

BONNETS & BULLETS: THE NANCY HART MILITA

A Thesis

by

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This thesis meets the standards for scope and quality of
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

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ABSTRACT

For the entirety of the Civil War, a group of elite Southern women from LaGrange, Georgia, formed the only all-female militia ever to have existed in the United States. Known locally as the Nancy Hart Militia, these young women prepared to defend their town, showcasing their determination to protect the home-front and preserve their personal honor while men were away fighting. This thesis explores this little-known group of women, challenging the stereotypes of proper Southern belles and considers their motivations and experiences within the context of antebellum, wartime, and postbellum eras. Using historical records and personal accounts, this study traces the formation of the Nancy Hart Militia, examines their cultural expectations, and analyzes their legacy as they faded into local lore rather than gaining recognition in American history. Ultimately, this thesis argues that in subtly defying societal norms, the Nancies inadvertently created a new space for themselves to challenge gender roles and redefine and defend their honor in the face of danger.

DEDICATION

To the one who was with me at my beginning –

The one whose hand I held at her end.

To the one who cried tears of joy at my first breath –

The one I wept tears of sorrow at her last.

To the one who was steadfast, unflinching, honest, and obstinate –

The one from whom my example of strength comes.

To the one whose ever-singing voice could cut through granite –

The one who I will never hear say my name again.

To my mom, Kathryn Mae Cole Russell.

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This thesis is a culmination of what feels like its own lifetime, spanning an ambiguous space between the early 1800s and 2023. Its completion represents four years' worth of research, two MacBook Pros, one family death, some mental health issues, the balance of motherhood and academia, and – most importantly – unwavering support.

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Finally, I would like to thank two locations. First, Munro Ballet Studios as it was from their parking lot that I earned my two bachelor's degrees and began my master's degree while they trained my daughters in the art of dance. Second, Troup County Archives for providing me complete access to their incredible archives, which allowed me to bring this thesis to life.

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INTRODUCTION

Heavy cotton skirts brushed against the dusty floor of the woods belonging to the Bellevue Plantation, located in Troup County, Georgia, just outside the town of LaGrange. It was Saturday, May 25, 1861, and the afternoon sun peaked through the tall live oak and fragrant magnolia trees that lined the hilly grove, previewing the summer heat threatening northwestern Georgia. From the same trees came the occasional chirping of birds – which would suddenly stop when a violent *bang* rang out after a forewarning *click click click*. A handful of women, each wearing carefully decorated hats to keep their faces fair and without blemish, shared a few of old flintlock muskets that their grandfathers had used during the War of 1812 and the Revolutionary War. Upon aiming at their targets, they squeezed their eyes shut as if that would deafen the echoing blasts and ease jolting recoils. All newer guns were miles away with their fathers, brothers, husbands, and sweethearts with the LaGrange Light Guards or one of the other area volunteer units that were coming to life in the wake of the outbreak of the Civil War.

As many of LaGrange's men were gone and preparing to face the grim reality of the battlefield, the women left behind were intentionally preparing for defense of their home front using whatever tools possible, including a tired copy of an oft-used military training manual. Four years later, the two-volume manual memorized and the ability to shoot without closing their eyes accomplished, these young women faced the very threat for which they had anticipated.¹

¹ Leila C. Pullen Morris, "Personal Recollections of the War: Girl Confederate Soldiers," December 17, 1896, MS-107, folder 3, Forrest C. Johnson, III, Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA; Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the War of 1812, RG94, Roll M602_0169, National Archives and Records Administration; Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1798-1914, RG 94, Roll M602_0169,

As the story goes, on Sunday, April 17, 1865, this company of at least forty women known as the Nancy Harts (or simply, the Nancies), prevented the destruction of their town by Union troops led by Col. Oscar H. La Grange without even firing a shot.² It is said that upon facing a wall of indignant young Southern ladies Colonel La Grange, whose name being the same as the town was a mere coincidence, quipped, “I should think the Nancy Harts might use their eyes with better effect upon the Federal soldiers than their rusty guns.”³ The story concludes on a happy ending as Colonel La Grange agreed not to destroy the town (except the railroad depot), the Nancies extended an olive branch of Southern hospitality by inviting Colonel La Grange and his officers to tea and share a meal, after which the Union troops left the town

National Archives and Records Administration; Henry W. Thomas, ed., *History of the Doles-Cook Brigade: Army of Northern Virginia, C.S.A.* (Atlanta: Franklin Printing and Publishing Company, 1903), 64, 80, 84, 90-92, 107-116. Official records suggest that William Pullen was the great-grandfather Morris referenced. William Pullen served in the War of 1812 as part of Col. Robert Dyer’s Tennessee Volunteer Mounted Gunmen.

For this thesis, the women of the Nancy Hart Militia will be referred to by the last names they used during their time as Nancies, except for Leila Pullen and Caroline E. Ware Poythress Gay. Because Leila Pullen recorded her experiences by her married name Morris, she will be referred to as such. And although Caroline E. Ware Poythress Gay entered the Militia as Poythress, she will generally be referred to as Gay since, like Morris, that is the name she used while relaying her experiences.

² For a compiled list of purported Nancy Hart Militia participants, *see* tables 1.1 and 1.2 in Appendix A.

³ Morris, “Personal Recollections...,” Johnson Collection, 6.

and its inhabitants unmolested. And, like any good story about triumph against all odds, everyone lived happily ever after.⁴

The story of the Nancy Hart Militia is little known outside of LaGrange, Georgia, where it is still occasionally celebrated in the same town square they used to parade around. More than anything, this all-female militia is usually seen as a quaint footnote tucked neatly into the town's memory, quietly inherited with every new generation. In academic scholarship, even less awareness and recognition of the Nancy Hart Militia exists, despite there being a growing abundance of exploration into women's involvement in the Civil War.

For many white Southerners in 1861, the call to war was a harmonizing roar sung by men and women who believed their way of life was at risk. Over the course of two centuries, Southerners had been carefully developing a sort of Americanized aristocracy and a patriarchal culture based in honor, which defined the roles and behaviors of every person, regardless of socioeconomic class, and stressed absolute importance of "the individual's personal honesty and integrity."⁵ By the mid-nineteenth century, Southern culture provided them with a sense of comfort and security because they knew what to expect from themselves, from their families and acquaintances, and from their communities – that being a higher sense of nobility and chivalry. As a patriarchal culture, a man exhibited honor in the public domain, whereas a lady's honor was

⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁵ Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Evolution of Heroes' Honor in the Southern Literary Tradition," *Georgia Review* 40, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 991; Richard E. Nisbett and Dov Cohen, *Culture of Honor: The Psychology of Violence in the South* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 4.

rooted in the private.⁶ Overall, Southerners took pride in their collective identity of gentility and refinement, particularly in comparison to Northerners, commenting, “Stealing, lying and cheating are creditable in a Yankee, disgraceful to a Southron.”⁷

Abraham Lincoln, a Yankee and a Republican, had been elected the sixteenth president of the United States of America in a contest where the issue of slavery was central. The Republican Party, formed in 1856, stood on three platforms: first, slavery should not be allowed to expand into any U.S. territories and all existing laws to the contrary should be repealed; second, “all lawful measures... in resistance” to slavery in territories would be supported; and third, overtake the opposing Democratic Party, which “identified with the progress of the Slave power to national supremacy.”⁸

While Republicans found unity in their stance on slavery, the Democratic Party, already fracturing along a sort of invisible Mason-Dixon line, officially split. Just before Christmas in 1860 and a month after Lincoln’s election, South Carolina announced its intention to secede from the Union, noting its motivation as “an increasing hostility on the part of the non-

⁶ Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), xi. Faust, Civil War scholar and native Southerner, recalls being taught by her mother that the term *woman* was considered “disrespectful, if not insulting.” The proper term to use (for white adult females, at least) was *ladies*.

⁷ “A Rebel Estimate of the Yankee Character,” *Liberator* (Boston), June 7, 1861, 1.

⁸ “The Pittsburg Convention, 1856,” in *Proceedings of the First Three Republican National Conventions of 1856, 1860 and 1864* (Minneapolis: C.W. Johnson, 1893), 11.

slaveholding States to the institution of slavery, has led to a disregard of their obligations.”⁹

Within six months, the slave-holding states of Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee would also secede and form the Confederate States of America.¹⁰

Following Lincoln’s election, Southerners insisted that the United States government refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the states’ right to secede, or the sovereignty of the Confederacy. This refusal implied a question of honor, the virtue held in the highest esteem by Southerners and a culture they were seeped in. According to the Confederate government this insult was the reason for the hostilities that culminated with the Civil War, not slavery. To add injury to insult, the Union’s intent to restrict slavery “threaten[ed] the South’s way of life,” notes

⁹ *Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union and the Ordinance of Secession* (Charleston: Evans & Cogswell, Printers to the Convention, 1860).

¹⁰ Thomas Conn Bryan, “The Secession of Georgia,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (1947): 89–111; Benjamin La Bree, ed., “The Foundation and Formation of the Confederacy and Ordinances of Secession of the Southern States,” in *The Confederate Soldier in the Civil War, 1861-1865* (Louisville: Prentice Press, Courier-Journal Job Printing Company, 1897), 11–13; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, series 4 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880), 1: 281-285. See also table 1.3, “Dates of State Secession from the Union.”

preeminent Civil War scholar James McPherson.¹¹ To many of the South, living by and for honor was essential, and defending that central virtue was all the motivation Southerners needed to fight.

This thesis is not a work of Confederate apologetics and does not defend the ideals of the antebellum South, most notably their claims that states possessed a constitutional right to secede or that states' rights, not slavery, lay at the root of the war. It does, on the other hand, seek to understand the world in which elite white women like the Nancy Harts lived. For the individuals who fought on behalf of the Confederate States of America, the Civil War was about preserving Southern culture; unfortunately, a deeply woven part of that culture was associated with slavery. The "peculiar institution" of slavery, the thankless exploitation and toil of millions of African Americans, was an essential element of mid-nineteenth century Southern society.¹²

¹¹ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Ballantine Book, 1988), 311.

¹² John C. Calhoun, "The South Carolina Exposition," in *The Works of John C. Calhoun: Reports and Public Letters*, ed. Richard K. Crallé (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1855), 12, 132. From the time the United States Constitution was drafted, directly referring to slavery as such was considered uncouth and euphemisms were applied, even though its institution and the country's dependence was common knowledge. Calhoun is credited with the term *peculiar institution* as he used a version of it in a speech given at the South Carolina Exposition in 1828 ("peculiar labor") and another speech addressed to the people of South Carolina in 1831 ("peculiar domestic institution"). Edwin A. Miles, "The Old South and the Classical World," *North Carolina Historical Review* 48, no. 3 (1971): 258, 264, 275.

Rather than focusing on the causes of the war, or defending the Southern Confederate people, this thesis is about young women of the South's elite social class who prepared to defend their small town against the possibility that the enemy would march in and destroy it like a tsunami of blue. In four chapters this study will use newspapers, books, maps, and governmental records, as well as the personal stories, letters, and scrapbooks of the Nancies themselves and those closely acquainted with them to lift the Nancy Hart Militia from its place in regional Georgia history and weave them into the larger scholarship on women's participation in the Civil War.

The first chapter is a historiography of existing scholarship relating specifically to the Nancies. It considers the three distinct eras in which the young women of the Nancies lived: antebellum, wartime, and postbellum. The second chapter introduces the Nancy Hart Militia, the region of Georgia they were raised in and later defended, the identity of their heroine namesake, and some of the officers. Shifting focus to its founding member, Nannie Morgan, it explores the reason for forming and postulates militia's motivations, as well as demonstrates that the tale of Colonel La Grange passing through the town matching his name was not just a detail tacked on for embellishment. The third chapter addresses the social implications to their forming a militia. Using another member of the Nancies as a focal point, Mary Heard, it considers the unique cultural expectations of elite, or planter-class, Southern women during the antebellum period and reveals how the Nancies both fulfilled and defied those expectations in developing a military unit. It examines the cultural components of the planter-class, specifically religion and education, and how intricately laced antebellum Southern society was in the lives of the Nancies. The fourth chapter examines the Nancies after the war, tracing the paths life took them, and explaining why they faded into local lore rather than became celebrated in American history as revolutionary

women. The central figure in this chapter is militia member Caroline Gay, whose personal recollections and postbellum scrapbooks help historians to understand the collective (and often romanticized) memory of antebellum Southern life.

Ultimately, this thesis argues that the elite women of the Nancy Hart Militia created a space exclusively for themselves where they were united by their determination to defend their personal honor – before, during, and after the Civil War – a conviction that allowed them to remain ladies in the face of danger, while challenging the constructed stereotypes of a proper Southern belle.

CHAPTER I

THE NANCY HART MILITIA IN SCHOLARSHIP

When the hazy smoke from the final cannon shot of the American Civil War had finally cleared, focus shifted from combat to reflection. This state of reflection about the conflict persists generations later as new topics and themes evolve with new questions asked and the answers to old questions reconsidered – all in an effort to comprehend a war that pitted brother against brother.

Initial attempts by scholars to make sense of the Civil War and its aftermath tended to overlook women, focusing instead on the activities of men. Women were secondary and uncredited characters in a production directed and starring men. Fortunately, such is not now the case, as the past four decades has seen an outpouring of exciting new scholarship on women and the war.¹³ Yet gaps still exist. In her pioneering analysis of women in colonial New England, historian Laurel Ulrich Thatcher quipped, “Well-behaved women seldom make history.”¹⁴ This

¹³ Voluminous scholarship on the cultural expectations of womanhood and ladyship, Southern women, and the Civil War is too vast to be fully integrated into a master’s thesis. For good recent historiographical texts, see Catherine Clinton, *Stepdaughters of History: Southern Women and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016); Lorien Foote, “Rethinking the Confederate Home Front,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7 (September 2017): 446-465; Lyde Cullen Sizer, “Mapping the Spaces of Women’s Civil War History,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1 (December 2011): 536-548.

¹⁴ Laurel Ulrich Thatcher, “Vertuous Women Found: New England Ministerial Literature, 1668-1735,” *American Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (Spring 1976): 20–40.

continues to resonate today because history has often forgotten to include them, unless they loudly go against social norms – thereby classifying them as rebellious and ill-bred. Even now, their colorful stories are much more entertaining to recount than the women who led average lives. For the Civil War era, women who often take center stage are those who ripped off the cloak of social propriety, like Harriet Tubman, Belle Boyd, Rose O’Neal Greenhow, and Sarah Emma Edmonds.

In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, the experiences of the Southern women who lived through it were usually relegated to an occasional speech at a ladies’ memorial society, the quiet publication of a wartime diary, a short interest story in a local newspaper, or forgotten and buried away in a musty attic. As historian DeAnne Blanton notes, however, journalists Frank Moore and Ida Tarbell spearheaded early efforts to carve out a space for women in Civil War history, focusing on those women who took up arms. Such women could hardly be classified as “well-behaved.”¹⁵

A year after the war, Moore published *Women of the War: Their Heroism and Self-Sacrifice*, beginning his introduction with: “The histories of wars are records of the achievements of men, for the most part...” He goes on to assert, however, that “[t]he story of the war will never be fully or fairly written if the achievements of women in it are untold.” Though he does credit some women who fought as soldiers, naming Ellen Goodridge, Bridget “Irish Biddy”

¹⁵ DeAnne Blanton, “Women Soldiers of the Civil War,” *Prologue* 25, no. 1, 1993, <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1993/spring/women-in-the-civil-war-1.html>.

Divers, and Nelly Chase, Moore failed to recognize in his compendium of women's wartime heroism the members of Georgia's Nancy Hart Militia.¹⁶

In 1909 journalist Ida Tarbell asked the United States War Department for records on any women who served in the Civil War in some capacity or another. Tarbell was told that no such records existed, which Moore's publication decades prior and innumerable later scholars like Blanton prove untrue. Tarbell was certainly on the right track in her belief that women served in the Civil War, but either the right questions were not asked or (and more likely) it was because it was a woman asking for information pertaining to things outside of her acceptable social realm.¹⁷ Later scholars like DeAnne Blanton, Lauren Cook Wilke, Kay J. Blalock, and Marianne Monson have continued to uncover the women who served as soldiers, most notably Sarah Edmonds (who fought as Private Franklin Thompson), Mary Ellen Wise (served as James Wise), and Jennie Hodgers (served as Albert D. J. Cashier). Unfortunately, few scholars include the Nancies of LaGrange, though they trained with as much dedication and served with as much honor as Edmonds, Wise, and Hodgers. Perhaps because of their socioeconomic position as elite white Southern women, disguising themselves as men and enlisting in the official military was not something they even considered; nonetheless, those of the Nancy Hart Militia were soldiers in their own right.¹⁸

¹⁶ Frank Moore, *Women of the War: Their Heroism and Self-Sacrifice* (Hartford: S. S. Scranton & Co., 1866), v.

¹⁷ Blanton, "Women Soldiers of the Civil War."

¹⁸ Kay J. Blalock, "Female Combatants," in *Women in the American Civil War*, ed. Lisa Tendrich Frank (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 23–29; Marianne Monson, *Women of the*

Women who upheld what society deemed a proper lady, yet also challenged their established nineteenth century roles, are exceptions to Thatcher's statement, such as "well-behaved" Clara Barton or Dorothea Dix, both of whom had one slipped foot in the public sphere and the other in the traditional domestic realm – like the Nancy Hart Militia. Whereas there has been tremendous scholarship on such "well-behaved" women who were active participants in the Civil War saga as Barton and Dix, the Nancies and their participation are too often forgotten. In attempting to understand women's involvement in the Civil War, specifically Southern women, most historians have failed to grasp the entire spectrum of women's activities by not including the Nancies.

As areas of study examining women's involvement in the Civil War gradually emerged, early publications relating to the Nancy Hart Militia failed to examine them from a scholarly perspective. The first half of the twentieth century saw handfuls of various retellings of their plight and bravery, but it was not until 1991 with R. Chris Cleaveland's "The Nancy Harts of La Grange" in the *Georgia Journal* and in 1994 in the *Civil War Times* as "Southern Girls with Guns: Georgia's Nancy Harts" that they were studied from an academic lens.¹⁹ Using such

Blue & Gray: True Civil War Stories of Mothers, Medics, Soldiers, and Spies (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain Press, 2019); DeAnne Blanton and Lauren Cook Wilke, *They Fought Like Demons: Women in the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 1, 17, 93-94, 167-171.

¹⁹ R. Chris Cleaveland, "The Nancy Harts of La Grange," *Georgia Journal* (Fall 1991): 8–9, 19, and "Southern Girls with Guns: Georgia's Nancy Harts," *Civil War Times Illustrated* 33, no. 2 (1994): 44–45. For a detailed chronological list of published retellings, see table 1.4.

sources as a 1904 article in *Ladies' Home Journal* on the Nancies, Leila Pullen Morris's first-hand "Personal Recollections of the War: Girl Confederate Soldiers," and the work of archivists and historians at the Troup County Historical Society, Cleaveland laid a foundation for future scholarship.²⁰

Anne Bailey's 1996 contribution in the *Journal of Confederate History*, "The Defenders: The Nancy Harts," places the Nancies in a larger context by addressing the roles of middle- and upper-class women in the nineteenth century and, specifically, during wartime. Bailey contends that the Nancies and Southern women everywhere possessed more "patriotic loyalty" than their male counterparts. Like Cleaveland, Bailey emphasizes Leila Pullen Morris's experience. She notes that Morris's recollections were crafted in such a way that they successfully "harmonized the female traits of dignity and graciousness with the masculine image of carrying and shooting weapons," as opposed to other women of the time who completely ripped apart the seams of what it meant to be a lady.²¹

²⁰ Mrs. Thaddeus Horton, "The Story of the Nancy Harts," *Ladies' Home Journal*, November 1904, 14; Morris, "Personal Recollections..." Johnson Collection. Mrs. Thaddeus Horton was the penname occasionally used by Corinne Stocker Horton, a respected journalist and editor for the *Atlanta Journal* (presently the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* upon the merger of the *Atlanta Constitution* and the *Atlanta Journal* in 1982). Under this penname she published the November 1904 article, "The Story of the Nancy Harts," in *Ladies' Home Journal*, whereby the account of the Nancies enjoyed national circulation.

²¹ Anne J. Bailey, "The Defenders: The Nancy Harts," *Journal of Confederate History* 15 (March 1996): 35–56.

In 2018 Katherine Brackett expanded on both Cleaveland and Bailey's scholarship in "Remembering the Nancy Harts: A Female Militia, Gender, and Memory." Brackett successfully argues that the women of the Nancy Hart Militia saved their town from destruction through "bravery and hospitality" – the latter being a pillar of Southern culture that sustains to this day, the former being an aspect of Southern identity that the Nancies were taught. Like Bailey, Brackett examines Morris's "dubious" first-hand testimony and correctly states that it "provided the framework for nearly all future references to the all-female militia."²²

Even though Cleaveland, Bailey, and Brackett recognize that the majority of the Nancies attended LaGrange Female College, they neglect to consider how that educational foundation might have contributed to the Nancies' reimagined concepts of honor and loyalty, thereby later influencing the formation of the Nancy Hart Militia. This inadvertently plays into the Scarlett O'Hara stereotype, which paints the daughters of the elite Southern class as spoiled Southern belles.²³ However, beneath the hoop skirts and wide bonnets existed a population of highly educated and articulate young women who were fluent in French, could calculate complex equations, and gave back to those in their communities who had less – all reinforcing the ideology of what it meant to be a Southern lady.

²² Katherine Brackett, "Remembering the Nancy Harts: A Female Militia, Gender, and Memory," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 102, no. 4 (2018): 303–337; Brackett, "Nancy Harts Militia," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, last modified August 9, 2018, accessed March 21, 2022, <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/nancy-harts-militia/>.

²³ Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind* (New York: Macmillan, 1936).

In addition to failing to emphasize the importance of the Nancies' educational foundation, previous scholars who have focused on their wartime exploits have neglected to recognize the importance of material artifacts – most notably scrapbooks kept by former members – in explaining the totality of their experiences. Other than Morris's speech for the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Horton's interview with Nannie Morgan, there are scant primary sources specifically on the Nancy Hart Militia as a unit. Existing letters between some of the Nancies and their male loved ones on the battlefield make no mention of what the women of LaGrange were doing regarding home-front defense.²⁴ For example, in correspondence from Caroline Gay and her husband Jack, she kept her conversations within the limited perimeter of domesticity: questions about planting radishes, the health of their daughters, town news like which young lady had lost a sweetheart, and her own fears that she would lose hers as well. She did not mention the armed company of women training to protect their town, much less her own involvement.²⁵ As such, new methods must be devised to approach and extract evidence of the Nancies' Civil War activities. This is also the case concerning the Nancies and the emerging fields of collective memory and Lost Cause rhetoric. Finally, although Bailey and Brackett each provide an excellent examination as to how the memory of the Nancies

²⁴ Letters, 1858-1865, MS-100, Morgan-Hill Papers Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA. In this collection are letters between Nannie Morgan and her husband J. Brown Morgan, as well as her brother Miles Hill.

