# Resistance to Reconstruction: Virginia Women's Resentment in 1862-1870 Madeleine Stout – History

On April 12, 1865, Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne wrote in her diary "I pray God, that I may yet live to see his vengeance exercised against our enemies; that I may live to see our brave, our noble army rise up from the ashes of our burning homes, and yet avenge the death of our heros [sic] slain. If they could chose [sic], how few would come back to this life, for what is life compared with honour." Elizabeth's entry reacted to news of Robert E. Lee's surrender on April 9, 1865, and the Confederate defeat. By April 1865, the Civil War had run rampant through Virginia leaving behind destroyed cities, crops, and Confederate governments. Reconstruction is traditionally perceived as ranging from 1865-1877, but slaveholders in Virginia began experiencing the dissolution of slavery as early as 1861.<sup>2</sup> Although Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, some Virginians felt the effects of emancipation two years prior. As a result of the crumbling of slavery some wealthy slave-owning families experienced the reconstruction of their domestic lives from 1861-1865. Thus Elizabeth encapsulated the resentment many elite, white southern women in Virginia felt when faced with emancipation. Virginia, also known as the Old Dominion, was occupied by two warring armies from 1861- $1871.^{3}$ 

Studies of resistance to white slaveholding women to Reconstruction and emancipation, focus on the physical violence perpetuated by white southern men, but information on white women's resistance is often overlooked. How did white women in Virginia react to and navigate Reconstruction and living under military occupation? According to the diaries of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne and Lucy Rebecca Buck they reacted to Reconstruction with contempt and bitterness. Women resisted the rule of military occupation and Republican laws in unconventional ways through their prayers and religious work and supporting the erection of

Confederate monuments. For women like Elizabeth and Lucy, military occupation was a part of Reconstruction. The connection between the arrival of Union troops and the fleeing of slaves from their owners caused elite white women to associate the occupying soldiers with the new hardships they faced when their slaves disappeared. Elizabeth and Lucy demonstrate the ways women resisted Reconstruction through their resistance to occupation.

This paper will cover women's lives, reaction, and resistance starting with military occupation during 1862 and ending in the 1870s when Elizabeth Alsop's writings grew less frequent. It will track the response white slave-owning women had to military occupation in 1862, their use of religion to further resist and react with contempt, and the role ladies memorial associations played after 1865. In the years following 1865, as women of privilege adjusted to Reconstruction in Virginia, most southern women stopped writing in diaries and journals. It is hypothesized this occurs due to the changes in elite southern societies, specifically the high losses of eligible suitors and the need for women to engage in physical labor to compensate for the labor previously conducted by slaves. An example of the sudden departure from writing down one's thoughts is shown in Lizzie's entries becoming less frequent between 1869 and 1878.

The Union army occupied towns in Virginia, such as Fredericksburg, during the Civil War and after the war created tension between local Virginians, mainly women, and Federal troops.<sup>5</sup> The main goal of Reconstruction was to admit the former Confederate states back into the Union by creating and passing a new state Constitution, adhering to emancipation, registering African Americans to vote, and ratifying the Fourteenth Amendment.<sup>6</sup> In 1867, Congress passed the first Reconstruction Act which divided the South into five different military districts. Virginia was labelled "Military District One." The second Reconstruction Act vested in the

military district commander the duty to oversee the process of reconstructing his district. In 1867, the commander over Virginia was General John M. Schofield. Hundreds of Federal troops had occupied Fredericksburg since June 1865, at most the city housed 1,746 troops. Virginia was still under occupation in 1869 and did not experience a decline in soldiers' presence until receiving re-admittance into the United States.

The women living under occupation in Virginia throughout 1861-1871 provide a picture of how women resented and resisted the presence of Union troops. Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne and Lucy Rebecca Buck were from elite, slaveholding, white families in the South. 

These women not only experienced military occupation by Union troops, but the disintegration of slavery in Virginia. Both women were daughters of wealthy, white families who owned slaves, they were close in age, they were both unmarried from 1861 to 1871, and wrote of Union troops with resentment. 

When slavery began eroding in Virginia after July 1861, with Benjamin Butler's acceptance of enslaved refugees at Fort Monroe in Hampton, Virginia, these women were affected in the years that followed. In their personal writings the women refer to their family's slaves as "servants." In 1860, the Alsop family owned at least forty-eight enslaved men, women, and children. 

Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop first wrote of her servants running away on May 25, 1862. She recorded "Three of our servants have already left, viz; Georgianna, Mary Ann, and John. The others can leave whenever they feel so disposed."

Occupation in Fredericksburg, Virginia led to the Battle of Fredericksburg on December 11-12, 1862. In contrast to Elizabeth, Lucy Rebecca Buck recorded her family's servants leaving on June 9, 1863, approximately five months after Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. She wrote "the servants had all left in the night and carried our three horses with them." Buck connected the value of the slaves and horses to her family's wealth, she continued

"their ingratitude in taking the horses when they knew they were our main dependence of support" and "poor father his loss is the heaviest of all, amounting, it is thought to some sixteen thousand dollars." The absence of slavery in the Buck family led to a Reconstruction of domestic labor at their home known as Bel Air.

