

IF HE SHOULD DIE: THE PLIGHT OF PATIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES AT THE
GEORGIA AND SOUTH CAROLINA LUNATIC ASYLUMS
DURING THE U.S. CIVIL WAR AND EARLY RECONSTRUCTION

by

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(Under the Direction of Stephen Berry)

ABSTRACT

The dislocations of the Civil War and Reconstruction sent a diverse array of U.S. Southerners, white and black, free and enslaved, poor and rich, female and male, adult and child, flooding into the state lunatic asylums of South Carolina and Georgia. These patients' shared 'insanity' in no way made them equal, and they usually received different treatment in all senses. The white men tended to be more violent and more free. The white women were often suffering from puerperal difficulties and trauma. The enslaved had usually been half-abandoned with a hope that they would soon become valuable again. With all these differences, the state lunatic asylum provides historians with a common frame, and dominant culture is often at its most conspicuous when studied from the margins. In the mid-nineteenth-century many patients were committed not because of any internal suffering but because of inappropriate external behavior -- a failure to measure up to what was expected of their gender and race. Ironically then we may be able to best study the gender and racial norms of the period from the perspective of those who most breached them and called them into question -- the ostensibly 'insane.' When these patients are considered in their personal, familial, and community context rather than as medical cases of mid-nineteenth century insanity, their lived experiences reveal

key conflicts around race and gender during the Civil War era. By studying the plight of patients and their families at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums, the shadowed margins of the 1860s U.S. South become illuminated.

INDEX WORDS: U.S. Civil War, Reconstruction, Mental Illness, Disability, African-American, Race, Women, Gender, Georgia, South Carolina, Lunatic Asylum, Family, Death

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DEDICATION

For the patients

admitted to state lunatic asylums,

those remembered, those forgotten.

Your lives were worthy, and your stories should be told.

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I must first acknowledge the many wonderful people that make private and public archives possible, including the receptionists, the custodians, the security staff, the archival assistants, and the archivists. I grew into my professional persona in the archives. While pursuing my doctorate in history, I worked briefly as an archival assistant at the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscripts Library, now housed in the Richard B. Russell Special Collections Library at the University of Georgia. During my short time as an archivist, I witnessed incredibly hard work and respect from the men and women handling unusual and precious materials from the past. Subsequently, when I visited archives as a researcher, I could see both explicitly and implicitly the tremendous work and effort occurring at these impressive institutions, small and large, private and public.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Privilege and Freedom.....	26
Oppression and Slavery.....	34
2 BLOOD.....	45
Like Father, Like Daughter.....	48
Had a Sister in the Asylum.....	62
Pauper Idiots from Clark[e] County, Congenital.....	75
To Be Wealthy, White, Male, and Insane.....	85
3 WAR.....	106
Women at War.....	110
Disabled Doctors.....	127
Veteran Disability Pensions.....	147
4 SLAVERY.....	163
Enslaved by a Secession Signer.....	173
An Enslaved Woman and A Free Woman.....	188
Enslaved by an Interstate Slave Trader.....	199

5	VIOLENCE.....	214
	Violence in Postwar Charleston.....	216
	Unpredictable Violence on the Plantation.....	220
	Post-Partum Violence.....	235
	Suicide as Self-Violence.....	255
6	SEX.....	262
	Being Sexed and Having Sex.....	264
	Sexual Assault in the Family.....	282
	Surviving Nymphomania.....	302
7	FREEDOM.....	315
	Colored insane pauper, of and from the Bureau Hospital.....	324
	Address Daniel Broomfield, Warrenton, Ga.....	332
	He is of mixed blood but has never been a slave.....	341
8	CONCLUSION	365
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	378

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This project studies people and patients who occupy deteriorating graves that dot the U.S. South. Under sandy soil and red clay rest the bones and flesh of men, women, and children who died over a century before. In this condition, we can only imagine who they once were and what they once did. Context provides clarity in some cases: an overgrown cemetery in the countryside may reveal a rural, impoverished people lost to a collapsed mill industry, and an overburdened churchyard in the city might display war heroes and planter-politicians. Other sites of the dead remain invisible, including the innumerable places across the U.S. South where death embraced enslaved African-Americans. In a few areas, we find unusual sites of memory from the nineteenth century. A small cluster of graves under massive oaks, where a family buried their dead near home, now beside a busy interstate. A vaulted grave of crumbling brick where trees push past coffin and lid to find sky. A row of moss-covered infant graves without names, inscribed with initials of parents and a solitary year of life. These places of death provide physical, social, and cultural meaning to the lives of white and black U.S. Southerners in the nineteenth century, but these graves imply intact families and spatial change *after* death. If we instead examine the cemeteries at U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums of Georgia and South Carolina, we confront and recognize slavery, war, and reconstruction, as well as the complex intersection of identities of race, gender, and disability in the mid-nineteenth century.

In Milledgeville, Georgia, a historical marker names “Cedar Lane Cemetery,” the demure title for the resting place of over twenty-five thousand people, black and white, male and female, old and young, heralding from across the U.S. South and the broader United States of America. Two thousand identical iron markers jut from the earth, proclaiming absolute anonymity in mass. Every piece of iron, cast from the same mold, denotes a thousand untold stories. A bronze angel statue serves as a perpetual guardian for these people, though the horrors which she staves off have already reached them.¹ These unknown dead are from Central State Hospital, or, as it was known in the mid-nineteenth century, the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. These dead patients once had identities and experiences distinctive to each individual, but through human error and neglect, these have vanished into the ground and time, only symbolically marked here by twenty-first century advocates. At the end of their lives, these asylum patients died away from home, and much of their previous experiences as citizens and members of families disappeared, leaving them best known for their medical disability. However, these forgotten dead are more than patients; they were humans and U.S. Southerners, struggling and suffering, through decades of societal upheaval, familial trouble, and personal turmoil.²

The following study investigates those who slipped along the periphery at the “lunatic asylums” of Georgia and South Carolina during the 1860s. The unknown dead at Milledgeville, Georgia find sisters and brothers throughout the United States at many other asylum and hospital cemeteries, but the closest are those in Columbia, South Carolina, where patients were buried invisibly in the city cemetery for much of the

¹ Cedar Lane Cemetery is located in Milledgeville, Baldwin County, Georgia. A historical marker at the

² Doug Moore, “Asylum: Inside Central State Hospital, once the world’s largest mental institution,” *Atlanta Magazine* (2015): accessed January 1, 2017, <http://www.atlantamagazine.com/great-reads/asylum-inside-central-state-hospital-worlds-largest-mental-institution/>.

nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century, African-American patients were interred in a wooded “Colored Asylum Cemetery,” which, through negligence and disinterest, has transformed into a private golf range, complete with sprinkler systems, sand traps, and wayward golf balls.³ The callous treatment of the mentally ill and disabled has become an unfortunate but expected norm in the twentieth century, made worse by continued disregard after death. This unkind behavior from society and medicine has origins in the mid-nineteenth century when high hopes slid away into abyssal lows.

The choice to focus narrowly on the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums arises from the slower development of U.S. Southern state institutions for the insane during the mid-nineteenth century. In contrast to Europe and the U.S. North, the U.S. South largely did not concentrate private or public funding for state lunatic asylums during the early- to mid-1800s. However, Virginia constructed several state asylums during the mid-nineteenth century; the record-keeping of those institutions was both impressive and massive in scope. Although this study could have easily included Virginia’s state lunatic asylums, the preponderance of materials from those institutions would have overwhelmed the patient experiences found at Georgia and South Carolina. These two deeper southern states established their own lunatic asylums long before the U.S. Civil War; Georgia began receiving admissions in 1842, while South Carolina took in its first patient around 1827. For the antebellum and war periods, these two states only ran a single state lunatic asylum each, in contrast to Virginia and several states in the U.S. North which boasted multiple public institutions for insane. As a result, the stories of

³ Michael Trinkley and Debi Hacker, “Dealing with Death: The Use and Loss of Cemeteries by the S.C. State Hospital in Columbia, South Carolina” (Columbia, South Carolina: Chicora Foundation, 2001).

patients and their families at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums represent U.S. Southern people putting their full faith and trust in the solitary state lunatic asylum available to them in a time of significant crisis. The subsequent medical records from these institutions reveal the extent in which mentally ill and disabled people relied on the state to assist them medically and intimately and to alleviate a human burden and family responsibility. Notably, during the 1860s, Florida did not run its own state lunatic asylum, while Alabama only established its own later called Bryce Hospital in 1861. Patient records for Alabama's state lunatic asylum, as well as North Carolina's two state institutions for the insane, are not publicly available, in contrast to Georgia and South Carolina, both of which having allowed public access to the medical records of patients.

In the tumultuous period of war and reconstruction during the 1860s, some citizens began to be considered solely medical cases. The nineteenth century witnessed immeasurable change during the decade of the 1860s, especially in the lives of those experiencing mental illness and other disabilities. Some who suffered with mental and physical disorder sought aid in the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums. Around 1866-1867, both institutions experienced a fundamental transformation with the forced acceptance of emancipated black men and women by the Freedmen's Bureau and the new Reconstruction governments. At the same time, the asylums witnessed the increased admission of impoverished white U.S. Southerners. With rising patient populations, detailed record-keeping dissolved into rushed commentary. The complex struggles of man, woman, and child as members of families and society compressed into medical objectification. These unfortunate trends escalated through the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s. The stigma now worn by many mentally ill Americans has historical basis in this

transition. There is no inherent inevitability in the mistreatment of the disabled; the stigma encountered in America today is both socially constructed and historically situated. This study of mid-nineteenth century asylum patients helps explain the current American views on mental illness and disability by considering a period before significant patient population increase and rampant institutional neglect.

The history of slavery, war, and reconstruction has become relatively familiar terrain, both in scholarship and the broader public. However, the history of lunatic asylums and mental illness, specifically that of the U.S. South, is relatively less known although not completely unstudied. Scholars have only recently begun to consider the lived experiences of the mentally disabled in the nineteenth century. These studies often view those struggling with mental illness as medicalized individuals exclusively interacting with the state and medical authority. We rarely place such people in their familial context and home environment. In the past decade, several scholars have treated the mentally disabled as victims of war and reconstruction, particularly post-traumatic stress disorder in the Civil War and its aftermath. Yet we seldom study the broader subjects of slavery, war, and reconstruction from the perspective of those at the asylum. The experiences of the mentally ill and disabled draw us into new worlds within the dark era of the 1860s. Through the complex lives of over a thousand patients at Georgia and South Carolina, we can see that the seemingly familiar U.S. South still has unknown heights and depths.

This book makes many things new. Scholars have examined the most accessible sources about U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums – annual reports, policies, legislative decisions, scandals, official histories – but these materials produce a top-down narrative

and build an institutional perspective. To the extent that we have seen patients, we have only seen a sliver of their lives – the time when they were committed to a lunatic asylum. We have little information on who they were before they were admitted, how they arrived, how they left, and how they and their families perceived their struggles and recovery. Although invaluable in many ways, asylum records are woefully incomplete alone. Through admission and discharge documents at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums, we can acquire innumerable accounts and figures. This study partially relies on these materials due to their significance when viewed collectively. Asylum records taken individually can be informative, but totals, patterns, and anomalies emerge when the admissions are considered in aggregate. Scholars have yet to do such tremendous, tedious work with the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums, but this study finds its foundation in datafication of the records of the 1860s. By first considering quantitative data, we can better transition into qualitative case studies with a clearer understanding of patient populations and change over time.

Between January 1, 1860 and December 31, 1869, there were 1410 admissions to the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums combined; 804 from Georgia, and 606 from South Carolina. 782 of the 1410 were male, and 628, female. In contrast to other asylum studies which argue that mental illness was increasingly feminized in the nineteenth century, admissions at Georgia and South Carolina were 55.5% male and 44.5% female in the 1860s. Some scholars have investigated the relationship between gender and mental illness, but most have done so in regards to British lunatic asylums. Using a feminist framework, Elaine Showalter covers English psychiatry from 1830 to 1980, asserting that many “mad women” were rather women behaving untraditionally

and male psychiatrists codified this socially abnormal behavior as scientifically unsound.⁴ Showalter claims that British society “perceived women as childlike, irrational, and sexually unstable” and “rendered them legally powerless and economically marginal,” leading male physicians to create “categories of deviance from which doctors drew a lucrative practice and asylums much of their population.”⁵ Joan Busfield challenged Showalter by emphasizing “the complex interrelation of gender and madness” instead of the exclusive focus on women and mental illness.⁶ Busfield asserts that “the idea that madness becomes in the nineteenth century a distinctively female malady is mistaken,” because “although images old and new were gendered, there was no clear female monopolization of madness in terms of cultural representations or in terms of patient populations.” Her own statistical analysis of British lunatic asylums demonstrates that “men as well as women were liable to be identified as mad and spend some time in an asylum.”⁷

My research of these two U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums during the 1860s partially confirms Showalter’s analysis and validates much of Busfield’s counter-argument. While female patients were treated differently due to their sex, they did not make up a majority of admissions to the Georgia and South Carolina lunatic asylums. In both studies by Showalter and Busfield, female patients greatly outnumber male patients in British lunatic asylums, typically 55% to 45%.⁸ However, this study shows the opposite for patient numbers for Georgia and South Carolina: 45% female, 55% male.

⁴ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985).

⁵ Showalter, *The Female Malady*, 73.

⁶ Joan Busfield, “The Female Malady? Men, Women, and Madness in Nineteenth Century Britain,” *Sociology* 28 (1994): 259.

⁷ Busfield, “The Female Malady?,” 275.

⁸ Busfield, “The Female Malady?,” 264.

This discrepancy does not invalidate any suggestions that mental illness and gender have an intense and intertwined relationship which changed over the nineteenth century.

During the 1860s, the term “hysteria” was not used at either Georgia or South Carolina mental institution, though that would become a more common in later decades. However, in this same decade, physicians often named other female-specific mental and physical disorders, including two instances of female “nymphomania” in South Carolina and Georgia. Showalter and Busfield’s debate over the role of female mental illness has fortunately redirected scholarly attention to the relationship between gender, sex, sexuality, and mental illness.

Gender and sexuality fundamentally altered the experiences of patients at these two U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums. Many women came to the Georgia and South Carolina asylums suffering from “puerperal mania” or “puerperal insanity” – what we might today refer to as post-partum depression and psychosis. Some women were committed because of uterine disease, womb disease, menstrual disorders, and even menopause. White male asylum physicians certainly construed the natural shifts in women’s hormones as insanity in some cases, but women did not disproportionately arrive at these two state lunatic asylums in the 1860s. White and black women alike were undoubtedly admitted as suffering gendered and sexed figures, often struggling with the results of heterosexual marriage and reproduction. Similarly, men arrived at the institutions after having exhibited hypersexuality in terms of sexual assaults or excessive masturbation – two behaviors considered highly abnormal for sane men in the 1860s. Deviant gendered and sexual behavior could force the commitment of men and women to

lunatic asylums, especially if these actions interrupted social expectations, even during a period of unpredictable transformation such as the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction.

The ages of patients admitted range from infants to the elderly. The youngest, besides newborn infants brought with their mothers, were children younger than ten years of age. Many of the youngest patients were what modern medicine would call “intellectually disabled,” which has been variously referred to by nineteenth and twentieth century physicians as “mental retardation,” “idiocy,” and “imbecility.” A significant number of children admitted to the lunatic asylums experienced epilepsy and severe convulsions. The admission of young U.S. Southerners to state lunatic asylums demonstrates the societal ambivalence towards intellectually and physically disabled people, especially during the late 1860s when African-Americans first came to the asylum in large numbers. In 1869, two black “congenital idiots” named Adam and Joe were admitted to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, at the ages of ten and nine. Adam would be discharged within three years in 1872 when the asylum began discharging the intellectually disabled due to overcrowding. Adam’s record simply states “Discharged (Imbecile)” with no indication if any social or medical services would be provided for the black disabled teenager outside of the asylum during Reconstruction.⁹

In contrast, in 1867, a black woman named Alsey Redding came to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum accompanied by her daughter, Frances, who was “supposed” to be just ten years old. The institution considered them “pauper idiots,” with their condition being congenital or existing from birth. Both eventually died at the asylum, apparently having never left after their initial 1867 admission. The mother Alsey resided at Milledgeville for

⁹ Adam, #1718, and Joe, #1719, South Carolina Lunatic Asylum Admissions Books, 1828-1947, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina (hereafter SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947).

the next thirty years, finally dying in 1898 of “senility.” However, some twenty years earlier in 1877, her daughter had died at the institution of “convulsions” around the age of twenty. Half of these two women’s lives were spent behind lunatic asylum walls; for one woman, that meant a full ten years, but for her mother, it meant a nearly unimaginable thirty years within a psychiatric institution removed from society. Alsey and Frances’s burial places are unknown, but both are assumed to have been interred at one of Georgia’s three asylum cemeteries, possibly even Cedar Lane with its bronze angel and symbolic markers.¹⁰

The oldest patients at South Carolina and Georgia during the 1860s were in their late seventies and early eighties, but these are notably familial and medical estimates of age. Many who arrived in the late stages of life were physically deteriorated, often paralyzed and unable to walk or speak. While many had family who seemed to have become unable or unwilling to care for their elderly relatives, others had no named contact, or no one to notify of their condition, including their death at the institution. In 1864, Moses Woodfin, a 79-year-old white brick mason, widower and repeat patient to the Georgia asylum, arrived once more “the subject of paralysis and unable to do anything,” including being unable to “walk or speak at all distinctly.”¹¹ First marked “partial insane” on the 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Moses had been born in Virginia in 1785, moved to “Alabama Territory” to “survey lands” in 1817, and relocated to Jasper County Georgia around the 1830s.¹² When he was found to be insane in 1845, he was

¹⁰ Alsey Redding and her little girl Frances, Georgia Department of Public Health, Central State Hospital, Medical Case Histories, Volume 3 (October 9, 1860 – July 31, 1873) (hereafter Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873), 229.

