his properties.

By August 1863, the Grimballs' private matters continued on a downward spiral when Meta's father had his house sacked by his own slaves. Meta wrote, "Papa has had all his negroes carried off in a recent raid on Pon Pon Heyward Manigault's too; Papa's house was sacked by his own negroes his Mill burnt and he lies ill at Adams Run."[32] Unfortunately, Meta's father never overcame the attack, and passed away on the morning of September 30, 1863. Her youngest daughter Charlotte had been taking care of him for twelve weeks prior with no improvement. Meta wrote in her diary how agitated with the war she had become, and her inability to see the end. She attributed the strain of continuous war and the struggling country to her father's death. Furthermore, her father had been a wealthy man and the war had bled him dry. If it were not for the country being torn apart, her children would have received at least one hundred & fifty dollars apiece.[33] Nonetheless, the money that was left to Meta from her father helped the Grimball family avoid total bankruptcy. However, this money mattered little when the Grimball family was faced with the reality that their current residence in Spartanburg, St. John's College, was going to be sold. The family did not know if they could

[31] Meta Morris Grimball, March 10, 1863, GFC.
[32] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, August 4, 1863, GFC.
[33] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, October 4, 1863, GFC.

continue living at St. John's College under new owners. By January 1, 1864, the family might have been homeless if it was not for the kind heart of Mr. Irwin, the new owner, who allowed them to pay the same amount of rent for another year.[34]

The Grimball family's situation became even worse during July 1864. Meta wrote in her diary on July 30, 1864:

> Mr. Grimball received a letter from William written from the 3d N.C. Hospital, Charleston, telling him he was there ill, & at the end of the letter said there was such buzzing in his head from Quinine he could hardly write, he had received the stockings sent down & had a pair on, was thankful for them. Arthur wrote the next day & Berkley Wilkins, both saying William was very ill. Arthur sent a telegram begging his Papa to come down at once, Mr. Grimball sent off on Monday, arrived in Charleston about 5 o'clock on Tuesday 25. William knew him but when he spoke wandered. Arthur met his father at the cars, Berkley was at the hospital. Mr. Grimball passed the night there & at about 7 o'clock on Wednesday morning William passed away, apparently without pain, his father closing his eyes.[35]

John and Meta had faced financial difficulty throughout the war, but the loss of their son was a heavy burden. Elizabeth had been especially close to her brother William. Writing letters frequently throughout the war, they conversed over simple matters such as Elizabeth's daily life in Spartanburg and how she was getting on with tutoring Harry and Lotty, in order to ease each other's minds of the war.[36] After William's death the family mourned his loss greatly.

Through the hardships the family faced during the Civil War, Elizabeth was finally able to convince her parents that entering into the public sphere as a teacher was beneficial to the

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[34] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, September 9, 1863, GFC.
[35] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, July 30, 1864, GFC. See also Appendix 4 for full letter.
[36] Many of the letters between William and Elizabeth are one sided. Although a few of Elizabeth's letters survive, it was not common for soldiers to keep letters from loved ones in fear of the enemy obtaining the letters and harming their families. The above-mentioned conversations are what I could piece together. Many of Elizabeth's surviving letters to William are water stained and smudged where only bits and pieces are legible.

family. Even though John and Meta were appalled and opposed to the idea of their oldest daughter working as a teacher, their financial situation offered no alternative. John had previously preferred to forgo necessities than see either of his daughters working outside the home. As time went on, John was not able to earn a regular income to keep his daughter's home. He wrote in his diary that he was "much disturbed by this economic necessity."[37] A friend of Elizabeth's, Emma Holmes, described the struggle Elizabeth faced when convincing her father that it was necessary for the family's and her welfare that she leave to take a teaching position in Union, South Carolina. Holmes wrote that, Elizabeth's "father and brothers were much opposed to it at first but she, like myself, was very desirous of doing something for herself, especially in these times, and they at last consented that she should do so for a few months."[38] Although John permitted Elizabeth to work for a few months outside of the home, she stayed in Union on her own free will and taught after the war ended in April 1865. Elizabeth was finally able to use the disruption of war as a tool to acquire a position as a teacher and earn a living for herself, and was no longer in the position to be a burden on her family's limited resources.