²⁵ Caroline Ware Poythress Gay, "To My Darling Husband," April 4, 1865, MS-004, Nix-Price Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA; John Thomas Gay to Caroline Gay, letters, 1861-1865, MS-004, Nix-Price Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA.

fit into larger scholarship, they do not consider the physical artifacts compiled by one of the Nancies and passed on to her daughter and later her granddaughter.

The study of scrapbooks as primary sources is still emerging, according to Anna Rusk, who studied the Civil War scrapbook of Henry Whitney in 2013.²⁶ Rusk suggests, “[h]istorians have just begun to study scrapbooks and their makers,” noting the initial work in 2006 by experts Susan Tucker, Katherine Ott, and Patricia Buckler, and later in 2008 by artist Jessica Hefland. Scrapbooks are akin to visual autobiographies of their creators.²⁷ Material objects of nostalgia, scrapbooks testify to, as scholar Sarah Senette considers, “historical memory and identity.”²⁸ Whatever has been included in a scrapbook reinforces its maker’s inferred truth from memory. Scholars who have utilized scrapbooks as primary sources, such as William C. Davis, note that the keeping of scrapbooks is highly gendered, with most authors being women.²⁹ In the case of

²⁶ Anna Denov Rusk, “Collecting the Confederacy: The Civil War Scrapbook of Henry M. Whitney,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 47, no. 4 (Winter 2013): 267–296.

²⁷ Ibid., 271; Susan Tucker, Katherine Ott, and Patricia P. Buckler, eds., *The Scrapbook in American Life* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006); Jessica Hefland, *Scrapbooks: An American History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

²⁸ Sarah Senette, “Anna Watson’s Scrapbook: A Study of Historical Memory and Identity,” *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana History Association* 59, no. 2 (Spring 2018): 133–166.

²⁹ William C. Davis, “The Virginian Wartime Scrapbook: Preserving Memories on Paper,” in *Virginia at War, 1863*, ed. William C. Davis and James I. Robertson (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 103–114.

the scrapbook collection created by one of the Nancies and preserved by her family, this notion of gendering offers a glimpse into an era where the private spheres of women were distinct from that of the men (public). Such is particularly valuable to any study of the Nancies, as three generations of one former member kept well-preserved scrapbooks.

To fully understand the world in which the Nancies lived, one must also appreciate the importance of honor. Over several pieces of scholarship, starting with *Southern Honor*, historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown unfolds what it means to be Southern in conjunction with the notion of honor, which he identifies as a male-dominated virtue and part of Southern identity. In *The Evolution of Heroes' Honor in Southern Literary Tradition*, Wyatt-Brown explores the “realm of honor,” noting that while its layers were undeniably built from the lowest social class to the highest (men being at top in each layer), clear-cut “distinctions between private and public spheres were not.”³⁰ In *Tom Parker Revisited*, Wyatt-Brown considers the “language of honor,” presenting how the use of language through sermons or stories/folklore strengthened and reinforced the culture.³¹ Honor was Southern vernacular.

Louise Wigfall provided insight into how the language of honor was spoken in the mid-nineteenth century in her autobiographical *A Southern Girl in '61*. Wigfall often applied the terms “gallant,” “noble,” “bravery,” or “patriot” explaining one’s character and actions, notably

³⁰ Wyatt-Brown, “The Evolution of Heroes’ Honor in the Southern Literary Tradition,” *Georgia Review* 40, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 991.

³¹ Wyatt-Brown, “Tom Watson Revisited,” *Journal of Southern History* 68, no. 1 (February 2022): 20.

those who defended what they believed a “good cause.”³² Wigfall’s personification that honor was “a noble man of undaunted courage and a blameless life” supports Wyatt-Brown’s statement of honor as male-dominated virtue, which women were to support from within their established domestic roles.³³ The Civil War opened up what women, still confined to their domestic roles, were socially permitted to do to help their men in gray uphold the honor of the South, such as volunteer nursing. A universal theme that quietly spanned Wigfall’s recollections was the additional burdens women, like the Nancies, carried as caretakers of the domestic realm in wartime, like the nagging anxiety of invasion and destruction or the increasing price of food. Over one hundred years later, Walter Sullivan continues similar recollections in *The War Women Lived: Female Voices from the Confederate South*. Here Sullivan gives voices back to the women who endured life in the middle of battles yet maintained – at least during the height of the Civil War – a sense of “strong and courageous and extraordinary patrioti[sm].”³⁴

Historian Drew Gilpin Faust builds upon Wyatt-Brown’s “language of honor,” pointing out that literature of the time emphasized the idea of being a lady as in one who possessed “good

³² Louise Wigfall Wright, *A Southern Girl in '61* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1905), 44, 46, 78, 150, 245.

³³ Ibid., 230.

³⁴ Walter Sullivan, *The War Women Lived: Female Voices from the Confederate South* (Nashville: J.S. Sanders & Company, 1995); Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics & Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

manners, demureness, kindness, and gentleness.”³⁵ Also reflected in mid-nineteenth century etiquette manuals, ladies of the elite class were expected to be, as Wyatt-Brown notes, “as quiet as doves.”³⁶ To possess honor was to adhere to the Biblical value to be “without spot, and blameless,” so many women tried to protect this virginal-type honor by maintaining a pristine

³⁵ Drew Gilpin Faust, “Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War,” *Journal of American History* 76, no. 4 (March 1990): 1200–1228; Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 4; Harland D. Hagler, “The Ideal Woman in the Antebellum South: Lady or Farmwife?,” *Journal of Southern History* 47, no. 3 (August 1980): 406.

Literature from the nineteenth century outlining social expectations includes: Irwin P. Beadle, *Beadle’s Dime Book of Practical Etiquette for Ladies and Gentlemen: Being a Guide to True Gentility and Good-Breeding, and a Complete Directory to the Usages and Observances of Society* (New York: Irwin P. Beadle, & Co., 1859); Elisabeth Celnart, *The Gentleman and Lady’s Book of Politeness and Propriety of Deportment, Dedicated to the Youth of Both Sexes* (Boston: Allen and Ticknor, 1833); Robert De Valcourt, *The Illustrated Manners Book: A Manual of Good Behavior and Polite Accomplishments* (New York: Leland, Clay, & Company, 1855); Florence Hartley, *The Ladies’ Book of Etiquette, and Manual of Politeness: A Complete Hand Book for the Use of the Lady in Polite Society* (Boston: G. W. Cottrell, 1860); Sullivan, *The War Women Lived*, xiii; Emily Thornwell, *The Lady’s Guide to Perfect Gentility* (New York: H. W. Derby & Co., 1857).

³⁶ Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 320.

reputation.³⁷ According to the chivalric definition of a lady, the act of forming, belonging to, and actively participating in a male-dominated domain like a militia or the military was dishonorable and incomprehensible.

To engage in male activities was loosen the seams of proper society. It was considered inappropriate for proper women to serve as soldiers, as “[it was] an accepted convention that the Civil War was a man’s fight,” note Blanton and Lauren Cook Wilke.³⁸ However, this accepted convention did not hinder women from fantasizing about fighting for the honor of their cause, reveals Faust, though carrying out such “cross-gendered behavior” went beyond society’s “system of [female] subordination.”³⁹ For some women, this fantasy became reality as they disguised themselves as men and enlisted as soldiers rather than contributing to the war effort by serving as nurses in area hospitals.

Over the course of the war, Faust argues, elite Southern women lost their faith in the ability of their men to protect them. Suddenly left in charge of a busy estate, women were forced to navigate the public and private spaces of their lives without the protection they were raised to depend on, gradually redefining their roles, their spaces, and themselves. In the case of the Nancies, this meant that they also reimagined the traditional gendered boundaries to include expanded notions of what their sense of honor demanded that they do.

³⁷ 2 Peter 3:14 KJV, “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

³⁸ Blanton and Wilke, *They Fought Like Demons*, 1.

³⁹ Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 20, 232.

Scholarship dedicated to the Nancy Hart Militia remains sparse, in large part because of the shortage of letters, diaries, or contemporary accounts specifically relating to this intriguing group, and, more particularly, its role in ensuring that LaGrange, Georgia, escaped destruction by invading Union armies. But expanding the search for primary documentation to include non-traditional sources – such as scrapbooks – offers important insights into the thoughts and actions of the member of the Militia. Incorporating traditional primary sources dealing with broader issues – particularly college catalogues, military training manuals, census records, and newspapers – further adds to the story. In sum, by taking a more holistic approach to available sources, this thesis unfolds the Nancy Hart Militia out of regional lore and quilts together something of greater substance.

CHAPTER II

THE NANCIES

With the onset of the Civil War and the enthusiastic enlistment and deployment of many able-bodied men of LaGrange, Georgia, a group of young women united to form the only known all-female militia of the history of the United States; in many ways, they may be considered the first Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAACS).⁴⁰ The story of these young elite women tends to be folded away into the memory of LaGrange like an heirloom quilt in a cedar hope chest: nicely preserved and passed down quietly from generation to generation. Outsiders would

⁴⁰ Althea Bouchelle Benton, "The 'Nancy Harts' of Civil War Days in LaGrange Were Forerunners of WAACS of World War No. 2," *Columbus Ledger*, December 13, 1942, 5; Eleanor Orr, "LaGrange WAACS 82 Years Ago," ca. 1943, MS-100, Morgan-Hill Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA. At the beginning of World War II there was a heightened sense of patriotism and conviction for everyone to "do their part" both on the home-front and the battlefield – similar to the excitement at the dawn of the Civil War. In that war, however, women were permitted to do their part as members of the United States Armed Forces in one of three auxiliary branches: the Women's Army (Auxiliary) Corps (WACS or WAACS), the Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), or Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPS). Examples of women's active involvement in the military, like the Nancy Hart Militia, was used to promote these new (gendered) branches. For further information, see Emily Yellin, *Our Mothers' War: American Women at Home and at the Front During World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010).

probably know nothing of this group of young women who were as devoted to training to defend their little town as they were to what they believed to be the righteous cause of the Confederacy.

Antebellum Georgia newspapers illustrated the increasing tensions between the North and the South since the years immediate proceeding the Revolutionary War, with the root of these tensions being how slavery related to the rights of individual states. In an issue of Augusta's *Chronicle and Gazette of the State*, dated January 1793, was reported the possibility of "the abolition of Negro Slavery" in the House of Representatives, at which time someone had reportedly been tasked with "creat[ing] disunion among the states" in the name of abolition.⁴¹ A Philadelphian Quaker visiting Georgia noted in an article in the *Savannah Republican* from November 1816 noted that "[t]he southern people are in no want of slaves, and are especially averse to those [inhabitants] of the north." The author also observed how defensive Southerners became regarding their "honor and morality."⁴² The *Georgia Journal* reported in May 1818 a congressional session during which an unnamed author observed the distinction between "the

⁴¹ John A. Smith, "The Following Are Some of the Observations of Mr. Smith (S.C.) in the House of Representatives...", *Georgia State Gazette, or, Independent Register* (Augusta), January 12, 1793, 2.

⁴² "Quaker Cant," *Savannah Republican*, November 9, 1816, 2. Quakers generally lived in the North and were some of the first proponents of abolition. In the years leading up to and during the war some of their homes became stops along the Underground Railroad, used by such conductors as Harriet Tubman. For more on this subject, see Robert C. Plumb and Elisabeth Griffith, "The Underground Railroad," in *The Better Angels: Five Women Who Changed Civil War America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), 33–50.

Representatives of the slave holding states” and the states that had abolished slavery.⁴³ In contrast to Northern representatives, the writer noted that Southern state congressmen expressed notable “earnestness” when issues like harboring runaway slaves were raised. In the same newspaper a year later, a front-page article entitled “Emancipation—not governed by humanity—a political business altogether” accused those who supported emancipating enslaved persons of being anything but altruistic and lacking in common reason. The anonymous author asserted that because “the emancipation of one set [of slaves] must be only the making of another,” abolitionists merely desired to become masters over the ignorant.⁴⁴

White Southerners had long mulled the notion of secession from the Union as a solution for their frustrations and discontent with the U.S. government over limitations of territorial and economic expansion of slavery. Georgia newspapers reveal that by the 1850s Southerners had added the defense of slavery to their list of reasons to secede, claiming that their interpretation of the Constitution guaranteed individual states’ rights, most notably the right to secede from the Union.⁴⁵

⁴³ “The Late Session of Congress,” *Georgia Journal* (Milledgeville), May 26, 1818, 2.

⁴⁴ Limner, “Emancipation—Not Governed by Humanity—a Political Business Altogether,” *Georgia Journal* (Milledgeville), October 12, 1819, 1.

⁴⁵ “The Compromise - Disunion [From the *Savannah Georgian*],” *Georgia Telegraph* (Macon), April 8, 1851, 2; “Cotton,” *Georgia Telegraph* (Macon), January 28, 1851, 2; “Editorial Correspondence,” *Southern Recorder* (Milledgeville), June 10, 1851, 3; Henry, “To The Editor,” *Berkeley and Jefferson Intelligencer* (Martinsburg), April 15, 1803, 1-2; “Texas,”

On Tuesday, December 20, 1860, South Carolina carried out the South's "time-honored threat" and announced its intention to secede from the Union, noting that "an increasing hostility on the part of the non-slaveholding States to the institution of slavery, has led to a disregard of their obligations." After South Carolina declared its independence, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana voted at their respective state conventions to also secede. On February 8, 1861, these states united to establish a provisional government and constitution. On February 22, 1861, the provisional government was formalized as the Confederate States of America, with Jefferson Davis selected as President. Soon after, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee broke away from the Union and joined the Confederacy. All were slave-holding states.⁴⁶

The Great Rebellion formally began April 12, 1861, when Confederate troops opened fire on Fort Sumter in South Carolina's Charleston Harbor. Within weeks, Georgia governor Joseph E. Brown ordered twenty infantry companies to muster in Augusta to prepare for service in Virginia; half of these companies would form the 3rd Georgia Regiment and the other half the 4th Georgia Regiment. On April 26, 1861, over 130 volunteers of the LaGrange Light Guards departed by train with the West Point Guards for Augusta, now part of that 4th Georgia

Georgia Telegraph & Republic (Macon), August 5, 1845, 3; "Union or Disunion!," *Georgia Journal and Messenger* (Macon), September 4, 1850, 2.

⁴⁶ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 143; Bryan, "The Secession of Georgia," 11–13.

Regiment. Passing through Atlanta, they were “enthusiastically greeted” by citizens and declared to be “Georgia’s noblest and truest sons.”⁴⁷

Initially left behind were those unable or unwilling to defend the Confederate cause on the battlefield, including the elderly, the infirm or unfit, women, and those who either opposed secession or could not afford to leave their homes.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, invigorated by the patriotic fever

⁴⁷ “Enthusiastic Reception of Soldiers from LaGrange and West Point,” *Southern Confederacy* (Atlanta), April 27, 1861, 2.

⁴⁸ The desire to fight was not universal. As McPherson points out in *Battle Cry of Freedom*, “[b]y the winter of 1861-62 the bloom had faded from southern enthusiasm for the war” (429). With the one-year enlistees reluctant to reenlist, even with financial and furlough incentives, the Confederate government enacted military drafts. Even so, it was not hard for men to find ways to get out of conscription. Initially, if one could afford it, he would hire a military service substitution, or service by proxy. As the war raged on, men who did not want to fight took advantage of such exemption statuses as teachers or professors (like some at LaGrange Female College), members of clergy, apothecaries, hospital attendants, and certain industrial workers (cotton, wool, steel). Those owning twenty or more slaves were also excluded. None of these waivers, particularly paying someone to serve in their place, applied to poorer farmers whose lives were rooted to their land. Confederate States of America, “Public Laws of the Confederate States of America, Passed at the Fourth Session of the First Congress; 1863-64,” in *The Statutes at Large of the Confederate States of America*, ed. James M. Mathews (Richmond: R.M. Smith, Printer to Congress, 1864), 72. For further reading on conscription in the Confederacy, see Albert Burton Moore, *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy* (New

that had been increasing over the last decade, division between North and South had grown (like southern churches of several denominations separating themselves from their northern brethren), those on the home front did what they could to support their boys in gray. Women young and old exchanged the decorative brass buttons on their fine dresses with wooden ones so the buttons could be melted into bullets. Forced to forego imported fabrics like muslin due to Union blockades, middle- and upper-class Southern women learned how to use their grandmothers' spinning wheels to make cotton homespun dresses, which became symbols of pride and patriotism for the wearers. Created from "material [that] was grown, spun, and woven on her own plantation... [t]he colors very pretty, dyed from the bark of trees and wild roots," a plantation mistress would proudly display her "very pretty homespun dresses."⁴⁹ Creating and wearing homespun, also known as butternut for its color, was considered a domestic act of loyalty to the Confederacy.⁵⁰ To further contribute to the war effort, women used the same raw

York: Macmillan, 1924); John M. Sacher, *Confederate Conscription and the Struggle for Southern Soldiers* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2021).

⁴⁹ The "poorer class of country people," Confederate nurse Kate Cummings noted, created their own blossoming subeconomy, "earn[ing] their living by knitting these articles and weaving cloth" and selling it to those of higher social classes. Kate Cummings, *Kate: The Journal of a Confederate Nurse*, ed. Richard Barksdale Harwell (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 193.

⁵⁰ T. C. De Leon, *Belles, Beaux and Brains of the 60's* (New York: G. W. Dillingham Company, 1909), 121, 395; Mary Fahey, "The Changing Role of Elite Southern Women in the Lower South (1830-1900)" (M. A. thesis, Atlanta: Georgia State University, 2017), accessed

cotton to knit socks for those on the battlefields. Despite these efforts, however, the “logic of female dependence,” what Faust explains as Confederate women’s reliance on and belief in white male protection, was no longer sustainable. Nancy “Nannie” Hill Morgan and Mary Alford Heard were not satisfied that enough was being done to protect their town from invasion and themselves from an assault on their honor as Southern ladies. Their service in the Nancy Hart Militia demonstrated this conviction.⁵¹

The memory of this conviction was captured in a typed 12-page draft of a speech given by Leila Pullen Morris, who served under Morgan and Heard as a lieutenant, on the afternoon of Thursday, December 17, 1896, to her fellow members of the Daughters of the Confederacy (eventually the United Daughters of the Confederacy, or UDC) in Atlanta.⁵² Entitled, “Personal Recollections of the War, Girl Confederate Soldiers,” Morris reflected on her involvement:

During the days of the Confederacy and towards the close of the dreadful struggle between the States, the women of LaGrange, Troup County, Georgia, recognizing the defenceless [*sic*] condition of their city, banded together for mutual protection from the stragglers of both armies and

January 16, 2023, https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/history_theses/115, 37; Giselle Roberts, *The Confederate Belle* (Columbia: University of Missouri, 2003), 79-84.

⁵¹ Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 59.

⁵² “A Very Delightful Programme Has Been Arranged by the Daughters of the Confederacy...,” *Atlanta Constitution*, December 17, 1896, 9.

predatory raids of the vicious. They conceived the idea of forming a military company...⁵³

This account Morris gave to the UDC was expanded on by journalist Corine Stocker Horton, who interviewed and recorded Morgan's recollections about the origin of the militia for *Ladies' Home Journal* in 1904:

The idea came to me one stormy night. It was early summer, and the storm was of short duration, for the next morning dawned clear and beautiful. While out walking soon after breakfast I met Mrs. Peter Heard, a young matron like myself. I stopped her.

"Do you realize," I said, "that we are defenseless?"

"I do," said Mrs. Heard.

"This city full of women and children is absolutely at the mercy of Heaven?" I said.

"Absolutely," said Mrs. Heard.

We looked helplessly into each other's eyes.

"Suppose army stragglers or escaped prisoners should come along. They could murder us all."

"They certainly could."

"Not a woman in town can shoot a gun," I said.

"Not one," said she.

Against we looked into one another's eyes.

"It's a dreadful state of affairs!"

Mrs. Heard agreed with me.

⁵³ Morris, "Personal Recollections," Johnson Collection, 1.

“What shall we do?” said I.

“What *can* we do?” said she.

“I’ve got my grandfather’s old flint-lock fowling piece,” said I.

“I’ve got an old rifle,” said she.

“We’ll issue a call,” said I, “and we’ll organize a company. At least we can defend our homes, and if they want us at the front – well, we’ll be ready.”⁵⁴

Considering that Morgan’s account was drawn from her memory over four decades prior, it is likely that her recollection of her conversation with Heard is not perfectly accurate. Between her account and Morris’s recollection, however, some basic facts can be extracted. For instance, during the Civil War the physical protection traditionally provided by men was ripped away when they deployed. This left the domestic sphere of women and children exposed to an assortment of threats and, as Faust points out, everyone questioning “What Shall We Do?”⁵⁵ Faust further contends that these threats from which elite women within a patriarchal society needed protection came in a sort of trinitarian form: “physical, emotional, and financial.”⁵⁶ The most immediate threat shared by Morris and Morgan was the threat of military deserters and/or escaped prisoners of war – any of whom could be mentally unstable. Neither Morris nor Morgan specifies as to which side these potential military deserters or escaped prisoners belonged to; in

⁵⁴ Horton, “The Story of the Nancy Harts,” 14.

⁵⁵ Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 29.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 121.

fact, Morris stated that they could be of either army. Unstated was that beyond the destruction of their town, they feared the destruction of themselves and their honor.⁵⁷

Until the latter half of the 20th century public discourse regarding sexual assault were generally avoided as it was impolite conversation and those who did discuss such matters (whether newspapers or individuals) were considered “excessively ill-bred.”⁵⁸ Wartime, however, changes the rules of propriety as the rawness of reality blasts away blissful illusions. The wartime violence of rape is, scholar Crystal Feimster states, “an issue both ancient and contemporary.”⁵⁹ For women like the Nancies who lived in a warzone, the threat of violence and rape draped over them like a heavy blanket in a humid Southern summer and discussion about it shifted from whispers about behind closed doors to the public platform of newspapers.⁶⁰ Without

⁵⁷ Fahey, “The Changing Role of Elite Southern Women,” 40-43; Morris, “Personal Recollections,” Johnson Collection, 1.

⁵⁸ Hartley, *Ladies’ Book of Etiquette*, 18.