¹¹ Moses Woodfin, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 110.

¹² Year: 1860; Census Place: Jasper, Georgia; Roll: M653_128; Page: 235; Family History Library Film: 803128; Document: Territorial Papers of the US; Volume Number: Vol. 18; Page Number: 277; Family Number: 29; Moses Woodfin, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 110.

committed to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum but then walked off asylum property and disappeared for some time, only to reappear and be readmitted then released to Jasper County.¹³ Finally, when his daughter was unable to care for him in January 1864 during the Civil War, Moses once again arrived at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. His fate is unknown, as physicians did not mark a death, he has no known headstone, and he never reappears on the U.S. Federal Census. It simply seems Moses died and was buried anonymously somewhere in the U.S. South, at home or at the state lunatic asylum.¹⁴

Years later, in 1868, Juda Webb, a black woman, recently emancipated, also came to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum “unable to walk, in fact in an utterly helpless condition.” The institution estimated her age to be around eighty, remarking “nothing is known of her case.” Although Juda almost certainly had surviving family or friends from her time under slavery, she was not noted as having any in the asylum record. She died only six days after her admission on Christmas Eve 1868.¹⁵ It would have been difficult for anyone from Juda’s past to have known about her death at the state asylum as few, if any, notices were given to the public about individual deaths at the institution. Though she likely had descendants and had labored both physically and reproductively for many decades, having been born into slavery around 1788, Juda only earned four short sentences of attention from asylum physicians. She did not even receive a cause of death or a remark about her burial location. Few records indicate any of these elderly patients ever returned home after their death at the asylum. Indeed, most, if not almost all, were likely buried at state lunatic asylum cemeteries.

¹³ Moses Woodfin, #56, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1842-1861.

¹⁴ Moses Woodfin, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 110.

¹⁵ Juda Webb, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 263.

At the Georgia Lunatic Asylum in the 1860s, the 804 patients came from a variety of family dynamics. 26.7% were married, 29.2% were single, 2% were divorced or separated, 5% were widowed or a widower. About 8% were what modern Americans consider children, or someone younger than eighteen years of age. The average patient would have been a white single man in his early thirties, having first shown symptoms of mental illness in the previous few years. Noticeably, however, the asylum physicians recorded numbers and status according to their own estimates as well as the unclear statements given by the state, local police, family, friends, employers, and neighbors concerning a specific patient. Many patients – both white and black – have only estimates for their age, frequently with the descriptor “about [this age].” Similarly, the date that symptoms first manifested came from the patient or someone that knew of their case: these do not indicate a scientific or objective starting point for mental illness, but rather when a noticeable change in behavior occurred, usually in the form of erratic actions or violence. Even a patient’s current marital status may have been an approximation, especially considering the wartime U.S. South’s inability to contact friends and family for confirmation about provided information by a patient and the party bringing him or her.

As time poured through the hourglass, Georgia Lunatic Asylum physicians estimated more and recorded less. In the year 1860, the number of patients without a recorded marital status was 17% (16 out of the 95). During the war years, between 1861 and 1865, the percentage generally remained around 20% for an unstated marital status. However, starting in 1866-1867, when African-Americans were first admitted in significant numbers, patients received noticeably less attention to their personal lives in their admission entries, indicating physicians became less interested in them as citizens

and more as medical cases. In 1867, suddenly 44% of patients had no recorded marital status – a four time increase from 1866, which only 10% did not have this piece of information. In 1868, the percentage jumped to a stunning 61%, meaning more than half of admitted patients, almost two-thirds, had no known marital status. In 1869, the figure 38% was still nearly double the earlier number. This dramatic change occurs silently in the asylum records when seen on an individual basis, but taken collectively, the transition is striking and disturbing. These changing numbers parallel the increased admission of African-Americans, for whom many white U.S. Southerners bore conflicted feelings, especially in regards to marital status under slavery and emancipation. Both asylums in Georgia and South Carolina seemed to have ignored the possibility that people of color could be married, separated, divorced, or widowed. Georgia physicians frequently did not note in African-Americans' admission entries any sort of marital status. In contrast, South Carolina's ledger book had a clear column for such information, but for African-Americans, the physician simply and intentionally left the space blank. It is impossible to tell the beliefs of mentally ill or disabled freedpeople about their marital status or intimate relationships through studying lunatic asylum records.

In agreement with societal feelings of racial hierarchy, both Southern asylums treated enslaved and free people of color differently than poor and wealthy white U.S. Southerners. Prior to emancipation, Georgia did not allow the admission of any person of color, slave or free. In contrast, South Carolina began reluctantly accepting slaves shortly after its establishment. As Peter McCandless notes in his study of the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, the first African-American patient was an enslaved black boy, around age fourteen, admitted in 1829. He supposedly had become “deeply and dangerously

intoxicated” which led to him being “perfectly stupid and listless” around age eleven.¹⁶

Over the next few decades, the institution refused to accept almost all other African-Americans for two reasons: “First, because the acts concerning the operation of the asylum did not expressly permit their admission; and second, because their presence would require additional expense and complicate the running of the institution.”¹⁷ South Carolina only formally began to accept African-Americans in 1849, although only a small number of free people of color and slaves were subsequently committed to the asylum between 1849 and 1866. The asylum received African-Americans because advocates believed “the state had a moral responsibility to care for faithful servants and to protect slaveholders families from the dangers of living in proximity to lunatic slaves.”¹⁸ The intention of enslavers, planters, and politicians – primarily powerful white men – was never to recover the minds of slaves for their bettered mental health. Instead, their motivation was to maintain a functional, productive laborer for their household or plantation and preserve the appearance of a benevolent, paternalistic society.

From January 1860 to May 1865, only ten “colored” patients were admitted at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum: one was a free woman of color, and the other nine were enslaved. Of these enslaved African-Americans, two were men, and the other eight were women. The gender difference in admitted slaves likely comes in part from the decision to have female “house servants,” who were more easily noticed as mentally ill and valuable enough for their enslavers to seek treatment and cure. In contrast to these ten admitted African-Americans, two hundred and eighty white people came to the South

¹⁶ Peter McCandless, *Moonlight, Magnolias, and Madness: Insanity in South Carolina from the Colonial Period to the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 76.

¹⁷ McCandless, *Moonlight, Magnolias, and Madness*, 75.

¹⁸ McCandless, *Moonlight, Magnolias, and Madness*, 76.

Carolina Lunatic Asylum between 1860 and 1865. These patients included lifelong U.S. Southerners, recently arrived U.S. Northerners, and European immigrants. Very little has been recorded about the conditions that welcomed slaves at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. However, scholars have gleaned that the housing, food, and treatment were all subpar, particularly in comparison to what was presented to white patients. McCandless has contended that the antebellum “accommodations the asylum provided for blacks... consist[ed] of a couple of small brick outbuildings placed near the main asylum structure.” A temporary decision came on the cusp of war to refuse admission for black men.¹⁹ However, both sexes arrived at the institution between 1860 and 1865, though female slaves were committed in noticeably larger numbers. This disparity in admission and treatment varied by race, gender, and disability even among enslaved people, especially since white physicians and politicians controlled access to the state lunatic asylum.

In the years following the U.S. Civil War, overall patient numbers changed wildly in response to postwar chaos and fluctuations of emancipation and poverty. Population figures for African-Americans rapidly increased: where there had been only ten patients admitted to South Carolina between January 1860 and May 1865, sixty-two arrived at the asylum between September 1865 and December 1869. Similarly, Georgia, which had never accepted any people of color prior to emancipation, swiftly admitted ninety-four former slaves between 1867 and 1869. White U.S. Southern society’s difficult adjustment to emancipation was made all the more uncomfortable as the state lunatic asylums were forcibly confronted with the admission of mentally and physically disabled people of color. Living and treatment conditions barely improved for the newly emancipated

¹⁹ McCandless, *Moonlight, Magnolias, and Madness*, 76-77.

African-Americans, but the Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction governments on both the local and state level continued to send "colored idiots" and "colored lunatics" to Milledgeville, Georgia and Columbia, South Carolina. In the following decades to the turn of the twentieth century, African-Americans were more frequently committed to U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums, eventually forcing the construction of new buildings for segregated black patients.

Only a few scholars have considered the social experiences at Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums during the 1860s. These studies are primarily institutional histories that focus on political, economic, and medical changes within the asylum.²⁰ No one has taken a generational approach to these two state lunatic asylums. Although a scholar could use political definitions of events and survey the asylums in the antebellum period (1827-1860 for South Carolina, 1842-1861 for Georgia), the huge swath of time covers when the two institutions were undergoing enormous but slow-paced evolution. The U.S. Civil War period, generally regarded as December 1860 to May 1865, saw the admission of a few hundred patients. Many of these cases significantly inform us about the horrors and ills of war, but these short years only provide a limited perspective. Scholars usually define Reconstruction for Georgia and South Carolina as beginning somewhere in 1865 and lasting until 1877 when federal troops left the U.S. South. However, this era has temporal boundaries that scholars base on political and state decisions but not the inner workings of private families or the elusive minds of mentally ill U.S. Southerners. If we instead consider the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic

²⁰ For South Carolina, the primary work is Peter McCandless's *Moonlight, Magnolias, and Madness: Insanity in South Carolina from the Colonial Period to the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). For Georgia, the primary work is Peter Gordon Cranford's *But For the Grace of God: The Inside Story of the World's Largest Insane Asylum, Milledgeville* (Augusta, Georgia: Great Pyramid Press, 1981).

Asylums in the 1860s as a generational study, we can see an entire people in transition – and families in transition, asylums in transition, a region in transition, the idea of mental disability itself in transition. This general approach shows traditional history from a nontraditional perspective. The different direction allows us to question what mentally ill U.S. Southerners made of slavery, war, and Reconstruction – and what slavery, war, and Reconstruction wrecked upon the mentally ill.

No one has situated the history of U.S. Southern state lunatic asylum patients fully inside emerging disability theory. Disability Studies has increasingly become an academic force, and its advance in the historical field has been a welcome innovation to the conventional histories of established events, stories, and people. Echoing Joan Scott's call to utilize gender in historical study, we should consider disability as a lens of historical analysis.²¹ As Douglas Baynton explained, "Disability is everywhere in history, once you begin looking for it, but conspicuously absent in the histories we write."²² Unfortunately, few scholarly works of history engaged mental illness and disability and its relationship with race, gender, sexuality, and class in the mid-nineteenth century. Several recent works have shed needed light on subpopulations under stress, such as Dea H. Boster's *African-American Slavery and Disability: Bodies, Property, and Power in the Antebellum South, 1800-1860*, which delves into the complicated world of U.S. Southern disabled slave life.²³ In contrast, Hannah Joyner's *From Pity to Pride: Growing Up Deaf in the Old South* studies wealthy white men and their experience with deafness and

²¹ Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* Vol. 91, No. 5 (1986), 1053-1075.

²² Douglas C. Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," in *The New Disability History: American Perspectives*, eds. Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 52.

²³ Dea H. Boster, *African-American Slavery and Disability: Bodies, Property, and Power in Antebellum South, 1800-1860* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

disability.²⁴ As Disability Studies engages further with the historical field, we will only better both disciplines and deepen our understanding of the experience of mental illness and disability in the American past.

Disability interacts differently with diverse elements of identity such as age, race, sex, class, and education, and does so in distinct ways in different time periods. Kimberle Williams Crenshaw first discussed intersectionality by considering “race, gender, and other identity categories” within identity politics in the wake of social movements from the 1960s and 1970s. Intersectionality theory establishes that the “focus on the intersections of race and gender only highlights the need the account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed” and the wide-ranging impact of identity on various peoples.²⁵ Although Crenshaw was studying “battered women’s shelters in minority communities in Los Angeles” in the 1980s, her theory became increasingly popular in feminist discussions of identity politics. The modern idea that “converging systems structure the experiences” of people should be moved back in time into the spaces inside U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums during the 1860s.²⁶ By considering the intersection of identities and systems of oppression, we can better understand the lives, experiences, and deaths of mid-nineteenth century patients of all sexes/genders, races, and social classes.

Scholarly attention to overlapping identities can alter the most traditional of narratives. The inclusion of gender and sexuality transforms the historical account of U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums. However, we should go further in our use of identity

²⁴ Hannah Joyner, *From Pity to Pride: Growing Up Deaf in the Old South* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2004).

²⁵ Kimberle Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* Vol. 43 (1991), 1245.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

politics. Evelyn B. Higginbotham propels us to delve into deeper territory and avoid the easy “claims of homogeneous womanhood, woman’s culture, and patriarchal oppression of women” even within medical institutions.²⁷ As we move forward in our analysis of power and positionality in mid-nineteenth century lunatic asylums, we must realize that race plays an exceptionally prominent role in the experiences of patients. However, we should not consider “race” to mean only “blackness”; we should attempt to understand the meaning and extent of “whiteness” as a privilege and factor in the lives of lunatic asylum patients. The social construction of race – “blackness” and “whiteness” in the case of the nineteenth century U.S. South – has its historical roots as well. The world-shattering 1860s played a significant role in shifting American conceptions of racial categories and meanings. As slaves turned into citizens, Higginbotham’s discussion of gender, race, class, and sexuality becomes all the more essential to understanding the experiences of newly freed disabled African-Americans. As scholars “fully recogniz[e] race as unstable, shifting, and strategic reconstruction,” we must go further to “problematize much more of what we take for granted.”²⁸

Even more recent and revolutionary works, such as Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands / La Frontera* should remind scholars that intersectionality works in innumerable ways: the intersection of aspects of identity can include the most evident features, such as gender and race, but should also take into account many other aspects, including sexual practices, sexual orientation, and region. Anzaldúa proclaims her borderlands are “not comfortable territory to live in” as they are a simultaneous physical, spiritual, cultural, psychological, and sexual space filled with “contradictions” and

²⁷ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African-American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race,” *Signs* Vol. 17, No. 2 (1992), 251.

²⁸ Higginbotham, “African-American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race,” 274.

“hatred, anger, and exploitation.”²⁹ Yet here Anzaldúa and many others reside on a “thin edge of barb wire.”³⁰ The patients at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums in the 1860s lived in a similar place, confusing and complex, which they could not flee and did not choose. Their time on the edge could be temporary or permanent depending on a myriad of circumstances and sheer chance. By their admission to U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums in the 1860s, they entered a place – physical, social, cultural, and mental – that survived on the edge of shadow and sunlight. While some would return fully into society’s sun, only barely haunted by their time on the edge, others never again saw light and existed in the shadow until and beyond death.

As people struggling with disabilities, the patients at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums changed from loved ones within families to medical entries in ledger books. The intersecting variables of identity with disability lead us to objectification theory. Martha C. Nussbaum clarifies the concept of objectification by arguing “it is not only a slippery, but also a multiple, concept.”³¹ Most importantly for this study, Nussbaum introduces the notion that objectifiers will treat objectified people in a number of ways that destroys their humanity, leading them to become “lacking in autonomy and self-determination,” “lacking in agency and perhaps also in activity,” and “something whose experience and feelings (if any) need not to be taken into account.”³² Her concept of “fungibility” – or what I refer to as disposability – becomes uncomfortably familiar when studying the lives of certain disabled people in the 1860s, especially women and people of color admitted to asylums. Nussbaum discusses slavery

²⁹ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987), Preface.

³⁰ Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, 13.

³¹ Martha C. Nussbaum, “Objectification,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 24 (1995), 251.

³² Nussbaum, “Objectification,” 257.

in conversation with disposability, demonstrating that “the very toollike treatment inherent in the institution entails a certain sort of fungibility, in the sense that a person is reduced to a set of body parts performing a certain task, and under that understanding can be replaced by another similar body, or by a machine.”³³ For those who became state lunatic asylum patients, a significant number found themselves cast aside by family or employers and were soon replaced by new spouses, slaves, or employees, even before they died. Others were not replaced with another person, but their absence also did not always slow familial growth and progress. These combined concepts of interchangeability and disposability help us understand the decreasing value of certain disabled people, particularly those who were considered primarily worthy due to their physical or reproductive labor replicated for powerful white men.

Those who were admitted to the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums most often came from familial situations, though a few staggered through life alone. All had once been children, and many had children of their own. Some had parents and grandparents who lived with them or nearby. A considerable number had spouses; others married or remarried after their stay at the asylum. Many had close relationships with neighbors, colleagues, politicians, and employers. Very few had no connection to the community they lived in. As many Americans now imagine themselves, U.S. Southerners in the mid-nineteenth century should be understood as members of families and communities, small and large, thriving and dying. The position of patients within a family unit can help us better understand the transition from mentally ill family members to neglected, if not abandoned, medical cases of disability. Medical authority at U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums understood that patients came from families and

³³ Nussbaum, “Objectification,” 264.

frequently lived with their families. A significant number of admission entries at Georgia describe violence enacted against parents, spouses, and children. These violent acts include murdering children, striking spouses at the dinner table, attacking parents, and sexually assaulting sisters. In these descriptions, we can reconstruct the lives of mentally disabled people at home with their family, often in ways that reveal how and why their behavior led to their admission to the U.S. Southern state lunatic asylum.