Meta described Elizabeth leaving home for the first time to work in the public sphere on January 18, 1865:

> This day Elizabeth left us to be a assistant teacher in Miss. Read's School in Unionville. Miss. Kenedy [sic] had been very kind in interesting herself about this plan of Elizabeth's, & went down with her to day, to see the school begin, E is to teach French & Music. The dear child had been the comfort and help of her parents, and family, she has taught her sisters, & Harry, and benefitted them in every way. Lotty, owing to her care & instruction is well educated, & Harry

[37] John Berkley Grimball Diary, GFC.
[38] Marilyn Mayer Culpepper, *Trials and Triumphs: Women of the American Civil War* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1991), 240.

> has been most unwillingly instructed, in French, and in every way elevated, & improved. She must be followed, wherever she goes, with a blessing; a dutiful & Christian child. Miss Read is keeping house, & we hope E will find it pleasant there.[39]

This diary entry written by Meta alludes to the notion that she was content with Elizabeth going to work in the public sphere. She gave Elizabeth her blessing when leaving home. There are numerous references however, where Meta plainly states her embarrassment about Elizabeth. In her diary, Meta said that she was "mortified by Elizabeth being a teacher."[40] Additionally, in a letter written to her husband, Meta confessed that she was humiliated that Elizabeth must lead "the treadmill life of a teacher."[41] Even though the Grimball family was dealing with difficult issues associated with the death of their son William and the Confederate war effort, Meta still retained the values and traditional ideas of turning her daughter into a proper southern belle. Meta was ashamed of the family's position when Elizabeth had to leave home in order to support herself. In Meta's opinion, Elizabeth should have been married before the war in order to have a husband to secure her financial support.

When the war ended in April 1865, Meta expected Elizabeth to stop working and come home. Meta assumed that, without the strain of war, the family would revert back to their prewar status and occupations. Therefore, Elizabeth could not be seen working outside the home. She would be damaging the reputation and honor of her family. Unfortunately, circumstances were not in the Grimballs' favor, and John was forced to sell off some of his property to pay off debts. The Grove Plantation was returned to the Morris family in New

[39] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, January 16, 1865, GFC.
[40] Meta Morris Grimball Diary, February 20, 1866, GFC.
[41] Meta Morris to John Grimball, August 23, 1866, GFC.

York. However, John was able to retain the Pinebury Plantation until his death in 1892. John wrote in his diary of the difficulties brought by unemployment and a lack of income.[42] The Grimball family had a challenging time recovering from the devastating war, and Elizabeth seemed to recognize the tough situation her family was in.

Furthermore, even though the Grimball family's economic base was dwindling, Meta still did not give up pestering Elizabeth about coming home. In a letter to Elizabeth, Meta demanded her resignation and a swift return to her rightful place in the home. Elizabeth became irritated with her mother's constant nagging and curtly replied, "I have received your ultimatum…and have made up my mind to one thing. I will hereafter act upon my own judgment…I will not be a dependent old maid at home with an allowance doled out to me while I could be made comfortable by my own exertions."[43] Elizabeth then went on in her letter to speak about the injustices faced by unmarried women, and how society demanded them to live with their parents until marriage. She concluded the letter by assuring her mother that she was indeed not ruining the family's honor by arguing that, "many noble women had entered the profession during the war."[44] After the Civil War, southerners gradually began to accept female teachers in public schools. If children had to be educated, then southern women were to replace the men who went off to fight in the war and the northerners who retreated back to their home states. Elizabeth felt that she had accomplished a worthy goal in entering a male dominated sphere, and becoming an independent, financially stable woman. No amount of begging from her mother deterred Elizabeth in giving up a life of freedom.

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[42] John Berkley Grimball Diary, GFC.
[43] Elizabeth Grimball to Meta Morris Grimball, September 11, 1866, GFC.
[44] Ibid.