To uncover the reaction of elite white Virginia women to the enforcement of Reconstruction legislation, mainly the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, in the Old Dominion requires extensive primary source analysis. A challenge in researching southern, white women's reactions to Reconstruction is the lack of sources for poor and common women. One has to read the sources of elite white women to find the "hidden transcripts" of poor, white women. <sup>14</sup> The diary of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne serves as the central collection surveyed. Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, more commonly referred to as "Lizzie", began writing in her diary in 1862 at age 15. From 1862 to 1863, Lizzie travelled to Richmond to attend school at the Southern Female Institute. Her diary provides one example of the opinions of southern women during Reconstruction. 15 In addition to her travels, the diary includes her life at home in Fredericksburg, her religious beliefs, and her thoughts on the expectations of southern society for women. Lizzie's original diary resides at the Virginia Historical Society within the Wynne Family Papers collection in Richmond, Virginia; Andrew H. Talkov completed a full transcription of her diary which is available by permission of Talkov. 16 Lizzie's diary is a valuable and underutilized source on the opinions of young, southern women during Reconstruction.

Lucy Rebecca Buck provides a similar narrative to Lizzie. Lucy lived in Front Royal, Virginia, approximately seventy miles from Fredericksburg. Buck was eighteen at the outbreak of the Civil War and belonged to a slave-owning family. By 1860, it is estimated the Buck family owned at least ten slaves. <sup>17</sup> Her father, William Mason Buck, owned the plantation on the

perimeter of Front Royal known as Bel Air. <sup>18</sup> Lucy's diary provides information on how the crumbling of slavery, brought on by the Civil War and Union occupation, affected the domestic sphere in the South. Elizabeth R. Baer served as editor for the 1997 reprint of Lucy's diary, *Shadows on My Heart: The Civil War Diary of Lucy Rebecca Buck of Virginia*. Lucy's diary is housed in the library archives of Randolph College in Lynchburg, Virginia. Baer notes that she deleted redundancies, repetitions, and added punctuation to Lucy's entries in her publication of the diary. She defends her decisions in order to "provide a readable text" and "maintain the integrity of Lucy Buck's writing." <sup>19</sup>

Historians of Reconstruction write mostly of the changing political atmosphere, and not the social and cultural changes women encountered. Eric Foner, one of the most acclaimed scholars of Reconstruction, leaves out the role and response of southern women from 1865 to 1877 in his comprehensive study, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877.<sup>20</sup> In response historians, such as Anne Firor Scott, Drew Gilpin Faust, Laura F. Edwards, Hannah Rosen, and Jane Turner Censer, study women during Reconstruction. These women focus on definitions of southern womanhood, and how wealthy, white women in the South lived and adapted to changes brought on by Reconstruction. The historiography of these women's behaviors and attitudes during Reconstruction begin in the 1970s with Scott's work, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics. Scott argues that after the Civil War "southern women became in time a distinct type among American women." She states the goal of her work is "to describe the culturally defined image of the lady; to trace the effect this definition had on women's behavior; to describe the realities of women's lives which were often at odds with the image; to describe and characterize the struggle of women to free themselves from the confines of a cultural expectation."<sup>21</sup> Scott serves as the starting point of white southern women's history

in academia. She limits her scope to southern elite women who were part of educated and wealthy families. Scott notes that while states in the South differ in politics, economics, and culture; the behavioral patterns and images of women prior to 1861 were identical throughout the region. Scott claims that the Civil War broke southern life norms, especially women's role in society, and following 1865 women began to create a public record as they lived and acted within the broader society.

Writing in the 1990s, Drew Gilpin Faust criticizes Bell Irvin Wiley's work as being "limited by its biographical approach." In her book, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War*, Faust examines how white southern women navigated the changing ideas of gender and household brought on by the Civil War. She argues that white women, "invented new selves designed in large measure to resist change" in order to "survive in the altered postwar world of defeated confederates, regional poverty, and black freedom." Faust focuses on the identity crisis southern women experienced during and after the Civil War. Faust uses newspapers and the diaries, letters, and memoirs of slaveholding white women to analyze the change in elite white women's lives during the Civil War. She evaluates the role of ladies memorial associations in communicating Lost Cause narratives as well as helping rehabilitate the honor of white southern men who supported the Confederacy. Faust's work serves as part of the foundation for research on elite, white southern women.

In 2000, Laura F. Edwards published *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era*, in which she critiqued the lack of focus on women during the years of the Civil War and Reconstruction.<sup>26</sup> Edwards builds on research done by Anne Firor Scott and Drew Gilpin Faust to show the role white women played during the Civil War and Reconstruction eras.<sup>27</sup> Her study broadens Faust's focus on elite women to include women of

various social classes. Edwards argues that southern women "played key roles" in the Civil War because the "Civil War and emancipation shattered the regions' households and political institutions." Edwards points out that women were engaged in politics and change before they invented memorial societies and advocated for female suffrage. She acknowledges that elite white women's sources are more easily available than those of poor women, but she still crafts a narrative for the common white woman using court records, trials, and newspapers. Edwards's scope of research also includes African American women, and encompasses the Confederate states. Edwards constructs a synopsis of work that has been done in the twentieth century on southern women's history and adds a deeper analysis of the social mobility the Civil War and Reconstruction created for white women to the field.