⁵⁹ Crystal N. Feimster, “General Benjamin Butler & the Threat of Sexual Violence during the American Civil War,” *Daedalus* 138, no. 2 (2009): 126.

⁶⁰ “‘Barbarous Yankee Generals’: The North Confess Their Atrocities,” *Georgia Journal and Messenger* (Macon), July 8, 1863, 1; “Charged with Rape,” *Macon Telegraph*, May 14, 1863, 2; “A Rebel Estimate of the Yankee Character,” *Liberator* (Boston), June 7, 1861, 1; “A Georgian Imprisoned - Affairs at Washington, Alexandria, &c.,” *Daily Morning News* (Savannah), May 6, 1861, 1; “A Georgian Imprisoned - Affairs at Washington, Alexandria, &c.,” *Macon Telegraph*, May 6, 1861, 2; W. J. S., “Our Country Our All,” *Macon Telegraph*, May 29, 1862, 2; E. I. Gardenhire, “Letter to Editor: Federals at Sparta [From the Knoxville (Tenn.)

their husbands, brothers, and fathers, they were at great risk of being sexually violated – particularly because, as testified by Morgan and Morris, most women did not know how to handle guns or defend themselves. Stories about women being victim to the “indecent assault” or “vile purpose” by soldiers while they were at their most vulnerable – and always without a male protector – were sprinkled throughout Georgia newspapers.⁶¹

As the war developed, hatred and fear of Northern soldiers undoubtedly increased. Southern newspapers that the Nancies likely read warned, “The Yankees not only come for robbery and plunder, but ruin and rape... [of ladies] who have been delicately raised and tenderly loved.”⁶² On the front page of both the *Macon Telegraph* and the *Daily News* just days after the LaGrange Light Guards had departed was a short paragraph about the attempted “rape on a little girl eleven years old, in Washington” by “[t]wo of Lincoln’s soldiers.”⁶³ A year into war, the editors of the *Macon Telegraph* declared: “A more vile, unprincipled race never breathed than

Register],” *Southern Confederacy* (Atlanta), May 29, 1862, 2; Geo. W. Adair and C. Smith, “A More Vile, Unprincipled Race Never Breathed than the Yankee People,” *Southern Confederacy* (Atlanta), July 29, 1862, 2.

⁶¹ Thomas P. Lowry, *Sexual Misbehavior in the Civil War: A Compendium* (Xlibris Corp., 2006), 151.

⁶² W. J. S., “Our Country Our All,” 2.

⁶³ “A Georgian Imprisoned - Affairs at Washington, Alexandria, &c.,” *Macon Telegraph*, May 6, 1861, 1; “A Georgian Imprisoned - Affairs at Washington, Alexandria, &c.,” *Daily Morning News* (Savannah), May 6, 1861, 1.

the Yankee people.”⁶⁴ The Nancies’ fear was genuine – particularly considering the location of their town.

LaGrange sits near the Alabama border in Troup County. It is nearly 70 miles southwest of Atlanta and a little over 100 miles northeast of Montgomery (the Confederacy’s first capital). The town, whose name came at the suggestion of Col. Julius C. Alford (paternal uncle of Mary Heard), was formally incorporated in 1828 and was designated as its own militia district soon after.⁶⁵ By 1830 LaGrange, had become the county seat, the population having blossomed to approximately 1,440 (the majority being slaves). Many of the white residents were of the elite class, which was typically comprised of planters, lawyers, and doctors. In LaGrange these occupations often overlapped: both Hampton W. Hill (Morgan’s father) and Bennett Ware (the brother of militia member Caroline Ware Poythress Gay) were medical doctors in town, as well as owners of plantations worked by enslaved persons just outside of city limits; John H. H. Colquitt (father of militia member Mary Elizabeth Colquitt) was the postmaster and owned a plantation worked by enslaved persons.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Adair and Smith, “A More Vile, Unprincipled Race Never Breathed than the Yankee People,” 2.

⁶⁵ Clifford Smith, *The History of Troup County* (Atlanta: Foote and Davies Company, 1933), 2, 48.

⁶⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, “Capt. John B. Strong District, Troup County, Georgia,” 1830 U.S. Federal Census, Population Schedule, RG 29, M19, National Archives and Records Administration. Newer settlements in western Georgia, like LaGrange, were referred to by the name of their local militia captain rather than the name of the town. Also included in that year’s

Some of the land that was eventually developed into extensive plantations had been acquired as a result of the State of Georgia's fifth land lottery in 1827, from which eligible residents of Georgia (veterans of the Revolutionary War and/or the War of 1812 and widows of these veterans) were able to claim 202½ acres of land previously occupied by Cherokees and Muskogees. Exploiting the rich soil found throughout the region and the free labor of the enslaved, many men of Troup County used these public land grants as the foundation for their subsequent fortunes.⁶⁷

census were questions regarding the total number of slaves owned. In later years slaves would be documented under their owners in "Slave Schedules," an attachment to the Federal Census. For Troup County, Georgia, the names belonging those enslaved person were never documented in census records, only the name of the owner, the slave's gender, age, and race (black or mulatto). There were 631 white persons, 808 slaves, and one "Free Colored Person." Further broken down, the Census identified 112 households; 82 of those households owned between 1-to-43 slaves, whereas only 30 households did not own slaves.

⁶⁷ Smith, *History of Troup County*, 9-26, 47; Georgia Surveyor General, Lottery Records – Land Lottery Grant Books [1805-1833], RG 003-05-029, Georgia Archives, Morrow, GA; Georgia State Revenue Commissioner, "Troup County [1861]," Revenue – Property Tax Unit – County Property Tax Digests, 1892-1792. RG 034-06-001, Georgia Archives, Morrow, GA; Adiel Sherwood, *A Gazetteer of Georgia: Containing a Particular Description of the State, Its Resources, Counties, Towns, Villages, and Whatever Is Usual in Statistical Works*, 4th ed. (Atlanta: J. Richards, 1860).

By 1860, Troup County boasted being the fourth-wealthiest county in Georgia, in addition to being the fifth-largest slaveholding county. In addition to the 6,223 whites and 37 free blacks listed on that year's census, there were 10,002 recorded enslaved persons. The LaGrange city marshal reported that the population of the town itself was 1,758 – with 844 white persons, 5 free black persons, and 940 enslaved persons.⁶⁸ The number of slaves in the town had increased nearly 70% from 1850, which is reflected in the recorded wealth of area families. A few served as domestic help; more undoubtedly worked on plantations within walking distance of LaGrange's centrally located Courthouse Square (today known as Lafayette Square); others lived and worked just beyond city limits.

The transportation of cotton from plantations and material from the textile mills that had started to spring up around the mid-1840s was made very efficient by West Point Lake, which borders the northwest edge of LaGrange and provided easy access to the Chattahoochee River. From the Chattahoochee River barges of white cotton were shipped to Florida's Apalachicola Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. Furthering the increase in manufacturing and distribution of cotton and textiles was completion of the Atlanta & LaGrange Railroad in 1854, which was renamed the Atlanta & West Point Railroad (A & WP) in 1857 when it connected to the West Point and Montgomery railroads. Civil War maps showing the path of the railroad reveal why its destruction would hurt the Confederacy. This was also the same railroad used by the LaGrange Light Guards to head to war.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ "Population of LaGrange," *Daily Columbus Enquirer*, July 25, 1859, 2.

⁶⁹ *The Army Map of Georgia* (Boston: L. Prang & Co., 1864), map, <https://www.loc.gov/item/99447293/> (accessed October 6, 2019); A. Lindenkohl, H. Lindenkohl,

Bonnets in Formation: The Women of the Militia

Rather than remain defenseless, many young women of LaGrange decided to be proactive and not waste time waiting for the threat of violence to manifest. Within weeks of their town's volunteer militia deploying, thereby leaving the affluent town exposed to the potential Union threats, the young ladies – all belonging to the upper echelon of society – transitioned into actively training soldiers “ready for the fray if emergency demanded.”⁷⁰

As understood by the nation's founding fathers, militias were seen as a means of providing security without the potential threats to democracy posed by a large regular army. Their role was enshrined in the Second Amendment: in order to form “a well-regulated Militia,” Americans must have the right “to keep and bear Arms.”⁷¹ Subsequent federal regulations required each state to organize its militia, which in many areas became an important reflection of local society, culture, and political influence.⁷² As with many laws written in the early days of the country, they were written by and applicable to white men – unless otherwise specifically noted.

Charles G. Krebs, and United States Coast Survey, *Northern Alabama and Georgia* (S.I.: U.S. Coast Guard Survey Office), Map, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2008628287/> (accessed October 6, 2019); “Military,” *Southern Confederacy* (Atlanta), April 25, 1861.

⁷⁰ Morris, “Personal Recollections,” Johnson Collection, 4.

⁷¹ Robert Wooster, *The United States Army and the Making of America: From Confederation to Empire, 1775-1903* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2021), 41.

⁷² Mary Ellen Rowe, *Bulwark of the Republic: The American Militia in the Antebellum West* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).

In LaGrange, however, the Nancy Harts took it a step further; undoubtedly influenced by their fathers and grandfathers who had joined militias during and after the War of 1812, these women also organized themselves as a traditional military company. Like male militias of the era, members of the company elected their own officers. Mrs. Nancy Colquitt Hill Morgan, 21 in 1861, was initially elected First Lieutenant, before being made Captain; Mrs. Mary Alford Heard, 27, was Second Lieutenant, becoming First Lieutenant after Morgan's promotion; Miss Andelia Bull, 25, was First Sergeant; Miss Augusta "Gussie" Hill, 17, was Second Sergeant; Miss Mary Eliza Colquitt, 23, was Third Sergeant; Miss Martha Elizabeth "Pack" Beall, 18, was First Corporal; Miss Leila Claudia Pullen, 16, was Second Corporal; Miss Sallie Bull, 26, was Third Corporal; Miss Ella Key, 25, was Treasurer; and widow Mrs. Caroline Ware Poythress, 25, served in the greater militia company (all young ladies were promoted in rank shortly thereafter). Together with this leadership, at least forty women trained under Dr. Augustus "Gus" Ware, aged 31 and brother of Caroline, who they initially elected captain.⁷³ "Women being naturally

⁷³ The name "Pack Beall" does not appear in any records beyond the article originally printed in the *LaGrange Reporter* and its subsequent reprinting. However, in comparing local census records, directories, and school records, and using deductive reasoning I have concluded that her actual name was Martha Elizabeth Beall. The other two options would be her younger sisters, Julia or Louisa Kate, who were both younger than 15 and students in lower grades at LaGrange Female Academy, the feeder-school to LaGrange Female College.

LaGrange Female College, *Catalogue of the Faculty, Pupils and Patrons of LaGrange Female College at La Grange, Georgia, for the Scholastic Year Closing July 10, 1856* (Atlanta:

Republican & Discipline New Job Office, 1856); *Catalogue of the Trustees, Faculty, and Students of the LaGrange Female College* (Atlanta: C. R. Hanleiter, 1857).

Like many white Southerners, Dr. Gus Ware never actually served in the Confederate Army, although the exact nature of his disability that rendered him ineligible for military service (battlefield or administrative) in the Confederacy is unknown. As a medical doctor, he was excused from conscription. On March 6, 1861, the Confederate Congress approved an act providing for a general surgeon and an assistant surgeon for each militia called into service. Congress of the Confederate States of America, “No. 48 - An Act to Provide for Public Defense,” in *Laws for the Army and Navy of the Confederate States* (Richmond: Ritchie & Dunnivant, 1861), 8–11.

In a letter dated April 22, 1861, Dr. Robert A. T. Ridley petitioned Georgia governor Joseph Brown to appoint Dr. A. C. Ware as a military surgeon, commending Ware’s experience, knowledge, and kindness. This letter was cosigned by Doctors S. D. Little, L. J. Roberts, and S. T. Beasley, N. N. Smith (father of Aley), W. W. Smith (brother of Aley), A. O. Stanley, as well as Judge O. A. Bull (father of Sallie and Andelia) and Col. J. M. Beall (father of Martha Elizabeth). Another letter to Governor Brown “stating [Ware’s] desire to receive the appointment of Surgeon to the 3rd. Regt. Geo. Volunteers” was written by Col. James M. Beall on April 23, 1861. Despite both letters and Act 48, Governor Brown did not appoint him. At the top of the page of Ridley’s letter “Nays” is written in pencil, suggesting that Governor Brown placed Dr. Ware in the “No” pile of applicants. Dr. Robert A. T. Ridley to Gov. Joseph E. Brown, April 21, 1861, Governor – Executive Dept. – Governor’s Subject Files (Aka Incoming Correspondence), 001-01-005, C 117931, doc: 261, c: 11793, Georgia State Archives, Morrow, GA; Col. James

unfamiliar with firearms and army tactics, we were obliged to seek beyond our sex for military instruction,” Morris recalled, implicitly admitting that the roles of defenders and protectors in the nineteenth century were not usually considered to be those of women.⁷⁴

The cause of the Nancy Hart Militia did not mirror that of the greater Confederacy, though they still “romantically patriotic.”⁷⁵ The Confederacy fought a traditional war played out on an international public stage by men consumed by notions of “manhood,” which included defending the South and their right to the peculiar institution of slavery. Alternatively, the Nancies represented a defensive reaction to the abrupt threat to their culture of antebellum domestic honor. From birth they had been learning and perfecting their roles as curators of

Madison Beall to Gov. Joseph E. Brown, April 23, 1861, Governor – Executive Dept. – Governor’s Subject Files (Aka Incoming Correspondence), 001-01-005, C 114741, doc: 291, c: 114741, Georgia State Archives, Morrow, GA.

According to *A Manual of Instructions for Enlisting and Discharging Soldiers* from 1863, it could be surmised that Dr. Ware was deemed ineligible due to “feebleness of constitution” because of epidemics of the era, like cholera, scarlet fever, typhus, or yellow fever. Curiously, the Oath of Allegiance he signed in 1867 does not note this disability, whereas others’ disabilities are noted. Roberts Bartholow, *A Manual of Instructions for Enlisting and Discharging Soldiers* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1863), 63; Georgia, Office of the Governor, “No. 194 Augustus C. Ware,” in Reconstruction Registration Oath Books, 1867, RG 1-1-107, Georgia State Archives, Morrow, GA.

⁷⁴ Morris, “Personal Recollections,” Johnson Collection, 2.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 4.

domesticity. As their kinswomen before them, they found safety and security in their accepted role as makers and caretakers of the home (or, at least, they were supposed to). Their place, however, was transactional, as it was dependent on men to fill the compound role of provider and protector, as well as the primary public representative of the family. What happened when those strictly assigned as providers and protectors were gone?

Boundaries shift and change during war, both physical and cultural. The tight edges around strictly defined spaces tend to fray, blur, and overlap. In both the North and the South, many of the men were gone and without men, there was little to no protection – save for old men past their prime, young men with physical disabilities, or men of all ages who simply refused to join military units, thus suggesting that they were of questionable manhood. The Nancies could have done what most women did across the South, which was to remain in the relative security of the traditionally female-dominated domestic realm: taking care of hearth and home and trying to maintain some semblance of antebellum normality. However, the Nancies could not find a sense of safety under this threadbare option, so they chose to rip out the seams holding together the boundaries of the domestic sphere and baste them to their cause: the honor of themselves as ladies and the honor of their town. The Nancies became the strong patch over the hole torn unevenly by the men when they answered the call to battle, even if it meant the risking their reputation as proper ladies. Regardless, it was this honor that propelled them to craft for themselves and their town a lace-trimmed defensive bulwark.

Devoted to defending their cause and to protecting themselves against the external threat of ill-intentioned soldiers and the internal threat of domestic disorder, the young women of the Nancy Hart Militia met twice a week to prepare themselves by using an old copy of William J. Hardee's two-volume *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics* (Hardee's *Tactics*) as their training

guide.⁷⁶ They primarily mustered at Hill's Grove on the grounds of Bellevue Plantation (see fig. 1 on the following page), occasionally using Judge Bull's fields for target practice. The Nancies took their military preparations seriously, whereas many of America's traditional militias (usually made up of the local elite) used their training time as an excuse to gather socially.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ William J. Hardee, *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics; for The Exercise and Manœuvres of Troops When Acting as Light Infantry or Riflemen*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1855); Morris, "Personal Recollections," Johnson Collection, 1.

A Georgia native, William J. Hardee was born in 1815. He graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1838. His military career spanned decades, starting with the Seminole Wars. Hardee fought under Zachary Taylor in the war against Mexico. After Georgia seceded from the Union, Hardee resigned from the U.S. Army and joined the Confederate States Army as a colonel – where President Jefferson Davis (formerly U. S. Secretary of War from 1853 to 1857) ordered him to update his 1855 manual, *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics*, which had originally sold 18,000 copies and was a standard U. S. Army manual. Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, *General William J. Hardee: Old Reliable* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992); Thomas Conn Bryan, "General William J. Hardee and Confederate Publication Rights," *Journal of Southern History* 12, no. 2 (May 1946): 263-274; "Military Manuals of the Civil War: 'Old Reliable,' Jeff Davis' Drillmaster," *Civil War Times* 48, no. 5 (October 2009): 22-23.

⁷⁷ W. W. Turner, "LaGrange, Georgia in 1860" (LaGrange, GA, 1923), Troup County Archives. This framed document is hung on the wall at the archives. Bellevue Plantation was owned by Georgia Senator Benjamin H. Hill, who served in politics before, during, and after the

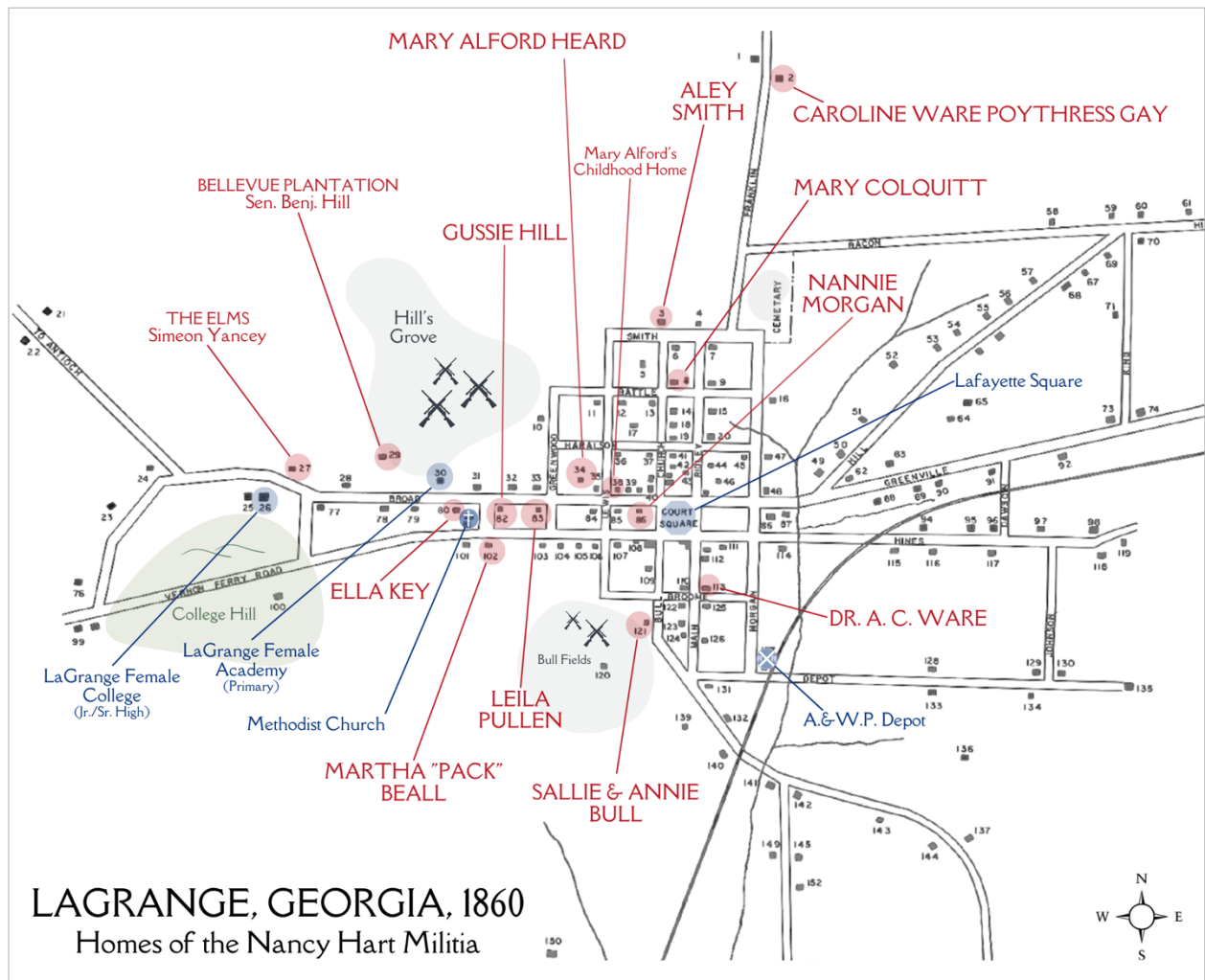


Figure 1 Homes of the Nancy Hart Militia in LaGrange, Georgia, in 1860 *W. W. Turner, Troup County Archives*

These recurrent gatherings were nothing like the morning or afternoon social calls elite white women of the day were accustomed to: no calling cards were needed; the locations of polite gatherings shifted from the parlor or the veranda to an open field; the polite “art of conversation” as defined in popular etiquette books was replaced by military commands of attention, preparation, and execution; attention to such detail as the proper dress for the proper

Civil War. Judge Bull’s property was about a twenty-minute walk southeast from Bellevue Plantation.

times of day refocused itself to making the target in a shot; and the casual sauntering up and down Broad Street with parasols quickly became organized marches down Broad Street to Courthouse Square with rifles and muskets.⁷⁸

Following Hardee's *Tactics*, Captain Morgan and her petticoated company memorized basic military commands and practiced formations, maneuvers, and, under the instruction of Ware, marksmanship.⁷⁹ Because Hardee's guide was thorough and its language clear, there was no question about the roles and expectations of each officer, whose "instruction... [could] be perfected only by joining theory to practice."⁸⁰ The Nancies were familiar with sewing theory into practice, as was exercised at their alma mater, LaGrange Female College. In addition to the general guidelines and rules of a military company, the curriculum in Hardee's *Tactics* was further simplified into the School of the Soldier, School of the Company, and the Drill for Skirmishers.⁸¹

After practice using antique arms to shoot a target "smaller than a barn door and larger than a mustard seed," they filed into columns according to rank and continued their training by

⁷⁸ Hartley, *Ladies' Book of Etiquette*, 12, 27, 110-115; Hardee, *Tactics*, 1: 15.