Ultimately, Elizabeth took control of her financial well being by becoming a teacher in the public sphere. She defied the expressed wishes of her parents in order to pursue a career outside of the household, and became an independent thinker. The Civil War presented multiple opportunities to women who were unmarried and wanted to leave their parents' home. Instead of conceding to follow the strict moral code of a southern lady, Elizabeth forged her own path. In the later years of Elizabeth Grimball's life she married William Munro and stayed in Union, South Carolina to continue teaching. The death of her husband in 1900 required her to move back to Charleston, South Carolina where she too passed away on January 25, 1914. The remarkable journey Elizabeth made into the public sphere as a teacher and the tension this act created between her and her mother lives on in the letters and journal entries of the Grimball Family Collection. Elizabeth Grimball is an example of a shift toward young American women taking an independent stand in professions made possible by the Civil War. Instead of conceding to follow the strict moral code of a "Southern Belle," Elizabeth forged her own path.

Conclusion

Striving to tell an extraordinary story of nineteenth century women's education, schoolgirl samplers, and the story of Elizabeth Grimball bring to light the transition of southern gender roles brought on by the Civil War. Through opportunities presented during the Civil War, southern belles were able to utilize their education to acquire previously male dominated positions. For example, teaching was a previously male centered profession; however, with the dawn of the Civil War, eager southern men willing to fight on the frontline left students without instructors. Women stepped up and filled the teaching gap in southern schools, made possible by the education women received as young girls. The physical evidence for the type of education young girls had is in the samplers they stitched.

It is important to understand nineteenth century women's education and job obtainment because it prequels the twentieth century women's rights movement and modern feminism. American women's history is a complex and broad subject. Historians tend to focus on the moment women fought their way into the voting booths. The culmination of years of hard work to gain the right to vote is definitely thrilling, and compared to the supposedly docile and genteel southern belle, more captivating to a wider audience. Nonetheless, the southern belle was not the stereotypical proper lady that has been portrayed in popular culture. She had passion for political endeavors, dreams of working so she no longer had to rely on her father or husband for money, and a hope for independence that was unfortunately not sustained or approved of in antebellum, southern society.

How then can historians change the perception of the general public to view the southern belle as more than a docile woman whose only passion in life was supposed to be running a home? The National Women's History Museum (NWHM) is an online organization

that seeks to "inspire, educate, research and collect the stories of women's contributions to the social, political, cultural and economic life of the United States."[1] The ultimate goal of the NWHM is to build a world-class museum on the National Mall in Washington D.C., in affiliation with the Smithsonian Institution, in order to raise awareness and honor women's diverse experiences and achievements throughout history. When housed in a permanent location, the NWHM will be the first museum in any nation's capital that shows the full spectrum of the history of its women, and will serve as a guiding institution for other countries. Founded in 1996 by Karen Staser, the NWHM's first major achievement was working in partnership with other women's organization to raise funds and generate public support to move the monument of Lucretia Mott, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony from the Capitol Crypt to the rotunda of the United State Capitol.[2]

Currently, the NWHM has a dynamic website that offers online exhibits, educational programs, scholarship opportunities, research help, and other public events such as walking tours of Washington D.C. The exhibit section of the website includes a diverse range of topics such as, "Legislating History: 100 Years of Women in Congress," "Reforming Their World: Women in the Progressive Era," "Partners in Winning: Women in WWII," "Clandestine Women: Spies in American History," and "New Beginnings: Immigrant Women and the American Experience." Contending that women's contributions and accomplishments have been mostly overlooked or omitted altogether from mainstream history, the NWHM wants to fill this void. Instead of rewriting current museum exhibits to "fit" in women's history or omitting other important narratives in favor of a woman centric one, the NWHM is a place

[1] "National Women's History Museum." National Women's History Museum - NWHM. February 05, 2010. Accessed March 30, 2017. https://www.nwhm.org/.
[2] Ibid.

where women's history is told alongside current history exhibits. The overall objective is not to rewrite history; it is to create a place where historical scholarship and knowledge can be expanded.

With such a wide range of topics and a mission to highlight previously overlooked women's accomplishments, the NWHM website and eventual physical museum is the ideal platform to create an exhibit to showcase antebellum women's education. Beginning with young schoolgirl samplers to demonstrate the transition from eighteenth to nineteenth century education standards, the exhibit would take a look at women who used their education to gain jobs during the Civil War. Elizabeth Grimball as a teacher in Union, South Carolina would be one of the many stories told.