Jane Turner Censer contributed to the historiography of white southern women's history with her work on the redefining of white womanhood in the South during Reconstruction. Her book, *The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood 1865-1895*, published in 2003, builds on Laura Edward's research on the changing notions of women in the South.<sup>30</sup> Censer argues that the "image of the women in the South immediately after the war has changed relatively little" despite the broad range of scholarship published by historians, such as Scott, Edwards, and Faust.<sup>31</sup> She claims that as the South was being reshaped in the years after the war by emancipation and Reconstruction legislation, elite white women in the South became more polarized between a revival of the "southern belle" image and the emancipated new woman.<sup>32</sup> Unlike Edwards, Censer focuses solely on the issues white women reacted to during Reconstruction. Censer also narrows her geographical focus by analyzing the circumstances in Virginia and North Carolina. Censer claims that Virginia adapted to rapid industrialization faster than other southern states and that industrialization played a significant role in the lives of white

women.<sup>33</sup> Censer also explores the differences between generations of women, primarily how younger women tended to fight the concept of the feminine and submissive southern belle that permeated fiction and histories of southern white women in the Civil War era.<sup>34</sup> Contrary to Edwards' work, Censer claims no one had attempted to revise Scott's work on postwar women, and sets out to show how they defied stereotypes and reacted to the changing ideas of courtship, education, marriage, and politics in the years after the Civil War.

In her work, Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause, Caroline E. Janney analyzes the formation, maintenance, and erasure of ladies memorial associations from 1865 to 1915. Janney argues that Virginia women, "came to shape the public rituals of Confederate memory, Reconstruction, and reconciliation."35 Janney contends that when studying Reconstruction, historians should analyze the 1860s to the 1880s through the lens of women's experiences to gain a better picture of southern society in the latter half of the nineteenth century. She connects Virginia women's mourning of the loss of the Confederacy to political resistance of Reconstruction legislation and black equality.<sup>36</sup> Building on Anne Firor Scott, Janney claims that the Civil War created opportunities for women to become more politically and socially involved in southern society, evidenced by how quickly women mobilized in ladies memorial associations and began affecting the memory of the Civil War during Reconstruction. She points out that these associations in Virginia were formed in 1865 and a majority of white women in Virginia joined these associations where they pushed the Lost Cause narrative.<sup>37</sup> In addition she disagrees with the idea that the Lost Cause narrative began in the 1880s and was perpetuated by men. Janney supports her argument with diaries, letters, meeting minutes of ladies memorial associations, and newspapers.

The historiography of white southern women during Reconstruction ties into how women in Virginia navigated the changing atmosphere brought on not only by the Civil War, but the post war political climate. Historians have begun to uncover ways in which white slave-owning women in the South reacted to and navigated the changing society in 1862, brought on by the presence of Union troops and the fleeing of slaves. These women in the South reacted with resentment toward Union troops, and complained of servants fleeing their property. While there were incidents of physical resistance toward Union officers in Virginia, elite women engaged in secretive, less violent, acts of resistance.<sup>38</sup> They turned to religion, refusal to comply with orders when under occupation, and personal talks with family members to resist troops from 1862 to 1865. After 1865, some of these women relied on religion and their service in ladies memorial associations to convey their resentment and qualms with post-war military occupation.

Union troops first occupied Fredericksburg, Virginia on April 18, 1862, with the idea that military rule would restore loyalty in the Old Dominion. Instead, slaveholding families, such as the Alsop family, refused to display loyalty to the United States. Elite white slaveholding women, such as Elizabeth Alsop, believed that the Union occupiers were the main reason slaves were leaving their owners in 1862. On June 6, 1862, Lizzie Alsop wrote "the Federal Army commit many depredations upon private property, but principally in the country. They shoot father's hogs and try and make the servants stop their work." Her entry is an example of the disdain white elite women in Virginia felt toward military occupiers as well as the connection between occupiers and the beginning of Reconstruction in Virginia. She equates the Union soldiers with endangering her father's finances both in the form of the pigs slaughtered and the loss of revenue generated by slave work, as well as the effects the Federal Army had on enslaved workers. In the same entry, Lizzie recalled that two of her family's wagons "were loaded with

slaves...and the <u>drivers</u> [sic]were absolutely <u>forced</u> [sic] to drive them into town and over to the Yankee encampment." Lizzie mentioned that Confederates, especially women, "treat the Yankees with <u>silent</u> contempt" and states Union soldiers "little know the hatred in our hearts towards them, or the great <u>scorn</u> we entertain for Yankees." Her private remarks support the argument that elite, white southern women resisted emancipation in secretive and unconventional ways. Elizabeth shared these feelings in conversations with her family, which is how she knew of the tension over the wagons being redirected by troops. On May 3, 1862, Lucy recorded the full occupation of Front Royal by the Union Army. She states "Martial Law was proclaimed in poor little Front Royal and sentinels stationed at every avenue from the place." She recalled a scene similar to Elizabeth in which her family's servants were detained and moved to the Union encampment nearby, and when her father went to retrieve his property, he was met with refusal by Union soldiers. 43