⁷⁹ Cleaveland, "Georgia's Nancy Harts," 44-45; Celestine Sibley, "40 Rebel Women vs. the Yankees," *Atlanta Constitution*, August 25, 1991, 123; Laura June Davis, "Girl Soldiers of Nancy Harts Militia," *Civil War Monitor* (March 6, 2012), accessed September 9, 2019, <https://www.civilwarmonitor.com/front-line/the-girl-soldiers-of-nancy-harts-militia>.

⁸⁰ Hardee, *Tactics*, 13-14.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 16, 90, 171.

marching east down Broad Street to Courthouse Square.⁸² Following Hardee's instructions, each member of the company was separated by six paces, which allowed them to be "better adapted to movements on a large scale" and was "highly essential to the regularity of the march."⁸³ Casting aside everything they knew as the proper etiquette of ladies when in public, the Nancies "boldly marched through the streets with guns on [their] shoulders and banners flying."⁸⁴ The purpose of marching in a very public area (versus the more private space of Hill's Grove or Judge Bull's fields) was not only to rehearse the various types of marching (the direct march, the oblique march, the march by flank, and differing steps within), but to reassure their town that there was some level of defense and to muster up civic enthusiasm.⁸⁵

The *LaGrange Reporter*, the town newspaper that was printed within view of their routine march around the town square, christened their petticoated militia the "Nancy Harts" within days of their development. News of their formation spread through the Confederate states and was featured in several newspapers, identifying them by their full names and ranks within the militia, adding to the South's patriotic fervor. The *Daily Dispatch*, of Richmond, Virginia, reported that it was the ladies' "determination to prepare to defend their homes, if necessary, as

⁸² Morris, "Personal Recollections," Johnson Collection, 3.

⁸³ Hardee, *Tactics*, 18, 31.

⁸⁴ Morris, "Personal Recollections," Johnson Collection, 3.

⁸⁵ Hardee, *Tactics*, 46.

did Nancy Hart of olden time.”⁸⁶ In her UDC speech, Morris recounted that they were named as such in honor of “that extra loyal Georgia woman.”⁸⁷

The Real Nancy Hart: The Namesake, The Legend, The Woman

Less than seventy years after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, Nancy Hart had been crocheted into the cultural folklore of Georgia. As with many Southern stories, reality is interwoven with the brightly colored threads of slight exaggerations, thereby making it difficult to separate fact from fiction. Every story about Georgia’s beloved heroine Nancy Hart must therefore be read with a grain of salt – for even she was said to have told tales larger than life.

According to numerous accounts, including an address in 1916 by the State Historian of Georgia, Nancy Hart tricked, shot, killed, and buried two Tories at the height of the Revolutionary War after she had been left alone on her Georgia homestead when her husband Benjamin went off to fight for independence.⁸⁸ All stories are quick to note that she was far from a handsome woman, nor did she exhibit characteristics of an eighteenth-century lady; in fact, in 1848 writer Elizabeth Ellet described her as “vulgar and illiterate, but hospitable and [a] valorous

⁸⁶ “The ‘Nancy Harts’ of LaGrange,” *Daily Dispatch* (Richmond), June 6, 1861, 1.

⁸⁷ “The ‘Nancy Harts’ of LaGrange,” *Daily Sun* (Columbus), June 1, 1861, 2; “The ‘Nancy Harts’ of LaGrange,” *Southern Confederacy* (Atlanta), June 1, 1861, 2; “The ‘Nancy Harts of LaGrange,” *Weekly Chronicle & Sentinel* (Augusta), June 5, 1861, 3; Morris, “Personal Recollections,” Johnson Collection, 1.

⁸⁸ Lucian Lamar Knight, *Address of State Historian of Georgia, Hon. Lucian Lamar Knight, in the State Capitol, November 25th, 1916* (College Park: Martin Printing Co., 1916).

female patriot.”⁸⁹ These characteristics add that bright color to the story – particularly the entertaining detail that Nancy was able to shoot and kill experienced soldiers even though she was (reportedly) severely cross-eyed. Ultimately the tale of Nancy Hart is one of heroic redemption; despite her unladylike deportment and lack of beauty, through her recounted brave actions in the face of death she became a hero and the namesake for LaGrange’s all-female militia.

Behind the exaggerations there exists some truth, though scholars still find it nearly impossible to isolate the two. Research reveals that the Revolutionary War heroine was born approximately 1735 as Nancy Ann Morgan to Thomas and Rebecca Morgan in North Carolina. With her parents she lived in Bucks County, Pennsylvania and in her birth state prior to marrying Benjamin Franklin Hart, eventually settling in South Carolina and later in Broad River County, Georgia. During the American Revolution, Benjamin Hart went off to fight with his fellow patriots, leaving Nancy and their children alone on their Georgia homestead in Elbert County.⁹⁰ Known by her contemporaries as outspoken and feisty, Nancy had no qualms defending her family and her home against invading British soldiers or their Tory allies.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Elizabeth F. Ellet, “Georgia Women: Nancy Hart,” in *Women of the Revolution*, 3 vols. (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1848), 2: 227–233.

⁹⁰ Mrs. Howard H. McCall, *Roster of Revolutionary Soldiers in Georgia*, 3 vols. (Atlanta: Georgia Society: Daughters of the American Revolution, 1941), 3: 106-107.

⁹¹ E. Merle Coulter, “Nancy Hart, Georgia Heroine of the Revolution: The Story of the Growth of A Tradition,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 39, no. 2 (June 1955): 118–151; Cleaveland, “Georgia's Nancy Harts”; “From Mrs. Ellet’s *Women of the Revolution*, Georgia

Nancy Hart died at her home in Henderson, Kentucky about 1830 and is buried alongside one of her sons, John Benjamin Hart. Her tale of bravery and the collective memory of patriotic strength live on through various plaques and monuments throughout Georgia. One plaque's inscription, further blurring the line between fact and fiction, reads: "Nancy Hart / During the American Revolution / A Party of British Tories Came to / Her home. Single handed she killed / One and Wounded Another. The / Remainder of the Party Surrendered / And were later Hanged by her / And a few Neighbors."⁹²

Providing credibility to Nancy Hart's act of heroism was the 1912 discovery of the six skeletons where Nancy Hart said she buried the Tories, near a large tree by her house on Wahatchee Creek. According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, crews had been grading land for the Elberton and Eastern Railroad when they unearthed the skeletons three feet under the surface. In an era before forensic analysis, archeologists concluded that the skeletons, buried without coffins in a shallow pit, must have been Nancy Hart's purported Tory intruders.⁹³

Women: Nancy Hart.," *Columbus Enquirer*, March 25, 1851, 1; "Biographical: Nancy Hart," *Independent* (Oskaloosa, KS), March 4, 1865, 1; Edna Arnold Copeland, *Nancy Hart: The War Woman* (Elberton, GA: 1941); McCall, *Roster of Revolutionary Soldiers in Georgia*, 3: 106-107.

⁹² "Nancy Ann Morgan Hart (1735-1830)," *Find a Grave*, accessed March 17, 2023, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16616031/nancy-ann-hart>; "Nancy Hart Historical Marker," *Historical Marker Database*, last modified 2012, accessed March 25, 2023, <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=21388>.

⁹³ "Skeletons of Six Tories Found Hanged Near Elberton, Found," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 23, 1912, 3; "Skeletons of Six Tories Found Near Elberton," *Weekly Times-Recorder*

Carrying the name “Nancy Hart” with as much pride as they had for their town, the Nancies were diligent in constant Civil War patrols up and down the hilly streets of LaGrange, which were a far cry from the gentle sauntering ladies of the day were accustomed to. Etiquette books, which had grown in popularity in the mid-nineteenth century, stressed that women of the Nancies’ social class should carry themselves in “a dignified, lady-like deportment [in order to] command respect.”⁹⁴

Census records confirm that the women of the Nancy Hart Militia belonged to the elite social class. Nannie Morgan was the daughter of one of LaGrange’s physicians, Dr. Hampton Wooten Hill, and enjoyed a comfortable childhood. In 1850, one year prior to his death, Dr. Hill owned 23 slaves, a large home sat between Broad and Vernon Streets, 205 acres of land forested with oak and hickory in the county, and whose real estate value was estimated at \$4,000 (worth nearly \$150,000 in 2023).⁹⁵ Nannie went on to marry lawyer Jeremiah Brown Morgan in 1857,

(Americus, GA), January 2, 1913, 11; “Nancy Hart,” *American Battlefield Trust*, accessed March 17, 2023, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/nancy-hart>. No present-day investigations are known to have been conducted on these skeletons to ascertain the validity of this century-old claim.

⁹⁴ Hartley, *Ladies’ Book of Etiquette*, 110.

⁹⁵ Georgia State Revenue Commissioner, “Troup County [1861],” Revenue – Property Tax Unit – County Property Tax Digests, 1892-1792, RG 034-06-001, Georgia Archives, Morrow, GA; U.S. Census Bureau, “Troup County, Georgia,” 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Population Schedule, RG 29, Roll M653_138, National Archives and Records Administration; and “Georgia Militia District 655,” 1850 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules, RG 29, M432,

and just three years into their marriage they claimed an estate valued at \$7,000 and owned six slaves. Mary Eliza Colquitt was a cousin and her father J. H. H. Colquitt, the postmaster, had an estate totaling \$18,000 and owned 20 slaves. Leila Pullen's father Charles was wealthy merchant, whose estate was valued at \$34,550 and owned 27 slaves. Aley Smith's father, Dr. Nathan Smith, claimed an estate valued at \$52,000 and the ownership of 21 slaves. Sally and Andelia Bull's father, Orville, was a revered local judge and attorney, whose estate was valued at \$23,000 and owned seven slaves. Considering the amount of land, number of slaves, and reported personal wealth of these families, these young ladies grew up surrounded by comfort. However, the daughters of LaGrange did not waste their days during the war lounging on the verandas of their plantation homes, drinking mint juleps, and being fanned by slaves as they listlessly fretted about their futures.⁹⁶

National Archives and Records Administration; "\$1 in 1860 → 2023 | Inflation Calculator," *Official Inflation Data*, accessed March 13, 2023, <https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation>; Robert Sahr, "Inflation Conversion Factors for Years 1774 to Estimated 2024," (study, Corvallis: Oregon State University), April 8, 2014. According to data derived from the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and an in-depth study by Dr. Sahr and the American Antiquarian Society, the value of \$1.00 in 1860 is worth approximately \$36.25 as of March 13, 2023. Using this information, it was possible to convert the recorded 1860 estate values were to the approximate 2023 values. See table 2.1, "Total 1860 Estate (Real Estate and Personal) Values vs. Total 2023 Worth."

⁹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, "Troup County, Georgia," 1860 United States Federal Census, Population Schedule, RG 29, Roll M653_138, National Archives and Records Administration.

Capt. Nannie Morgan

The Nancy Hart Militia would not have existed were it not for the determination of Nancy “Nannie” Hill Morgan to organize and lead the young women of her town to fill the protective roles left behind by the LaGrange Light Guards, thereby knitting together the domestic and public realms of her era.

To date there are only two known photographs in existence of Morgan (figs. 2 and 3 on the preceding page), depicting her before and after the Civil War. The first captures Nannie as a young woman of about 20. The expression of her dark eyes was tight and focused, almost worried. Her lips were pursed and slightly frowning. Over her dark hair she wore a bonnet tastefully decorated with flowers, tied in a large bow beneath her oval-shaped face. She wore lace-trimmed gloves on hands clasped together over a large hoopskirt. The positioning of her hands revealed her training in proper ladies’ etiquette, for they “rest in an easy, natural position, perfectly quiet.”⁹⁷ Wrapped over her shoulders was a large fur shawl, suggesting the photograph

Refer again to table 2.1 for a breakdown of the economic conditions of the Nancies immediately preceding the war.

⁹⁷ Hartley, *Ladies’ Book of Etiquette*, 151.



Figure 2 Nancy Morgan, circa 1860. *Troup County Archives*



Figure 3 Nancy Morgan, circa 1890. *Troup County Archives*

was taken close to the secession winter – a period in which local newspapers were reporting increasing animosities between themselves and the North.

The second photograph was taken about 1890 and sees her as slightly softened with age. She wore a high, lace-collared white blouse. Her hair was again parted in the middle and pulled back, yet this time it did not hide beneath a bonnet. Her eyes were just as focused as before, though her lids have become heavier. There was less worry hanging from her lips and ghosting her brow. As in the picture taken thirty years prior, she did not smile – typical during this era of photography.

Born Nancy Colquitt Hill on March 1, 1840, in LaGrange, she was the fourth of six children of Dr. Hampton Hill (1800-1851) and Eudocia A. Lane (1812-1868), who had an equal

number of sons and daughters. Dr. Hill was one of many doctors serving LaGrange – another being Dr. Nathan Smith, the father of Nancy Hart member Aley Smith. Although Dr. Hill owned a substantial amount of land and over a dozen slaves outside of town, he and his family resided in a house between Broad and Vernon Streets. For years, Dr. Hill routinely opened his large home to young ladies of LaGrange Female College needing accommodations. In 1850, there were eleven young ladies of the college boarding at his residence – not counting his own children.⁹⁸

Through her mother's line, Nannie was distantly related to her militia's namesake, with Nancy Hart being the mother-in-law of her great aunt, Patience Lane. Nancy Hart's son, to whom Patience was married, was John Benjamin Hart.⁹⁹

Nancy graduated from LaGrange Female College in the summer of 1856 and, after a brief break in their engagement, married Jeremiah Brown Morgan (1835-1884) the next spring.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, "Troup County, Georgia," 1850 United States Federal Census, Population Schedule, RG 29, Roll M432_84, National Archives and Records Administration. Eudocia Lane was the niece of Joseph Lane, who became the first governor of Oregon.

⁹⁹ "Ann Nancy Morgan (1735-1830)," *Ancestry*, last modified 2023, accessed March 17, 2023, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/163882863/person/172234875547/facts>; McCall, *Roster of Revolutionary Soldiers in Georgia*, 3: 106-107.

¹⁰⁰ J. Brown Morgan to Nannie Hill, February 9, 1857, MS-100, Morgan-Hill Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA. This letter from Brown (as he was known) expressed his sorrow at his broken engagement with Nannie Hill, who seems to have (briefly) broken their engagement, though her reasons are not given.

Morgan was an up-and-coming attorney whose office overlooked the same town square that his wife and her militia would later march around. Like many of the other able-bodied men of LaGrange, Morgan departed with the rest of the LaGrange Light Guards for Virginia on May 7, 1861. He left behind Nannie, who, in turn, rallied local young ladies together to form the Nancy Hart Militia as a way protect themselves and their town from Yankee aggressors, unruly slaves, or gray deserters who failed to live up to being “Georgia’s noblest and truest sons.”¹⁰¹

For nearly four years, starting May 25, 1861, the Nancy Hart Militia drilled under the leadership of Dr. Ware and First Lieutenant-turned-Captain Nannie Morgan. She would have held an old heavy musket by a pair of small hands that had seen little physical work, fashionably pale from years of wearing gloves. But as she trained, her hands were likely bare, as holding a gun and shooting with accuracy would have been difficult with gloves that were meant to accessorize a lady’s wardrobe rather than be put to task beyond a polite handshake. Her hands’ only calluses would have been faint and revealed years of needlework and penmanship practice. After all, wrote a typical contemporary author of female gentility, “[an] elegant hand [was] regarded by many as betokening evident prestige in its possessor.”¹⁰²

Even with a relatively small population, LaGrange had at least two newspapers publishing between 1861 and 1865, as well as uninterrupted access to newspapers from West Point, Columbus, and Atlanta. Throughout the war, the Nancies remained up to date on the whereabouts of their men, who were a part of the Doles-Cook Brigade, Army of Northern

¹⁰¹ “J. B. Morgan,” *LaGrange Reporter*, August 11, 1859, 1; “J. B. Morgan,” *LaGrange Reporter*, November 30, 1860, 1.

¹⁰² Thornwell, *Lady’s Guide to Perfect Gentility*, 54.

Virginia; local newspapers provided extensive coverage about the movement of troops and personal correspondence was delivered routinely by train, telegraph, and post. Accessibility to swift news and updates unified the remaining citizens of LaGrange in collective mourning, as well as encouraging Confederate patriotism.¹⁰³

Considering how rapidly news spread through LaGrange, the ladies of Nancy Hart Militia were well-aware of the Union Army closing in on them from Alabama to the east and West Point to the very near south. Rumors about rape and pillaging had also, no doubt, been whispered behind delicate bonnets. By March 1865 these whispers had grown louder, as the march of Union Army Major General William Tecumseh Sherman from Atlanta to Savannah the previous autumn screamed destruction and dishonor. In what has been likened to a scorched earth policy, Federal troops decimated Georgia's landscape to the east, burning and destroying the objects of Southern pride and prosperity: cotton, railroads, and anything else they believed would weaken the Confederacy.¹⁰⁴ For Confederate men, this was yet another insult to their Southern culture of

¹⁰³ "Military Movements," *Georgia Journal and Messenger* (Macon), May 8, 1861, 2; "The Third Georgia Regiment," *Weekly Constitutionalist* (Augusta), December 3, 1862, 1; "The Battle of Fredericksburg," *Macon Telegraph*, December 29, 1862, 1; "The Situation at Fredericksburg," *Daily Sun* (Columbus), December 17, 1862, 1; Thomas, *History of the Doles-Cook Brigade*, 64, 107.

¹⁰⁴ Shelby Foote, *The Civil War: A Narrative*, 3 vols. (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 3: 30-31, 374, 640-654; Stephen Huggins, "State Terrorism during the American Civil War," in *America's Use of Terror: From Colonial Times to the A-Bomb* (Lawrence: University Press of

honor; for Confederate women alone on the home-front, it was more than an insult – but the real possibility that they would be the ones facing the physical consequences.

Heightening domestic anxieties, one newspaper reported, “They [Union soldiers] scour the country, plundering and murdering the inhabitants without mercy, and leaving nothing but a barren waste wherever they go.”¹⁰⁵ With the war having blurred lines of propriety even in the media, other newspaper stories reported Yankee “atrocities” like “arson, murder, plunder and rape.”¹⁰⁶ Between these publications, news from loved ones on the battlefield, and simple word-of-mouth, those living in towns throughout the South were put on even higher alert in March of 1865 when Union Gen. James H. Wilson began eliminating some of the last of the Confederacy’s strongholds in Alabama on his way east towards Georgia.

Kansas, 2019), 99–123; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 41. See also *War of the Rebellion*, series, 3: 658.

¹⁰⁵ “The Situation in West Tennessee,” *Chronicle & Sentinel*, April 26, 1865; Mary Ann Harris Gay, *Life in Dixie During the War* (Atlanta: Charles P. Byrd, 1897), 268. The local newspapers of LaGrange that remained in publication between 1861 and 1865 include the *Daily Bulletin* and the *LaGrange Reporter*. An article on the front page of Augusta’s *Daily Sun*, dated August 13, 1861, recounted a woman having been “violated by two [Yankee] ruffians, in the dinning [*sic.*] room, and in the presence of her own children.” “Accounts from the Yankee Army in Washington - Their Outrages, and Manassas Panic [From the *Richmond Examiner*, 8th],” *Daily Sun* (Columbus) August 13, 1861, 1.

¹⁰⁶ ““Barbarous Yankee Generals’: The North Confess Their Atrocities,” *Georgia Journal and Messenger* (Macon), July 8, 1863, 1.

Wilson's Raid, Colonel La Grange, and the Ladies of LaGrange

Beginning March 22, 1865, in northwest Alabama, Wilson's Raid, as it quickly came to be known, was executed by the Union Cavalry Corps, which was comprised of 13,500 troops within the First, Second, and Fourth Cavalry Divisions. Using military tactics that scholar Stephen F. Bowman compares to those used in Operation Desert Storm (1990-1991), Wilson's cavalry employed "speed, mobility, and shock action... by taking advantage of firepower and limited visibility to overcome superior enemy defenses," throughout their march east.¹⁰⁷ These tactics were most notably used on April 2, 1865, against Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest's Confederate forces subsequent to the capture and destruction of Selma, Alabama, a key remaining source of manufacturing, munitions, and supplies for the Confederate armies. "I fear Selma has fallen," Caroline Ware Gay wrote her deployed husband Jack on April 4, going on to note the amount of "refugees coming in from Montgomery and Selma all day."¹⁰⁸

On April 12, unaware that three days earlier Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee had surrendered to Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox, Virginia, Wilson swept through Montgomery on the way to Columbus and Macon, Georgia. In Opelika, Alabama, en route to Columbus, General Wilson tasked Col. Oscar H. La Grange with leading the 2nd Brigade to

¹⁰⁷ Stephen L. Bowman, "Ahead of Its Time: Wilson's Cavalry Campaign of 1865," *Army History*, no. 23 (Summer 1992): 12.

¹⁰⁸ Caroline E. Gay to John "Jack" Gay, April 4, 1865, MS-004, Nix-Price Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA.

capture West Point, thirty-five miles north. On the evening of Easter Sunday, April 16, 1865, Colonel La Grange announced its “capture and occupation.”¹⁰⁹

That morning Colonel La Grange and the 2nd Brigade had followed the railroad north on foot into West Point. In what is known as the “desperately defended and gallantly won” Battle of West Point, Colonel La Grange captured Fort Tyler, took prisoner about 300 Confederate soldiers, confiscated mass supplies, and burned 19 locomotives, between 200-245 railroad cars, and a few bridges.¹¹⁰ Those Confederates who fought this battle included Col. James H. Fannin, who was from LaGrange and had answered the call to Fort Tyler’s defense along with eighteen other area men.¹¹¹ This battle resulted in the death of Confederate Brig. Gen. Robert C. Tyler, the last general to perish during the Civil War. After this successful action, official records report Colonel La Grange made sure that a hospital was set up for whomever was wounded (Union or Confederate) and “[m]arched toward La Grange Station” along the path of the Atlanta & West Point Railroad.¹¹²

On Monday, April 17, 1865, when Colonel La Grange’s troopers rode within sight, trepidation would have weighed heavily on the ladies who had been training for four years for this very moment. They likely heard reports about the Confederates’ loss a day earlier to Wilson’s raiders at the Battle of Fort Tyler in West Point, just seventeen miles away, which were

¹⁰⁹ Stephen Vaughn Shipman, “Diary of Stephen Vaughn Shipman, 1865: Monday, April 17th, 1865,” Wis Mss 50S; WIHV93-A773, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI.