Likewise, physicians understood that some mental illness was “hereditary” and labeled such cases in a manner reminiscent to modern portrayals of genetic predisposition. Their medical beliefs provide us a window into intimate family spaces where mental illness and eccentricity were well known within a family and relayed to medical authority. For example, Hannah Way’s 1865 admission entry stated, “Her Grand Mother and Aunt died insane,” whereas Lucinda M. Darby’s 1862 entry noted, “Her grandmother and one of her uncles was insane but recovered.”³⁴ Many other entries, such as Jefferson Eubanks in 1860, remarked simply, “Hereditary predisposition known to exist.”³⁵ All three of these patients were white U.S. Southerners with known families, though their lives varied tremendously. Almost none of the African-Americans admitted during the 1860s – either as slaves or freedpeople – received such information about their health’s hereditary basis or genetic lineage. The absence of familial references in the African-American asylum entries reveals the callous treatment of both slaves and freedpeople as medicalized individuals rather than a suffering valued member of a family and larger society.

³⁴ Hannah Way, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 128; Lucinda M. Darby, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 61.

³⁵ Jefferson Eubanks, #798, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 2.

An unusual way that aggregate data can assist in determining the decreasing importance of family for both white and black U.S. Southerners rests in the use of named contacts in state lunatic asylum materials. Throughout the 1860s, Georgia's admission records routinely concluded with an admission date ("Received [month date year]") and a contact name and address ("[First name] [Last name] [City] [State]"). This last piece of information, which I have termed "named contact," fluctuates in relation to the war and emancipation. In the primary war years of 1862, 1863, 1864, and 1865, most patients had an attached contact and address, suggesting that in stressful times, a familial address was needed in case of emergency. During the heat of war in 1864, all but one of the admitted patients had a named contact. In 1866, when only whites were admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, 97% of patients had a contact person and address listed in their entry. If a patient was a white male or female of any class, between 1860 and 1865, the state lunatic asylum almost always included information regarding a person to contact and a home address. The war-time assumption was even a white mentally ill person had someone – family, employer, or local authority – who cared enough to be notified of changing condition and death.

However, in 1867 and 1868, when large numbers of freedpeople suddenly entered the U.S. Southern state lunatic asylum, physicians were much less likely to record a contact person and address. The lack of information could possibly be due to poor communication between Freedmen's Bureau Hospitals or local governments and the state lunatic asylum. Initial admission of African-Americans to Freedmen's Bureau Hospitals, jails, and poorhouses may have not recorded information regarding marital status, the name of an important person (family or otherwise), or their home address. As African-

Americans migrated throughout the U.S. South after war and emancipation, they may not have maintained a constant or known home address. However, most white women and men found wandering the woods and city streets in Georgia received a named contact and address, indicating that their presence had eventually directed the state back to their family, neighbors, or other charitable persons. In contrast, the great majority of African-Americans in 1867 and 1868 earned no recorded named contact or address. The black patients that did receive this information primarily have white named contacts, which can be confirmed by secondary materials such as census data. In 1867 and 1868, very few African-Americans had an African-American named contact, who the state lunatic asylum clearly marked as “colored.” The African-American transition from slaves to citizens has been studied in countless ways, but this approach can illuminate otherwise subtle and shadowed parts of Reconstruction history.

We simply have too few deep portraits of the mentally ill in the nineteenth century. This study attempts to constellate patients through a series of full portraits from the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums. We can do this best by investigating the mentally ill people and their families and their interactions with U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums during the 1860s. They appear quite distinct from each other, but some share noticeable similarities. Intersectionality helps illuminate the different experiences of the mentally ill in the nineteenth century: those who have privileged variables of identity (race, gender, class, education) faced different consideration by society, medicine, and family. Others had an altered experience with their disability due to their low position in U.S. Southern society. The importance of the body over the mind meant that skin color and sex shifted a disabled person’s reception at U.S. Southern lunatic

asylums during the 1860s as well as their recovery and reintegration into society. For example, violent mentally ill people were treated differently based on their gender/sex, race, and class. As we will see in Chapter Six, “Violence,” an Irish immigrant was condemned to life in the U.S. Southern state lunatic asylum after murdering a fellow Irish immigrant, but a wealthy white planter who killed an enslaved African-American was discharged only after a few short years of medical treatment. By investigating these cases more deeply, we can learn about the diverse lives of the mentally ill and disabled in the nineteenth century and the world that shaped them and that they in turn shaped.

To illustrate the upcoming chapters, we can review the differences in life, treatment, and death between Samuel Austin Cook and Violet Roseborough. These two patient portraits demonstrate the important distinctions between mentally ill people admitted to state lunatic asylums in the U.S. South. Significant issues of the following scholarly investigation include privilege, consent, record-keeping, temporary and permanent disability, and familial or intimate concern for the asylum patient. However, these issues change considerably when other variables are taken into account, such as race, sex/gender, class, and education. Samuel Austin Cook and Violet Roseborough were both admitted during the 1860s to U.S. Southern lunatic asylums; each was eventually discharged, and each was committed because others wanted their mental health to improve. However, while Samuel was the descendant of white wealthy planters, Violet was enslaved by a man not all that unlike Samuel. Violet’s last name is listed as identical to her enslaver’s, but Samuel carried his name as a proud legacy from his slave-owning father. While the Georgia Lunatic Asylum described Samuel as a “demented imbecile” and the subject of “dipsomania” (the nineteenth century term for uncontrollable cravings

for alcohol), Violet received very little attention from the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, only earning the short descriptor “Violet Roseborough, a slave.”³⁶ Although seemingly a different ends of the spectrum of social status and medical attention, the two arrived at U.S. Southern lunatic asylums during the chaotic 1860s, suffering from what at the time was referred to as insanity. Their highly distinct and separate cases permit deeper exploration into complicated issues otherwise barely traversed.

Privilege and Freedom: *Samuel Austin Cook*

When he was admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum in March 1867, Samuel Austin Cook was a twenty-year-old violent white man residing with his wealthy planter family in the war-torn U.S. South.³⁷ Although his admission does not include this information, Samuel had volunteered to serve in the Confederacy at age sixteen instead of attending the University of Virginia as his family had initially expected. Likely due to his young age and social class, Samuel was kept close to home and served at the Andersonville Commissary department.³⁸ His experiences at the infamous prisoner of war camp, whether honorable or horrific, are currently unknown. After Confederate defeat, by 1867, Samuel had been “intemperate for several years under the influence of hereditary predisposition.” Although his admission entry provides few additional details, the asylum explained, “When on a drinking spree [he] will commit serious acts of violence.” Foreshadowing his impressively kind treatment at the lunatic asylum, his entry concludes: Samuel “is a very gentlemanly, well behaved young man except when

³⁶ Samuel Austin Cook, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 198; Violet Roseborough, #1191 and #1386, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

³⁷ Samuel Austin Cook, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 198.

³⁸ Anna Maria Green Cook, *History of Baldwin County* (Anderson, South Carolina: Keys-Hearn Printing Company, 1925), 302-305.

drinking.” The word “gentlemanly” acts as a code: it denotes white male privilege in a time that became nostalgically known as the Old South. Samuel would not be considered like other “demented imbeciles” – another descriptor of his case used in his admission entry – because of his background of wealthy white planters who supported the Confederacy.³⁹ In his stay at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, Samuel resided with the asylum superintendent’s family, not in the institution’s wards with the socially inferior pauper patients. However, his admission entry does not provide this detail; instead, other more personal records must be consulted to see how Samuel lived before his admission and while he resided at the state lunatic asylum.

Samuel came from a truly affluent U.S. Southern family, and his successful father, Hamlin J. Cook, was marked as his named contact in his asylum record. In 1860, Hamlin had real estate worth a stunning \$111,500, and his personal estate, valued at \$84,966, included eighty-five enslaved African-Americans, making Hamlin one of the largest slave-owners in the state of Georgia. Hamlin J. Cook had attempted sell three of his plantations in 1859, including “half or all of [his] place... containing 4675 acres, 900 cleared and under fence, 500 acres ready to take in the next year” and Alligator Place plantation’s 1912 acres and its “Gin house, Screw, and Negro Cabins.”⁴⁰ On the eve of war, Samuel’s background was one of extraordinary privilege: he would have inherited whatever was left after his father’s sales, including fertile plantation land and a significant number of enslaved African-American laborers. Yet, after Confederate defeat, Samuel’s mental illness – his intemperance – forced his admission in early 1867 to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum.

³⁹ Samuel Austin Cook, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 198.

⁴⁰ Hamlin J. Cook, “Three Plantations For Sale” (1859).

Nonetheless, Samuel did not suffer immensely as a disabled man. During his residence at the state asylum, he caught the eye of the asylum superintendent's daughter whose "true occupation [was] searching for a husband." Anna Green's diary, faithfully kept from January 1, 1861 to her marriage to Samuel in 1869, uncovers their strange courtship, which took place at the state lunatic asylum itself. Samuel first courted Anna while residing at the asylum for medical treatment and then in the following months after he left the institution. In the early 1860s, death and war profoundly affected Anna, including the loss of her mother and sister as well as many male friends and neighbors. The invasion and military occupation of the state asylum left her devastated, and Confederate defeat led the entire Green family to "bitterly mourn it."⁴¹ Yet Anna was rapidly courted after the war's end, first by her older sister's widower, Adlai Houston, who died before they could be married, and then by Samuel while he was still a patient at her father's asylum. As one historian kindly described, "During the summer of 1867, [Samuel] came to the Asylum at Milledgeville as a special patient, where apparently he was suffering from alcoholism. He spent the remainder of that year under Dr. Green's care, where he enjoyed the full hospitality of the superintendent's family. Under these circumstances the romance between the young patient and the superintendent's popular daughter blossomed and grew to full ripeness."⁴² Not only did Samuel Austin Cook, a patient in the postwar Georgia Lunatic Asylum, stay with the institution's superintendent's family instead of sharing space with other pay patients, he was allowed to court the man's prized daughter while recovering from violent substance abuse.

⁴¹ James C. Bonner and Anna Maria Green Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1964), 71.

⁴² Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 4.

In Anna Maria Green's diary, which she kept throughout the 1860s, she first references Samuel Austin Cook on May 28, 1867, although he had first arrived at the asylum – and the family house – two months earlier on March 28, 1867. On May 28, Anna included his name “Mr. Cook” followed by wrote several lines, which she later erased. These missing lines could have been a remark about his institutionalization, his violence and substance abuse, or her initial personal feelings towards him; ultimately, whatever they were, these sentences were not something that Anna wanted to remain in existence or become public, so she “obliterated” them from the record. She continued with a compliment and a slightly jealous observation: “Mr. Cook... is a fine performer upon the piano and plays for [the women in the] evenings. Kate Nash has been carrying on quite a flirtation with him. I do not know to what extent she carries it but I have very little confidence in her, indeed none at all.” In a final pleased comment, Anna added, “Mr. Cook came in our sitting-room Sunday night, and sat until twelve o'clock,” indicating not only had she already begun to note and appreciate his presence, he clearly had begun his attentions towards her within two months of his asylum admission.⁴³

Yet in late July 1867, Anna was still burdened by the memory of her betrothed Adlai O. Houston's death, which she described in the most melancholy tones.⁴⁴ By mid-August, when Samuel did not come to the sitting room, she noted it in her diary but claimed, “[I] suppose his absence for the best.”⁴⁵ In early September, she suddenly declared in the midst of a lengthy entry, “I must write something of Mr. Cook so much of my time is spent in his company and agreeably too. He is a young man of very bright mind and pleasant humor, at times sparkling wit. I feel sympathy for him that pity that is akin to

⁴³ Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 114.

⁴⁴ Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 115.

⁴⁵ Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 117.

love, and he seems to fancy me – sometimes I imagine he loves Fanny but he knows of her engagement to Johnnie – I do not think she suspects a thing; and perhaps it is only the admiration all must yield to her.” Anna’s constant jealousy of her friends and female relatives had entered into her feelings towards her newest beau, Samuel, but both insecurity and girlish hope flooded her thoughts. She wrote, evidently pleased at first but then becoming quickly melancholy: “He has at times however manifested a fancy for me. and if he were to address me, it would be a strong temptation to marry him for I know I admire and my life is a sad one at home, and seems without a single aim or ray of joy.”⁴⁶ As she concluded her entry, noting her brother was leaving for college and Samuel was also leaving as well, she mused, “I do not understand Mr. Cooks going but he is very singular and often incomprehensible... My admiration for Mr. Cook may be deeper than I imagine.”⁴⁷ It had been five month since Samuel Austin Cook had been first admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, and he had fallen into full romance with the institution’s superintendent’s daughter.

Samuel was still an asylum patient on September 11, 1867, when he became a secondary author in Anna Maria Green’s diary. She explained: “I am writing in my journal for Mr. Cook to read so I will not very apt to record those circumstances or feelings in which at present I am most deeply interested.” As she began recalling events about their time together that morning, Samuel intervened to tease her, and the two seem to be passing the diary back and forth, flirting silently through their written comments. Three days later, Anna fully gave her diary to Samuel so he could write something “that might be considered as ‘fit companionship for so many pages of *expressive Sentiment*,”

⁴⁶ Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 118.

⁴⁷ Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 119.

which Samuel claimed “(Notwithstanding his conviction of incapability He nevertheless attempts to write).”⁴⁸ His following paragraphs address deep sorrow, great disappointments, and future comfort and happiness – all for Anna Marie Green – and are both beautiful and dramatic in their evident love for the young woman. A few days later, Anna warmly proclaimed: “Can it be that the heart I thought withered by the blight of that early disappointed love has been revived by the rich dews of his manly affection into the richest feeling.” She then reconstructed how “on the evening of the twelfth on the top of the house with the soft moonlight shining around us [Samuel] told me of his Love, and I promised to be his in time.”⁴⁹ While still an asylum patient, Samuel had proposed a marriage to the superintendent’s daughter.

A month into their engagement, Anna attempted to construct a faithful portrait of Samuel Austin Cook: “[I will] yet try not to paint with love’s rosy hue, for I am sober tonight – I styled him once a ‘demented inebriate’ such he is not – his mind is in all its po[wer] his faculties unimpaired by dissipation as [page torn] as I can discover.” Yet, after lovingly describing “deeply, darkly beautiful blue” eyes “whose blue depths I could gaze forever,” Anna abruptly declared, “In my love for Mr. Cook I feel most *terribly* when ever the thought like blighting mildew falls upon the heart. Should he ever drink – should that drink lead to insanity – Great God have mercy. May I pray, may I struggle for him, may I not give myself up to revelings in wild excesses of joy, may I “be sober” I will try not to fear evil, to enjoy the present happiness has made mine...”⁵⁰ Evidently, in September 1867, Anna Maria Green had not forgotten how Samuel Austin Cook had arrived in her life and at her father’s house, and she feared a future where his substance

⁴⁸ Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 120.

⁴⁹ Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 121.

⁵⁰ Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 122-123.

abuse reemerged and ruined them both. Nevertheless, her desperate repeated mantra of “May I...” intervened on her anxiety about future insanity.

Unfortunately for Anna, she was a truly emotional young woman, and Samuel was not entirely well. In late November, she seems to have been particularly overwhelmed and declared to Samuel while in the sitting room that she did not believe that he loved her, “but that it would not kill [her] if he didn’t.” He “came and kissed [her] saying he did *not* feel well *mentally* or physically and that he must go upstairs,” which caused Anna tried desperately to keep him downstairs. Still, Samuel left her “so miserable and lonely,” causing her to write hastily in her diary, “I love him oh! I love him better than life, and I am so happy in that Love, if he only knew the years of trial that had darkened my girlhood robbing it of its sunshine, he would understand why occasionally I should doubt the reality of my present fullness of joy...”⁵¹ By December 31, 1867, when Anna wrote her final entry in her diary, she considered her relationship with Adlai in contrast to Samuel, and his insanity and substance abuse arose as she contemplated their engagement. She admitted, “Yet I love him – He is younger than I, not, to a stranger, prepossessing in appearance, and the victim of terrible hereditary influences – and yet I love him – Why?”⁵² But Anna enjoyed listing all the reasons that she felt love and happiness with Samuel, and the pair seems destined to be together at the end of her diary, where Anna jubilantly declared their wedding “shall not be for two years yet.”⁵³

On April 8, 1869, a full two years after his commitment as a “demented imbecile,” Samuel married Anna Marie Green, the daughter of Dr. Thomas F. Green, the Georgia Lunatic Asylum Superintendent. Samuel’s brief stay as a patient at the Georgia Lunatic

⁵¹ Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 124.

⁵² Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 125.

⁵³ Bonner and Cook, *The Journal of a Milledgeville Girl*, 128.

Asylum and his “hereditary influences” of insanity seem to have had little negative impact on his life. One scholar summarized his institutionalization as Samuel Austin Cook “was a patient at the asylum and was being treated for alcoholism. Apparently he was cured, or at least cured enough to sire ten children.”⁵⁴ A few years later in 1872, the couple moved to Midway, Georgia, underneath the coastal city of Savannah, where Samuel engaged in innovative horticulture and ran “a beautiful and profitable experimental farm, importing plants and trees from Japan.”⁵⁵ Although once a committed patient for substance abuse at the state lunatic asylum, in 1880 the Board of Trustees of the Georgia Lunatic Asylum requested his assistance with the asylum’s fields and horticulture. For the rest of his life, Samuel worked tirelessly with new methods of agriculture in the U.S. South, becoming editor of the Agriculture section of *The Savannah News* and “The Southern Farm,” started by Henry Grady, the very man who coined the New South.⁵⁶ Samuel Austin Cook had a truly impressive life, particularly if one first encounters him as an underage guard at Andersonville Prison and a U.S. Civil War veteran who drank so excessively that he erupted into great violence. Samuel’s admission entry at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum acts as one small though vital document about his life. His admission and alcohol troubles should be simultaneously considered a fundamental stage of his life and a brief part of his unstable postwar experiences. Samuel would not have been the same man without his residence at the state lunatic asylum, but the extent the broader world later knew of his earlier alcoholic excess and violence has been lost to time.

⁵⁴ Kaemmerlen, *General Sherman and the Georgia Belles*, 64.

⁵⁵ Cook, *History of Baldwin County*, 302-305.