Elizabeth and Lucy's displeasure with Union occupation in 1862 continued for months. On April 30, 1862, Lucy wrote of "the entrance of three uncouth Yankees" arriving at Bel Air and demanding dinner. She expresses resentment by writing "I was angry enough to have given them battle" to which her mother responded by to "not let Nellie or I put our heads out the door while the Yankees were here." Her anger continued on May 14, 1862, when Union officers set up headquarters at Bel Air, which Lucy recorded in her diary. She wrote of the Union troops destroying the family mill, stealing their pigs and cows, as well as demanding food from her family while setting up camp. Lucy spoke angrily in private with her parents on her opinions of Union occupiers in a different fashion than Lizzie Alsop. Lizzie's entries reflect despair instead of contempt, on June 10, 1862, she wrote "It is the first time I have ever thought that we would be here more than a few weeks longer with the Yankees, but I feel desponding now, and just as if

some terrible calamity was about to befall us."<sup>46</sup> Lucy wrote of her desire to physically resist Union occupiers on April 30, 1862, but was unable to, whereas Lizzie used her body to exhibit small signs of resentment and resistance. On July 2, 1862, Lizzie mentioned she and her friends were on a walk and refused to travel under the Union flag. This small action was one unconventional way in which elite white women in the South resisted Federal military occupation and displayed their resentment for soldiers from 1862-1871.<sup>47</sup> Lizzie chose to dirty her clothes instead of bowing her head in support of the United States.

In 1863, Lucy's opinions of Union occupation and actions did not change. On January 12, 1863, she refers to the Union cavalrymen as looking "like demons" when they rode their horses in town and raided shops and homes. 48 On May 16, 1863, she recalled a raid on her home by Union soldiers looking for supplies for the army and any rebel troops. She mentioned her father "had gone to send the horses off to a place of concealment" to protect the family's wealth. 49 During the years 1863 and 1864, the Buck family witnessed even more raids by Union troops. Lucy's diary contains information on battles around Winchester, the Confederate victory at Vicksburg, the death of Stonewall Jackson, and her continuous anger at the actions of Union troops coming and going from Bel Air.

Wealthy white women in the South faced hardships in 1865. Some of the women in Virginia had been without slaves since 1861, but 1865 ushered in complete enforced emancipation. Elite white women were expected to contribute more to maintaining the home. On April 13, 1865, news of Robert E. Lee's surrender reached Lucy to which she wrote "God only knows how nearly mad I must have been" when she heard the news; she continues "I'm desperate and wicked tonight." Lucy's response is similar to Lizzie's. Though Lizzie showed a desire for vengeance at the news of Lee's surrender, both women exhibited anger and frustration.

Elizabeth solemnly recounts the presence of Federal troops in Fredericksburg, Virginia during 1865. On April 22, 1865, she wrote, "How hard it is! How hard! Seeing them (our enemies) walking our streets, forcing our grey-headed fathers to take the oath; and feeling that our cause is lost." She continued by stating her grief at the loss of the Confederate army and government. She explained that she is overcome by grief at the fall of the Confederacy and the presence of soldiers in her home. On May 18, 1865, Elizabeth mentioned the Federal Troops coming through Fredericksburg "hour after hour" and claimed she can never "forgive them all they have done to us; the desolation, the grief over all our land. On May 29, 1865, she recalled a "Yankee General" visiting the home and leaving believing her mother "as true a Southerner as ever," implying that her mother treated the general negatively. Shortly after learning of the defeat of the Confederate Army, Lucy ceased to write due to being overcome with grief and having to adjust to the integration of freedmen and women into Virginia's postwar society.

The role of religion from 1861 to 1865 to white women in the planter class consisted of the belief that women were subordinate to men, but above their slaves. 55 While Elizabeth wrote of her misery, hatred, and inability to forgive Federal troops and the enemies of the Confederacy, she and Lucy illustrated how Virginians used religion to react to occupation as a form of resistance. From 1861 to 1865, pulpits across the South issued sermons declaring that losses in battles and of loved ones, were not signs of an impossible victory, but of the impurity of the Confederate supporters. These sermons influenced southerners to pray for victory and use religious activities as tools of resistance. The diary insinuates she and her family were a denomination of Christianity, as they frequented church weekly. It is unknown which church she attended but she did reference her family and herself going to church services. Lucy wrote on

March 16, 1862, her family attended church where she and her sister spoke with other women of the uneasiness they felt of the Union occupiers. On January 1, 1863, Lucy recalled feeling thankful to God for "the successes" of the Confederate people during occupation.<sup>58</sup> From 1862 to 1865, churches in the South served as areas where elite southern families could secretly speak their minds without suspicion, and learn of news about Civil War battles and politics.<sup>59</sup>

In the case of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, the church served as a place where Virginians, men and women, could express anti-Union and anti-occupation thoughts and freely speak of resistance to Reconstruction. On July 10, 1865, she recalled a sermon in the local Presbyterian Church where the preacher claimed, "those now in authority over, that the Lord might change their hearts, and make them enact wise and righteous laws, & God might deliver us from the curse of wicked Rulers." Elizabeth followed this quotation by ensuring that sermons such as this one comforted southerners who mourned the loss of the Confederacy. After Lizzie's baptism and conversion to Christianity in September of 1865, her diary centers on her allegiance to God and her faith. This idea ties in with Janney's statement that mourning after the end of the war was a form of political resistance.