¹¹⁰ *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, vol. 49: 417.

¹¹¹ James H. Fannin, “Col. James H. Fannin,” *Confederate Veteran* 18, no. 1 (1910): 181.

¹¹² *War Of The Rebellion*, series 1, vol. 49: 341-343, 352, 364-365, 384, 387, 428-429.

confirmed by a few Confederate soldiers who had escaped capture at Fort Tyler. Passing through ahead of Colonel La Grange's advance, Morris recalls these soldiers, who were more concerning about saving their own lives than in protecting the unprotected, told the women, "Young ladies, go into your houses and bar your doors, we beseech you." Morris furthered, "The Nancies did not retreat, for we had made up our minds to dare or die."¹¹³

From the porch of Simeon Yancey's hilltop home at 600 Broad Street, the Nancies waited and eventually spotted "a body of blue coats" in the distance. Like the stately white columns that supported the front of Yancey's home, the women straightened and prepared themselves to carry the weight of the town in the defense of honor.¹¹⁴ Capt. Nannie Morgan was less than two months away from delivering her first child as she stood with her fellow Nancies, their grandfathers' old rifles drawn and pointed at the approaching troops headed by a mustached Union officer on horseback.

Morris and Morgan both recalled Colonel La Grange being rather amused as he encountered this wall of armed young women and, as the story goes, quipped, "I should think the Nancy Harts might use their eyes with better effect upon the Federal soldiers than their rusty

¹¹³ Morris, "Personal Recollections," Johnson Collection, 5.

¹¹⁴ "The Nancy Hart Militia: The Women Who Kept Watch," *Visit LaGrange*, last modified 2023, accessed October 6, 2019; "The Elms" (Yancey Smith House), Photograph, ca. 1920, MS-004, Nix-Price Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA.

guns.”¹¹⁵ Morgan further remembered that, upon polite introduction by a captured Confederate officer, La Grange mentioned that he had “heard of the Nancy Harts.”¹¹⁶

Whether or not the banter or scene between La Grange and the Nancies actually occurred, there are two remnants of truth that exist about the events of April 17, 1865, in LaGrange, Georgia. First, Union troops led by La Grange did venture through the Georgia town sharing his

¹¹⁵ Horton, “The Story of the Nancy Harts,” 14; Morris, “Personal Recollections,” Johnson Collection, 5.

¹¹⁶ Horton, “The Story of the Nancy Harts.” Morris and Horton refer to a “Major Parkham.” In her typed draft, Morris first references him as “my friend Maj. R. B. Parkham” (6). “Major Parkham” was probably Capt. Rutledge T. B. Parham of the 24th Alabama Regiment, who had extended family in Troup County and fought alongside General Tyler at West Point. Historians at the Troup County Archives deduced the same. For supporting evidence, refer to Randall Allen, “The Nancy Harts,” *Troup County Historical Society Newsletter*, June 1987, 5-6; “Corrections on Frank Logue’s ‘LaGrange’s All-Female Civil War Militia from the Northeast Georgia Seven’ in *Touring the Backroads of North and South Georgia*,” 1999, VF-c20, MS-107, Johnson Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA; “Parham, Rutledge T. B. - Civil War Service Index (CMSR) - Confederate - Alabama,” *Fold3*, accessed March 29, 2023, <http://www.fold3.com:9292/image/304573180>; Smith, *History of Troup County*, 79-80.

Despite later assumptions that Parham was Morris’s “sweetheart,” Morris clearly states that she did not have a “sweetheart in grey” (4). When “[she] replied indignantly [to Colonel La Grange], Yes, he is,” she did so as an act of subtle rebellion. Though she fibbed about being romantically attached, Morris does state she and Parham were friends.

name.¹¹⁷ In addition to what was recorded by seven different Union officers in official records, diary entries made by soldiers who were part of Wilson's Raid, most notably Maj. Stephen Vaughn Shipman (1st Wisconsin Cavalry Regiment) make immediate note of it, as does Confederate Col. James H. Fannin.¹¹⁸ Second, still standing today are several of the town's impressive antebellum homes and the buildings lining Courthouse Square, suggesting that there

¹¹⁷ "Wilson's Raid: Report of Colonel Oscar H. La Grange, First Wisconsin Cavalry, Commanding Second Brigade, of Operations March 22-April 17," in *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, vol. 49, 429.

¹¹⁸ Shipman, "Diary of Stephen Vaughn Shipman, 1865: Monday, April 17th, 1865," Wisconsin MSS 50S, WIHV93-A773, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI; *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, vol. 49, 462. Colonel Fannin, a native of LaGrange, was captured at the Battle of West Point – where, upon the death of General Tyler, he took command. After arriving in Macon, Colonel La Grange asked that Colonel Fannin be permitted to return to his home immediately because he was "a gentleman of the highest character and standing" and La Grange trusted he would not violate this parole. Fannin, likewise, praised the character of the Union colonel. Years later, Colonel Fannin recollected his treatment as a prisoner of war of Colonel La Grange, recalling the friendship that was established between them and lasted decades later. For more on Colonel Fannin's opinions of Colonel La Grange, see "The Georgians in Washington," *Macon Telegraph*, September 27, 1865, 4; "The Georgians in Washington," *LaGrange Reporter*, October 13, 1865, 1; Fannin, "Col. James H. Fannin," 181.

was some sort of peace-brokering conversation between Colonel La Grange and Captain Morgan.¹¹⁹

Retellings of this scene, which artist Mort Künstler depicted in his painting “LaGrange vs. LaGrange,” say that the Nancies agreed to put down their arms if the Yankees agreed not to destroy their town.¹²⁰ While the first-hand account of Morris neither validates nor disproves this assumption, she did recall a series of interactions that were surprising considering the bitter nature of the last year of the war. First, to those Confederate soldiers, like Parkham (Parham), who were from the area and had been captured at Fort Tyler, Colonel La Grange (who still did not know about Gen. Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox on April 9) gave them a night’s parole to spend with their families. Second, Morris exercised her instilled Southern hospitality by inviting La Grange and two of his officers to tea – which the Union officers accepted. Third, La Grange stationed guards outside of their homes that night (though high anxiety at the knowledge that Yankees were a stone’s throw away did not permit a fitful night’s sleep for the town’s

¹¹⁹ Homes directly associated with the Nancies that still stand today include those belonging to Sen. Benjamin Hill, Simeon Yancey, and Mary Alford Heard. [See Map 2.1.] Other homes along the paths taken by troops connected to Wilson’s Raid or Sherman’s March were not always as fortunate. Rowena Hanes Ford, “My Life,” in *Confederate Reminiscences and Letters, 1861-1865*, vol. 2, 20 vols. (Atlanta: United Daughters of the Confederacy, Georgia Division, 1995), 101–111; Medora Field Perkerson, *White Columns in Georgia* (New York: Rinehart, 1952).

¹²⁰ Beth Rowland, “Down to the Last Detail: Artist Mort Künstler Completes His Civil War Series with a Quirky Tale from LaGrange, GA,” *America’s Civil War* 28, no. 3 (2015): 60.

residents). As both Morris and the official records state, La Grange, his troops, and their prisoners left the next morning to continue their march toward Macon, about 90 miles east. Confederate soldiers from LaGrange who had been taken prisoner by Colonel La Grange were released by April 21, 1865, when Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman telegraphed Brigadier General Wilson that “the reported armistice was a reality and that he was to cease further operations.”¹²¹

As the smoke of cannons settled in West Georgia, early reports of Yankees in LaGrange provided varying accounts of their actions. The *Atlanta Intelligencer* noted Federal troops having burned “the railroad depot building, three cars and some of the buildings on the public square,” which was republished a day later in the *New York Herald*.¹²² Shortly thereafter it was also reported in the same two papers that the jail and courthouse were burned, but “No private houses.”¹²³ Articles printed days later in Augusta’s *Chronicle & Sentinel* were presumably more accurate in that they only cite the railroad depot having been destroyed by the Yankees, who, otherwise “seemed to be on their best behavior.”¹²⁴

¹²¹ Horton, “The Nancy Harts Militia”; Morris, “Personal Recollections” Johnson Collection; *War of the Rebellion*, series 1, vol. 49: 344, 462-463.

¹²² “Latest from the Selma and Montgomery Raiding Party,” *Weekly Intelligencer*, April 19, 1865, 2.

¹²³ “The Destruction at Lagrange,” *Atlanta Intelligencer*, April 20, 1865, 2; “The Destruction at Lagrange,” *New York Herald*, April 30, 1865, 3.

¹²⁴ “The Destruction at West Point,” *New York Daily Herald*, April 30, 1865, 3; “Wilson’s March,” *Wheeling Daily Register* (Wheeling, WV), May 1, 1865, 1; “The Raiders [From the *Atlanta Register*, April 20],” *Southern Recorder* (Milledgeville, GA), May 2, 1865, 2;

Rather than the story of the Nancy Hart Militia and their defeat by Union forces closing in against a burning skyline, the Nancies' story ends with the everyone, North and South, sharing a meal together – compliments of Morris. At first this image of enemies uniting over food seems improbable, especially due to the horrific violence of the Civil War. But in sifting through layers of memories in recollections and letters, occurrences of Southern women going by the adage, “you catch more flies with honey than vinegar,” exercised their power of Southern hospitality, which had been perfectly curated within the domestic sphere since childhood. Morris's memory of rushing to put together a fine meal for La Grange and his men may not have been an exaggeration as other Georgia women recall “preparing a great feast” for the Yankees who had occupied their towns. Of course, it also helped that many Union columns knew that the war was nearing its end, and dramatically reduced the pillaging that had often accompanied the earlier stages of Wilson's Raid.¹²⁵

“The Confederacy Going Under,” *Savannah Daily Herald*, May 4, 1865, 1; “From Western Georgia: The Raiders,” *Confederate Union* (Milledgeville, GA), May 9, 1865, 2; “From Western Georgia: The Raiders,” *Chronicle & Sentinel* (Augusta), May 10, 1865, 1.

¹²⁵ Frances B. Anderson, “A True Reminiscence of The Confederate Era,” in *Confederate Reminiscences and Letters, 1861-1865*, 2: 47–49.

Amidst unconfirmed rumors of peace talks further east, on April 12 Wilson's troopers had captured Montgomery, Alabama, the first capital of the Confederacy. “Not a man left the ranks, not a loud word was uttered, and not an incident happened to hurt the feelings of a misguided people,” reported Wilson. “Many witnessed it from the windows, doorsteps, and sidewalks with silent respect, which showed clearly that the great Rebellion was at an end...

When Colonel La Grange led his troops out of the town that coincidentally shared his name on the morning of April 18, he left behind a group of young women who had succeeded in accomplishing what they had set out to do four years earlier: defending their town and retaining their honor.

More than one lady expressed her surprise and gratification at the perfect behavior of our men.”

Edward G. Longacre, *Grant's Cavalryman: The Life and Wars of General James H. Wilson* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2000), 210-211; James Harrison Wilson, *Under the Old Flag: Recollections of Military Operations in the War for the Union, the Spanish War, the Boxer Rebellion, Etc.* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1912), 2: 251.

CHAPTER III

BLACKBOARDS BEFORE BULLETS

To further understand why these Southern belles took up arms, why they – like their namesake Nancy Hart – defied the established norms of their days, yet continued to view themselves as ladies, their educational foundation must also be examined. Faust contends that education, in addition to wealth, power, and refinement, was a subtle distinction to the elite antebellum Southern identity.¹²⁶ Devoting special attention to the life of Mary Alford Heard, Second (later First) Lieutenant in the Nancy Hart Militia, this chapter continues the assertion that their primary motivation was their sense of honor, which Wyatt-Brown and Faust argue was integral to Southern identity.

In the South, honor meant loyalty to one's faith, one's family, and to one's community. Honor, McPherson contends, was "one's public reputation, one's image in the eyes of his peers."¹²⁷ Once honor or public reputation was lost, it was nearly impossible to regain. Thus, in addition to the fears for their safety resulting from the departure of so many men for the war front, for the Nancy Harts during the Civil War, the thought of LaGrange being pillaged (thus losing its honor in theory and in presentation) was incomprehensible. Because of their sense of loyalty to LaGrange, where most had been born and all sculpted into scholars, the notions of being a proper lady came to include defending honor at all costs.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 4.

¹²⁷ McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 23.

¹²⁸ Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 4.

To be a Southern lady in the mid-1800s meant to be modest, respectful, and (above all) honorable. Her worth and honor were directly woven to whatever male authority reigned over her: if unmarried, she (her appearance, behavior, speech) was the direct reflection of her father and/or brother(s); if married, she reflected her husband. In patriarchal Southern culture, utmost value was placed on one's unblemished reputation – which then extended to the family. As one gentleman planter told his daughter, "If you learn to restrain every thought, action and word by virtue and religion, you will become an ornament."¹²⁹ There was no better place to have this instilled and practiced than at a religious academy founded during the Second Great Awakening, which saw a revival in Christianity throughout America and encouraged women to find purpose in their life – that purpose being to serve God and building His kingdom on earth.¹³⁰

Educational Foundations: From Uselessness to Usefulness

At the top of a hill overlooking the horizon of southwest Georgia sits the red brick-and-mortar buildings that make up LaGrange College. Shaded by tall green trees as they stroll to class, the diverse co-ed student population of about one thousand blossoms from the town's

¹²⁹ Ibid., 41, 227.

¹³⁰ 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); Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1957); Leonard I. Sweet, "The Female Seminary Movement and Woman's Mission in Antebellum America," *Church History* 54, no. 1 (March 1985): 44.

warmth, which considers those attending the college as extended family members. In a statement that reads as true today as it did nearly two centuries ago, the college website reads:

To unlock your potential, you just need the right catalyst: a place that fosters your curiosity and fuels your passion.

Step onto the LaGrange College campus and discover that place – a place where you’re capable of things you never even considered. A place where your possibilities are endless.¹³¹

The Second Great Awakening, which roughly spanned the years 1790 through 1840, was the catalyst propelled a dramatic growth in female education and the establishment of female seminaries and colleges between the years 1820 and 1850. During this period LaGrange College served as a space for about 200 daughters of the area’s well-to-do to acquire a remarkable level of education. From a superficial standpoint, it would seem that a handful of years at any female academy at this time was but a brief stopping point between youth, marriage, and motherhood for the daughters of upper-class society before they went on to marry and become the ornaments of local doctors, lawyers, planters, or other members of the elite. LaGrange Female College, as it was known from 1851 to 1934, was anything but a school focused on refining the deportment of young ladies: LaGrange Female College served as the Nancies’ catalyst that fostered brave curiosity and fueled their passion for defending their truth: honor.

¹³¹ LaGrange College, “About,” last modified 2023, accessed March 28, 2023, <https://www.lagrange.edu/about/index.html>.

Unlike New England, Georgia in the early nineteenth century was largely still an expanding frontier and lacked the civic infrastructure of education.¹³² Acknowledging the need for its youth to be educated, in 1817 Georgia allocated \$250,000 “for the future establishment and support of Free Schools throughout this state,” though no plan was set in place for the actual erection of schools. Only in December 1822 did an official committee establish a “Poor School Fund,” of which \$12,000 would be allocated to the counties. A student was eligible to attend the free school (for up to three years) if their parents did not pay “a tax exceeding fifty cents over and above their poll tax.” Students, mostly male and from the middling class, ranged in age from 8 to 18 and curriculum covered reading, writing, and basic arithmetic. Despite this small step, educational responsibilities fell to local authorities and LaGrange did not open a free school until 1903.¹³³

In late December 1831, by an act of the Georgia Legislature, LaGrange Female Academy was formally chartered and extended educational opportunities for daughters of the elite in Troup County.¹³⁴ In December 1847 the school was granted the right to confer accredited degrees and

¹³² Georgia’s eighth and final land lottery was held in 1833, redistributing land stolen from the Cherokee and Muscogee indigenous tribes. Georgia Surveyor General, Lottery Records – Land Lottery Grant Books [1805-1833], RG 003-05-029, Georgia Archives, Morrow, GA.

¹³³ William H. Kilpatrick, “The Beginnings of the Public School System in Georgia,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 5, no. 3 (September 1921): 9-10; Smith, *History of Troup County*, 140.

¹³⁴ “An Act to Incorporate Certain Academies, and to Appoint Trustees for the Said Academies...,” in *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, Passed in Milledgeville*,

changed its name to LaGrange Female Institute, though it kept the Academy portion for those in the primary grades.¹³⁵ In 1851 the school's name changed again, this time to LaGrange Female College.¹³⁶ In 1856, the Georgia Conference of the Southern Methodist Episcopal Church purchased the institute and placed on its Board of Trustees such men as Sen. Benjamin H. Hill, Rev. Caleb W. Key (father of Ella Key), James M. Beall (father of Pack Beall), R.A.T. Ridley (future father-in-law of Pack Beall), and Robert J. Morgan (father-in-law of Nannie Morgan).¹³⁷

at an Annual Session in November and December, 1831 (Milledgeville: Prince & Ragland, Printers, 1832), 4. Original trustees included Julius C. Alford, the uncle of Mary Alford Heard, and Joseph Poythress, the father-in-law of Caroline Ware Poythress Gay.

¹³⁵ "An Act to Incorporate the Lagrange Female Institute," in *Acts of the State of Georgia, 1847* (Milledgeville: Miller Grieve, State Printer, 1848), 120. Trustees of LaGrange Female Institute included Nannie Morgan's father, Dr. Hampton Hill, and Annie and Sally Bull's father, Judge Orville A. Bull. LaGrange Female Institute is mentioned by name in *Gone With the Wind*, having been the alma mater of Aunt Pittypat. Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind* (New York: Macmillan, 1936), 779.

¹³⁶ "Statute 195: LaGrange Female College," in *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, Passed in Milledgeville, at an Annual Session in November and December, 1851* (Milledgeville: Prince & Ragland, Printers, 1852), 311.

¹³⁷ *Biographical Souvenir of the States of Georgia and Florida: Biographical Sketches of the Representative Public and Many Early Settled Families in These States* (F.A. Battey & Company, 1889), 630; Charles Edgeworth Jones, *Education in Georgia* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1889), 101; H.M. Du Bose, *A History of Methodism: Being a*

School directories and local newspaper clippings document that all but one leader of the Nancies were, at one point, students at LaGrange Female College.¹³⁸ Like Nannie Morgan and Mary Alford Heard, students were primarily the daughters of the local elites, but some came from as far away as Texas. At LaGrange Female College, as with a few other female seminaries at the time, young ladies received a classical education along with lessons in fine arts (such as the piano forte or painting). This well-rounded education was, as historian Leonard Sweet puts it, “[designed] to prepare [women] for a life of usefulness.” This usefulness was to serve a woman’s ultimate purpose in life: as wives, mothers, and honorable and contributing members of society. Education, it would seem, served as a step between adolescence and marriage.¹³⁹

Volume Supplemental to “A History of Methodism” by Holland N. McTyeire...Bringing the Story of Methodism, with Special Reference to the History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Down to the Year 1916 (Nashville: Publishing House of the M. E. Church, South, 1916); “No. 182 LaGrange Female College,” in *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, Passed in Milledgeville, at an Annual Session in November and December, 1860* (Milledgeville: Boughton, Nisbet & Barnes, State Printers, 1861), 175–176. For the history of the institute until 1955, see Irene B. Birdsong, “The History of LaGrange College” (M.A. thesis, University of Georgia, 1955).

¹³⁸ *Catalogue of... LaGrange Female College* (1859), 18. Militia member and treasurer Ella Key was not mentioned by name in any existing catalogue.

¹³⁹ Sweet, “The Female Seminary Movement,” 44; Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 199, 201.

LaGrange Female College offered a range of educational and vocational courses to the elite Southern daughters, from Latin and French to watercolors, grammar and rhetoric to private music lessons, advanced mathematics to artistic embroidery. The young women of the Nancies became especially proficient in fine arts, guaranteeing their social citizenship as proper ladies of their community and exemplary keepers of the domestic sphere.¹⁴⁰

In their grammar and rhetoric classes, they learned how to compose eloquent letters that relied on logic rather than emotion. School compositions by Militia-member Caroline Ware Poythress Gay exhibit that in penmanship classes, their handwriting was practiced to perfection.¹⁴¹ History and philosophy courses reinforced their inferred divine right as elite ladies of the South. Bible classes given by area Methodist ministers gave students the spiritual tools to hold onto their instilled Southern virtues. Lessons in mathematics prepared them for life as the wives of planters, doctors, or lawyers – knowing how to manage household finances was essential to those who ran the domestic realm. The education gained at LaGrange Female College was not superficial and ornamental. It was a defining time when young white women of the elite Southern class learned how to be contributing members of society.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ *Catalogue of... LaGrange Female College* (1859), 18.

¹⁴¹ Caroline Ware, “The Happiest Life,” 1853, MS-105, Ware Family Papers, box 13, folder 27, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA.

¹⁴² Matthew Page Andrews, *Women of the South in War Times* (Baltimore: The Norman Remington Co., 1924); Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 92, 199; *Catalogue of... LaGrange Female College* (1856).

The school's 1858 *Catalogue* shows that Sally Bull, a resident graduate, learned the piano forte; Aley Smith, also a senior, mastered the organ and thorough bass; Gussie Hill, a junior, took violin and piano forte; Leila Pullen, a sophomore, was a music pupil and took violin. Such a curriculum was not unique for the region or era. Proponents sought to shift uselessness into usefulness "in terms of building the kingdom of God on earth."¹⁴³

The foundation of the curriculum studied by future members the Nancy Hart Militia at LaGrange Female College was classical education, which features ancient Greek and Roman models of learning, and highlights Latin as the core language. Classical education is based in grammar, logic, and rhetoric – with the central subjects being mathematics and science. In Europe it rose to popularity in the Middle Ages, with such institutions as Oxford and Cambridge, and continued to flourish throughout the nineteenth century. Students of classical education were required to master what they learned, not simply breeze over it. As such, it transformed the young women who would form the Nancy Hart Militia into independent and critical thinkers, proficient in fine arts, and masters of subjects and self-discipline.¹⁴⁴

The curriculum used and the discipline exercised at the college molded the Nancies into women ready to defend their personal and public honor, as well as prevent the decline of their republic. At LaGrange Female College, young women (whose ages varied between about 10 and

¹⁴³ *Catalogue of the Trustees, Faculty, and Students of LaGrange Female College* (Atlanta: J. I. Miller & Co., 1858); Sweet, "Female Seminary Movement," 44.