In today's political climate, citizens seem to inherently distrust the information that is dispersed at a rapid rate by the print media and digital platforms, but museums have stood as trustworthy sources. Since the nation's founding, museums have been consistent places of trusted information where conversations of local and national significance are able to take place. Museum exhibits have the ability to appeal to a wide audience and encourage intergenerational participation. As they are often dynamic learning hubs, museums have the ability to transform the way people see the world and each other. These cultural institutions invite citizens to learn, engage, and inspire one another. Museums have the invaluable opportunity to heal a divided country and begin a new conversation.

With this in mind, in mainstream history women have been generally overlooked. Their stories are passed over for a more male dominated perspective. When women's roles in the United States are mentioned, has been usually in subordination to a husband until the twentieth century women's rights movement. Therefore, an exhibit dedicated to women's education

would change the conversation about women's roles in the United States, and even shift preconceived opinions. For example, by creating an exhibit centered around Civil War era, southern women teachers' questions can be answered not only on women's roles in the past but their roles in today's society. Why is teaching a female dominated institution in the United States? How does the South's inability to unionize affect teachers' pay compared to the North? Why are teachers paid low wages to begin with? Of course this master's thesis does not answer these questions; however, museums have the ability to. Instead of writing an essay for an academic journal where only professional historians are apt to read it, curators are able to conduct research with the public in mind. Their exhibits receive local and sometimes national attention depending on the museum. Educational programs can also be designed around this exhibit in order to attract school groups, intergenerational museum visitors, adults looking for learning opportunities, and teenagers seeking extracurricular opportunities. Overall, museums are an essential part of American culture, and are a unique form of education for United States citizens seeking trustworthy information. Therefore, museums are the best place to change the conversation about antebellum women's education.

Education is a thread that connects women's history. Constantly changing and developing, most women have viewed education as a way to advance in the world. According to Susan Burrows Swan, "the proper education of a man decides the welfare of an individual; but educate a woman and the interests of the whole family are secured."[3] It is important to tell the story of how and why women were educated, and what they did with that knowledge. Women have always pushed the boundaries of society's designated roles. Education is the key

[3] Susan Burrows Swan, *A Winterthur Guide to American Needlework* (New York: A Winterthur Book/Rutledge Books Crown Publishers Inc., 1976), 76.

to a woman's success because nevertheless, southern women persisted in utilizing their education in order to gain independence and transform gender roles in the South.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Genealogy of the Grimball Family.

GRIMBALL FAMILY
PAPERS, 1683-1930

No. 980

INTRODUCTION

Biographical Note

The Grimball family was a prominent family in Charleston, South Carolina, during the nineteenth century. They owned two plantations near Charleston--Pinebury and the Grove--where they cultivated rice and other crops, particularly corn and cotton before 1852. The family descended from Paul Grimball who came to South Carolina from England in 1682 and was secretary and receiver general of the Province. He died on Edisto Island in 1696.

The chief figures in the Grimball family as documented by this collection are John Berkley Grimball (1800-1892) and his wife Meta Morris Grimball (1810-1881), daughter of Colonel Lewis Morris of Morrisania, New York, and Elizabeth (Manigault) Morris of South Carolina. The Grimballs were connected also with the Munro, Trenholm, and Wilkins families of South Carolina.

The Grimballs had nine children who are listed on the genealogical chart below.