Following Caroline Janney's argument, the activities of ladies memorial associations are one way Virginia women reacted and resisted Reconstruction rhetoric. Ladies memorial associations were formed as early as 1865, beginning with the Ladies Memorial Association of Winchester, Virginia. The associations were created after the war to honor Confederate dead and their memory because the Federal Government focused on honoring northern soldiers who fought during the war. The majority of women involved in ladies memorial associations were devout Christian women who regularly attended church. This connection between church women and ladies memorial associations is another example of how religion was used to resist

Reconstruction from 1865 onward. It was through ladies memorial associations, such as the Ladies Memorial Association of Fredericksburg (May 10, 1866) and the Ladies Memorial Association for the Confederate Dead of Oakwood (May 5, 1866), that elite, white southern women were able to keep secessionist and Confederate identity alive and strong in the years following the Civil War.<sup>65</sup>

Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne joined the Ladies Memorial Association of
Fredericksburg in 1869 and participated in activities with the association in June, 1869.<sup>66</sup> On
June 19, 1869, Lizzie wrote about decorating the graves of the Confederate dead as her duty in
the Ladies Memorial Association.<sup>67</sup> This was the first entry where Lizzie recorded her work in
the memorialization of confederate legacy and the Lost Cause. From 1869 to 1873, she
participated in talks on the memory of Robert E. Lee, and the Confederate Memorial Day
celebration in Fredericksburg.<sup>68</sup> It is unknown if Lucy Buck participated in any activities with
the ladies memorial associations as she had stopped writing from 1865 to 1873, but as a single,
white woman who wrote passionately in support of the Confederacy she may have helped with
organization of memorials for Confederate dead. Caroline E. Janney, states the ladies memorial
associations allowed women to do more than honor the Confederate dead, but also to express
their Confederate patriotism. By continuing to exhibit Confederate patriotism while under
military occupation after 1865, elite, white southern women were able to memorialize Lost
Cause rhetoric as early as 1866.<sup>69</sup>

While the reconstruction of governments in the South did not begin to take place until 1865 and the surrender of the Confederacy, women experienced a reconstruction of the domestic sphere much earlier. Reconstruction for wealthy, white slave-owning women in Virginia began gradually in 1862 with the increased presence of military troops occupying key cities, such as

Front Royal, Fredericksburg, and Winchester, and the running away of slaves prior to 1863. As seen in the diaries of Elizabeth Alsop and Lucy Buck, when their slaves ran away, women's roles had to be adjusted. It started with increased domestic work, house cleaning, gardening, and cooking, but after 1865 elite women in the South began to see themselves as political actors. Prior to 1865, men and women in the South believed women to be naturally nonpolitical, timid, southern belles. After 1865, southern white women exercised more control, especially in the postwar battle over Confederate memory. Ladies memorial associations provided women with an outlet to flex their political abilities: they lobbied for funding for Confederate cemeteries and monuments, organized memorial parades, and educated their children on the noble cause of the Confederacy.

Some elite, white southern women also saw a slight elevation in the domestic sphere of the home. Elizabeth Alsop was in charge of her family's affairs after her father became paralyzed and died in 1872.<sup>71</sup> Without her parents or a husband, and thus no stable income, Lizzie declared on December 12, 1873, the sale of her family's two properties, their home in Fredericksburg and their farm, Sunny Side. She wrote "George's financial troubles, the sale of this place, and some ill feeling existing in the family...& Sunny Side is to be sold. Truly we are led by paths we know not." Her diary entry is an example of the turn many elite, white slave-owning families' lives took in the late 1860s-1870s. The financial trouble brought on with emancipation led many wealthy white men and women to sell their estates. Lucy Buck's experience is different than Lizzie's; Lucy never married, she did not manage her family's estate, and her family was forced to sell Bel Air in 1897 due to falling prices of wine. The family was forced to sell Bel Air in 1897 due to falling prices of wine.

White women from slave-owning families resisted Reconstruction in physical, unconventional, and secretive ways. The diaries of Elizabeth Alsop Maxwell Wynne and Lucy

Rebecca Buck provide examples of covert resistance to Reconstruction. They demonstrate how women reacted to the presence of Union troops from 1862 onward with resentment and contempt. They reveal how emancipation and slaves running away to find freedom drastically reconstructed the domestic sphere before the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. They expose the importance of religion as not only a tool for resistance, but as an institution where women could speak their minds to one another, gather information, and organize into political groups in the form of ladies memorial associations, which advocated for the honoring of the memories of the Confederate soldiers and the Lost Cause. These elite, white southern women experienced and began resisting Reconstruction in 1862 and continued to resist it well in the twentieth century. Their methods of resistance remain today, seen in Confederate monuments and cemeteries, even though the ladies themselves are gone and all but forgotten by history.

#### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 – 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 1, April 12, 1865.

Rebecca Capobianco, "Southern Women and Emancipation during the Civil War" in *Women and the American Civil War: North-South Counterpoints*, edited by Judith Giesberg and Randall M. Miller (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 2018) 83.