⁵⁶ Cook, *History of Baldwin County*, 302-305.

Samuel Austin Cook's two pristine headstones can be found not far from the Georgia Lunatic Asylum at Memory Hill Cemetery in Milledgeville, site of the asylum, rather than his later home of Midway. The first is a large, flat grey stone engraved with "Samuel Austin Cook / Born Albany, GA / December 10, 1846 / Died at Sabbath Day's Close, Midway, GA / June 25, 1911." A federal government issued veteran's headstone constructed of white marble declares his military service in Company A, 2nd Regiment Georgia for the Confederacy but does not note his post at Andersonville Prison.⁵⁷ Samuel has an abundance of materials devoted to his life, in part because his affluent upbringing but also because he married into a similarly elite white family. His headstone and surviving biography were both due to his wife Anna, who had a clear hand in the purchase of his grave and its engraving. She even wrote *The History of Baldwin County*, a book in which she dedicated several flattering paragraphs to her husband Samuel. In both records she ignores his alcoholic excess and violence, his brief time at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, and the extent of his soldierly experiences, even though he only had the chance to meet and court her due to his admission of insanity in the postwar period.

Oppression and Slavery: *Violet Roseborough*

In contrast to the overflowing portrait of Samuel stands Violet, a black female "farmhand" and "slave" admitted twice to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. She was Patient Number 1191 and 1386, first admitted in July 1860 and then again in May 1864. Her information was provided in part by her enslaver, the wealthy white man who supported her admission to the asylum. The phrase "person who supports" is a technical one and is the title of a column in South Carolina's ledger book. "C. of the Poor" for

⁵⁷ Samuel Austin Cook is buried at Memory Hill Cemetery, Milledgeville, Baldwin County, Georgia.

Commissioner of the Poor or City/Town Council filled this column for many impoverished whites and most freedpeople. For pay patients, however, this column contained the full proper name of a relative or employer: many patients had a matching last name to their “support” person. However, in Violet’s case, this column held the name of Thomas L. Roseborough. In her 1864 admission, Violet was listed as having her enslaver’s last name, but in 1860, she was just simply “Violet, a slave (colored).” Born into slavery in approximately 1834, she was twenty-six in 1860 and thirty in 1864.⁵⁸

Both South Carolina Lunatic Asylum admission entries marked Violet as married – a highly unusual act by the physicians that marked the marital status for an enslaved person.⁵⁹ Scholarly historiography around the sexual exploitation of slaves illustrates the heated contest between enslavers and the enslaved in the U.S. South. Recent works redirect attention from slave marriage to slave breeding, “as coercive, even violent, reproductive practices were known among the enslaved and their descendants.”⁶⁰ As Gregory D. Smithers declares, both the evidence and cultural memory of forced sexual relations between enslaved African-Americans is “a very uncomfortable topic.”⁶¹ It is impossible to decipher if Violet was consensually married to the enslaved man owned Thomas Lavender Roseborough in the 1860 U.S. Federal Slave Schedule. Thomas may have selfishly forced the two together for future offspring or more charitably purchased one or both with the knowledge of a pre-existing relationship. Both are possible, and neither are knowable. But both should be considered as elements to Violet’s life story.

⁵⁸ Violet Roseborough, #1191 and #1386, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Gregory D. Smithers, *Slave Breeding* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2012), 1.

⁶¹ Smithers, *Slave Breeding*, 6.

According to her asylum admission on July 27, 1860, Violet had supposedly been insane for seven months, but the physicians did not list a cause of her insanity. Just three days prior to her arrival at the state lunatic asylum, the census enumerator had noted Violet in the 1860 U.S. Federal Slave Schedule. Unlike the vast majority of slaves who can only vaguely be recognized in the slave schedules, Violet can be easily found in the 1860 U.S. Federal Slave Schedule. She was listed as one of six enslaved laborers under the name “Thomas Roseborough.” Violet was plainly labeled as “**(2)** [Slave 2 of 6] **25 F[emale] B[lack] *Insane***.” Of course, her name was not listed, because, as U.S. Southerners feared, that would provide her too much humanity in the state record. Nevertheless, we can see Violet in the slave schedule due to the information provided in her state lunatic asylum admissions. Somehow, Violet’s brief consideration as a mentally ill woman allowed her the humanity of a name in the record of her enslavement. The slave census does more work than we might first expect: it confirms her existence as an enslaved laborer of Thomas Lavender Roseborough, but the document also may corroborate the existence of her husband that was marked in the asylum admissions. He may be the slave “**(1)** [Slave 1 of 6] **30 M[ale] B[lack]**” also listed under Thomas Roseborough. Although we cannot confirm that this is Violet’s husband, his proximity to Violet in the slave census and the asylum’s repeated record of her marriage seem to suggest the two may be intimately linked. Thomas Roseborough had two “Slave houses” for his six enslaved laborers, but of the six, only two were adults and the other four were ages 13, 6, 4, and 8 months.⁶² We cannot know if the six slaves resided in one or both structures or even how the six were related, but we can surmise that at least one or more

⁶² United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

of the four children may have been Violet's and her husband. Nevertheless, this possible truth does not mean we have even partially reconstructed Violet's life and experiences as an enslaved black woman. However, we have reconstructed a part of her world, a difficult task, especially for those on the margins of race, gender, and class during slavery and the U.S. Civil War.

Violet's two state lunatic asylum admissions suggest a peculiarly privileged status as an enslaved black woman who attracted the momentary special notice from her enslaver. Many sick or disabled slaves never garnered such consideration or notice from their so-called owners. As Boster asserted, "Slaves with physical and mental impairments often faced unique limitations and conditions in their diagnosis, treatment, and evaluation as property." Mentally ill or disabled slaves proved to be "a significant challenge to white authorities, who were often torn between the desire to categorize them as different or defective and the practical need to incorporate their disorderly bodies into daily life, labor schemes, and the strictures of the slave market."⁶³ Many mentally ill or physically disabled slaves in the U.S. South were perceived as inferior or grotesque, which could lead to a diverse array of outcomes, including neglect, sale, and death. Very few of these slaves received the attention that Violet did when Thomas Lavender Roseborough, her wealthy Confederate enslaver, committed her to the state lunatic asylum for treatment and cure of her mental illness.

After her first admission, Violet was discharged six months later in January 1861 as "cured." Her treatment and experience in the institution are unknown. In the following three years between early 1861 and early 1864, Violet's experiences are also undetermined. During these years, Thomas Lavender Roseborough entered the

⁶³ Boster, *African-American Slavery and Disability*, 3.

Confederate military service: he served as a sergeant in the 6th Regiment, South Carolina Cavalry in the 1st Partisan Rangers Company C.⁶⁴ This unit engaged in a number of skirmishes before seeing action at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor, the Siege of Petersburg, and the Carolinas Campaign, among others.⁶⁵ The extent to Thomas's soldierly career has yet to be discovered; he and his family do not appear to have left his private documents in the public archives.

Back in Fairfield County, South Carolina, Violet apparently continued to show noticeable symptoms of mental illness, because she was committed once again. Thomas and the Roseborough family evidently hoped for a second pronouncement of a "cured" disability and a return to her function and labor. At her second admission in January 1864, the length of Violet's insanity was noted as "recurrent" and the cause, "unknown." She only resided at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum for five months – one month less than her first admission – before being discharged "cured" in October 1864. At this point, Violet as an enslaved woman disappears from the record. If she made it to emancipation or the end of the U.S. Civil War, we cannot immediately tell. She may have taken a different surname or had her first name spelled differently or even totally changed, but she does not readily appear in subsequent censuses of the Fairfield County, South Carolina. Regardless, Violet has yet to reemerge in the record after her discharge from the state institution. Her two stays at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum adds to our

⁶⁴ National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, online <<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>>, acquired 2007.

⁶⁵ National Park Service, "Confederate South Carolina Troops: 6th Regiment, South Carolina Cavalry (Aiken's Partisan Rangers) (1st Partisan Rangers)," accessed January 1, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-battle-units-detail.htm?battleUnitCode=CSC0006RC> .

understanding of her otherwise elusive life – and the complex lives of enslaved disabled people, particularly enslaved young black women.⁶⁶

Violet's two admissions as an enslaved black woman reveal the complicated nature of the state lunatic asylum in transition: she was committed by a white enslaver for his purposes and not her own concerns. The concept of consent is a confusing one when we consider mental disability: can a mentally ill person, especially one experiencing throes of madness, consent to treatment and cure at a state institution with medical doctors? The question grows more complicated when we consider issues of slavery and dependency in the 1860s. As Marie Jenkins Schwartz explains in her work about gynecological medicine and enslaved African-American women, "The common assumption was that black enslaved women existed for the benefit of a white ruling class. Doctors were concerned for their patients, but their concern was constrained by their support for slavery and their belief that a black woman's destiny was to serve her owner."⁶⁷ Lack of consent may have been the experience of all or most the enslaved people admitted to state lunatic asylums, but it could also be true for some white women whose spouses, parents, or children wanted something from them rather than for them. In Violet's case, her consent is questionable and unknowable. As Schwartz noted about antebellum gynecological surgery, "enslaved women had little choice but to submit to the surgical procedures recommended by doctors and approved by owners," and enslaved black women like Violet Roseborough similarly had little choice in her dual admissions to the state lunatic asylum as well.⁶⁸ However, the consent of all patients – black, white, male, female, old,

⁶⁶ Violet Roseborough, #1191 and #1386, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

⁶⁷ Maria Jenkins Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave: Motherhood and Medicine in the Antebellum South* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010), 228.

⁶⁸ Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave*, 232.

young – at U.S. Southern state lunatic asylum cannot be ascertained and should not be assumed. Scholars should also not assume that asylum physicians and staff willingly accepted all kinds of disabled people into their institutions, including children, women, and the enslaved. Families, employers and enslavers, local law and order, or the state government had to invest considerable time, effort, and money to commit mentally ill or disabled people to the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums during the 1860s. The vast diversity among admitted asylum patients reveals a strikingly wide variation of experiences and conditions of consent, disability, life, and death.

The following study ultimately concerns only those admitted to the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums in the 1860s as well as their families. Unfortunately, we have not yet been able to thoroughly study the many mentally ill and disabled people who existed throughout the U.S. South in this era who never entered its few state lunatic asylums. These many unknown people are even more disadvantaged in terms of record-keeping and histories told on their behalf. Those who left little behind include mentally ill slaves and freedpeople of both sexes as well as poor and wealthy white men, women, and children. Although their many stories are vital to understanding of the nineteenth century, we must first start with U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums, such as the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums, particularly those undergoing great transformation in the 1860s. By doing so, we can tell a distinct and essential story about a subpopulation of the mentally ill and the disabled, their families, and U.S. Southern society in transition.

With this recent content being the first chapter, the second chapter of *If He Should Die* delves into blood-related patients at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums. These patients were found through amassing the 1410 admissions at the two

institutions and discovering relatives admitted across years and decades. The significant impact of a mental health crisis in a family was only compounded and worsened by the multiple admissions of related loved ones in the same family. The patients in this chapter include Christian and Anne E. Rumph, a father and daughter pair; Mary and Rhoda Narcissa Bobo, sisters; five members of the Gully family, all intellectually disabled; and three men of the Middleton family of South Carolina, two of which were lifelong residents of private asylums after their brief encounters with the state lunatic asylum.

The third chapter focuses on the U.S. Civil War and its impact on individuals and their families who were subsequently sent to either the Georgia or South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. In three subsections, the chapter investigates three women traumatized by secession, disease, and death; two disabled doctors, one of whom lost his life and career to typhoid fever, and the other who faced relatively little consequence for his lifelong mental disorder; and two veterans, disabled by war, whose lives intersected with the state lunatic asylum and the federal government pension system.

The fourth chapter uncovers the few enslaved people admitted to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. While Georgia did not allow the admission of slaves, South Carolina permitted less a dozen during the U.S. Civil War era, especially its initial years. These admissions were highly gendered, primarily being young enslaved women of color who were admitted by wealthy male enslavers from the cities of Charleston and Columbia. The discussed cases are those of Tenah, whose enslaver was Williams Middleton, a signer of the South Carolina secession; Martha and Mary Eason, two women, one an enslaved black woman and the other a free white woman, whose commitments were paid by the same white man during a time of war and chaos; and Henry, whose enslaver was

Charles Logan, a notorious interstate slave trader whose twentieth century legacy rarely suggests his nineteenth century claim to fame and wealth.

The fifth chapter illuminates the places in the U.S. South that violence ran rampant: the family household. The diversity of violent patients emphasizes that 1860s U.S. Southern violence had no special gender or class, but the ways in which white women and white men were understood as violent beings differed tremendously, even more so when considering the privileges of wealth and slaveholding. The chapter begins with a shocking murder committed by Peter Murphy, an Irish immigrant in Charleston, who murdered his blind and physically ill neighbor. Other cases include those of Jesse M. Vason, Isaac Rowdon, and James Henry Colclough, three white plantation owners and enslavers, who terrorized their own family as well as the enslaved African-Americans who labored for them. In contrast, several patient stories of puerperal violence show that gender, sex, and sexuality played key roles in understanding family violence, such as in the cases of Temperance Aven Curtis, Elizabeth Pardue, Permelia Wilson, Sophronia O. Horne, and Fannie Huguley. Finally, the life and death of Andrew Jackson Killian reveals suicide as self-violence in the U.S. South in the mid-nineteenth century.

The sixth chapter discusses the role that extreme sex and sexuality played in the mental health and admissions of several patients at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums. The sexually deviant behavior ranged from puerperal instability to sexual assaulting family members to alleged nymphomania. The sexual and physical expectations of motherhood articulated themselves poorly in the minds and behavior of Matilda Mitcham and Helena Mensing, both of whom acted inappropriately, often violently, during and after pregnancy. In contrast, the unwanted sexually violent behavior

expressed towards family members led to the commitments of Charles Kilgore and Julius J. Hollemon, two young white men whose families could not contain them at home. Finally, Eva Fernandez was one of the strikingly few young women admitted for excessive female sexuality. Her brief appearance at the state lunatic asylum and subsequent discharge reveals that, unlike young men such as Charles and Julius, women could more easily escape and survive the stigma of sexual misbehavior.

The seventh chapter covers the earliest admissions of people of color at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums after emancipation from 1866 to 1869. These commitments typically came at the behest of a local, state, or federal Reconstruction authority, although some people of color were admitted by their loved ones. The three selected cases for the seventh chapter demonstrate the wide range of patients of color admitted during these few years in the late 1860s. The first patient, Lewis Griffin, was a formerly enslaved young man who the Freedmen's Bureau labeled insane and sent away to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum from a Freedmen's Bureau Hospital after he escaped authorities, stole a horse, and suffered a non-fatal gunshot wound. His family does not feature in his story, revealing how disassociated many institutions saw freedpeople in their earliest years of freedom. The second patient, Mourning Flournoy, displays a distinctive story: one of deep interpersonal kinship networks sustained during and after slavery. Mourning's brother, Daniel Broomfield, became quite successful after emancipation, and, although Mourning did not do as well due to her mental instability, their family story reveals a complex experience for people of color in Reconstruction. Finally, the third patient, James C. Holloway, stands unique as a free person of color admitted to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum as at least a third generation free person

of color residing in the Charleston, South Carolina area. The Holloway family, well before the end of slavery, had thrived in the deep U.S. South, building extensive networks among free people of color and white people alike. Furthermore, in a time period where racial bias included gradients of skin color as well family reputation, the Holloway family enslaved darker-skinned people of color to force their labor in antebellum Charleston. The surprising story of the Holloway family is made all the more complicated by the late 1860s admission of James C. Holloway to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, who the institution noted was “of mixed blood but never has been a slave.” The inclusion of James in this closing chapter of *If He Should Die* demonstrates that our twenty-first century expectations of the U.S. South and its state lunatic asylums should be challenged with unusual and true stories of the plight of patients and their families.

CHAPTER 2

Blood

Grass, soil, snow, stone, asphalt: blood has spilled over many diverse surfaces through human history. Blood has poured through the veins of every perpetrator and victim of genocide. Blood has pumped the hearts of fifteenth-century kings and twenty-first century presidents, eighteenth-century revolutionaries and sixth-century soldiers, the earliest philosophers and the most recent rebels. Blood ties and has tied humanity together in countless ways. It serves as that which brings humans into the world, and it often marks the end of human life. Blood-connected people have constituted tribes and clans, battalions and communes, census units and genealogical legacies. The basic genetic testing invented in the 1970s has transformed into the twenty-first century capitalistic feast of D.N.A. diagnostics where anyone for a small sum can discover the scientific structures deeply embedded in their blood. Few could have imagined such marvels in nineteenth century America, though some may have wanted validation or refutation of familial bonds and obligations. Instead, nineteenth century Americans better understood blood as something that united families and something which was dashed across the earth in acts of violence, desperation, and war.

The state lunatic asylums of Georgia and South Carolina witnessed families wandering the shadowy margins throughout the 1860s. Both institutions were initially designed to breathe life into patients, not deprive them of existence. Unfortunately, these original missions faded as patient populations spiraled out of control. Families began to

see the asylum less as a place to redeem their relative and more as a place to keep their loved one somewhere else besides the family home. A patient who may have found recovery in the antebellum period may not have been similarly rewarded in the late 1860s, much less so at the end of the nineteenth century. Yet families still sought medical intervention from the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums – and they did so repeatedly, often in one era for one relative and in the next for another family member. This chapter delves into these unusual stories: the blood ties that connected small subpopulations of patients. What follows are some of the lived experiences of related mentally ill and disabled people admitted to U.S. Southern lunatic asylums, including a parent-child pair, two sisters, four siblings, and a set of three cousins.