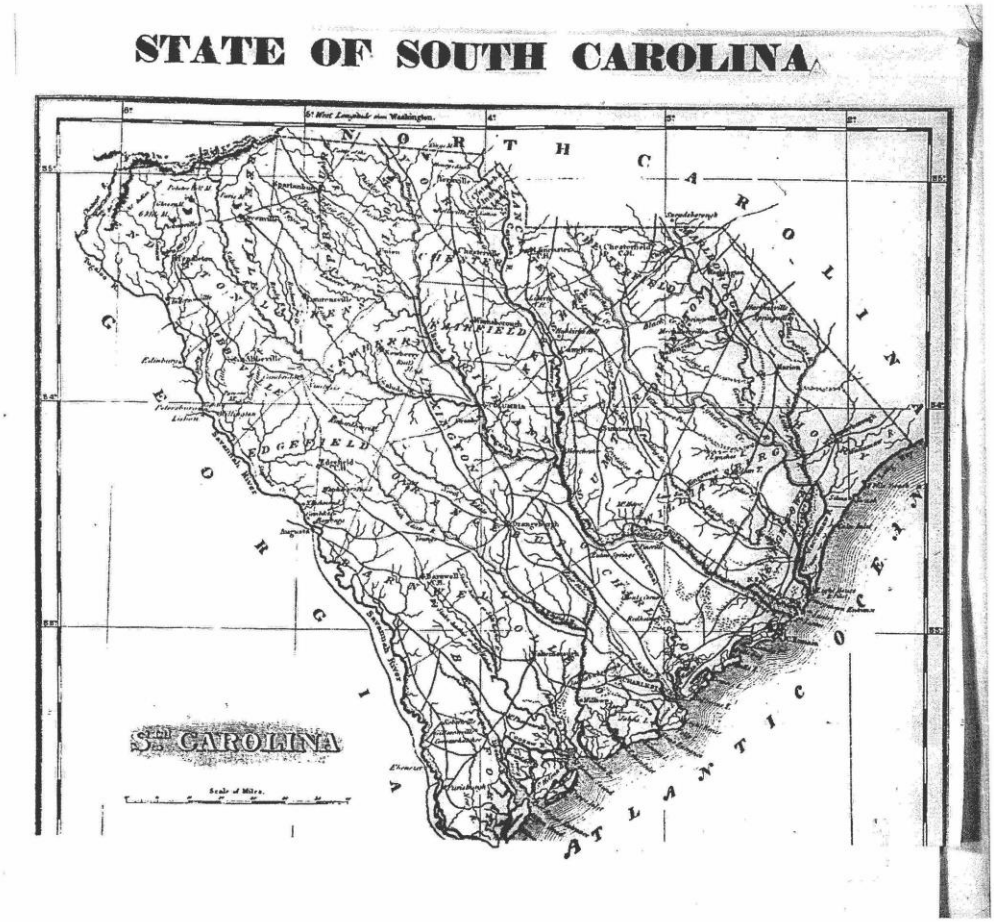
Margaret Ann "Meta" (1810-1881) - John Berkley Grimball (1800-1892)
m. 1830

- Elizabeth (1831-1914) m. William Munro (d. 1900)
- Berkley (1833-1899)
- Lewis (1835-1901) m. Clementina Legge
- William (1838-1864)
- John (1840-1922) m. 1876 Katie Moore; m. 1885 Georgina Barnwell
  - Arthur (1842-1894)
  - Gabriella (d. 1924)
  - Charlotte
  - Harry m. 1876 Helen E. Trenholm