See also, Wendi Maloney, "New Online: Diarist Documents Eventful Times on the Confederate Home Front" *Library of Congress Blog*, <a href="https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2018/10/new-online-diarist-documents-eventful-times-on-the-confederate-home-front/">https://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2018/10/new-online-diarist-documents-eventful-times-on-the-confederate-home-front/</a> (accessed December 6, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> University of Richmond. "The Story of Virginia's Reconstruction" Reconstructing Virginia: The Richmond Daily Dispatch, 1866-1871. <a href="https://reconstructingvirginia.richmond.edu/overview">https://reconstructingvirginia.richmond.edu/overview</a> (accessed November 15, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth R. Baer notes after 1865 southern women were coping with the loss of a large number of Southern Men, the inability to find a spouse, the loss of fathers, sons, and brothers, and the change in domestic life as reasons for women to suddenly stop writing in diaries in the years after the War. John G. Selby states a similar reason as Baer for the sudden conclusion or gaps in diaries after 1865. Selby divides the years after the war into two periods, the "building years" from 1865-1880 in which men and women in the South devoted their time to finding work and recovering from the financial loss brought on by Confederate defeat. Selby states women typically did not find employment so they "stayed where they were, either assisting in or running a household." From 1865-1871 Lucy, and Lizzie both leave large gaps in their diaries which reflect the trend of the "building years."

Ed. Elizabeth R. Baer, *Shadows on My Heart: The Civil War Diary of Lucy Rebecca Buck of Virginia*. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1997) 321-323.

John G. Selby, *Virginians at War: The Civil War Experiences of Seven Young Confederates*. (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002) 213-214.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew F. Lang argues that Union soldiers struggled when occupying Southern cities and states to adapt to citizen soldiers, usually consisting of women and children. Lang explains Union occupying forces followed a code of masculinity in which uniformed soldiers, mainly men, engaged in combat while women remained in the gendered position of submissive housewife. Lang points out white southern women turned this gendered concept on its head and engaged in physical altercations with occupiers to combat the invasion of their lives and practices. Andrew F. Lang. *In the Wake of War: Military Occupation, Emancipation, and Civil War America.* (Baton Rouge; Louisiana State University Press, 2017) 64-65.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Lowe. *Republicans and Reconstruction in Virginia*, 1856-1870. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991) 75-76.

<sup>7</sup> Gregory P. Downs and Scott Nesbit, *Mapping Occupation: Force, Freedom, and the Army in Reconstruction*, http://mappingoccupation.org, published March 2015, Accessed October 29, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> From 1861-1871, Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne was known by her maiden name Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop. Throughout the paper she will be referred to as "Lizzie" or "Elizabeth Alsop" since she was not known as Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne until after her marriage on March 20, 1878.

Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 – 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 8, March 20, 1878.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth and Lucy's fathers did not serve in the Confederate or Union Armies during the Civil War. These two women did not experience what LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long state as a recurring dynamic for southern elite white women from 1861-1865. Whites and Long explain that wealthy white women from 1861-1865 usually experienced a heavier workload of domestic responsibilities at the absence of husbands and father figures. Whites and Long note some elite white women would hire male laborers, or rely heavily on their slaves to compensate. Lizzie and Lucy did not have to fill gaps in housework until their slaves ran away in 1862 and 1863.

Lee Ann Whites and Alecia P. Long, *Occupied Women: Gender Military Occupation and the American Civil War*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009) 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Rebecca Capobianco argues "Women's stories move the process of emancipation along a different timeline than that of official policy and demonstrate that the personal decisions of individual people determined when and how emancipation occurred, and what it meant". Her work articulates that women in Virginia began adjusting to emancipation, and the crumbling of slavery in 1861 with the first slave refugees in Hampton, Virginia at Fort Monroe.

Laura F. Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era.* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 4. Ed. Baer, *Shadows on My Heart*, 209, 214, 230. Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 249-250.

<sup>14</sup> James Scott argues that the historical record is full of "hidden transcripts", which he defines as, "a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant". Scott advocates historians read between the lines and try to uncover the hidden meaning behind primary sources. In relation to white women in Virginia's resistance during Reconstruction, the meaning behind the words of these women could reveal something new about their methods and perceptions of resistance.

James C. Scott. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1990) xii.

- <sup>15</sup> Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA.
- <sup>16</sup> Talkov, Andrew H. "The Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862-1878" (Master's Thesis, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2013).
- <sup>17</sup> Ancestry.com. *1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedules* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2010.
- <sup>18</sup> Baer, Shadows on My Heart, xv.
- <sup>19</sup> Baer, Shadows on My Heart, xxxv.
- <sup>20</sup> Eric Foner briefly covers Virginia during Reconstruction, and when he does he focuses on the economic conditions and not the social or cultural issues. He concludes that Virginia did not experience Radical Reconstruction in the 1860s, and instead saw change during the Virginia Readjuster Movement in the 1870s-1880s. Foner defines the Readjuster Movement as one where the Reconstruction government in the late 1870s in Virginia, "poured funds into the public schools, abolished poll tax, raised taxes on corporations…and moved to reinforce blacks' civil and political rights."

Eric Foner. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863-1877*. (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2002) 412-413, 592.

- <sup>21</sup> Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics 1830-1930.* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970) x.
- <sup>22</sup> Scott, The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics 1830-1930, xi.
- <sup>23</sup> Bell Irvin Wiley explored the lives of white women in the South in his 1975 work, *Confederate Women*. Wiley, a prominent early writer of Civil War history, argued women played an important role in the bid for southern independence during the Civil War. Wiley crafted a biographical narrative of the lives of elite, white confederate women from 1861-1870. He provides context on the upbringing of elite, white southern women, their education, marriages, travels, and thoughts. Wiley's research uses memoirs, letters, and diaries of Mary Chesnut, Virginia Tunstall Clay, and Varina Davis. Wiley followed the lives of these women through the end of the Civil War and into Reconstruction. Wiley's work has received criticism as it is not representative of all southern women, and follows a narrative without supporting an argument.