¹⁴⁴ Daniel Walker Howe, "Classical Education in America," *Wilson Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 31; Otis B. Oakman, "The History of Classical Education," *Journal of Education* 37, no. 21 (May 25, 1893): 324.

18) maintained a heavy workload. The basic spring schedule in 1851 for Mary Alford or Nannie Hill as first year students included mathematics (arithmetic to fractions), modern geography, English grammar, and history (*The History of the United States, or Republic of America* by Emma Willard). A sophomore's schedule consisted of mathematics (arithmetic to algebra), poetry, astronomy, history (England and France), science (analytical botany), and natural philosophy. A junior at LaGrange continued to study mathematics (algebra to geometry), along with moral philosophy and logic, world history, and science (mineralogy and chemistry). A senior student took mathematics (trigonometry and mensuration), intellectual philosophy, advanced astronomy, science (physiology and geology), mythology, language (French), and rhetoric. Electives included further language lessons (Italian, Latin, Greek), religion (with a Southern Methodist flavor), music (voice, piano forte, guitar, violin), and the arts (drawing and painting, embroidery, and wax sculpturing). These lessons trained the young ladies how to think critically and creatively, as well as develop the awareness that (just as $1 + 1 = 2$ or two chemicals created a new chemical) to every action there was a reaction. Lessons in mythology and history taught the girls ancient Greek and Roman politics, including how city-states had to provide their own defenses using citizen soldiers.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ *Catalogue of the Faculty, Pupils and Patrons of the La Grange Female Institute, For the Scholastic Year 1851* (Columbus: Enquirer Print, 1851); John R. Hale, "Not Patriots, Not Farmers, Not Amateurs: Greek Soldiers of Fortune and the Origins of Hoplite Warfare," in *Men of Bronze: Hoplite Warfare in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 176-193.

From its inception, such a strong emphasis was placed on mathematics that it was studied half of each day. Indeed, it was recommended that prospective students receive tutoring in math prior to attending to prepare them for the challenges at LaGrange Female College. Instructors, all of whom were highly educated, used curriculum developed by Adrien-Marie Legendre – who, along with Joseph-Louis LaGrange (of whom the town was named after) and Pierre-Simon Laplace, was a great French mathematician that influenced the development of comprehensive (albeit rigorous) geometry. Translated into English by Thomas Carlyle and edited by David Brewster, *Elements of Geometry and Trigonometry* was used not only by LaGrange Female College, but also Harvard University, the United States Military Academy, and many other academic institutions. LaGrange Female College asserted that mathematics strengthened the power of reasoning and that languages gave scope to thought – both of which expanded the imagination.¹⁴⁶

The power of reasoning is an extension of the study of logic – a branch of the classical education, which emphasized reason, logic, and virtue. The schedule for the young women of LaGrange Female College reflects this intense education. In English, students were exposed to a wide range of literature in various languages. As one scholar notes on classical education, “the effort of mastering the rigorous logic and grammar required to conjugate Latin verbs and decline nouns was itself regarded as a tool to teach young people self-discipline.” Combined with the literature and history that taught the ancient Greek and Roman tenants of patriotism, democracy,

¹⁴⁶ Lao G. Simons, “The Influence of French Mathematics at the End of the Eighteenth Century upon the Teaching of Mathematics in American Colleges,” *Isis* 15, no. 1 (February 1931): 105.

and republicanism, it is understandable that the young ladies of LaGrange Female College formed the Nancy Hart Militia to defend their own honor, as well as that of their community.¹⁴⁷

From at least the age of fourteen until she graduated in 1851 at the age of seventeen, Mary Alford Heard was a student at LaGrange Female College. Heard's senior catalogue identifies her, along with future Nancies Nannie Hill Morgan and Mary E. Colquitt, as being skilled at playing the piano forte.¹⁴⁸ This talent would serve her well as a proper hostess and a source of personal entertainment "to occupy thoughts and fingers in her hours of leisure" – particularly when her brief educational period concluded.¹⁴⁹

The catalogue from Heard's graduating year also declared it essential that LaGrange Female College "teach our pupils *to think independently and correctly*."¹⁵⁰ This reflected the influence of Emma Willard (1787-1870), who scholars credit with the expansion of female education in the nineteenth century. Willard, a teacher and historian, was a staunch advocate for female education, believing that a solid foundation of liberal arts would mold young ladies into "good, moral citizens who could help prevent the decline of the republic."¹⁵¹

As good, moral citizens, young women had to know how to function with as much (limited) independence they could be trusted with (they were considered the weaker sex, after

¹⁴⁷ Howe, "Classical Education in America," 31.

¹⁴⁸ *Catalogue of... LaGrange Female Institute* (1851), 11-12.

¹⁴⁹ Hartley, *Ladies' Book of Etiquette*, 180.

¹⁵⁰ *Catalogue of... LaGrange Female Institute* (1851), 17.

¹⁵¹ Mark David Hall, "Emma Willard on the Political Position of Women," *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 11.

all). Trust was exercised through strict rules, which varied from the type of fabric young ladies could and could not use for their uniformed gowns to the usage of domestic help. LaGrange Female College students were not permitted to bring their slaves. This rule, specified in each college catalogue through the end of the Civil War, applied to on-campus boarding students as well as those living off-campus (as the Nancies did). Without enslaved persons to assist ladies in simple tasks, students had to learn a modicum of self-sufficiency. None of this suggests, however, that institutions like LaGrange Female College were anti-slavery, for slaves were used in the construction and maintenance of the schools. Who else would manicure the noted green gardens of LaGrange Female College or cook meals for the hundred or so students who lived on campus? Slavery was, after all, a “peculiar institution” which white Southerners insisted only they could understand.¹⁵²

The proper lady, as the antebellum students at LaGrange Female College esteemed to be, possessed “good manners, demureness, kindness, and gentleness.”¹⁵³ When the Civil War exploded and the men of LaGrange packed off to the war fronts, its young women had to reexamine their roles within their socially defined sphere. They were not destined for a life in chains of superficial drudgery that a society with specific gender roles defined. Their peaceful exchange with Colonel La Grange, commander of enemy forces who might have destroyed their town and their way of life, is evidence that the Nancies were empowered by their roles and

¹⁵² Richard N. Wright, “Ambivalent Bastions of Slavery: The ‘Peculiar Institution’ on College Campuses in Antebellum Georgia,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 80, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 470.

¹⁵³ Hagler, “The Ideal Woman in the American Antebellum South,” 406.

expectations. In their exchange, the Nancies did what they believed a proper Southern lady would do – reciprocate the Union colonel’s gentlemanly respect to their honor by exercising their Southern hospitality.

1st Lt. Mary Alford Heard

According to standards for Southern ladies in the first half of the nineteenth century, Mary Erasmus Cade Heard (née Alford) was an ideal specimen, as she belonged, through birth and marriage, to some of the wealthiest families in LaGrange, Georgia. She was the only daughter born to Erasmus Cade Alford (1801-1841) and Catherine Campbell (1812-1838) on July 30, 1834. Her older brothers were Joseph W. Alford (1831-unknown) and Lodwick Cade Alford (1831-1853). Heard’s mother died when she was four, after which her father remarried the young widow Margaret Ewing Morrow Cox (1802-1870) and she gained Albert Ewing Cox (1819-1896) as stepbrother and, shortly thereafter, Margaret Ewing “Posey” Alford (1841-1923) as a sister. Her paternal uncle was Julius Caesar Alford (1799-1863), who is credited with naming LaGrange and was a veteran of the War of 1812, as was her paternal grandfather and Julius Alford’s father, Lodwick Cade Alford (1775-1857).¹⁵⁴ Heard’s paternal great-grandfather, Julius Alford, Sr. (1749-1820), fought in the American Revolution.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the War of 1812, RG 94, Roll M602_0169, National Archives and Records Administration; Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1798-1914, RG 94, Roll M602_0169, National Archives and Records Administration; Smith, *History of Troup County*, 2, 48.

¹⁵⁵ “North Carolina Revolutionary Pay Vouchers, 1779-1782,” *Ancestry*, last modified 2019, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/470:61947>.

Heard married Peter Abram Heard (1826-1901) soon after graduating from LaGrange Female College and took up residence at 206 Broad Street, a block away from Leila Pullen, Martha Beall, Nannie Morgan's childhood home, and Ben Hill's Bellevue. Originally built in 1830, the property now known as the Heard-Dallis House underwent significant renovations in 1842 after Heard's father-in-law George (1785-1852) purchased it. The home, which still stands in the same spot today, is a perfect example of the Greek Revival architectural style synonymous with the antebellum South. Like Margaret Mitchell's literary plantation of Tara in *Gone With the Wind*, imposing white fluted Doric columns flank the front and sides of the two-story home, supporting a flat roof that covers a wide, airy porch.¹⁵⁶ This was Heard's early marital home, but she was not the sole mistress of the house, as that position belonged to her widowed mother-in-law Martha Coffee Heard (1793-1877).¹⁵⁷

Etiquette dictated that Martha Coffee Heard, being the older of the two and having resided in the house longer, had seniority. The virtue of respecting and honoring one's elders would have been instilled in Mary Heard from birth and reaffirmed at church services on Sundays at the Methodist church and likely throughout the week at LaGrange Female College. The Biblical commandment to "honour thy father and thy mother" was taken seriously in

¹⁵⁶ U.S. Department of the Interior, Heard-Dallis House, Reference Number 75000611, National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program Records: Georgia, RG 79, National Archives and Records Administration.

¹⁵⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, "Troup County, Georgia," 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Population Schedule, RG 29, Roll M653_138, National Archives and Records Administration. In their dwelling, Martha Coffee Heard was listed after her son Peter and his wife Mary.

Southern culture, whether it be biological parents, step-parents, or in-laws, as was the New Testament instruction for those younger to submit themselves “unto the elder.”¹⁵⁸ A daughter-in-law who lived with her husband’s family was to follow Ruth’s demonstration of submission to Naomi.¹⁵⁹

At 206 Broad Street, Heard had to concede to her mother-in-law’s rules and ways of household management, including the slaves that served the house. Beyond the white Doric columns, white men (regardless of age) were the masters and their wives had to look the other way when they did not agree with their husbands’ behavior and actions. This was especially true for Mary Alford Heard.

Upon his father’s death in 1852, Peter Heard became master of the Greek Revival house on Broad Street, in addition to inheriting the role of his mother’s headship and caretaker since he was the oldest living son.¹⁶⁰ It was nearly unheard of for widows of any age, like Martha Coffee Heard and Caroline Ware Poythress Gay, to exist without a man serving as their representative in the public realm. As historian Sara Delamont explains, nineteenth century American and

¹⁵⁸ Exodus 20:12 KJV, Deuteronomy 5:16 KJV; 1 Peter 5:5 KJV.

¹⁵⁹ Ruth 1:16 KJV, “And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people and thy God my God.”

¹⁶⁰ Peter Heard’s younger siblings included George Coffee (1818-1822), Martha Faulkner (1822-1861), Cynthia Ann (1823-1829), and Henry Thomas (1834-1886). Martha Faulkner Heard was the mother of militia member Martha “Pack” Beall. Dr. Henry Thomas Heard married Mary Alford Heard’s sister Margaret Ewing “Posey” Alford (1841-1923).

European women were “dependent on men to alter their situation” as they existed in a “position of powerlessness.”¹⁶¹

In terms of property, by 1860 Peter Heard owned 64 slaves and 1,300 acres of land.¹⁶² On her own part, property tax records note Martha Coffee Heard owning 51 slaves and 1,250 acres, bringing the total who worked throughout the 2,550-acre Heard property to 115 – the most in LaGrange.¹⁶³ Celestia Avery, a former slave of the Heard family, remembered at least one enslaved woman and one enslaved man being assigned to the house and the rest “required to do the heavy work in the fields.” Avery also recalled that every slave hated Master Heard, for he “whipped [them] unmercifully and in most cases unnecessarily,” and was as hot-tempered as his

¹⁶¹ Sara Delamont, “The Contradictions in Ladies’ Education,” in *The Nineteenth-Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World*, ed. Lorna Duffin and Sara Delamont (New York: Routledge, 2013), 13: 135.

¹⁶² U.S. Census Bureau, “Troup County, Georgia,” 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Population Schedule, RG 29, Roll M653_138, National Archives and Records Administration.

¹⁶³ Georgia State Revenue Commissioner, “Troup County (1861),” Revenue – Property Tax Unit – County Property Tax Digests, 1892-1792, RG 034-06-001, Georgia Archives, Morrow, GA. For the total number of slaves owned by the households of the Nancy Hart Militia in 1860, see table 2.1.

father.¹⁶⁴ For Mary Alford Heard to intervene would have been considered an act of disrespect to her husband, to whom she had taken an oath to submit.¹⁶⁵

It is not known what kind of relationship Mary Alford Heard had with Martha Coffee Heard. While Heard and her mother-in-law might have formed comforting bonds over their shared experiences as plantation mistresses, it is more likely than not that Mary Alford Heard was not given much sympathy. As one lady's etiquette book declared, "Many a home has been cheered by domestic forbearance, and placid submission to circumstances, even in the higher classes,"¹⁶⁶ yet also warned that "the husband makes another home elsewhere if his own hearth offers him only silence."¹⁶⁷ Heavily embroidered with social expectations, Heard, like other ladies of her time, was to wear a veil of pleasantness at all times – even in the face of her husband's purported cruel side. This was particularly important because by 1863 Peter Heard followed his father's footsteps into ministry, serving as the chaplain for the area's Confederate

¹⁶⁴ Federal Writers' Project, "Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 4, Georgia, Part 1, Adams-Furr," Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn041/>.

¹⁶⁵ Colossians 3:18 KJV, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord."

¹⁶⁶ Hartley, *Ladies' Book of Etiquette*, 252.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 296.

hospitals, and the wife of clergy (like Mary Alford Heard) must reflect the enormity of her husband's position.¹⁶⁸

Because the few public records that exist usually list her as "Mrs. Peter A. Heard" instead of using her own first name, it is almost impossible to know what was beneath her veil – much less, her character. The centuries' old law of coverture established that "the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that husband."¹⁶⁹ Tracing the status of women in Georgia from the colonial period to the antebellum era, historian Eleanor M. Boatwright verifies that a married woman's personhood was one with her husband's, of whom was the head of the family and was entitled to make all final decisions.¹⁷⁰ An unspoken rule of social etiquette dictated that a wife use her husband's name when referring to herself, as she was an extension of him. Only in 1912, in the

¹⁶⁸ Peter Heard, Compiled Service Records of Confederate General and Staff Officers, and Nonregimental Enlisted Men, RG 109, Roll M331_0123, National Archives and Records Administration.

¹⁶⁹ William Blackstone, "Chapter the Fifteenth. Of Husband and Wife," in *Commentaries on the Laws of England: Book I of the Rights of Persons*, ed. David Lemmings, 4 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 1: 284. The Law of Coverture evolved in the Middle Ages and was formalized as English common law by Blackstone in the 1760s. During its formation, the United States modeled its common law after England's.

¹⁷⁰ Boatwright, "The Political and Civil Status of Women in Georgia, 1783-1860," 301-324. Boatwright also mentions that mention of a (wife's) separate estate "did not appear on the statute books... until 1847" (310). But even then, a woman's estate was typically held in a trust.

obituaries describing her life, was Heard allowed to be fully independent of her husband's identity: she is finally referred to as "Mrs. Mary Heard."¹⁷¹

As evidenced in early newspaper articles of the Nancy Harts' formation, notable is the fact that Heard used her husband's name while Nannie Morgan, also married while serving as a Nancy, did not. It is likely that the definition of honor slightly differed between the two married women and Heard (or her husband) held a stricter view. What is certain is that Heard, the first person to whom Morgan disclosed her notion of defending the town, was an active participant in the Nancy Hart Militia and not as sheltered as most of her contemporaries.¹⁷² Indeed, the education that she and the Nancies had received at LaGrange Female College encouraged them to assume more independence than was typical of elite white antebellum Southern women, but still expected them to remain ladies of honor.

The education instilled in Mary Alford Heard and the young women of LaGrange taught them how to think using reason and logic, which was fundamental in forming the Nancy Hart Militia because they had to create and organize something without precedent. With many of the men defending the Confederacy on the frontlines, Southern women back on the home-front usually had two choices in the likelihood of the enemy's appearance at their threshold: flee to safer locations and/or go on with their daily lives as best as they could in tension-filled dread.

¹⁷¹ "Georgia Social News: Athens," *Macon Telegraph*, January 10, 1909, 16; "Social Life in Macon: Athens, GA," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 25, 1906, 8; "Society: Athens, GA," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 20, 1910, 8.

¹⁷² De Valcourt, *Illustrated Manners Book*, 21, 468-469. The term *delicate* is repeatedly and exclusively used in relation to women.

Several alumna of LaGrange Female College, however, decided to form a makeshift sorority and take up arms to defend their honor. This unorthodox decision to form an all-female militia to protect their safety and prevent the physical destruction of their town during the Civil War is more understandable in light of the classical education and self-discipline the young ladies received as pupils at LaGrange Female College.¹⁷³

Though she followed the social expectations of a proper lady and continued to wear the veil of coverture the rest of her life, Heard managed, at least subtly, to escape the strict confines of the domestic sphere after the Civil War. Both Heard and her husband both took positions as teachers at the Lucy Cobb Institute in Athens, Georgia.¹⁷⁴ As she had when part of the Nancy

¹⁷³ Various retellings of the Nancy Hart Militia (*see* table 1.4) note about 40 women standing guard when the Union Army descended on their town. A quick look at LaGrange Female College's Catalogue of Students from either 1859 or 1877 (there are none between those years) and area census records show that the number of local women between the ages of 16 and 30 was well over the cited 40. Outside of the named leadership, it is unknown how many young women of LaGrange participated in total in the Militia – even if it was only one day. *Catalogue of... LaGrange Female College* (1859); *Catalogue of the Faculty, Alumnae and Students of LaGrange Female College* (LaGrange Reporter, 1877).

¹⁷⁴ “Death and Funerals: Heard,” *Macon Telegraph* (February 9, 1912), 8; Lucian Lamar Knight, *Georgia's Landmarks, Memorials, and Legends* (Atlanta: Byrd Printing Company, 1913), 1: 437-438; “The Lucy Cobb Institute,” *Lucy Cobb Institute Messenger* (Athens, GA, March 1, 1876), 1. The Lucy Cobb Institute was established in 1859 as a high school for young women to be “trained for useful womanhood” and, after the Civil War, “[to keep] abreast with

Hart Militia, by becoming a teacher Heard was again able to delicately weave together the domestic with the public realm.

the real progress of the New South [and] have at the same time modestly exemplified the gentle traditions of the Old.” Between 1880 and 1926, Cobb alumna and founder of the United Daughters of the Confederacy Mildred Lewis Rutherford served as a teacher and, for a time, its principal. See also Charles Edgeworth Jones, *Education in Georgia* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1889), 110-111; Katherine E. Rohrer, “The Lucy Cobb Institute: Mildred Lewis Rutherford and Her Mission to Preserve an Idealized Southern Community,” in *Southern Communities: Identity, Conflict, and Memory in the American South*, ed. Bruce E. Stewart and Steven E. Nash (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019), 230–245.

CHAPTER IV

“HOMESICK FOR DIXIE”: COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF THE LOST CAUSE

I long to see a cotton fiel'
Once more befo' I go
All hot an' splendid, roll its miles
Of sunny summer snow!

I long to see dat Easy Worl'
Where no one's in a flurry;
An' where, when it comes to die,
Dis n— needn't hurry!

Howard Weeden¹⁷⁵

Built from the ashes of a war lost and the smoldering clouds of collective memory, Southern identity and the pride surrounding it manifested and reinforced itself in the postbellum decades. Numerous scholars have examined this notion of traditional Southern identity, or

¹⁷⁵ Howard Weeden, “Homesick for Dixie,” *Bandanna Ballads* (New York: Doubleday & McClure Company), 18; Frances C. Roberts and Sarah Huff Fisk, *Shadows on the Wall: The Life and Works of Howard Weeden* (Huntsville: Burritt Museum, 1962). Weeden, whose real name was Maria Howard Weeden, was an acclaimed regional poet and artist from Huntsville, AL. Her poem, “Homesick for Dixie,” was republished by an unknown and undated newspaper and cut out and pasted in Caroline E. Gay’s scrapbook (vol. 16) below a quotation from Robert E. Lee.

Southernness, with many identifying themes of memory, beliefs, sentimental emotion, community, and symbolism in the form of physical artifacts. Specifically cited is the shared Southern belief in the Lost Cause, which, contrary to public belief, was spawned only after the war's end. Exemplified in the proliferation of the Confederate flag, media (music, television, movies, and print), and historical re-enactments of Civil War battles, Lost Cause rhetoric bonds together those who are homesick for Dixie like "a kind of social cement."¹⁷⁶

Those who embrace the Southern identity, historians and ethnographers note, conform to the strictly defined gender roles between gentlemen and ladies set forth by their predecessors, appreciate the mouth-watering cuisine made from scratch from recipes handed down from their grandmothers, and often speak with a slow drawl. These Southerners may also consider any American who is not from the South a "Yankee" or a "Northerner," regardless of that person's place of birth. The notion of Southern identity also brings to mind everything the Confederate flag represents, including the violent racism and the suppressive sexism that has run especially rampant in the South since its colonization by Europeans. Modern culture continues to both

¹⁷⁶ Wyatt-Brown, "The Evolution of Heroes' Honor in the Southern Literary Tradition," 991; Edward A. Pollard, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederacy* (New York: E. B. Treat & Co. Publishers, 1866). Written a year after the Civil War ended, *The Lost Cause* placed the titular phrase into vernacular. Pollard, a Virginian, was a Confederate sympathizer and apologist who attributed the Confederacy's defeat to a failure of leadership and will.

reinforce and rebuke the Southern identity – depending on who is producing and consuming the culture surrounding that identity.¹⁷⁷

Scrapbooking Memories

Nostalgia is a powerful thing. What one remembers and how it is remembered can serve as one's truth. Memory, like perceived truth, is subjective – collective memory even more so. The perceived truth for many Southerners was that the Civil War was not about slavery, but it was about states' rights and the preservation of their culture. In less than a decade after the Confederacy's defeat, the Lost Cause myth – what scholar William C. Reynolds refers to as a mist or “a dimness or haziness produced over time” – would find itself permeating the Southern states like the thick, humid summer air, engulfing residents and visitors alike.¹⁷⁸ There came to be established a pervasive sense that the South was, indeed, ready to rise again and finally defeat its Northern aggressors. Today it can be witnessed in small towns' reluctance to relocate Confederate monuments. It can be heard faintly within the melodious Southern drawl of defense of their grandmothers' efforts to erect those monuments. It can be felt with each offering of that famous hospitality, served with a side of sweet tea. It can be seen waving from pickup trucks, patched on baseball caps, and silkscreened on shirts. The Lost Cause is not a myth in the South; the Lost Cause is a truth that has been passed down for generations like a secret family recipe for

¹⁷⁷ The labels of “Yankee” and “Northerner” have been attributed to me countless times since I am originally from Oregon and California.