These are the stories of Christian and Anne E. Rumph: a suicidal father and disordered daughter, their dual admissions to the state lunatic asylum separated by decades. There are Mary Bobo Baker and Rhoda Narcissa Bobo, two sisters whose female bodies ruled their lives and sent them separately into the state institution. There is the Gully family, an assemblage of intellectually disabled children descended from street beggars. And there are the Middleton cousins, the three wealthy offspring of secessionists and rice kings. Each family's social situations shaped their experience with mental illness and disability. The many differences between the antebellum period and the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction meant dissimilar results for those entering the state lunatic asylums. In the 1860s, those with considerable wealth had markedly different options than those struggling and starving, especially when it came to treatment for severe disability. These are stories of sorts of familial suffering that we rarely encounter, but such lives and deaths provide a nuanced and tender view of the U.S. South in its

transition through the mid-nineteenth century. Through these varying accounts of violence, marriage, poverty, slavery, war, disability, and death, we see the world that many struggled for, with, and against.

The early records from the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums recall a time when physicians provided individual care and had not yet adopted an extensive bureaucratization of the medical process. The ledger book of South Carolina's state lunatic asylum reads incredibly plainly: the columns list only a few pieces of information. Most patients received an identification number, a first and last name, an admission date, marital status, "who supports," pay or pauper status, county of residence, and native of what U.S. state or foreign country. Although South Carolina continued the use of a lined and columned ledger book rather than Georgia's open blank pages, the information for South Carolina asylum patients became increasingly detailed as the decades advanced to the U.S. Civil War. By the 1860s, most patients were receiving more fundamental pieces of information, including sex/gender, age, length of insanity, cause of insanity, occupation, and supplementary notes. The transformation of record-keeping demonstrates the development of the state lunatic asylum and its view of patients: while once maintaining sparse records due to a low patient population, later periods saw an increase in information to better maintain clarity and knowledge. Another transition began slowly in 1866-1867 but then escalated out of control by the end of the nineteenth century after the increased acceptance of black and poor white patients in truly significant numbers. Although some patients obtained more information in their records, such as a new category of record called "Case Histories" which started official usage in the 1870s, these materials documented medical cases rather than struggling citizens. The decreasing

availability of personal details in asylum records meant that patients became less valued as suffering people and more as medicalized symptomatic cases.

Like Father, Like Daughter: *Christian Rumph and Anne E. Rumph*

The early transition from relatively little information to an advanced stage of record keeping can be seen in the distinct admissions of Christian and Anne E. Rumph, a father and daughter pair, whose separate commitments to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum came in wholly different decades. Christian arrived at Columbia, South Carolina in April 1834.⁶⁹ His daughter was committed twenty-seven years, three months, and twenty-one days later in July 1861.⁷⁰ Those nearly thirty years saw immense changes throughout the U.S. South, including the entrenchment of slavery in the harvesting of rice, cotton, and sugar. Planters who owned a dozen slaves in 1830 could have several hundred by 1860. These same men hotly engaged in war starting in the summer of 1861 to preserve their cultural and financial stake in human bondage. In Christian's case, his life was utterly transformed by the presence of slavery in Orangeburg, South Carolina, where his father had immigrated and resided in the late eighteenth century. Christian, like his father and brothers, was a large-scale planter who enslaved numerous Africans and African-Americans. He was one of the many sons of 'General' Jacob Rumph, an American Revolutionary War veteran, well known in South Carolina for his military confrontations with loyalists and British soldiers. Allegedly, Jacob was one of those "drove Bloody Bill Cunningham to his deeds of violence," the notorious traitor who massacred American

⁶⁹ Christian Rumph, #122, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

⁷⁰ Anne E. Rumph, #1252, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

militiamen and civilians in the fall of 1781.⁷¹ The year before in 1780, the city of Charleston, South Carolina had fallen to the British, and “bold spirits arose every where to assert their liberties.” Jacob Rumph became “the commander of a troop of cavalry, raised in his neighborhood to protect themselves and their families, but who lost no occasion of aiding their friends or annoying their enemies.” In 1841, a Southern newspaper praised Jacob as “a man of prodigious size and strength, of great courage and coolness in the hour of danger” and described his military maneuvers against British soldiers and loyalists on rural Carolinian roads.⁷² Jacob Rumph remained in the area while he participated in the military conflict, and thus both defended and resided with his family in the early 1780s. After the war’s conclusion, Jacob and his wife welcomed Christian into the newly defended nation in February 1786; he was their fifth child, a postwar baby produced when his father finished his service for the new United States against Great Britain.⁷³

Christian was born perfectly in time to be militarily available for the War of 1812: during the conflict, he served in Rutledge’s 3rd Regiment South Carolina State Troops as a private infantryman. His superior officer, Lieutenant Colonel John Rutledge Jr., was the son of South Carolina’s first governor, and he, too, had large infantry boots to fill. Rutledge’s 3rd also saw the service of Charles Drayton II, owner of Drayton Hall in Charleston, South Carolina, who acted as a surgeon for the military unit.⁷⁴ All three of these men served knowing their father’s military actions and significance in the

⁷¹ Jeannette Holland Austin, *The Georgia Frontier, Volume 2* (Baltimore, Maryland: Clearfield Company, 2005), 292.

⁷² “The Death of Parker: A Tale of the Revolution,” *The Weekly Standard* (Raleigh, North Carolina), May 19, 1841, page 1.

⁷³ Austin, 293.

⁷⁴ National Archives and Records Administration. *Index to the Compiled Military Service Records for the Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the War of 1812*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. M602, 234 rolls.

Revolutionary War. Currently, we have no surviving records – letters or otherwise – about Christian’s personal experiences serving in the 3rd Regiment South Carolina during the War of 1812. However, he fought alongside prominent South Carolinians and protected home and country. Like most of his companions, Christian survived the war as well as its rampant diseases to create a family in a rapidly changing South Carolina during the early nineteenth century.

Several years after the War of 1812, Christian married Margaret Maria Miller Rumph, a woman ten years younger than him, and they soon produced a number of children, although several did not survive childhood.⁷⁵ Christian’s only son, his namesake, was born in August 1823 but died in October 1834 after just having made his eleventh year. His son’s gravestone mournfully proclaims: “Taken from the fond solicitude of an affectionate mother in early life, but not before he learned to pray.” The phrasing of “solicitude of an affectionate mother” may sound foreign to modern readers, but these words were occasionally used in nineteenth century literature. An 1881 review of early nineteenth century letters between family members describes “the mother was unwearied in her affectionate solicitude – solicitude for the eternal as well as temporal interests of her darling child.”⁷⁶ Using this interpretation of Christian’s small gravestone, his mother Margaret appears desperate to care for her child – in life and in death. Her son’s italicized epigraph further makes a declaration, marked in quotation marks, as if the young Christian was speaking to Margaret from beyond the grave: “Weep not for me my mother. To die is gain.” The second part of this epigraph originates in the King James

⁷⁵ 1830; Census Place: *Orangeburg, South Carolina*; Series: *M19*; Roll: *173*; Page: *30*; Family History Library Film: *0022507*.

⁷⁶ James Knowles, editor, “Alexander Carlyle to Thomas Carlyle,” *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, Volume 10 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, & Company, 1881), 22.

Bible and references Philippians 1:21 - “To live is Christ, and to die is gain” – which promises that death permits a profound union with Jesus Christ. Christian’s young death was articulated as deeply affecting Margaret and her feelings of self and motherhood.⁷⁷

Yet one wonders, reading these inscribed lines of motherhood, what was the experience of Christian’s father in his namesake’s death? The answer is a sorrowful one: Christian Rumph had unexpectedly died four months before his son. Only a few feet from his grave would so soon be placed another stone memorial, that for his young child. Yet Christian had not passed away from the rapid rush of disease in the early nineteenth century nor in a work-related accident at his plantation. Instead, on June 10, 1834, Christian completed a suicide attempt – at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum – miles and miles away from his homestead in Orangeburg. He committed suicide at the age of forty-eight. The details of Christian’s suicide are unknown, but his sudden death at a fairly young age at the state lunatic asylum suggests that his family may have known of his troubles and even feared the worst for him before his suicide. For Margaret, she had little time to grieve her husband’s death, because her son was clearly close to passing from the world as well. Much like Christian’s suicide, the details of their son’s death are unknown, although one could estimate that his swift death may have been due to disease or accident. With Christian’s suicide in June, when her small son died of an unknown cause in October 1834, Margaret was already a young widow. In a linguistic failure that American English has yet to solve, there is no word for a mother who has lost a child.

The state lunatic asylum may not seem to feature vitally in the Rumph narrative, but the elder Christian’s death in 1834 is highly associated with the South Carolina Lunatic

⁷⁷ Christian H. H. Rumph (1823-1834) is buried at the Rumph Cemetery in Saint Matthews, Calhoun County, South Carolina. This is now on private property, and permission must be granted before accessing the cemetery.

Asylum, although his gravestone does not suggest its presence. According to the South Carolina Lunatic admission ledger-book, Christian was committed on April 5, 1834 for unstated reasons. The ambiguity around his admission can be frustrating, but wild guesses should not be made about what caused Christian and his family to take the significant step of institutionalization. Christian was Patient Number 122, as the state lunatic asylum had only been open for five short years. The Rumph decision to institutionalize Christian was a serious and sincere one, as few families had turned to official commitment in the early era of the state lunatic asylum. Ultimately, Christian came to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum because he and his loved ones considered his behavior to be abnormal in some way, although they likely imagined his irregularity to only be temporary. The limited information included his admission reveals very little: Christian Rumph was a male married pay patient supported by his wife “Mrs. Rumph,” a resident of “Orangeburgh.” We have no evidence regarding his time or treatment at the asylum, but we do know that his residence there was short. Around two months after his admission, Christian committed suicide while still residing as a patient at the state lunatic asylum, which was described shortly in the admission ledger. His suicide was almost certainly related to the mental illness that prompted his institutional admission sixty-seven days earlier. However, even this suggestion can only be a hypothesis. The only record at the state lunatic asylum comes from a concise supplementary note on Christian Rumph’s admission line: “Committed suicide June 10, 1834.” We do not know the method of his suicide, whether it was rope, razor, gun, or other means. Outside of the asylum materials, there are no corroborating records about his death being a suicide.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Christian Rumph, #122, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

In a moment lost to time, Christian's body was somehow moved from Columbia to Orangeburg after his completed suicide. His family erected a thin yet stunning gravestone for him – and, according to the memorial, to mark the physical presence of his “mortal remains.” The marker declared him “a devout Christian, an affectionate Husband & Father, a benevolent friend & kind neighbor.” Christian gained another nuanced piece of high praise: “& while health lasted, a zealous & useful minister of the gospel.” He had apparently been a practicing reverend in his local community in the early nineteenth century. However, the precise nature of his health – physical or mental – is left ambiguous, but the grave's commentary suggests that his religious occupation had been interrupted by something occurring internally within him, not outside of him. The final part of his epigraph, italicized, comes from Revelation 14:13 in the King James Bible: “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” Much like Christian's young son who would die a few months later, his epigraph suggests that religious faith would reward him in death when he joined Jesus Christ. Somehow the sin of suicide did not damn Christian Rumph, at least according to what was written on his gravestone and was presented to his family who visited him in death.⁷⁹

Christian's widow Margaret Maria Miller Rumph – also known as Margaret M. M. Rumph – suffered through her husband's mental breakdown, his admission to the state lunatic asylum, his suicide at a distant location, his body's return and burial at the family cemetery, and, shortly after, the death of her only son and the namesake of her recently deceased husband. In 1840, Margaret can be found on the Orange Parish, Orangeburg

⁷⁹ Reverend Christian Rumph (1786-1834) is buried at the Rumph Cemetery in Saint Matthews, Calhoun County, South Carolina. This is now on private property, and permission must be granted before accessing the cemetery.

census living with her three daughters and forty-eight slaves. These three daughters were Caroline around age eighteen; Elizabeth, around age fourteen; and Anne, around age ten. Margaret inherited many enslaved African-American laborers after Christian's death: these included twenty-four children under age ten; nine children between ten and twenty-three; thirteen adults between ages twenty-four and fifty-four; and two women older than fifty-five. Only the fifteen adults were marked as employed in agriculture.⁸⁰ Although Margaret held forty-eight enslaved African-Americans in 1840, Christian claimed thirty-two in the 1830 U.S. Federal Census.⁸¹ Most of the increase in enslaved people seems to be new children: only twelve were ten years or younger in 1830, but there were twenty-four enslaved children in the 1840 U.S. Federal Census. This trend only continued in the following two slave censuses: from thirty-two enslaved people in 1830 to forty-eight in 1840 to fifty-seven in 1850 to sixty-three in 1860.⁸² Every census showed the natural increase of the enslaved Rumph laborers – more and more African-American children forced to work the fields as Margaret's own white daughters grew into women destined for marriage and motherhood.

Sometime in the early 1840s, Christian and Margaret's eldest daughter Caroline married a neighbor, James David Rumph, and the couple quickly produced five children over the next eleven years.⁸³ Their first daughter did not survive infancy, but the others

⁸⁰ Year: 1840; Census Place: *Orange Parish, Orangeburg, South Carolina*; Roll: 514; Page: 298; Image: 605; Family History Library Film: 0022510.

⁸¹ 1830; Census Place: *Orangeburg, South Carolina*; Series: M19; Roll: 173; Page: 30; Family History Library Film: 0022507.

⁸² United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. M432, 1,009 rolls.; United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

⁸³ Year: 1850; Census Place: *Between Santee and Edisto North of Belville Road, Orangeburg, South Carolina*; Roll: M432_857; Page: 302A; Image: 64.

seemed to do well during their childhood years.⁸⁴ But, widowed Margaret, already without one son, confronted loss again with the 1856 death of Caroline at age thirty-four. Caroline seems to have struggled in her final days, as indicated by her gravestone's epigraph which reassured her surviving, stricken family. In 1856, Margaret could walk by her dead husband, her dead son, and her dead grandson to the site of her dead daughter's burial and read her epigraph: "The pains of death are past. Labour and sorrow cease; and life's great warfare closed at last. Her soul is found in peace." But Margaret likely found little solace in her daughter's death, for soon she was challenged with the unusual reality of raising three grandchildren and supporting her two older unmarried daughters.⁸⁵

Christian and Margaret's youngest daughter, Anne, had been long disabled. According to her asylum admission in 1861, Anne had been insane for "16 years," the cause of which was "ill health." The institution alleged she was "33" and was single, identifying her as "Miss Anne E. Rumph."⁸⁶ The designation of "Miss" is a racialized one as well as gendered and classed. No African-American woman in the 1860s at either the Georgia or South Carolina Lunatic Asylum earned the prefix "Miss." In contrast, Anne was understood as a descendant of white war veterans and the daughter of a large slaveholder and successful planter widow, and so she was bestowed the title by the state lunatic asylum. Similarly, Margaret was named as "Mrs. M. M. Rumph," the middle "M" referring to her maiden name "Miller." Her "Mrs." is entirely due to her social status, and it insinuates differential treatment given to Anne during her time at the state institution.

⁸⁴ Caroline's unnamed infant daughter (August 8, 1842) is buried at the Rumph Cemetery in Saint Matthews, Calhoun County, South Carolina. This is now on private property, and permission must be granted before accessing the cemetery.

⁸⁵ Caroline Margaret Rumph (1822-1856) is buried at the Rumph Cemetery in Saint Matthews, Calhoun County, South Carolina. This is now on private property, and permission must be granted before accessing the cemetery.

⁸⁶ Anne E. Rumph, #1252, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

Although we cannot tell what happened with Anne while she resided at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, she was first committed on July 25, 1861 and remained until May 10 or May 29 in 1876 – nearly fifteen years of treatment at the institution. By 1876, Anne had lost the “Miss” prefix, likely because a different attendant wrote her discharge and perhaps times had changed since the antebellum era in terms of etiquette. In a highly unusual marker, Anne was noted as being “discharged unimproved” at “age 48.” The annotation “unimproved” is a surprising detailed in the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum records from this period; the word denotes that Anne was not cured of her mental illness and was still showing symptoms of her disability but left the asylum regardless.⁸⁷

In those fifteen years at the state lunatic asylum, through the U.S. Civil War and almost all of Reconstruction, Anne’s life remains hidden away, but some of Margaret’s experiences in rural South Carolina can be restored. On the eve of war, Margaret was a sixty-three-year-old widow maintaining a vast plantation; her wealth amounted to \$14,000 in real estate and a striking \$68,000 in personal estate, which included sixty-three enslaved black laborers.⁸⁸ She raised livestock of all kinds from cattle to swine to sheep; she primarily planted corn and rice, though she dabbled in a few other crops.⁸⁹ If a scholar only studies Margaret’s census records, she appears remarkably successful, but asylum records and gravestones add further nuance her life history. In 1860, her two surviving daughters, Elizabeth and Ann, were in their early thirties, and Caroline’s three

⁸⁷ Anne E. Rumph, Discharged on 1876-05-10, SCSHI Admissions and Discharges, 1860-1964.

⁸⁸ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Orangeburg, Orangeburg, South Carolina*; Roll: M653_1224; Page: 353; Family History Library Film: 805224; United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

⁸⁹ Census Year: 1860; Census Place: *Orangeburg District, Orangeburg, South Carolina*; Archive Collection Number: AD262; Roll: 4; Page: 31; Line: 27; Schedule Type: *Agriculture*.

orphan children, ages nine, seven, and five, lived with her.⁹⁰ The war took its toll on Margaret Rumph, but in ways that we cannot easily describe. She still had considerable land in 1868, as indicated by a neighboring plantation land sale, but her life had fundamentally changed with emancipation.⁹¹ Her \$68,000 invested in human slaves was now gone, and her \$14,000 in real estate now meant something quite different using paid labor. Her daughter Anne resided at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum throughout the war, and it is unclear what Margaret experienced with her three grandchildren and her remaining daughter Elizabeth during these unstable years of conflict.