Bell Irvin Wiley. Confederate Women. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1975) xi.

Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 311.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> 1860 U.S. Census, Spotsylvania County, Virginia, slave schedules, St. Georges Parish, page 336.

Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 – 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 1, May 25, 1862.
 Baer, Shadows on My Heart, 208.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> On June 10, 1863, Lucy expresses the sudden change in her life that emancipation has brought. She wrote "Rising and working before sunrise this morning made me so deathly sick." Her statement is an example of the work wealthy slave owning women were unaccustomed to performing when they had slaves. Three days later she notes struggling to turn the oven on and bake bread. On July 10, 1863 she recalled feeling exhausted after working all day. The change in Lucy's daily life from leisure to being responsible for housework aligns with Laura Edwards claim that "the abolition of slavery called the position of all women into question". Lucy's role as daughter was reconstructed to include performing work formerly done by her family's slaves.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Faust, Mothers of Invention, 8.

<sup>25</sup> The Lost Cause of the Confederacy, more commonly referred to as the Lost Cause, was the ideology believed to have come about in the 1880s, but actually began in the 1866 in which the Confederate Cause was a heroic and noble one, and not treasonous and vile.

Eds. Gary W Gallagher and Alan T Nolan. <u>The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History</u>. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000) 1.

Faust, Mothers of Invention, 252.

<sup>26</sup> Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 1, 8.

<sup>27</sup> Edwards also builds on Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's work, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South.* Fox-Genovese argued elite white women "took slavery for granted, for it grounded her life and pervaded her sense of herself in the world". Edwards adds to the argument the political involvement of white elite women, and brings their actions outside of the domestic sphere unlike Fox-Genovese who keeps women within the home. In addition, Edwards also illustrates that elite, southern white women were not always submissive to their husbands during the War, instead these women were often responsible for helping run the internal workings of the home providing them a chance at upward mobility.

Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 1-8.

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988) 24-26, 30-31.

- <sup>28</sup> Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 2.
- <sup>29</sup> Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 4, 8.
- <sup>30</sup> Jane Turner Censer, *The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood 1865-1895*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003).
- <sup>31</sup> Censer critiques Elizabeth Fox-Genevese in a manner similar to Laura Edwards. Censer disagrees with Fox-Genovese's argument that white women preferred a hierarchical society where they were subordinates to men as long as they could use the hierarchy to be seen as above slaves and the poor whites. Censer instead suggests white women in the south had differing opinions on the patriarchal hierarchy, she claims elite white women are more complex than Fox-Genovese portrayed in the 1980s.

Censer, The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood 1865-1895, 2-3.

- <sup>32</sup> Censer, The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood 1865-1895, 9.
- <sup>33</sup> Censer, The Reconstruction of White Southern Womanhood 1865-1895, 4.
- <sup>34</sup> Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 6.
- <sup>35</sup> Caroline E. Janney. *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies Memorial Association and the Lost Cause.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008) 2.
- <sup>36</sup> Janney, Burying the Dead but Not the Past, 3.
- <sup>37</sup> Janney, Burying the Dead but Not the Past, 5, 7-8.
- <sup>38</sup> One such incident involves a famous Confederate spy, Belle Boyd, who lived along the border of Virginia and West Virginia during the Civil War. Boyd took a gun and shot a soldier who she perceived spoke to her mother in a disrespectful way.

Ruth Scarborough, Belle Boyd: Siren of the South. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1983) 18-19.

- <sup>39</sup> Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 1, June 6, 1862.
- <sup>40</sup> Lizzie adds to her entry that when her father went into town to retrieve his slaves he was informed by a union officer "that by taking the Oath he could very easily get them again" to which her father responded he "was a Virginian & Southern man and <u>Would Not</u> take an oath to support a Northern Government." She mentioned nine more of her family's slaves have left and that there are no longer any male slaves working their property. The "Oath" Lizzie mentioned is the Oath of Allegiance which Union occupiers offered Confederate supporters to take in exchange for protection of property.

Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 – 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 1, June 6, 1862.

Capobianco, "Southern Women and Emancipation during the Civil War" in *Women and the American Civil War*, 85. <sup>41</sup> Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 – 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 1, June 6, 1862.

<sup>42</sup> Ed. Baer, Shadows on My Heart, 61.

<sup>43</sup> Lucy recalled, "Father attempted to go over and have them released, he was halted by the sentinel and told that he would not be permitted to return home again if he should go within their lines." Lucy also mentioned seeing a former servant of a family acquaintance in Union uniform passing by her home. She continues referring to Union

soldiers as "villains" from this point onward. While living under occupation, Lucy expresses feeling as though she is living "the awful consequences of subjugation" at the hands of the Union soldiers. She wrotes of Federal troops enforcing curfews, stealing food, and claiming they were the masters of the people of Front Royal. Ed. Baer, *Shadows on My Heart*, 61-62 64-65.