¹⁷⁸ William M. Reynolds, “The Southern Mist: The Shaping of American Culture and Politics,” *Counterpoints* 412 (2013): 19. To illustrate his argument, Reynolds lists six definitions of the term *mist* from the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

the perfect pecan pie. For some women, the memory and truth of the Lost Cause was passed down to their daughters and granddaughters in the form of scrapbooks.

Resting on the third floor of the Troup County Archives in LaGrange is a gray box containing three scrapbooks from the Gay family, some of the original non-Indian colonists of the area.¹⁷⁹ The first scrapbook in the collection, almost two inches thick with a dark green cover, was pieced together by twice-widowed Caroline E. Gay, once a member of the Nancy Hart Militia, and was finished by her daughter Eugenia Nix. The second book bares an orange cover and is less than an inch thick; it was started by Eugenia and completed by her daughter Caroline “Carrie” Nooner. Carrie would go on to complete her own scrapbook, which features a dark teal cover and is as thick as the orange volume, completing the collection. Evident throughout these scrapbooks, compiled by several generations of Southern women, is an intense sense of nostalgia for Dixie based upon the memory of those surviving the Civil War and the myth of the Lost Cause.¹⁸⁰

Using these three scrapbooks, this chapter will consider how memories of the Civil War and the Lost Cause were managed and preserved. Special attention will be devoted to the earliest volume, compiled by a woman who experienced it first-hand and completed by her daughter whose memory of it was shaped by that of her mother. This chapter will also use the contents of these scrapbooks, most notably newspaper clippings and mementoes, to examine how these

¹⁷⁹ Smith, *History of Troup County*, 14; Alex Hopkins to Forrest C. Johnson, March 4, 1986, MS-100, Morgan-Hill Papers Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA.

¹⁸⁰ Gay-Nix-Price Scrapbooks, 1893-1960, box 16, volumes 13-16, Coll. 40101.5, MS-004 Nix-Price Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA.

artifacts were used to help create a collective memory. Further, this chapter more broadly argues that it was not just the Lost Cause myth that the white women of the South were trying to preserve, but the memory of the strength of their foremothers and the space these women carved out for themselves and reframed the traditionally male-dominated notion of honor.¹⁸¹

Caroline, The “Little Rebel”

In the antebellum South the values of tradition and honor, or as Wyatt-Brown terms “Southern ethics,” were instilled from birth and “publicly revered and exalted.”¹⁸² For Southern ethics it did not matter whether a person was belonged to the working class or the planter class, as long as that person was white. Tradition meant doing things as they had always been done; every person was confined to their racial and gender roles, as well as their specific spheres of existence. Men (who desired to be considered gentlemen) enjoyed more freedom and lived in the public sphere and were tasked with being the defenders of honor. Women (who preferred to be considered ladies) existed in the private sphere and were to behave and be worthy of their men’s defense.

Caroline Gay, born Caroline Elizabeth Ware in 1836 to Dr. Bennett Ware (1795-1842) and Lorena Lane (1810-1897), was a member of the wealthy planter class whose family is recorded as being among the founding members of LaGrange. Gay had three older brothers, (Augustus, Joseph, and Eugenius), two younger sisters (Philomena, or “Philo,” and Anna), and one younger brother (William). With her family, she spent her entire life in LaGrange and

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 493.

graduated from LaGrange Female College in 1853 with Mary Eliza Colquitt.¹⁸³ Gay's well-rounded classical education was comparable to that her brother Augustus received at the University of Pennsylvania. Caroline Ware married Francis "Frank" Poythress, a wealthy young merchant sometime between her graduation from LaGrange Female College and 1859, when Frank died. The marriage bore one child, Mary, and left Gay a young widow upon the outbreak of the Civil War.¹⁸⁴

The one bright spot in the premature death of her husband was that Gay became the owner of the Poythress estate.¹⁸⁵ The 1860 Federal Census names Gay, 24, as the head of a

¹⁸³ Gay was Nannie Morgan's first cousin (their mothers, Lorena Lane Ware and Eudocia Lane Hill, were sisters); Colquitt was a more distant cousin, but also through Lane family.

¹⁸⁴ Lucia McMahon, "'Of the Utmost Importance to Our Country': Women, Education, and Society, 1780- 1820," *Journal of the Early Republic* 29, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 484; *Catalogue of... LaGrange Female Institute...* (1851); *Catalogue of the Trustees, Officers, and Students of the University of Pennsylvania: Session 1852-1853* (Philadelphia: T. K. & P. G. Collins, Printers, 1853), 25; Sweet, "Female Seminary Movement," 43-44; "Alumnae," *Catalogue of... LaGrange Female College* (1857), 7.

Death records indicate that "liquor" was the cause of Francis Poythress's early death. "F. Poythress, Troup County, Georgia, 1860," U.S. Federal Census Mortality Schedules, 1850-1885, T655, roll 8, National Archives and Records Administration.

¹⁸⁵ Smith, *History of Troup County*, 194; "Troup County, Georgia," 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Population Schedule, RG 29, Roll M653_138, National Archives and Records

household worth \$77,200 (over \$2.7 million in 2023), 57 slaves, and 1,050 acres of land.¹⁸⁶ Of all the women who served in the Nancy Hart Militia, Gay was the wealthiest [see table 2.1]. Her independent wealth did not, however, prevent her from acting when the honor of her family – which sat on her shoulders alone – was at risk.

As a woman of independent means, though she did have her oldest brother Gus as her male protector, Gay joined her childhood friends and academy classmates in the Nancy Hart Militia.¹⁸⁷ From a traditional white Southern viewpoint, Wyatt-Brown states that women “should have little cause to defend themselves,” but these women saw no other choice than to defend their traditional domestic identity by testing traditional boundaries. Faust adds that “[women] had not a place in the public sphere, [but] they nevertheless asserted their claims within it.”

Administration; “Troup County, Georgia,” 1860 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedules, RG 29, Roll M653, National Archives and Records Administration.

¹⁸⁶ State of Georgia, “Troup County (1861),” Georgia [Property] Tax Digests, 140 vols., Georgia Archives, Morrow, GA.

¹⁸⁷ “Troup County, Georgia,” 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Population Schedule, RG 29, Roll M653_138, National Archives and Records Administration. The 1860 Census lists Dr. A. C. Ware living with his sister and a wartime letter from Gay’s husband establishes Gus’s role as her protector temporarily in lieu of himself. John Thomas Gay to Caroline Gay, letter, February 17, 1865, MS-004, Nix-Price Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA.

Publicly training until the end of the war, the Nancies were determined to keep the realm of their domestic sphere safe against potential invading Union troops.¹⁸⁸

At the beginning of 1863, Caroline Poythress married Lt. John “Jack” Gay while he was on furlough from the LaGrange Light Guards, having been recovering for months following an injury at Battle of Antietam. From this union came daughter Eugenia later that year.

Unfortunately, before he could meet his daughter Lieutenant Gay was mortally wounded at the Battle of Fort Stedman on March 26, 1865, and died a month later, on April 29 at Stuart Post Hospital in Richmond, Virginia.¹⁸⁹ Although she already had experience as a widow with a small

¹⁸⁸ Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 55; Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 12; Morgan, “Nancy Harts of the Confederacy,” 465-466.

¹⁸⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, “Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Database,” *National Park Service*, last modified May 19, 2014, accessed December 12, 2022, <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm>; John Gay, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Georgia, RG 109, Roll 0183, National Archives and Records Administration; Thomas, ed., *History of the Doles-Cook Brigade*, 40, 109; Georgia Department of Defense. Adjutant General – [Civil War] Muster Rolls by County (Men Subject to Duty), 1860-1864, RG 022-01-064, Georgia Archives, Morrow, GA; John Gay, “U.S., Civil War Prisoner of War Records, 1861-1865,” M_598, RG 109, National Archives and Records Administration.

Jack Gay’s military records present a detailed timeline of his military service. He had frequent ailments, from gastritis to tonsillitis, and was involved in numerous battles, including the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862. From this battle he was wounded and taken prisoner,

child, Caroline Gay was now a war widow. Her husband and the father of her second daughter had been martyred for the great Southern Cause, meaning that Gay had given the most honorable sacrifice that a woman of her social class could give. Between her second husband's death and the defeat of the Confederacy, Gay came to embrace the Lost Cause like it was a religion and, as their scrapbooks testify, passed on this devotion to her daughter and granddaughter.

Scattered over several of the last pages in the green scrapbook are Caroline's obituaries and poetic tributes, evidently cut and pasted by her second daughter Eugenia. These newspaper cutouts mention Caroline Gay's nickname as the "Little Rebel" for her devotion to the Confederacy and its memory. Friends reminisced:

She was of the old south, of royal lineage, and like her southern sisters of the highest type of Christian womanhood ... She kept the fires burning on the altar for more than fifty years after the Confederate collapse, at times faint, yet still pursuing that noble patriotic sentiment, for which those nearest her heart had sacrificed their lives. She not only loved the cause for which they died, but "her boys," as she affectionately called them, who wore the Gray, was as sincere and sweet as the whispers of a mother's love, and they in return simply idolized her, and will nourish her memory as long as one is left, and tell their children of her beautiful life and devotion to principle.¹⁹⁰

but he paroled immediately by signing an oath "of honor" promising "not to take up arms or service in any military capacity against the Government of the United States."

¹⁹⁰ Gay-Nix-Price Scrapbooks, MS-004, Nix-Price Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA.

Scrapbooks as Devotionals, or, The Gospel of Caroline

In spite of losing the war and everything that goes along with that, what white Southerners did not lose, however, was their sense of identity – which they clung onto tightly. For elite white Southern women in wartime this identity wove together traditional expectations (self-denial and “service to others”) with what was needed for survival (self-sacrifice) and, as Gay’s tribute emphasized, a devotion to principle. If the South and its culture of honor were to survive, women must survive. As evidenced by the scrapbooks created by Gay, Nix, and Nooner, their version of the South *did* survive, even if it was only through this shared identity and collective memory, which was inherited by succeeding generations.¹⁹¹

From the ashes of the old South rose a collective memory. First termed by Maurice Halbwachs in the mid-1950s, collective memory can be explained as the common memory of the whole (or society) versus the memory of the individual.¹⁹² Susan Crane defines it as “a conceptualization that expresses a sense of the continual presence of the past.”¹⁹³ While the idea of collective memory applies to the immediate witnesses and survivors of the war, scholar Jan Assmann argues that descendants of those like Gay would not be sharing a collective memory, but a cultural memory, because “[it] is characterized by its distance from the everyday” and “has

¹⁹¹ Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 17.

¹⁹² Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

¹⁹³ Susan A. Crane, “Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory,” *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (December 1997): 1373.

its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time.”¹⁹⁴ Both terms, collective memory and cultural memory, are applicable to the scrapbook collection and its creators. The collection’s initial creator, Gay, felt a genuine nostalgia for the antebellum era in which she came of age. Along with Morgan and Morris, Gay shared a collective memory.¹⁹⁵ Nix’s only direct experience with Dixie were her first two years of life. Nooner grew up listening to Confederate fairy tales, which probably featured an honorable gentleman in gray coming to save a fair maiden from the grips of a Yankee scoundrel. Romanticization tied collective and cultural memories of the antebellum South together, which is the theme in the scrapbooks.

The first yellowing page of the dark green scrapbook features three cut-and-pasted magazine illustrations of red robins and a paper Christmas ornament with the name “Momma” inscribed in pencil. Attached to this bell-shaped ornament with poinsettias on it is a red ribbon – as bright and unfaded as the wide ribbon two pages over with the words “Confederate Veteran: May 1886” printed on it in dark ink. In the middle of this first page is scrawled in clear script, “Caroline E. Gay, Dec. 1920.” In the upper right-hand corner of the page is the notation “Vol. 16” – bearing the same pencil script as “Caroline E. Gay, Dec. 1920.” From this one can infer that there were fifteen prior volumes, though whether they exist today is unknown. Upon turning the first page, the observer comes face-to-face with a full-body portrait of Gen. Robert E. Lee

¹⁹⁴ Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” *New German Critique* 65 (Spring/Summer 1995): 128-129.

¹⁹⁵ Alon Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method,” *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (December 1997): 1390.

and a printed tribute to him by Sen. Ben Hill. In her scrapbook, Gay has enshrined the hero of the Lost Cause.¹⁹⁶

Gay was not alone in her worship of Lee and adherence of the Lost Cause, or as C. Vann Woodward puts it, the “romantic cult of the Confederacy.”¹⁹⁷ Drawing from the strength they needed to survive the war and an irrepressible collective memory, white women in the postbellum South transformed ladies’ aid societies into memorial groups and associations to honor those, like Eugenius Ware and John Gay, who were slain in the very cause of the Nancies: honor.¹⁹⁸

Scattered throughout the Gay family scrapbooks are references to the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), of which Gay is credited with the founding of the LaGrange Chapter. Historian Karen Cox traces the origins of the UDC to local ladies’ memorial associations that

¹⁹⁶ Gay-Nix-Price Scrapbooks, Nix-Price Collection. The inscription “Momma” on the paper ornament and the citation “Caroline E. Gay, Dec. 1920” have differing handwriting styles, indicating that the paper ornament was probably a token of affection from Gay’s daughter Nix.

Senator Hill, a political associate and personal friend of Lee, wrote “Tribute to Gen’l Robert E. Lee” as a speech given in LaGrange in March 1865. It is very likely that Gay would have been present when the speech was given. Benjamin H. Hill, Jr. *Senator Benjamin H. Hill of Georgia: His Life, Speeches and Writings* (Atlanta: T. H. P. Bloodworth, 1893), 406, 408.

¹⁹⁷ C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 14.

¹⁹⁸ Karen L. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 12.

organized immediately upon the conclusion of the war. Cox argues that “women were the longtime leaders in the movement to memorialize the Confederacy” and to construct and preserve the memory of the Lost Cause.¹⁹⁹ Gay’s involvement with the UDC evolved from her involvement with the LaGrange Ladies’ Memorial Association. Keeping with Southern ethics and tradition, these gendered organizations were extensions of the domestic or private sphere – only entering the public sphere of politics when issues required it. The *LaGrange Reporter*, one of the newspapers featured in the scrapbooks, detailed Gay’s enthusiastic involvement with the local ladies’ memorial association (where she served as president for over two decades) and the UDC as early as 1893 until her death in 1922.²⁰⁰ Like Morris and her involvement in the UDC, Gay’s active participation in these movements, complete with detailing their meetings, meant a continuation of balancing between private and public spaces.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 1. Some issues that required women to enter the political sphere – traditionally populated by men – included placing Confederate memorials and monuments in such national parks (54).

²⁰⁰ “A Grand Celebration: Preparations for Memorial Day in LaGrange,” *Macon Telegraph*, April 9, 1891, 3, “A Nation’s Holy Grief: Embalms in Fragrances the Memory of Warriors True and Tried, The 26th Duly Celebrated in LaGrange,” *LaGrange Reporter*, April 28, 1893, 1; “Cannot Stop!” *LaGrange Reporter*, May 26, 1893: 1; “Confederate Monument Unveiled at LaGrange,” *Atlanta Constitution*, October 31, 1902, 4; “Memorial Day: Exercises to Take Place Wednesday, April 30th,” *Atlanta Constitution*, March 28, 1890, 3; “Memorial Day,” *LaGrange Reporter*, April 16, 1897: 1.

²⁰¹ Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 14.

Materials in Gay's scrapbooks describe the organization and early memorialization efforts of these groups. One article praised Mr. Lemuel M. Park for donating \$100 to the LaGrange UDC to erect a Confederate monument in the center of town. Another clipping, on the same page, spoke of women's efforts to decorate the graves of fallen Confederate soldiers. The feeling of nostalgia becomes apparent as proceeding pages include reflective and melancholy poetry, in addition to an onslaught of obituaries for those of Gay's generation.²⁰²

The numerous obituaries Gay included in her scrapbook reveal a community's mourning of the loss of heroes and Gay's loss of those who experienced what she liked to refer to as the War Between the States. In the green scrapbook, for example, a lengthy obituary of Dr. A. R. Coleman, a LaGrange native and probable colleague of her brother (both being area doctors),

Gay was not the only member of the Nancy Hart Militia to take part in ladies' memorial associations; newspapers mention Leila Pullen Morris's involvement with the Atlanta chapter of the UDC, as well as Adelaide "Addie" Bull Tomlinson's (younger sister of Annie and Sally) participating with LaGrange's UDC as its historian. "Daughters' Meeting: LaGrange Chapter Daughters of the Confederacy Met Friday and Passed Resolution," *LaGrange Reporter*, September 8, 1905, 3; Caroline Gay, "Description of UDC Meeting," n.d., MS-105, Ware Family Papers, box 13, folder 22, Troup County Archives; Adelia Bull Tomlinson, "Daughters of the Confederacy: The Object and Aim of the Daughters of the Confederacy - A Paper Read before the Organization at Its Last Meeting," *LaGrange Reporter*, July 23, 1897, 1.

²⁰² Gay-Nix-Price Scrapbooks, Nix-Price Collection. This marble monument was originally placed in the town square but has since been relocated to the Shadowlawn Cemetery in LaGrange.

rests next to a four-sectioned poem marking the 1919 reunion of the United Confederate Veterans organization. With a clipping of poetry and an explanation of red poppies in “Victory Memorial Emblem,” the scrapbook’s page also makes mention of the Great War (World War I). It can be inferred that Gay likened the efforts of the Great War memorialization to her efforts associated with the Civil War and the Lost Cause.²⁰³

Gay’s political views in the 1910s reflected her belief in the Lost Cause, and on a larger scale the belief of most of her Southern generation. Scrapbook pages reveal Gay to have been a supporter of the Virginia-born (in 1856) President Woodrow Wilson, who scholar Arthur Link states “was [proudly] claimed by Southerners as one of their own.” Though instrumental in the Progressive Era, Wilson espoused rhetoric that struck a longing chord with those in the South who were homesick for Dixie. Wilson, Link reveals, came to embrace his Southern roots, stating that the South “had been right” in seceding. To have the country’s president agree with Lost Cause theology only reinforced the faith of those like Gay, Nix, and Nooner.²⁰⁴

Devotion to Lost Cause theology was continually reinforced and Confederate memory resurrected with each proceeding generation, making it comparable to one’s devotion to religion and faith. In the case of the Lost Cause, it was a faith built upon the blind worship of the Three Giants in Grey: Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and Stonewall Jackson. One may even go as far as making the claim that this is the holy trinity of the Lost Cause. Ever the apologist, Gay dedicated a page in her green scrapbook to an illustrated portrait of these three men.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Arthur S. Link, “Woodrow Wilson: The American as Southerner,” *Journal of Southern History* 36, no. 1 (February 1970): 14, 15.

The Apocrypha of Eugenia and Carrie

Gay did not complete her scrapbook, as evidenced with the inclusion of her obituaries. It was finished by her only daughter, Eugenia Nix – who would go on to begin the orange scrapbook. In this latter scrapbook, Nix primarily includes materials regarding social happenings in LaGrange, as well as obituaries belonging to those of her mother's generation who were firsthand witnesses to the Civil War.²⁰⁵

A true daughter of the Confederacy, Nix joined Gay in memorial organizations in and around LaGrange. Her name can be found alongside her mother's in the *LaGrange Reporter*, which documented in detail activities of the local United Daughters of the Confederacy.²⁰⁶ For elite Southern white women, historian Karen Cox explains that it was not uncommon to find multiple generations working together in “memorializing the past and [seeking] ways to preserve Confederate culture for future generations,” and the true objective of such groups like the UDC was “vindication for the Confederate generation.”²⁰⁷ Because she was born in 1863, any scraps of memory Nix had would have been colored in by her mother as she likely remembered little about the war itself. Nix's developmental years formed during the Reconstruction Era, consistent with Cox's argument that the opinions of this generation “were largely shaped by Confederate

²⁰⁵ Gay-Nix-Price Scrapbooks, Nix-Price Collection.

²⁰⁶ “Daughters of the Confederacy will Assemble Next Week in Their Annual Meeting,” *LaGrange Reporter*, October 24, 1902: 1.

²⁰⁷ Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, 2-3.

men and women whose loss was transformed into bitterness.”²⁰⁸ Nix’s homesickness for Dixie was built upon this anger and romanticized reminiscences of the Old South.

Upon the death of her mother, Nix felt it her inherited duty as a Confederate daughter to continue memorialization efforts. This included cataloguing a personal archive of obituaries of those associated with the Lost Cause and contemporaries of her mother. She may have seen these individuals as pseudo aunts and uncles in the family of the Old South elite. As for her own family, Eugenia Ware Gay married William Nix in 1880 and had three daughters, Julia, Mary, and Caroline (Carrie). Carrie, who was born in 1888 and would go on to marry Harry Nooner, would continue the matriarchal archive of scrapbooks.

Carrie Nooner was born early enough to, like her mother, experience the bitterness of those who were firsthand witnesses of the Civil War and Reconstruction. At the same time, Nooner was also an early pupil of the reconstructed education curriculum of the South – as endorsed by the UDC. This contrasted greatly with her grandmother’s classical education. Scholar Amy Lynn Heyse explores the type of education Carrie would have received, referring to the UDC’s lessons for the Children of the Confederacy (C of C) as “catechisms.” Heyse argues that this was a way in which “women constructed collective memories for their young children.” The collective memories constructed into the minds of impressionable children included the idea of white supremacy, the romantic myth of antebellum life in the Old South, and the Lost Cause myth – all reinforced by “‘quasi-religious’ imagery to explain how the Confederates were a chosen people.” This influence on white Southern education occurred because the UDC allowed women to enter the public sphere demurely and quietly (but still under

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 37.

the protection of the private), as to ensure that the private sphere reflected their constructed memories of the past.²⁰⁹

Nooner's scrapbook is dark teal and has a Dutch windmill embossed on its cover. On its first page her name and address are scrawled in blank ink: "Mrs. Harry A. Nooner / 131 North Peninsula Drive / Daytona Beach / Florida." In faded pencil in the bottom right corner are the noted years "1931-32." These inscriptions reveal a few things about Carrie Nix Nooner, a Child of the Confederacy: she identified herself in her personal scrapbook as an extension of her husband. In effect, her individual public identity had been absorbed by her husband's – much like Mary Alford Heard had done decades before. Also notable is the fact that, at the time of the scrapbook's creation, Nix did not live in Georgia; rather, she lived hundreds of miles away in Florida. Newspaper scraps in her book, as well as her mother's orange book, reveal her husband to have been a successful jeweler; as a proper wife with good Southern values, she would have followed her husband wherever he thought best to live. However, Nooner's scrapbook reveals that she kept very close ties with LaGrange.²¹⁰

Like her foremothers, Nooner included countless obituaries of LaGrange citizens who were white pillars of the community and Lost Cause rhetoric. Nooner also kept records of young women of LaGrange, perhaps seeing them as the future of the South. By maintaining a

²⁰⁹ Amy Lynn Heyse, "The Rhetoric of Memory-Making: Lessons from the UDC's Catechisms for Children," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (Fall 2008): 408-432. *Catechism* refers to summaries of the principles of a particular Christian theology, in which rote instruction and memorization are often emphasized.