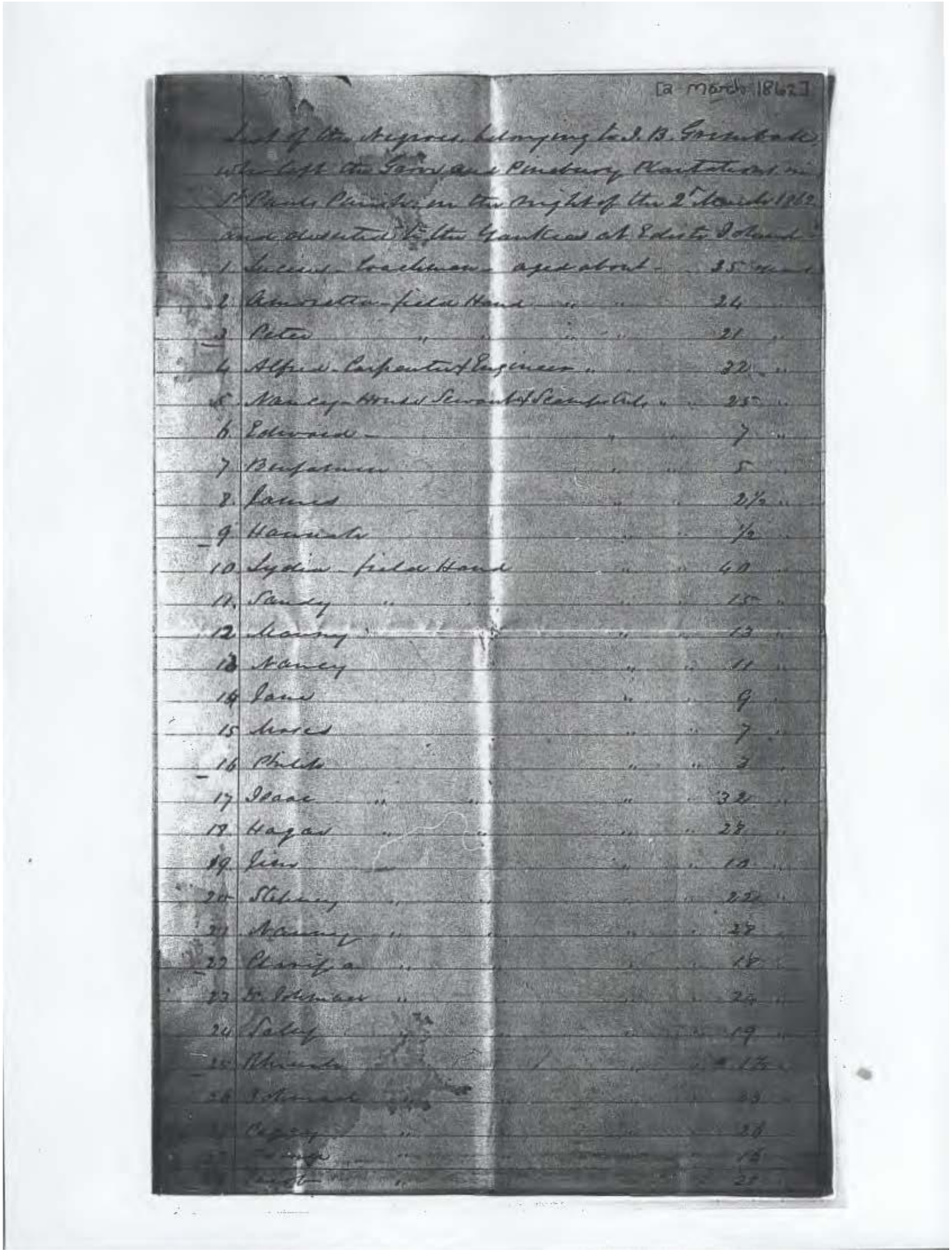
John Berkley Grimball's sister, Mrs. Eliza G. Wilkins, married Martin L. Wilkins (d. 1843). They had six children--Berkley, Gouveneur, Martin, Sarah, Eliza, and Annie--as well as others who died early in life.

3

Appendix 2. South Carolina Map 1860



Appendix 3. Log of slaves John Grimball owned prior to the Civil War. March 1862.



[2 March 1862]