Yet Margaret only struggled with these challenges for a few years: in November 1869, she passed away from “paralysis,” her age marked as “73” and her occupation listed as “farmer.”⁹² Her gravestone was erected beside those of her deceased husband and offspring on private Rumph land. Whoever remained in the family inscribed a few brisk words about her: “Mrs. Margaret Maria Rumph, Wife of Rev. Christian H. Rumph, Died November 15th, 1869. Age 73 Years, 3 Mo.s. and 2 Days.” Her italicized epigraph originates from the King James Biblical Revelation 22:5: “And there shall be no night there...” which references Jesus Christ as the source of all light or Light for those who join God in eternity.⁹³ Margaret had encountered many dark days since her marriage to Christian Rumph, including the death of infants and children, her husband’s breakdown and suicide, the unimagined labors of plantation management and raising grandchildren,

⁹⁰ Year: 1860; Census Place: Orangeburg, Orangeburg, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1224; Page: 353; Family History Library Film: 805224.

⁹¹ “Commissioner’s Sales: State of South Carolina, Orangeburg District,” *The Orangeburg News* (Orangeburg, South Carolina), 02 May 1868, page 10.

⁹² South Carolina Department of Archives and History; Columbia, South Carolina; *U.S. Census Mortality Schedules, South Carolina, 1850-1880*; Archive Roll Number: 2; Census Year: 1869; Census Place: Cow Castle, Orangeburg, South Carolina; Page: 1.

⁹³ Margaret Maria Miller Rumph (1796-1869) is buried at the Rumph Cemetery in Saint Matthews, Calhoun County, South Carolina. This is now on private property, and permission must be granted before accessing the cemetery.

and the lifelong mental illness of her daughter, Anne. The constant religious faith of the Rumph family through their dark experiences may have provided comfort to those who visited the private cemetery, but death and disability had haunted the family since 1834 and would not cease until the turn of the twentieth century.

When Anne was discharged in 1876, she appears to have returned to Orangeburg to live with her sister, Elizabeth, who in her late age, had married a older man with the notorious name of Andrew Jackson. Elizabeth was around fifty years old by the 1880 U.S. Federal Census, and Anne was about forty-four. Marked as a single “sis in law” living “at home,” Anne also earned a small slash in the column for “Insane.” Evidently, the “unimproved” discharge meant that Anne was not considered cured, sane, or able. Her original “16 years” of insanity was now a life-long marker of disability.⁹⁴ She lived with Elizabeth, her husband, and a myriad of relatives in Orangeburg until her death in February 1894.⁹⁵ However, the truth about Anne’s final years can only be found through tireless and strange exploration of physical records in rural South Carolina. The peculiar search for Anne E. Rumph’s grave was made nearly impossible even with the technological advances of the twenty-first century. The Rumph family cemetery, once on Rumph plantation land, has now transferred into private ownership and has turned into wilderness; it can only vaguely be found on modern maps. However, through virtual messages and physical adventures, the family cemetery eventually emerged in person: only to reveal Anne was not buried on there with the rest of the Rumphs. An initial assumption that Anne had returned to the state lunatic asylum and was buried in the city

⁹⁴ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Goodland, Orangeburg, South Carolina*; Roll: 1237; Family History Film: 1255237; Page: 150D; Enumeration District: 142.

⁹⁵ Anne E. Rumph (1834-1894) is buried at Target United Methodist Church Cemetery in Holly Hill, Orangeburg County, South Carolina beside her sister, Elizabeth Mary Rumph Jackson (1834-1899).

seemed challenged by her “unimproved” discharge and her long residence with her sister-in-law in Orangeburg for two decades. The missing 1890 U.S. Federal Census could have provided further detail, but its blazing destruction in 1921 meant that Anne’s final fate could be only found in skeleton and stone.⁹⁶

A subsequent search found her sister Elizabeth Rumph Jackson buried at Target United Methodist Church in Holy Hill, Orangeburg County. Her tall grave is elegantly curved and sits on a solid foundation atop white sand and frail grass. Target Methodist Church today is a pleasant white-painted church surrounded by verdant woods. Founded around 1800, the church is “one of the oldest Methodist congregations in this part of the state,” and has been burying parishioners since the 1820s.⁹⁷ According to her gravestone, Elizabeth was born on June 21, 1834 and died February 21, 1899 – just a few months before the dawn of the twentieth century. The reason for her burial far from the Rumph family cemetery resides freely on her grave: “She was a member of the M.E. Church for 50 years.” Combined with the inscribed comment that her memorial was “erected by her affectionate husband,” Elizabeth earned the praise: “An affectionate wife, kind mother who left many to mourn their loss, which is her gain.” A subsequent, demure reference to religious faith – “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord” – declares that Elizabeth ended her life like many white women in the late nineteenth century South Carolina

⁹⁶ See Kellee Blake, “First in the Path of the Fireman: The Fate of the 1890 Population Census,” *Prologue* (Spring 1996).

⁹⁷ The Target Methodist Church at 705 Target Road, Holy Hill, South Carolina in Orangeburg County has a two-sided historical marker erected by the Target Methodist Church congregation in 2010. It reads: “This church, founded about 1800, is one of the oldest Methodist congregations in this part of the state. It takes its name from Target Branch, a nearby tributary of Four Holes Swamp. The name ‘Target’ is thought to be a corruption of the “tar gates” along the edges of the swamp, where tar, turpentine, and timber were harvested. It held its first services in a brush arbor, with a sycamore stump for a pulpit. Target Methodist Church was one of several area congregations long served by circuit riders, on the Cypress Circuit 1810-1855, then on the Providence Circuit 1855-1916. Its first permanent church, a log building, was rebuilt as a frame sanctuary in 1830. A second frame church built in 1873 was replaced by the present sanctuary in 1920. The cemetery here includes graves dating as early as 1820.”

countryside. Yet one wonders where is her sister – a life-long mentally ill woman without husband or child? Was Anne at the state lunatic asylum? Could she be buried at Target Methodist? Or was she lost once again?⁹⁸

Tragically, Anne E. Rumph can be easily overlooked – both in paper documents and in stone. She was buried beside her sister Elizabeth at Target Methodist, having died five years prior to her in February 1894. However, through time and utter neglect, her gravestone, originally in the style of her sister's, has cracked in half – directly through her name. Now partially buried in fine white-gray soil, Anne's grave has no epigraph: no Biblical quotation from Revelation, no sweet comment about her faith and the Lord, and no praise for her role as a mother or wife, for she was neither. Instead, Anne earned only the plain descriptor that paralleled her sister's stone: "A member of the Methodist Church for 50 years." Lacking a birth date, she only earned the note: "Died February 3, 1894. Age 60 Years." The edge of her grave cuts diagonally through her name, causing it to appear as "ANNE RU." Due to this terrible mauling, transcriptions and databases have misidentified Anne and not awarded her the proper Rumph surname. Although this present scholarly work has corrected some of these mistakes, Anne's gravestone currently lays cracked into three jagged pieces, and its exposed edges bake in the hot Southern sun. In the long summer, diminutive yellow and black wasps nest under her stone in the shadow of disability and death.⁹⁹

Separated by sixty years, Anne's death in 1894 parallels her father's suicide in 1834 decades earlier at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. Both father and daughter were

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Mary Rumph Jackson (1834-1899) is buried by her sister at Target United Methodist Church Cemetery in Holy Hill, Orangeburg County, South Carolina. It is unknown where her husband Andrew J. Jackson is buried.

⁹⁹ As of Spring 2017, Anne E. Rumph's gravestone is still broken. The author of this work is currently attempting to repair her gravestone.

defeated by mental illness in unusual ways. Christian did not die in a way approved by his faith, yet he was buried at home with family, his reverend title, and the Bible on his marker. Years later, his daughter Anne stayed much longer at the state lunatic asylum but escaped to normal society for nearly two decades after her commitment. Her life outside the asylum may not have been rewarding: she never married nor produced children, and she never appears to have lived alone or worked independently. The Rumph family had originated with American Revolutionary war heroes but dissolved through the nineteenth century as mental illness and death took dual toll on its members. Christian only stayed for two months at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, but his existence is better understood by his brief time there. His unexpected admission to the state lunatic asylum suggests a distressed family and a desperate hope for a cure, though they found something much worse instead. Thirty years later, when his daughter Anne entered to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum on the eve of the U.S. Civil War, she walked into a transformed asylum. A patient could be lost at the institution now, and her long residence there for fifteen years reveals the asylum's continued difficulty with medical treatment and cure. Neither Christian nor Anne found what they wanted – or even what their family wanted – in the state lunatic asylum. Instead, both suffered through their mental illness, the father ending his struggles with suicide and the daughter only finding solace in her sister.

However, their graves demonstrate that mentally ill people – whether the illness was temporary or prolonged – in rural nineteenth century South Carolina found some comfort within their family. Although we cannot imagine the distress of Margaret Rumph, whose reverend husband killed himself, whose children died early, whose grandchildren

suffered, whose daughter was chronically mentally ill, we can accept that these experiences are not all that rare or unusual for certain U.S. Southerners. Instead, the account of the Rumph family reveals something true about the nineteenth century that we may not want to admit if we only nostalgically envision the U.S. South. Its darkness was profound, and that family could only do so much to save a loved one from sorrow.

Had a Sister in the Asylum: Mary Bobo Baker and Rhoda Narcissa Bobo

Mental and physical suffering was the dual experience of Mary E. Bobo Baker and her sister Rhoda Narcissa Bobo, both of Floyd County, Georgia, during the 1860s. Both women entered the Georgia Lunatic Asylum: Mary was twice admitted, once in 1861 and again in 1863, and Rhoda was admitted in 1867. In Rhoda's post-war admission, the asylum noted a Bobo family inheritance: Rhoda "is doubtless the subject of hereditary predisposition to insanity. Had a sister (Mrs. Mary Baker) in the Asylum twice. She is now well at home."¹⁰⁰ Although the sisters never resided at the state lunatic asylum at the same time, the institution recognized their familial connection, and by Rhoda's admission, they had begun arguing for a hereditary predisposition for both. Although it is unclear if the sisters had a genetic predisposition to mental illness, Mary and Rhoda both suffered considerably during the 1860s. The asylum believed motherhood had much to do with Mary's insanity, asserting that "about four weeks at the birth of [her second] child she was very evidently insane." Her mind again became "disordered... about four weeks after the birth of her last [third] child." Mary's post-partum insanity was treated and clearly understood as related to childbirth.¹⁰¹ In contrast,

¹⁰⁰ Narcissa Bobo, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 193.

¹⁰¹ Mary E. Baker, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 21.

her sister Rhoda, a single woman when admitted in 1867, did not have pregnancy attributed to her mental state, but the male physicians at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum still blamed her female sex. Undoubtedly based on Bobo family observations of the incident, the medical record claimed: “Cause supposed overexertion at a fire when menstruating by which she was seriously exhausted.”¹⁰² While modern readers might read such a diagnosis with raised brow, Rhoda’s own family believed that this combination of events had something to do with her sudden change in behavior. Her menstruation had become a medicalized feature of her mental health, just as Mary’s pregnancy and childbirth was viewed as key to her mental health history and described as the cause of her current insanity. Wisps of responsibility haunt the female bodies of the Bobo sisters: pregnancy and menstruation held considerable weight in their admissions to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. Notably, as we will see later in this chapter, young men exhibiting inappropriate sexual behavior did not have their male sex or bodies so explicitly blamed. However, similar to how menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth were uniquely female causes of insanity, “masturbation” seems to have primarily affected male patients, in the familial and medical understanding of bodies and minds in the mid-nineteenth century.

The Bobo sisters were parallel white women of the U.S. South: they both began to become erratically violent in their early twenties at the family home, fighting family members and destroying “anything in... reach.” After beginning showing symptoms of “disordered mind,” both Mary and Rhoda remained at home for over a year. In January 1860, Mary “was very evidently insane” after the birth of her second child but was treated locally by “Doctor W of Rome” and her own father, Willis Bobo, who “bled her

¹⁰² Narcissa Bobo, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 193.

two or three times” and “freely purged” her for “about four or five months.”¹⁰³ Around September 1865, her sister Rhoda began showing symptoms of insanity: she was “liable to sudden violent excitement and will fight furiously.” She also threw “her clothes in the fire” and made “every effort in her power to escape”; her medical record noted that she “runs very rapidly.”¹⁰⁴ Although the two sisters were separated by several years in age, and the onset of their mental illness were divided by war, both Mary and Rhoda were in their early twenties when they became violent and erratic. In all three admissions (two for Mary and one for Rhoda), their point of contact was their father, Willis Bobo, of Rome, Georgia. These shared relationships reveal an intimate and previously undiscovered space where a father watched his daughters struggle in the bloom of life, as the broader world fought over slavery and bled across the nation.

Willis Bobo was born in May 1813, and he married at age twenty-four to Sarah Cunningham in Floyd County, Georgia, where the pair would live most of their lives.¹⁰⁵ By the 1850 U.S Federal Census, Willis was thirty six, his wife was thirty-one, and together they could boast eight living children born over the last thirteen years: Andrew (b. 1838), Mary (b. 1839), Sarah (b. 1840), Emila (b. 1841), Rhoda (b. 1843), Martha (b. 1845), Margaret (b. 1846), and Josephine (b. 1847).¹⁰⁶ He also claimed four enslaved African-Americans: a twenty-six-year-old woman and her three children, ages six, four, and two.¹⁰⁷ He worked as a farmer, declaring ownership of \$800 in real estate.¹⁰⁸ Within ten years, Willis had increased his prosperity: he recorded \$3600 in real estate and \$6000

¹⁰³ Mary E. Baker, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 21.

¹⁰⁴ Narcissa Bobo, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 193.

¹⁰⁵ Dodd, Jordan, comp.. *Georgia Marriages to 1850*. Electronic transcription of marriage records held by the individual counties in Georgia.

¹⁰⁶ Year: 1850; Census Place: *Subdivision 30, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: *M432_69*; Page: *113A*; Image: 233.

¹⁰⁷ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. M432, 1,009 rolls.

¹⁰⁸ Year: 1850; Census Place: *Subdivision 30, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: *M432_69*; Page: *113A*; Image: 233.

in personal estate, much of which was in human slaves.¹⁰⁹ Yet his wife Sarah died in 1852, leaving him with nine children to tend, including what appears to be her very last son, David, who was born the same year of her death.¹¹⁰ By 1860, only one of his children had left his house to create her own: his oldest daughter Mary, who married Benjamin W. Baker in November 1857.¹¹¹

On the eve of the U.S. Civil War, Willis had managed to amass eight human slaves, including what appears to be the same woman and at least her oldest son from the 1850 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedule. He had built two buildings for his enslaved workers, adding to the overall value of his real estate in Floyd County.¹¹² As he looked around his small kingdom, Willis accepted incredible responsibility, but he at least could be relieved that his oldest daughter Mary had married to a man with inheritance and was already producing progeny for him. He also could still visit her; only a few miles separated Willis Bobo's house from the farmland of John Baker, Mary's father-in-law, where Mary and her new husband resided.¹¹³

Yet for the Bobo family and the newly formed Baker family, things were already greatly unsettled before the U.S. Civil War. Mary delivered her first child, a daughter named Amanda, later called "Lela," without great tumult in 1858. However, she struggled in December 1859 with the birth of her second child, a son, Andrew. Her family noticed within the month that she "was very evidently insane," though no surviving record describes what indicated so clearly that she was mentally unwell. By

¹⁰⁹ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Barkers, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: *M653_121*; Page: 251; Family History Library Film: 803121.

¹¹⁰ Sarah Cunningham Bobo is buried in Bobo Cemetery in Floyd County, Georgia.

¹¹¹ County Marriage Records, 1828–1978. The Georgia Archives, Morrow, Georgia.

¹¹² United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

¹¹³ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Cave Spring, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: *M653_121*; Page: 362; Family History Library Film: 803121.

January 1860, local medical intervention was called upon, and her father Willis got involved, as it was he who “bled her two or three times.” Physicians and her father intervened over the next few months after which “she appeared to be well,” and with that, her husband Benjamin approached her again as wife and mother. As a consequence of her marital duties and Benjamin’s interest in her, she “subsequently became pregnant and remained well until about four weeks after the birth of her last child which occurred in February 1861.” Mary Baker’s violence and erratic behavior after childbirth did not deter or cease sexual intercourse. The name and sex of this third child is currently unknown, and her admission entry suggests that she or he died as an infant: Mary “has had three children, the youngest born last February, lived about three weeks.” By April 1861, Mary Baker had lost her latest child, and she was again violent, suicidal, and unpredictable.¹¹⁴

Local physicians intervened once more with Mary: “In this last occasion she has been under the care of Doctor Culbertson of Floyd County.” The limited provided information about her doctor means only an educated guess to his identity. He most likely was Dr. Wade Culbertson, a physician who in resided and worked nearby the Bobo and Baker family in Cave Spring, Floyd County. He claimed \$5000 in real estate and \$10,000 in personal estate, mostly in the form of fifteen enslaved African-Americans, eleven of whom were under the age of ten.¹¹⁵ Through the war, Wade Culbertson continued his work locally as a physician and managed to maintain \$800 in real estate and \$700 in real estate by 1870.¹¹⁶ He escaped military service due to “partial deafness.” After surviving the war, Wade was listed on the University of Georgia alumni register while his fellow

¹¹⁴ Mary E. Baker, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 21.

¹¹⁵ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Cave Spring, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: *M653_121*; Page: 350; Family History Library Film: 803121.