- <sup>44</sup> Lucy's readiness to engage and display her resentment publicly to the Union soldiers differs from Lizzie's tendency to ignore and keep her anger privately to her parents and diary.
- Ed. Baer, Shadows on My Heart, 59.
- <sup>45</sup> The presence of soldiers within the homes of Southerners from 1861-1865 was a common and reoccurring act. Elite, white southern women were not only consumed by the daily news of the war, and worry for loved ones, but also with being occupied by men in their homes. Whites and Long equate the occupation of the home by foreign men primarily a southern occurrence. Ed. Baer, *Shadows on My Heart*, 69-71.
- <sup>46</sup> Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 1, June 10, 1862.
- <sup>47</sup> Lizzie wrote "we all went into the street preferring to get our dresses dusty to bending our heads beneath the stars & stripes." She recalled a man scolding her and her friends, but they pretended not to hear him and continue their walk. Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 1, July 2, 1862.
- <sup>48</sup> Ed. Baer, *Shadows on My Heart*, 177.
- <sup>49</sup> Ed. Baer, Shadows on My Heart, 201.
- <sup>50</sup> Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 121-122.
- <sup>51</sup> In her entries from April and May, Lizzie repeatedly refers to the Confederate cause as the Lost Cause, an example of Caroline Janney's point about the Lost Cause rhetoric beginning in the years after the war ended and not the 1880s.

Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 – 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 3, April 22, 1865. May 18, 1865. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*, 2, 4.

- <sup>52</sup> Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 3, May 18, 1865.
- <sup>53</sup> Lizzie also expressed concern about the imprisonment of Jefferson Davis, and the rumor of Robert E. Lee being hung for treason.

Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 – 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 3, May 29, 1865.

- <sup>54</sup> Ed. Baer, *Shadows on My Heart*, 309, 320-321.
- <sup>55</sup> Elite, white southern women perceived God as the head of the Christian and spiritual household, but their husbands were the center of the physical household. Laura Edwards connects religious salvation for wealthy white women with obedience under their husbands will and fulfilling social norms fitting their role as wives of slaveholders. After the war ended with a large portion of southern men dead, white women struggled to fulfill the traditional notion of religion from the antebellum period. Lizzie and Lucy embody this struggle in their inability to find husbands in the five years following the surrender of the Confederacy.

Edwards, Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 19.

- <sup>56</sup> Faust, Mothers of Invention, 182.
- <sup>57</sup> Faust claims that "casting hardships of war into a narrative of punishment, reformation, and deliverance, clergy offered southerners a basis for strength and confidence evening amidst disaster." Lizzie and Lucy both look to religion to inspire their beliefs in Confederate victory. They both use religion to ask for the removal of Union occupiers and express displeasure with the presence of Union troops. Lucy recalled a sermon in which the subject gave comfort to her despite her feelings of fear, anger, and helplessness at the hands of military occupation. Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 182.

Ed. Baer, Shadows on My Heart, 36.

- <sup>58</sup> Ed. Baer, Shadows on My Heart, 173.
- <sup>59</sup> Ed. Baer, Shadows on My Heart, 36, 39.
- <sup>60</sup> Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 3, July 10, 1865.
- <sup>61</sup> On September 15, 1865, Lizzie wrote in her diary about becoming a Christian and feeling, "much happier" after her confession and baptism. She recounts that the loss of the Confederacy during the Civil War had made her resentful toward God and religion, but she felt that being a Christian would lead her to live a better life. After her

baptism, Lizzie's diary contains prayers, poems, and readings from her Bible. Lizzie's devotion to Christianity seen in her diary entries after September, 1865, are examples of Anne Firor Scott's "religious perfection" elite, white southern women desired to achieve. Scott explains that women struggled to "live up to what God was presumed to expect of women" by keeping a religious diary devoted to scriptures and meditations. Lizzie not only tried to repent and change her ways after converting, but she also used church meetings, and her prayers to secretly resist to Virginia after 1865.

Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 – 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 3, September 15, 1865. Scott, *The Southern Lady*, 9-11.

- <sup>62</sup> Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*, 3.
- <sup>63</sup> Janney, Burying the Dead But Not the Past, 39-40.
- <sup>64</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust explains the *Richmond Examiner* called upon churchwomen to assume the role of caretaker for the memorialization of Confederate Dead in 1866.

Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008) 238.

- <sup>65</sup> Faust, *The Republic of Suffering*, 238-239.
- <sup>66</sup> Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 5, June 19, 1869.
- <sup>67</sup> Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 5. June 19, 1869.
- Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 1926. Wynne Family
   Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 7, October 14, 1870.
   Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1962 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 8, June 5, 1873.
- <sup>69</sup> Janney states that LMAS allowed women to expand on two post-war trends. "the creation of an organized womanhood among southern white women and a sense of white southern solidarity among ex-confederates". Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past*, 39-40.
- <sup>70</sup> Janney, Burying the Dead But Not the Past, 40.
- <sup>71</sup> Elizabeth's father died on June 26, 1872, she had cared for him while he was paralyzed for a few months before he passed.

Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 – 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 7, June 26, 1872.

<sup>72</sup> George is one of Elizabeth's brothers who returned home after their father's death in 1872.

Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne. Journal of Elizabeth Maxwell Alsop Wynne, 1862 – 1926. Wynne Family Papers, 1809-1967. Mss1 W9927 a. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond, VA. Volume 8, December 12, 1873.

<sup>73</sup> An interesting note is that Lucy does pay to have a house designed and built in Front Royal ,Virginia in 1904, implying she did have some success with managing her own finances while single later in her life. Baer, *Shadows on My Heart*, 322.

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