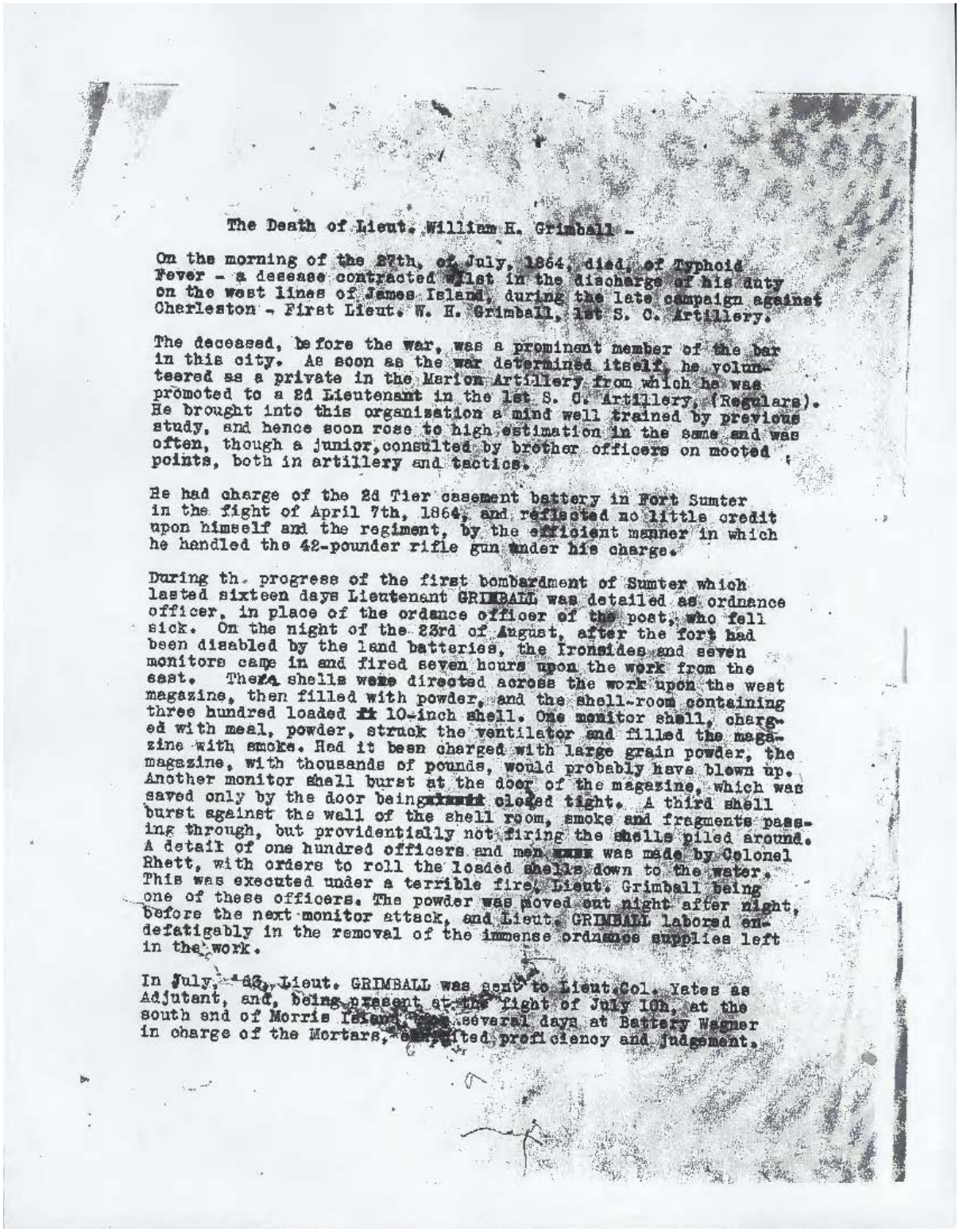
List of the Negroes belonging to J. B. Grimball who left the Grove and Pinebury Plantations in St Pauls Parish on the night of the 2d March 1862 and deserted to the Yankees at Edisto Island

1	[illegible] Coachman aged about	35 years
2	[illegible] field Hand	24
3	Peter	21
4	Alfred Carpenter & Engineer	22
5	Nancy House Servant & [illegible]	25
6	Edward	7
7	Benjamin	5
8	James	2½
9	Hannah	½
10	Lydia field Hand	40
11	Sandy	15
12	Mary	13
13	Nancy	11
14	Jane	9
15	Moses	7
16	Philip	3
17	Isaac	32
18	Hagar	28
19	Jim	10
20	Stepney	22
21	Nancy	27
22	Clarissa	18
23	[illegible]	24
24	Sally	19
25	[illegible]	17
26	[illegible]	33
[illegible]	[illegible]	26
[illegible]	[illegible]	15
[illegible]	[illegible]	25