¹¹⁶ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Subdivision 141, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_149*; Page: 250B; Image: 201897; Family History Library Film: 545648.

classmates were marked “died in service,” “killed in battle,” and officers in the Confederate army.¹¹⁷ When he encountered the Bobo-Baker family in the turbulent spring of 1861, Wade Culbertson asserted that Mary was “the subject of uterine disease.” By 1890, many physicians had enough of the over-diagnosis of uterine disease, suggesting that doctors “always bear in mind... woman has some organs outside the pelvis.”¹¹⁸ Yet other late nineteenth century physicians believed that more gynecologists should be present at lunatic asylums due to the relationship between uterine disease and insanity.¹¹⁹ In 1861, three decades before such heated debate, “uterine disease” was a fairly standard female diagnosis that was often imagined as related to or causing mental illness in women, especially those in their fertile years. Furthermore, Dr. Wade Culbertson either medically examined Mary or interrogated her and/or her husband about her menstruation, leading the Georgia Lunatic Asylum to add, Mary “is not believed to have menstruated since the birth of her child.” Ultimately, Dr. Culbertson did not cure Mary of her mental disturbance, as she was admitted to the state lunatic asylum in April 1861, just a few weeks after the first shots of war were fired at Fort Sumter in South Carolina.¹²⁰

As with many cases, Mary’s medical record includes the painfully short comment, “Discharged,” with no further notation about her experience in the state lunatic asylum or even the precise date that she left the institution. Unfortunately for the Bobo-Baker family, Mary was not so improved, as she reappeared in the asylum record in September 1863 – two years and four months later. Here, we learn that Mary had been “removed

¹¹⁷ Cornell, Nancy J. *1864 Census for Re-Organizing the Georgia Militia*. Baltimore, MD, USA: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2000; Augustus Longstreet Hull, *A Historical Sketch of the University of Georgia* (Atlanta, Georgia: The Foote & Davies Co., 1894), 178.

¹¹⁸ George Frederick Shrady and Thomas Lathrop Stedman, “The Abuses of Uterine Treatment,” *Medical Record* Vol. 37 (1890), 151.

¹¹⁹ “Can the Gynecologist Aid the Alienist in Institutions for the Insane,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 16 (1891), 870-873.

¹²⁰ Mary E. Baker, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 21.

much improved by her husband” at an earlier date, rather than being discharged by the asylum physicians. Patriarchal family authorities were the primary actors in “removing” patients, particularly female relatives, such as daughters and wives, during the 1860s. The state lunatic asylum explained that Mary had “continued to do well” once she left the institution but noted “persons intimate with her could see that her mind was not sound.” As with Mary earlier in her life, her husband ignored any lingering signs of mental illness or instability: he pursued her sexually, and “she became pregnant.” Much to the unrecorded grief of the Bobo-Baker family, who had lost their previous child at three weeks, Mary “delivered a stillborn infant at full time” in December 1862. This similarly unnamed child must have further thrown Mary into mental chaos, as the asylum and her family explained “after which she grew gradually worse until she has become entirely insane.” In the fall of 1863, “entirely insane” meant that Mary was “usually excited and sometimes very violently so when she is disposed to fight.” She had become “very noisy and profane,” though was “never destructive or filthy.” The asylum record described nothing about her home life or the status of her other children, or how her husband or father felt about her condition. And, as with many cases, she received no material update in her admission entry, leaving it to seem as Mary Baker has become an eternal resident of the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, never improved, never removed, never dead, never buried, always there, waiting and hoping for a positive outcome.¹²¹

The 1870 census enumerator of Floyd County, Georgia intervened to reveal that Mary did survive her second stay at the state lunatic asylum – and that she returned to Benjamin to produce more children, several of whom survived infancy. In 1866, after the U.S. Civil War’s closure, she birthed twin sons, John and Willis, the latter named after

¹²¹ Mary E. Baker, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 104.

her still living father, who must have been proud at her continued endurance as woman, wife, and mother. In 1868, she had a daughter who became her namesake: Mary Elizabeth Baker.¹²² Benjamin had survived the war after serving as a private in Company C. and G. of the 1st Regiment Georgia Cavalry, as did her father Willis, who acted as a sergeant in Company D. of the Floyd Legion.¹²³ Benjamin's time in the 1st Regiment Georgia Cavalry likely began in March 1862, which explains his brief sexual encounter with his wife in early 1862 that led to her fifth child, the stillborn infant born in December 1862. Likewise, his service likely ended in April 1865, when the regiment surrendered in the Carolinas campaign, which also explains Mary's multiple year cessation from producing children.¹²⁴ As her husband traversed with the Army of Tennessee, battling from Chickamauga to Atlanta, Mary survived young motherhood. It is unknown when she returned home after her second admission in September 1863, but one imagines that she reached the Baker homestead in Floyd County before the war's end to care for her children in her husband's prolonged absence.

By 1870, the Bobo-Baker family had lost some of the shine and success of 1860. According to the 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Benjamin worked as a thirty-six-year-old farmer with no real estate to his name and only \$300 in personal estate. Mary was thirty-two and "keeping house." She cared for their four children, including her oldest eleven-year-old daughter, her four-year-old twin sons, and her two-year-old namesake. Amanda, nicknamed "Mandy" in the 1870 census, her eldest daughter, was "attending school." In

¹²² Year: 1870; Census Place: *Subdivision 141, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: M593_149; Page: 252A; Image: 202024; Family History Library Film: 545648.

¹²³ National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, online <<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>>, acquired 2007. ; Historical Data Systems, comp. *U.S., U.S. Civil War Regiments, 1861-1866* [database online]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 1999.

¹²⁴ See Michael Bowers Cavender, *The First Georgia Cavalry in the Civil War: A History and Roster* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., 2015).

the 1870 U.S. Federal Census, there is the painful absence of her second son, Andrew, born in December 1859, whose birth had allegedly caused her the beginnings of her mental health issues. He never again appears in the census and seems to have died in the years between 1860 and 1870, having not surviving childhood. Although the 1870 U.S. Federal Census did not record the number of children born versus the number of children living, a revealing detail which would be added in the 1900 U.S. Federal Census, we know that Mary E. Bobo Baker had given birth to seven children: one stillborn, another who died at three weeks of age, another who died before age ten, and four who had survived. Although she had struggled repeatedly with post-partum mental health disorder, Mary was not marked as insane on the 1870 U.S. Federal Census.¹²⁵

Somehow undeterred by mental illness and grief, unrecorded but presumed, Mary and Benjamin conceived a final daughter, Matthey (b. 1872). She and her four siblings matured through childhood and into adulthood, and Mary's daughters left home for marriage and their own experience as mothers.¹²⁶ Mary's husband Benjamin would die in 1891 and was buried at Round Hill Cemetery in Rome, Floyd County, with a space placed in stone and soil for Mary to lay beside him.¹²⁷ Yet Mary survived another twenty years without Benjamin, though not without her two devoted twin sons, who both lived with her through the 1900 U.S. Federal Census. This particular document finally marked the number of children born and number of children living for women. Mary, age sixty-one, married forty-four years, explained that she had birthed eight total children and had five still living. These numbers track consistently with the combined census and asylum

¹²⁵ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Subdivision 141, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_149*; Page: *252A*; Image: *202024*; Family History Library Film: *545648*.

¹²⁶ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Cave Spring, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: *146*; Family History Film: *1254146*; Page: *289D*; Enumeration District: *070*; Image: *0584*.

¹²⁷ Mary E. Bobo Baker (1841-1910) is buried at Round Hill Cemetery in Rome, Floyd County, Georgia.

records: her first child Amanda, later called Lela, had survived, where her three subsequent siblings, including Andrew and two unnamed children, had not. Mary's twin sons, her namesake, and final daughter Matthey survived to see the dawn of the twentieth century. In 1900, Mary and her two sons lived together in a farmhouse, owned free; all could read and write.¹²⁸ Unfortunately, in the next decade, the trio's peaceful living quickly deteriorated: one twin, William, died in May 1904, and Mary did not survive to the 1910 U.S. Federal Census either. The last lonely twin, John, moved in with his oldest sister, Amanda or Lela Baker Rakestraw, and was identified as her forty-three-year-old lumber worker and brother-in-law.¹²⁹ Yet he, too, succumbed to death and was buried beside his brother and mother in February 1911. Neither of her sons appeared to have married. For reasons lost to time, they remained with each other and with their mother, to her death and their own, perhaps not so unlike their fallen siblings long ago from the war-torn 1860s.¹³⁰

Moving back in time, there is Rhoda Narcissa's story still to be told: she was Mary's younger sister, whose path seemed destined to follow Mary's through mental illness, marriage, and motherhood. However, life did not parallel so totally between the two women. Although both became violent and behaved unpredictably in their early twenties and each remained at home under local medical intervention until an admission to the state lunatic asylum, Rhoda did not have a husband or children during her early mental disturbance. In February 1867, upon her first admission to the Georgia Lunatic

¹²⁸ Year: 1900; Census Place: *Cave Springs, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: 196; Page: 10B; Enumeration District: 0110; FHL microfilm: 1240196.

¹²⁹ Year: 1910; Census Place: *Cave Spring, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: T624_187; Page: 4A; Enumeration District: 0058; FHL microfilm: 1374200.

¹³⁰ John (1867-1911) and William (1867-1904) are buried beside their mother at Round Hill Cemetery in Rome, Floyd County, Georgia.

Asylum, she was noted as being “insane for eighteen months” since she was “at a fire when menstruating by which she was seriously exhausted.” She had proven aggressive, belligerent, and destructive over those eighteen months, leading her father Willis Bobo to bring her to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. After his other daughter Mary’s double admissions in 1861 and 1863, Willis continued to trust the institution. Although we have no record of Rhoda’s treatment at the asylum, she was kindly referred to as “Miss Narcissa Bobo” and “Miss Bobo” throughout her medical record. Ultimately, Rhoda only remained at the institution for seven months before her discharge in October 1867.¹³¹

Rhoda Narcissa Bobo appears next in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census with her father and six siblings, sans Mary, who had been the only child of Willis to leave his household. Her name was given as “Narcissus,” and at age twenty-six, she had “no occupation,” no husband, and no children. The three years removed from the state lunatic asylum had not been so kind to Rhoda that she had fully integrated into U.S. Southern society. Nonetheless, she had not earned a mark in the column “Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, or idiotic,” which declared her free of insanity. The lack of official state designation saved her from stigma and possibly declared her family’s belief that her mental illness experienced a few years earlier had come to end. However, the census enumerator may have disagreed if he had further information about her medical case or history, and the family may have been hiding the severity of Rhoda’s condition, in hopes that she could find a marriage partner and create her own household. In the summer of

¹³¹ Narcissa Bobo, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 193.

1870, Rhoda Narcissa Bobo disappears from the official record, leaving behind endless questions of her fate.¹³²

Although her father and siblings survived to 1880, she is no longer marked beside them in the U.S. Federal Census. Much like Mary's later twin sons, several of Willis's children appear to have never married, including three of Mary and Rhoda's sisters, Sarah, Margaret, and Josephine, whose ages are artificially lowered in the 1880 U.S. Federal Census by several years, likely to make them more applicable as potential wives. Unlike Mary's twins, however, her own sisters, including Rhoda, vanish in their state of single womanhood in the late nineteenth century U.S. South. It is currently unclear what occurred to these four women; Rhoda vanishes after 1870, and the three other women disappear, too, after 1880.¹³³ They have no gravestones in the Bobo Cemetery where their father and mother are buried, nor Round Hill Cemetery, the nearby place where their sister and her family came to rest. It seems possible that all four married into other families, moving elsewhere, either near or far, but it could be that only some or none married. The four sisters may have been buried more anonymously with more temporary means of identification of their grave-sites than stone. In their unspecified deaths, the Bobo sisters experienced the fate of many single women without great means in the rural mountainous expanse of post-war Georgia.

Finally, deeper investigation is needed to find the fate of these four women, including Rhoda Narcissa Bobo, who entered the census only a few times and the lunatic asylum admission record once. As with many women in the nineteenth century, Rhoda's

¹³² Year: 1870; Census Place: *Subdivision 141, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_149*; Page: *313A*; Image: *206882*; Family History Library Film: *545648*.

¹³³ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Cave Spring, Floyd, Georgia*; Roll: *146*; Family History Film: *1254146*; Page: *283C*; Enumeration District: *070*; Image: *0571*.

name shifts frequently in different records, preferring variations of her middle name in most accounts. Even this simple change alters the viability of searching for Rhoda in the print record. Such scholarly inquiries are made even more challenging if Rhoda or her sisters married and losing lost Bobo surname, gaining another alternative identity. For this present work, Rhoda ends her story as a mentally unwell white woman who spent seven months in the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, following the footsteps of her older sister whose body had created life and death. She has one further brief appearance in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census before being swept away into the post-war U.S. South, an unfriendly place for poor single white women, parents dead, sisters mentally ill or single themselves.

Mary and Rhoda's time in the official state record – both the census and the state lunatic asylum – alters our perception of a present heavy stigma of mental illness associated with the female sex. Neither woman was marked as insane nor were subsequently damned to a short life or terrible death behind asylum walls. Instead, Mary Bobo Baker survived well into the twentieth century, even though she was designated insane at least four times and twice admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. With support from her father and husband, she never fully ceased her duties as a wife and mother, even during the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction. She produced and raised children, and she carried on her family's bloodline and her husband's surname. Regardless if she had consented to her stays at the asylum or her eight times as a mother, Mary Bobo Baker lived through it all. By her death in 1910, she had survived sixty-nine years to find her place in stone and soil beside her husband in their hometown.

However, Mary's story seems to have been an unlikely one, considering the confusing and ambiguous fate of her younger sister, Rhoda Narcissa Bobo, who similarly

struggled with mental health issues. While Mary broke into the twentieth century as a widow with five living children, residing with her two twin sons, Rhoda and her other three sisters melted out of the official state record – either married, dead, or living and dying so ordinarily that none took notice in a ferocious or concerned way. While these young white women survived the U.S. Civil War, their father and brother-in-law both serving the Confederacy along with many white men in their community, they do not appear to have found solace in the aftermath. Without the war or emancipation, their lives may have been different: inheritors of slaves and farmland, their availability taken notice by ordinary or extraordinary men of mountainous northwest Georgia, their existences newly marked by marriage and motherhood. Yet intervening forces – ranging from war to abolition to mental illness to death – altered their destinies, leading them from ledger lines into the abyss of lost paperwork and unwritten experiences and forgotten burial places.

Pauper Idiots from Clark[e] County, Congenital: *The Gully Family*

Some families committed their disabled loved ones without any intention of a possible cure or return home. Unlike Christian and Anne E. Rumph, who suffered with mental illness, many of the abandoned disabled people in the 1860s experienced what modern Americans might refer to as intellectually disabilities. In the antebellum and war periods, U.S. Southern families had difficulty considering the place of intellectually disabled in the community. Both society and medicine had yet to discern appropriate treatment and action in their cases. However, making such situations more complicated, many families with one intellectually disabled child often had another – and even another

and another. In the Gully family of Clarke County, Georgia, the parents produced five intellectually disabled children in the 1820s and 1830s. Thomas Gully had been born in 1785, and his wife Susan/Susannah was born around 1798. Like many citizens of early Georgia, his father was an immigrant to the state and had bought land during the Republican era.¹³⁴ His father, Richard Gully, was born in Virginia in 1756 and, like many men, was perfectly of age for the Revolutionary War. In 1778, Richard enlisted in the 3rd Continental Light Dragoon Regiment in Virginia; his war pension describes his two year service, in which he became a prisoner of war in British-occupied Charleston.¹³⁵ He lived in Virginia over the next twenty years, but in 1802, Richard Gully buy land in Elbert County, Georgia – now adjacent to Clarke County – which prompted he and his family’s relocation to the area. Over the next several decades, Richard and his wife had several children, including Thomas.¹³⁶ In contrast, we have very little information about Susan’s parents, the Reed family. It appears her mother, Sally Reed, lived with the Gully family in 1850 at a stunning age 101, meaning Sally was born in 1749. She would have come of age perfectly to ring in the American Revolution.¹³⁷

Thomas and Susan Gully married at some point in the early to mid-1820s. Their first child that survived to adulthood appears to have been born in 1828. Eventually, the couple had at least six children: Elizabeth/Betsy (b. 1828), George (b. 1829), Sarah (b. 1831), Charity (b. 1835), Nancy/Minerva (b. 1835), and Wiley (b. 1840). The 1830 U.S. Federal Census for Elbert, Georgia marks the presence of five children – a young boy,

¹³⁴ Year: 1850; Census Place: Bucks Branch, Clarke, Georgia; Roll: M432_65; Page: 44B; Image: 370.

¹³⁵ Mrs. Howard H. McCall, *Roster of Revolutionary Soldiers in Georgia*, Volume 1 (Baltimore, Maryland: Clearfield, 1941), 239.

¹³⁶ Desi W. Gulley, *The Life and Times of Richard Gulley, Revolutionary War Soldier*, accessed January 1, 2016, <http://files.usgwarchives.net/ga/elbert/bios/gulley.txt>.

¹³⁷ Year: 1850; Census Place: Bucks Branch, Clarke, Georgia; Roll: M432_65; Page: 44B; Image: 370.

three young girls, and an older boy – in the Gully household. This census – like most of the early documents – only includes the name of the head of household, most frequently white man. Neither Susan nor any of the children were listed by name in 1830. Two of these five children do not appear to have progressed into adulthood because individuals of their decade-increased age do not repeat on the next census record.¹³⁸ By 1840, the house contained six children: one young boy, two young girls, one preteen girl, one female teenager, and an older male teenager, again all unnamed. Three of these are marked as “Insane and Idiot at Private Charge,” but the census is unclear which children earned the label or who designated them as such.¹³⁹ Ultimately, we know of six named children in the Gully family, but records do not indicate what happened to the other offspring. They may have died early, but even this possibility cannot be confirmed.