²¹⁰ Gay-Nix-Price Scrapbooks, Nix-Price Collection.

scrapbook of life in LaGrange, Nooner may have felt as if she was able to remain a part of her home community. Near the end of her scrapbook, several pages are dedicated to memory of the Old South. Evidently cut from a newspaper or newsmagazine, this section features a large image of the Traylor house (“Old Home” or “Forest Home”), which was built in 1850. Neighboring pages feature portraits of some of the notable socialites of LaGrange, including Mary Traylor, Betty Ragsdale, and Bula Callaway.²¹¹ These three young women are dressed in antebellum-styled garb and use the Traylor home as their dramatic backdrop – making it evident that their UDC catechisms were quite impactful.²¹² From the gray box that houses the three volumes of Gay family scrapbooks falls a pale envelope, labeled in pencil, “Flowers taken from Jeff. Davis / May 29th, 1893,” the day in which the remains of Jefferson Davis passing though LaGrange while travelling via train on the way to his final resting place in Richmond, Virginia. Despite petitioning Richmond mayor J. Taylor Ellison, Gay failed to get the procession to stop so that

²¹¹ Bula (or Lula) Callaway was part of the Callaway family, who helped build LaGrange. The wealth of the Callaway family can be credited to their antebellum plantation’s production of cotton and establishing its own textile mill. This wealth continues into the 21st century from various businesses, including Callaway Golf, which was started by Bula’s brother Ely, Jr. John D. Thomas, “‘Big Bertha and Me’: After Mastering the Textile and Fine Wine Industries, Ely Callaway ’40C has Become the Driving Force in Golf,” *Emory Magazine*, last modified Winter 1997, https://www.emory.edu/EMORY_MAGAZINE/winter97/callaway.html; Carleton Wood, “Cotton Farming, Mill Villages and Fancy Parterres: The Woven Landscapes of LaGrange, Georgia,” *Magnolia* 22, no. 1 (Summer-Fall 2008): 1–7.

²¹² Heyse, “The Rhetoric of Memory-Making,” 408-432.

mourners would be able to “pay suitable honors to the dead chieftain.”²¹³ The *LaGrange Reporter* details “the last tribute” of the Confederate hero, as well as discusses Gay’s passion for memorializing Confederate veterans.²¹⁴ Inside this envelope is a piece of folded paper, which includes the pressed and dried remains of flowers from Jefferson Davis’s reburial procession; the train may not have stopped, but mourners still paid their respects. This bunch of flowers is, as scholars Anna Rusk or William C. Davis might consider, a relic or trophy representing the collective memory of the past. Interestingly, the paper that has wrapped this dried bouquet is an unused census sheet titled, “Colored Return of Enumeration of School Population of... Georgia, 1893.”²¹⁵ Neither Gay, Nix, nor Nooner probably saw the irony in this; rather, they only saw the unused paper as a material useful to preserve a piece of their collective Confederate memory.

The Gay family scrapbooks reveal how personal memories of the Civil War reflected the larger collective memory of Southern white women at the turn of the twentieth century. Like the flowers from Jefferson Davis’s procession, memories are preserved. Like the three scrapbooks, memories are passed down from one generation to the next. Memory as a whole and collectively, like truth perceived, is subjective. Gay’s memory of the Civil War was formed by her firsthand

²¹³ “Cannot Stop!,” *LaGrange Reporter*, May 26, 1893, 1. After his death in 1889, Jefferson Davis was buried in New Orleans. His widow, Varina Howell Davis, later requested that his remains be reinterred in Richmond, Virginia at Hollywood Cemetery, final resting place for many famous Confederates.

²¹⁴ “The Last Tribute,” *LaGrange Reporter*, May 26, 1893, 1.

²¹⁵ “Colored Return of Enumeration of School Population,” Gay-Nix-Price Scrapbooks, Nix-Price Collection.

experiences as a Nancy Hart, a widow, and a young mother – all adding to what she perceived to be the truth of the Lost Cause myth and a nostalgic homesickness for Dixie. Parts of Nix's memory were inherited as she was a daughter of the Confederacy. Nooner's memory relating to the Lost Cause was both inherited and expertly constructed by those intent on keeping their collective and cultural memory of the Old South alive. Overall, these scrapbooks reveal a deeply personal space – outside of the domestic or public spheres – that women carved out for themselves, where their memories were their truth and matriarchal strength could be passed on from one generation to the next.

CONCLUSION

The end of the Civil War marked the beginning of a new era for the South. The end of slavery brought with it shockwaves that are still felt today in the states that once swore allegiance to the Confederacy, and the region entered a period of Reconstruction and financial recession. As noted historian C. Vann Woodward put it, “No ruling class of our history ever found itself so completely stripped of its economic foundations as did the South in [Reconstruction].”²¹⁶ LaGrange, Georgia, however, did not feel the cold shock of military, political, and economic loss as much as other parts of the South.²¹⁷ Because the men of the town had built part of their wealth on their careers as doctors, lawyers, and merchants, they were able to maintain a leisurely lifestyle – though their standard of living was reduced now that they did not have the labor of enslaved persons to work the plantations and the homes saved by the Nancies.

Comparing the United States Federal Census records of 1860 and 1870 reveals that the wealth of the elites of LaGrange was not completely eliminated as a result of the Civil War and the emancipation of their enslaved workforce. For instance, Jeremiah and Nannie Morgan reported in 1860 their real estate value as \$2,500 and their personal estate value as \$4,500. In 1870, the Morgans reported their real estate value as \$1,400 and personal estate value as \$2,000.²¹⁸ Although the troubled economy hindered fundraising efforts, Caroline Gay and other women of ladies’ memorial associations were eventually able to raise money for Confederate

²¹⁶ Woodward, *Origins of the New South*, 29.

²¹⁷ John C. Schwab, *The Confederate States of America: A Financial and Industrial History of the South During the Civil War* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901).

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

monuments, which Cox suggests “opened doors for southern women to become public women” and further supports that assertion that women in wartime altered the seams of traditional gendered boundaries of space.²¹⁹

To identify as and take pride in being a Southerner is not, in itself, a negative thing. There is something to be said about a person embracing the identity he or she was born into or relates with. It gives a person a sense of self; without that sense of self, he or she is lost. The Southern identity adopted by most LaGrange elites found its definition in the antebellum era of the American South, to, as Faust explains, “make what they regarded as necessary seem once again legitimate.”²²⁰ This traditional Southern identity prides itself in its regional heritage and chooses to overlook a dark period of American history in favor of nostalgia and sentimentality – justifying the use of the term *counter-memory*.

Modern American popular culture has reflected and continues to reflect the Southern identity tactilely in media entertainment (music, books, television, movies) and physical entertainment (battlefield re-enactments), exposing its weaknesses and strengths. The Southern identity rooted in honor and the myth of the Lost Cause persists because, despite its harmful ideologies, the memories and lore evolve with each new generation – similar to how the retellings of Nancy Hart or the Nancy Hart Militia have developed and grown overtime. Considering the implications of the traditional patriarchal Southern identity, it may behoove future scholarship to coin and to examine Neo-Southern identity. This identity may more closely describe many present-day Southerners who embrace the uniqueness of their Southernness but

²¹⁹ Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, 11, 50.

²²⁰ Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 247.

recognize the darker aspects of their collective history and work to improve from there – as challenging as that is.²²¹

The history of the Civil War is stained with bloodshed and complexity. In most aspects it was anything but “civil” – however, the Nancy Hart Militia returned civility to the war when their home-front nearly became the battlefield. After the fighting ended and the surviving LaGrange Light Guards returned home, the disbanded Nancies returned to lives similar to those they lived prior to war. The one exception, however, was that their redefined spaces, which delicately overlapped private and public, would never deflate to its antebellum size. The Nancies (specifically Morgan and Gay) raised families and continued to involve themselves in civic affairs at Courthouse Square. And despite the loss of a slave-driven economy, LaGrange – the town the Nancies defended – was able to grow and prosper into the next century as the railroad depot was restored and factories and cotton mills sprouted up between fields of white and rail tracks.²²²

²²¹ Orville Vernon Burton, “The South as ‘Other,’ the Southerner as ‘Stranger,’” *Journal of Southern History* 79, no. 1 (February 2013): 7–50. Burton, a Southerner and a student of James McPherson, states, “My attempt to interpret the South is like trying to untangle a fishing line. Just when I think I’m making progress, a thread of thought breaks apart completely” (9).

²²² “Bring the Mills to the Cotton,” *Atlanta Constitution*, July 23, 1879, 2; Broadus Mitchell, *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1921), 58; Smith, *History of Troup County*, 115-122; U.S. Census Bureau, “Georgia,” in *1940 Census of Population: Volume 2. Characteristics of the Population. Sex, Age, Race, Nativity, Citizenship, Country of Birth of Foreign-Born White, School Attendance, Years of School*

Combining traditional and non-traditional primary source materials with a broad range of secondary scholarship on honor, Southern elite women, the Lost Cause, and collective memory, this study demonstrates that the Nancy Harts were able to maintain the established nineteenth century notions of being a lady – albeit slightly skirting the hemmed edges of social correctness – while preparing to defend their own (private) honor and the (public) honor of their town. It further demonstrates that even after they went back to their roles as wives and mothers after the war, they maintained their sense of self by collectively crafting memories and instilling the hope in their children and grandchildren that the South would rise again.

The names Nancy Hill Morgan, Mary Alford Heard, Aley Smith, Andelia and Sally Bull, Gussie Hill, Mary Eliza Colquitt, Martha Beall, Leila Pullen, Caroline Ware Poythress Gay, and Ella Key were softly tucked away into the antebellum and Civil War history of LaGrange, as was the memory of the Nancy Hart Militia. However, this group of women deserves to be more than just a historical footnote and recognized for their own resourcefulness and determination to protect and preserve their honor. The Nancies deserve to be remembered as figures of strength.

APPENDIX A: TABLES

Table 1.1: The Nancy Hart Militia – Names, Ranks, and Ages, May 1861

<i>Captain</i>	Dr. Augustus C. Ware, 31	<i>Third Sergeant</i>	Mary Eliza Eley Colquitt, 26
<i>First Lieutenant</i>	Nancy Colquitt “Nannie” Hill Morgan, 21	<i>First Corporal</i>	Anne Adelia Bull, 25
<i>Second Lieutenant</i>	Mary Cade Alford Heard, 27	<i>Second Corporal</i>	Leila Claudia Pullen, 16
<i>Third Lieutenant</i>	Augusta M. “Gussie” Hill, 17	<i>Third Corporal</i>	Sarah C. “Sallie” Bull, 22
<i>First Sergeant</i>	Martha E. “Pack” Beall, 18	<i>Treasurer</i>	Ella Key, 15
<i>Second Sergeant</i>	Aley Womack Smith, 19		

Sources: “The ‘Nancy Harts’ of LaGrange,” *Southern Confederacy* (Atlanta, June 1, 1861). Names and ranks originally published in the *LaGrange Reporter*, May 1861.

Table 1.2: Roster of the Nancy Hart Militia

Originally compiled by F. C. Johnson, III – Historian, Troup County Archives

Amos, Mary Alice	Heard, Margaret Ewing “Posey” (née Alford)
Awtrey, Mary Elizabeth (m. Greene)	Heard, Mary Cade “Pony” (née Alford)
Beall, Martha E. “Pack” (m. Ridley)	Hill, Augusta M. “Gussie” (m. Thompson)
Boddie, Chloe Crudup “Puss”	Hill, Mary Henrietta “Hennie” (m. Thompson)
Boddie, Elizabeth Vandalia “Van” (m. Whitfield)	Key, Ella
Broughton, Martha Matilda “Mattie”	McLendon, Harriet M. “Hattie”
Broughton, Sarah Antoinette “Mittie”	McLendon, Elethia S.
Bull, Adelaide “Addie” (m. Tomlinson)	McLendon, Sarah “Sallie” (m. Jordan)
Bull, Anne Adelia (m. Cox)	Morgan, Nancy Colquitt “Nannie” (née Hill)
Bull, Sarah C. “Sallie” (m. Park)	Pitman, Ella Louisa (m. Sledge)
Callaway, Kate	Pullen, Leila Claudia (m. Morris)
Colquitt, Mary Eliza Eley (m. Dix)	Screven, Olivia T. “Eva” (m. Lennard)
Cox, Margaret Antoinette “Dinkie” (m. Tuggle)	Smith, Alelujah Womack “Aley” (m. Boddie)
Edwards, Sarah J. “Sallie Jim” (m. Handy)	Snead, Mary D. “Mollie” (m. Hall)
Edwards, Willie R. (m. Redd)	Thornton, Martha Thomas “Tommie” (m. Banks)
Fannin, Annie E.	Ware, Dr. Augustus C.
Fannin, Julia Elizabeth (m. Ferrell)	Ware, Mary Ann
Ferrell, Ada Morgan (m. Tatum)	Ware, Philogenia “Philo” (m. Witherspoon)
Gay, Caroline Elizabeth “Pussie” (née Ware, m. Poythress)	Willis, Catherine E. “Kittie” (m. Thornton)
Griffin, Mary Elizabeth “Puss” (m. Pitts)	Wimbish, Mary Adelaid “Mollie” (m. Youngblood)

Source: Forrest C. Johnson, III, “Members of Nancy Hart Militia,” Manuscript, n.d., MS-100, Morgan-Hill Papers Collection, Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA.

Table 1.3: Dates of State Secession from the Union

Dec. 20, 1860	South Carolina	Jan. 19, 1861	Georgia	May 6, 1861	Arkansas
Jan. 9, 1861	Mississippi	Jan. 26, 1861	Louisiana	May 20, 1861	North Carolina
Jan. 10, 1861	Florida	Feb. 1, 1861	Texas	June 8, 1861	Tennessee
Jan. 11, 1861	Alabama	Apr. 17, 1861	Virginia		

Source: Secession, United States - Places in History, Library of Congress.

Table 1.4: Chronological Published Retellings of the Nancy Hart Militia

1881	Avery, Isaac Wheeler. <i>The History of the State of Georgia from 1850 to 1881, Embracing the Three Important Epochs: The Decade Before the War of 1861-5; The War; The Period of Reconstruction, with Portraits of the Leading Public Men of This Era.</i> New York: Brown & Derby Publishers, 1881.
1904	Horton, Mrs. Thaddeus. "The Story of the Nancy Harts." <i>Ladies' Home Journal</i> , November 1904.
1922	Morgan, Mrs. Forrest T. (Roberta). "Nancy Harts of the Confederacy." <i>Confederate Veteran</i> 30, no. 12 (1922): 465–466.
1926	Howell, Clark. <i>History of Georgia</i> . Vol. 4. Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1926.
1927	Moon, Louise. "Lady Soldiers of the Sixties Used Cotton as Ramparts to Defend City." <i>LaGrange Reporter</i> , September 6, 1927.
1930	Copeland, Edna Arnold. "The Nancy Harts of LaGrange." <i>Atlanta Constitution</i> . August 24, 1930.
1933	Smith, Clifford. <i>The History of Troup County</i> . Atlanta: Foote and Davies Company, 1933.
1942	Benton, Althea Bouchelle. "The 'Nancy Harts' of Civil War Days in LaGrange Were Forerunners of WAACS of World War No. 2." <i>Columbus Ledger</i> . December 13, 1942.
1948	Billinghurst, G. E. "The Story of the Nancy Harts." <i>LaGrange Daily News</i> . February 10, 1948.
1952	"Nancy Hart Squadron." <i>Butler Herald</i> . Butler, GA, May 16, 1952. Perkerson, Medora Field. <i>White Columns in Georgia</i> . New York: Rinehart, 1952.
1953	Bryan, Thomas Conn. <i>Confederate Georgia</i> . Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1953.
1959	Sparks, Andrew. "Ruffles and Rifles." <i>Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine</i> , November 8, 1959.
c. 1950	"The Nancy Harts Tour: A Visitor's Guide to LaGrange." Rice Printing Company, ca 1960. MS-100, VF-118, Morgan-Hill Papers Collection. Troup County Archives, LaGrange, GA.
1963	"Georgia Heritage." <i>Taylor County News and the Butler Herald</i> , September 13, 1963.
1969	Johnson, Clark. "The Nancy Harts Were Gallant Ladies." <i>LaGrange Reporter</i> . November 1, 1969.
1987	Allen, Randall. "The Nancy Harts." <i>Troup County Historical Society Newsletter</i> , June 1987.
1991	Cleaveland, R. Chris. "The Nancy Harts of La Grange." <i>Georgia Journal</i> (Fall 1991): 8–9, 19. Sibley, Celestine. "40 Rebel Women vs. the Yankees." <i>Atlanta Constitution</i> , August 25, 1991.

1994	Cleaveland, R. Chris. "Georgia's Nancy Harts." <i>Civil War Times Illustrated</i> 33, no. 2 (1994): 44–45.
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1996	Bailey, Anne J. "The Defenders: The Nancy Harts." <i>Journal of Confederate History</i> XV (March 1996): 35–56. Faust, Drew Gilpin. <i>Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
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2003	Cox, Karen L. <i>Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy</i> . Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003.
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2006	Kaemmerlen, Cathy J. <i>General Sherman and the Georgia Belles: Tales from Women Left Behind</i> . Charleston: History Press, 2006.
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2008	Blalock, Kay J. "Female Combatants." In <i>Women in the American Civil War</i> , edited by Lisa Tendrich Frank, 23–29. Santa Barbara, Calif: ABC-CLIO, 2008. Trammel, Jack. "Civil War in Literature." In <i>The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Literatures</i> , edited by M. Thomas Inge and Charles Reagan Wilson, 9:56–60. Charlotte: University of North Carolina Press, 2008.
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2015	Pousner, Howard. "A Salute to Female Civil War Militia That Saved LaGrange." <i>Atlanta Journal-Constitution</i> . April 8, 2015. Rowland, Beth. "Down to the Last Detail: Artist Mort Künstler Completes His Civil War Series with a Quirky Tale from LaGrange, GA." <i>America's Civil War</i> 28, no. 3 (2015): 60.
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2012	Davis, Laura June. "The Girl Soldiers of Nancy Harts Militia." <i>Civil War Monitor</i> (March 6, 2012). Accessed September 9, 2019. https://www.civilwarmonitor.com/front-line/the-girl-soldiers-of-nancy-harts-militia .
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2016	Punola, John A. "Confederate Nancy Hart Militia." <i>Civil War News</i> , October 2016.
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2018	Blakemore, Erin. "An All-Woman Confederate Militia Guarded Their Georgia Hometown." <i>History</i> . Last modified September 3, 2018. Accessed March 1, 2019. https://www.history.com/news/confederate-women-militia-civil-war . Brackett, Katherine. "Remembering the Nancy Harts: A Female Militia, Gender, and Memory." <i>Georgia Historical Quarterly</i> 102, no. 4 (2018): 303–337.
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2019	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. "LaGrange, Georgia." <i>Advisory Council on Historic Preservation</i> . Last modified 2019. Accessed October 7, 2019. https://www.achp.gov/preserve-america/community/lagrange-georgia . Monson, Marianne. <i>Women of the Blue & Gray: True Civil War Stories of Mothers, Medics, Soldiers, and Spies</i> . Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain Press, 2019. "The Nancy Hart Militia: The Women Who Kept Watch." <i>Visit LaGrange</i> . Last modified 2023. Accessed October 6, 2019. https://www.visitlagrange.com/the-nancy-hart-militia/ .
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2021	Craney, Glen. <i>The Cotillion Brigade: A Novel of the Civil War and the Most Famous Female Militia in American History</i> . Los Angeles, CA: Brigid's Fire Press, 2021.
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Table 2.1: 1860 Total Estate (Real Estate and Personal) Values vs. 2023 Relative Values

Member of Nancy Hart Militia	Head of Household with Occupation / Relation	Real Estate Value Personal Estate Value	# Slaves*	1860 Total Value	2023 Total Worth
Caroline Ware Poythress Gay	Self (widow)	\$ 60,000.00 \$ 60,000.00	57	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 2,798,174.44
Mary Alford Heard	P. A. Heard (planter), <i>husband</i>	60,000.00 17,200.00	64	77,200.00	2,645,942.15
Aley Smith	N. N. Smith (physician), <i>father</i>	13,000.00 44,000.00	39	57,000.00	1,884,780.71
Martha E. “Pack” Beall	J. M. Beall (merchant), <i>father</i>	8,000.00 43,000.00	27	51,000.00	1,830,412.03
Leila Pullen	C. Pullen (merchant), <i>father</i>	7,500.00 29,550.00	27	37,550.00	1,252,291.80
Adelia & Sallie Bull	A. O. Bull (judge/attorney), <i>father</i>	5,000.00 18,000.00	7	23,000.00	833,653.01
Mary Eliza Colquitt	J. H. H. Colquitt (postmaster), <i>father</i>	5,000.00 15,500.00	20	20,500.00	652,424.09
Dr. Augustus C. Ware	Self (physician)	2,500.00 8,000.00	0	10,500.00	543,686.74
Ella Key	C. Key (minister), <i>father</i>	2,000.00 9,000.00	2	11,000.00	398,703.61
Augusta “Gussie” Hill	E. H. Hill (widow), <i>mother</i>	5,500.00 3,000.00	15	8,500.00	308,089.15
Nannie Hill Morgan	J. B. Morgan (attorney), <i>husband</i>	2,500.00 4,500.00	6	7,000.00	253,720.48

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, “Troup County, Georgia,” 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Population Schedule, RG 29, Roll M653_138, National Archives and Records Administration; U.S. Census Bureau, “Troup County, Georgia,” 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Slave Schedules, RG 29, Roll M653_138, National Archives and Records Administration.

* *Value of slaves included in Personal Estate Value*

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