30	Ben - field Hand - aged about	45
31	Young Sukey " "	[illegible]
32	Big Charles " "	2[illegible]
33	O. Sukey " "	[illegible]
34	Simon " "	65
35	Kate — [illegible]	40
36	Martha - field Hand	40
37	Richard " "	3[illegible]
38	Abby " "	37
39	Henry	7
40	Eliza	3
41	infant	[illegible]
42	O. Tyrah field Hand	60
43	Rose " "	23
44	Jim	5
45	Betsey " "	18
46	Affey " "	60
47	Thomas " "	21
48	Hardtimes	2
49	Roger " " infirm	45
50	Dabney " "	45
51	Rachel " "	18
52	Jim	12
53	Stephen " "	[illegible]
54	Clarinda " "	[illegible]
55	Cudjo " "	[illegible]
56	Tom " "	[illegible]
57	William " "	[illegible]
58	[illegible] " "	[illegible]
59	David (Carpenter)	[illegible]
60	Cillah field Hand	[illegible]
61	Beck	[illegible]

62	Frank	field hand — aged about	30 ..
63	Dick	.. ..	28 ..
64	Jenny	.. ..	24 ..
65	Paul	.. ..	21 ..
66	Royal John	.. ..	38 ..
67	Phebe	.. ..	25 ..
68	Peter	.. ..	16 ..
69	Julia	.. ..	10 ..
70	Deaf John	.. ..	38 ..
71	Priscilla	.. ..	23 ..
72	Bet Cook	absconded from Charleston 11th Nov 1862	49 ..
73	Henry	field hand — left Plantation in Jany	20 ..
74	Abram	.. .. — left on steamboat	45 ..

Appendix 4. The Death of Lieut. William E. Grimball, July 1863.



The Death of Lieut. William H. Grimball -

On the morning of the 27th, of July, 1864, died, of Typhoid Fever - a decease contracted whilst in the discharge of his duty on the west lines of James Island, during the late campaign against Charleston - First Lieut. W. H. Grimball, 1st S. C. Artillery.

The deceased, before the war, was a prominent member of the bar in this city. As soon as the war determined itself, he volunteered as a private in the Marion Artillery from which he was promoted to a 2d Lieutenant in the 1st S. C. Artillery, (Regulars). He brought into this organization a mind well trained by previous study, and hence soon rose to high estimation in the same and was often, though a junior, consulted by brother officers on mooted points, both in artillery and tactics.

He had charge of the 2d Tier casement battery in Fort Sumter in the fight of April 7th, 1864, and reflected no little credit upon himself and the regiment, by the efficient manner in which he handled the 42-pounder rifle gun under his charge.

During th. progress of the first bombardment of Sumter which lasted sixteen days Lieutenant GRIMBALL was detailed as ordnance officer, in place of the ordance officer of the post, who fell sick. On the night of the 23rd of August, after the fort had been disabled by the land batteries, the Ironsides and seven monitors came in and fired seven hours upon the work from the east. Their shells were directed across the work upon the west magazine, then filled with powder, and the shell-room containing three hundred loaded 10-inch shell. One monitor shell, charged with meal, powder, struck the ventilator and filled the magazine with smoke. Had it been charged with large grain powder, the magazine, with thousands of pounds, would probably have blown up. Another monitor shell burst at the door of the magazine, which was saved only by the door being closed tight. A third shell burst against the wall of the shell room, smoke and fragments passing through, but providentially not firing the shells piled around. A detail of one hundred officers and men was made by Colonel Rhett, with orders to roll the loaded shells down to the water. This was executed under a terrible fire, Lieut. Grimball being one of these officers. The powder was moved out night after night, before the next monitor attack, and Lieut. GRIMBALL labored undefatigably in the removal of the immense ordnance supplies left in the work.

In July, '63, Lieut. GRIMBALL was sent to Lieut.Col. Yates as Adjutant, and, being present at the fight of July 10h, at the south end of Morris Island, was several days at Battery Wagner in charge of the Mortars, exhibited proficiency and judgement.

Vita

Brittney Lynn Maslowski was born in Detroit, Michigan, but grew up in Cary, North Carolina. She graduated with a B.S. degree in History from Appalachian State University in 2015. The following autumn she enrolled in the Public History Master's Program at Appalachian State University, and graduated with her M.A. in Public History in May 2017. In the summer of 2016 she accepted an internship with the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History, where she worked in conjunction with the Archives Center and *On With The Show* exhibit team. Maslowski plans to pursue a career as a digital archivist.