The Georgia Lunatic Asylum records help clarify the experiences of many of the Gully family children: they eventually arrived at the institution and proceeded to live there the rest of their lives, the length of which varied for each individual. The Gully story intersects with antebellum white poverty in a profound way. Although Thomas was the descendent of an American Revolutionary War veteran who owned considerable land, he never seems to have gained significant amount of wealth or real estate of his own. In 1850, he is last seen on the census at age sixty-five, with his wife at age fifty-two. Their five adult-aged children still lived at home with the youngest two daughters reportedly being fifteen and the eldest son being twenty-two. Instead of the three marked “Idiot” in the 1840 U.S. Federal Census, four are marked “Idiot” on the 1850 U.S. Federal Census.

¹³⁸ 1830; Census Place: *Elbert, Georgia*; Series: *M19*; Roll: *17*; Page: *134*; Family History Library Film: *0007037*.

¹³⁹ Year: *1840*; Census Place: *Elbert, Georgia*; Roll: *40*; Page: *185*; Image: *390*; Family History Library Film: *0007043*.

The increase in disability may not be due to suddenly appearing symptoms but rather the variation of who and what qualified a child as an “Idiot.” It appears that none in the family could read or write, including the three adults, Thomas, Susan, and Sally.¹⁴⁰ The long-standing disability of at least four of the Gully children had not escaped their family’s notice. These four were marked as “Idiot” in both censuses that counted such disabilities and were likely treated differently by their parents and community. However, because the Gully parents were impoverished and the county did not provide any social services for their disabled children, the family likely suffered throughout the antebellum era.

Thomas Gully appears to have died sometime in the early to mid 1850s, though no record of this event – either on paper or stone – has been yet found. He no longer appears on the census after 1850 and seems to have died in either his late sixties or earlier seventies. The family patriarch’s death evidently prompted Susan to send two of her four disabled children away to Milledgeville. For unclear reasons, she chose her two daughters instead of her two sons. She did not choose by age, as her daughters and sons were irregularly spaced. Instead, Susan Gully selected by gender: she could keep her sons with her in Athens-Clarke County, but not her daughters after her husband’s death. When she sent her daughters away in 1854, Susan likely had little expectation that Elizabeth and Charity would ever return home. Repeatedly marked in the census as “Idiots,” their disability was understood to be congenital and incurable. Susan’s admission of her two

¹⁴⁰ Year: 1850; Census Place: *Bucks Branch, Clarke, Georgia*; Roll: *M432_65*; Page: *44B*; Image: *370*.

daughters meant that they would not return to Athens; they would now live at the state lunatic asylum, and they would die there as well.¹⁴¹

Elizabeth and Charity Gully entered the Georgia Lunatic Asylum on October 19, 1854 labeled “pauper idiot[s] from Clark County, congenital.” Elizabeth was noted as being “about 28,” and Charity, “about 26.” Although it was not marked, neither were married. “Idiots” at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum are never marked with a never marital status during the 1850s and 1860s, due to the institution’s understanding that such disabled people would not be married. The antebellum ledger book for Georgia, much like for South Carolina, is surprisingly and frustratingly sparse with patient details. The only information for the Gully sisters in 1854 are these seven pieces of data: their names, their pauper status, their “idiocy,” their county of origin, their condition being “congenital,” their age, and their admission date. Charity has one additional note: her death. After being committed in October 1854, Charity rapidly deteriorated at the institution and was dead in just over eight months. She was twenty-six years old and had been disabled since birth, but her final few months of life she taken away from home and put in the care of strangers.¹⁴² Considering the poverty of her mother and siblings, Charity was undoubtedly buried at the asylum. It is unclear when her sister Elizabeth joined her in death, even though the two were committed at the same time. Elizabeth Gully remained on the “patients in the Institution at the close of the Year 1860-1861,” listed being admitted in October 14, “[18]54,” consequently we know she survived until

¹⁴¹ Elizabeth Gully, #434, and Charity Gully, #435, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1842-1861, Volume 2.

¹⁴² Ibid.

1861 – seven years after her admission.¹⁴³ However, she does not attract any further attention from the asylum: her record ceases after her admission and this one subsequent patient list. Elizabeth almost certainly died at the state lunatic asylum, but it is impossible to tell the precise date with the limited records currently available for the institution. Regardless, Elizabeth lived years after her sister’s swift death at the asylum; she had spent twenty-six years alongside Charity, her similarly disabled sister, but suddenly she was alone at a strange place, devoid of family, for a extensive number of years.

Susan Gully’s poverty and the intellectual disability of her children garnered unusual attention from the Athens-Clarke County community, even long after her death. In 1893, a local history book cruelly commented on their unfortunate situation: “No sketch of Athens would be complete without a reference to Mrs. Gully. For years she was the only professional beggar in the place, and this exclusive privilege she enjoyed until her death.” Susan Gully only became noticed once she was widowed: her husband Thomas did not feature the local reminiscences, and even her status as a widow was not remarked upon. Her husband’s absence had driven Susan to poverty and pleading for help in the local community, but locals did not delve behind the reasons for her existence as a “professional beggar.” By the end of the nineteenth century, Susan Gully – a widowed mother of at least four disabled adults – had been transformed into a delightful feature of the town, in contrast to her actual lived experience in the antebellum and war period, which must have been both desperate and sorry.¹⁴⁴

In 1860, on the cusp of the U.S. Civil War, Susan resided with her remaining daughter, Nancy, a “seamstress” in her early twenties and her husband Stephen Shields, a

¹⁴³ Patients in the Institution at the close of the Year 1860-1861, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3.

¹⁴⁴ A.L. Hull, *Sketches of Athens: From 1830 to 1865* (Athens, Georgia: Women’s Work Print, 1893), 46.

“laborer.” In the previous 1850 U.S. Federal Census, Stephen and Nancy Shields can be found together with a one-year-old daughter, Sarah. By 1860, Stephen and Nancy had five children with the Shields last name. Their ages – from two to ten – suggest that the couple had been repeatedly intimate. Nancy’s age when she had her first child was somewhere between fourteen and sixteen, according to the 1850 and 1860 U.S. Federal Censuses. In contrast to teenaged Nancy, her husband was in his early twenties. By 1860, Stephen, a thirty-five year old “day laborer,” only had “\$8” in personal estate and nothing in real estate. His mother-in-law Susan Gully was initially marked as “pauper” under the last column in the 1860 U.S. Federal Census – the one asking “whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or insane.” However, the enumerator struck out the word “pauper.” Marked underneath Susan, who was listed under Stephen and Nancy Shields and their children, was “George W.,” age thirty, and “Wiley M.,” age twenty. Both were labeled “Idiotic” – the third census that these two sons had attracted the disabled designation. However, George and Wiley would not remain long with Susan Gully, Stephen Shields, and Nancy Gully Shields: their mother, their brother-in-law, and their sister.¹⁴⁵

The local Athens historian in 1893 remarked on the condition of Nancy, George, and Wiley when discussing the town’s best-known beggar and their mother, Susan Gully. The local reminiscence concisely commented, excluding a date or context: “Two idiot sons were sent to the asylum.” The following line mentioned Nancy specifically with the hint that she too had been a burden: “Nancy was given in marriage to Stephen Shields,

¹⁴⁵ Year: 1850; Census Place: Athens, Clarke, Georgia; Roll: M432_65; Page: 10A; Image: 305 ; Year: 1860; Census Place: Athens, Clarke, Georgia; Roll: M653_116; Page: 1023; Family History Library Film: 803116.

and, relieved of the care of her children, [Susan] reduced begging to a fine art.”¹⁴⁶ Nancy herself may have been considered intellectually disabled at some point in her life, but she escaped the state lunatic asylum as well as desperate begging when she became pregnant and entered into marriage with an older man. The commentator further ignores the disability of Elizabeth and Charity, neither mentioning their antebellum admissions to the asylum or their very existence. Instead, the author noted the 1861 commitments of George and Wiley to Milledgeville – but he only did so because he wanted to explain how Susan developed into such a “artful” beggar, not to show the difficult lives of her sons. His next sentence further established Susan’s life as a childless mother beggar: “For years she was the only professional beggar in [Athens], and this exclusive privilege she enjoyed until her death.”¹⁴⁷ Little sympathy seems to have befallen Susan Gully, although she was clearly at the very bottom of the social hierarchy in Clarke County, Georgia. Instead, she appears to be the subject of a blunt joke decades after her misery and poverty.

The final comment about Susan Gully ignored that she had few options in life: “She always asked for flour, declining the offer of meal, because corn-bread hurt her teeth. Her taste in sugar was refined, and as to sorghum, she wouldn't hear to it. Her habitation was this side of the upper bridge, but there was no beauty in it that she should desire to stay there and she didn't.”¹⁴⁸ Somehow, the local historian disregarded that Susan had her impoverished struggles during the U.S. Civil War. Her sons were only admitted in May 1861, meaning the cruel description of her begging originated during war and Reconstruction. These contextual explanations for her poverty somehow escaped

¹⁴⁶ Hull, *Sketches of Athens: From 1830 to 1865*, 46.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

the historian's consideration. More community and familial care could have been given to Susan Gully and her disabled children, but the best that the state had to offer was the state lunatic asylum in Milledgeville. Throughout the fall of 1860, Georgia struggled with political division and finally seceded in late January 1861. The May 1861 asylum admission entries describe the pair as George, allegedly "age thirty," and Wiley, "eighteen years," both "congenital... pauper idiot[s]" from Clark[e] County Georgia. The older brother's admission claimed, "Is of a family of six (two males, four females), all idiots, two of the later were moved here in 1854." These "two... idiots" were Charity and Elizabeth Gully, one of whom was already dead by her brothers' admission. However, the other two female siblings are unknown, though Nancy may be one. It is also possible that the asylum record itself could be wrong.¹⁴⁹

The 1870 U.S. Federal Census for Milledgeville reveals that George died at the asylum in a short period of time, just like his sister Charity years earlier. Sometime between May 1861 and June 1870, he had passed away and accordingly was no longer listed on the patient census. Unlike other pairs of disabled siblings at the institution, Elizabeth and Wiley were not listed together on the census.¹⁵⁰ After the 1870 U.S. Federal Census, neither are listed on the Milledgeville asylum census. Their absence almost certainly means their death at the institution. All four of those named Gully siblings would have been buried at the asylum cemetery, their unmarked graves now protected by a bronze angel pointing towards Heaven. In Clarke County, Susan Gully last appears on the 1870 U.S. Federal Census as well. She was seventy-seven years old and

¹⁴⁹ George and Wiley Gully, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 24.

¹⁵⁰ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Scottsboro, Baldwin, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_134*; Page: 258B; Image: 270586; Family History Library Film: 545633.

lived with several of her grandchildren with the surname Shields.¹⁵¹ However, Nancy and Stephen Shields do not seem to be living in the area and may have died by this time, though it is unclear what fate befell them. Susan's death likely occurred sometime in her late seventies or early eighties, but her burial – like that of all the Gully family – remains unknown. She may have been buried on family land or in a pauper's cemetery, but her grave was likely marked with something temporary, such as a piece of wood or ornamental object like a rock, glass, or plant. These now have faded into the wilderness that surrounds much of the development in Athens-Clarke County, Georgia.

What could Susan have provided for her many disabled children? Was it easier when her husband was alive, when his income as a laborer barely supported an entire family? Once he was dead, leaving her without income, did she panic, did she try for a few years, did anyone in Athens offer her assistance or care? Athenians did not remember Susan Gully for her struggles; an 1893 history book instead joked about her sophisticated taste as a beggar. The book did not mention her two disabled daughters sent to Milledgeville in 1854, her other disabled children, her dead husband, or her difficult life as a widow during the war and Reconstruction. Their disability was not ridiculed but was neither medically described or delicately discussed. Though it is not recorded, all four of the Gully siblings must have died and were buried at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, some quickly, others years and even decades later. Had they remained in Athens, would life have been better, could they have lived longer? Does a longer life always mean a better life – during the nineteenth century or today? What could have been done for them if Susan was wealthy, if Thomas had inherited more, if Thomas had lived longer, labored

¹⁵¹ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Athens, Clarke, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_143*; Page: *341B*; Image: *13868*; Family History Library Film: *545642*.

more, earned more? Did physical, emotional, or mental distance keep them separated from their mother and each other on the census? How would wealth have altered their situation, their disability, their time at the state lunatic asylum?

To Be Wealthy, White, Male, and Insane: *Thomas Middleton, Henry Izard Middleton, and Cleland Kinloch Middleton*

The answer to the last question can be partially found in the lived experiences of the Middleton cousins residing in Charleston, South Carolina around the same period. A search of the 1860s South Carolina Lunatic Asylum finds four people with the surname Middleton, but two of these are African-Americans who labored for the wealthy white Charlestonian Middleton family. Tenah Middleton, a woman who was committed in 1861, and Daniel Middleton, a “colored” man admitted in 1869, were either currently or formerly enslaved by the white Middleton family. We know that Tenah was enslaved by Williams Middleton, who signed the South Carolina Ordinance of Secession, but Daniel’s former enslaver-owner is unknown due to the lack of information in his admission. The other two Middleton men admitted in the 1860s were Thomas Middleton in September 1863 and Henry Izard Middleton in January 1868. In a strange stumble in history, Thomas arrived at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in the middle of the U.S. Civil War – but not because he was an insane person. Instead, he had become sick and physically disabled.

At age sixty-five, Thomas reportedly suffered from paralysis, likely the result of a stroke that damaged his brain and caused an inability to move and function properly. The state lunatic asylum labeled his condition “spinal disease” which had occurred in the last

“two years.” Their brief supplementary note termed him “paralytic” – and that he “died 4th day after admission.”¹⁵² His discharge record stated that he formally died of “paralysis,” which is less a cause of death than an honest description of his condition when he died.¹⁵³ The official biographical and familial records of Thomas Middleton do not allude whatsoever to his admission to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. They also do not admit that he died there instead of his home in Charleston. Except for these few revealing sentences in the asylum ledger books, Thomas otherwise appears to have died in his city house in the middle of the U.S. Civil War. However, his family committed him to the state lunatic asylum with the intention of treatment and even a cure for his paralysis. Nevertheless, their expectations were rapidly dashed when he died just four days after admission. Thomas’ paralysis may have been sudden, but he could have also been suffering over a longer period, which only culminated in September 1863. His death at the asylum was likely not expected, and he did not remain there in death; his family interred his body back in Charleston the famous and lovely Magnolia Cemetery.¹⁵⁴

Thomas is not the only white male Middleton to enter the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in the 1850s and 1860s. Instead, the peculiar honor falls to Henry Izard Middleton and Cleland Kinloch Middleton, who are distant cousins through their fathers. The latter of the two strangely did not receive an admission entry in the ledger even though he certainly visited and even briefly resided at the institution based on his correspondence. Henry Izard’s first commitment to the asylum was actually in April 1859 – two years before the outbreak of the U.S. Civil War.¹⁵⁵ His short month-long stay at the

¹⁵² Thomas Middleton, #1356, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

¹⁵³ Thomas Middleton, Died 1863-09-27, SCSHI Admissions and Discharges, 1860-1964.

¹⁵⁴ Thomas Middleton (1797-1863) is buried at Magnolia Cemetery in Charleston, South Carolina.

¹⁵⁵ Henry Izard Middleton, #1095, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

South Carolina Lunatic Asylum was followed by his institutionalization at the Philadelphia Hospital for the Insane for the duration of the U.S. Civil War.¹⁵⁶ Henry Izard was again received at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum on January 4, 1868, described as “an old case,” a phrase which indicated a long-term mental disability case that the asylum was already familiar with.¹⁵⁷

In contrast, we only know that his cousin Cleland visited the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in late March 1853 due to an off-hand comment that he made in a letter to his father in May 1853. In dark loose cursive script, Cleland simply wrote his father, “My dear Father, Finding that a residence at the asylum in Columbia did not suit me, I left there on the 24th of March, and made my way to Nashville, Tenn., where my hopes of a kind reception from Mrs. Rutledge and her son, Mr. Arthur Rutledge, have been fully realized.”¹⁵⁸ By this point, Cleland had already struggled with several years of mental instability and erratic behavior. His institutionalization would not occur at the nearby institution in Columbia, South Carolina. Instead, like his similarly ill cousin Henry Izard, Cleland would find private care in small U.S. Northern asylums in Massachusetts and Maryland, which began sometime in 1860.¹⁵⁹ Whether or not the two stayed for days or months, both young men entered the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum and endured mental illness during the chaos of the antebellum, war, or Reconstruction years. Their privilege protected them from languishing at the overcrowded, underfunded state lunatic asylum for years until their eventual death. Instead, both men’s families relocated them to private

¹⁵⁶ Henry Izard Middleton, #1577, Vol. 3, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

¹⁵⁷ Henry Izard Middleton, #1577, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

¹⁵⁸ May 7, 1853. Cleland K. Middleton to Henry Augustus Middleton letter. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

¹⁵⁹ July 1, 1860 to Sept. 30, 1860. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

institutions in the U.S. North, which may have allowed them better personalized treatment but also meant their parents and siblings had less chance of visiting them. However, the Middletons preferred smaller private hospitals for their disturbed offspring, and so both Cleland and Henry Izard escaped the fate of many poor disabled people, both black and white, who suffered profoundly from the rampant disease and overcrowding evident at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Although Henry Izard would reside much longer at the state lunatic asylum than Cleland, both would end their days at a private institution, receiving personalized care and attention in his old age. Both died at private hospitals for the insane.¹⁶⁰

Cleland Kinloch Middleton was the oldest son of Henry Augustus Middleton, a well-known lawyer and planter in the South Carolina Lowcountry, and his family put incredible expectations on his shoulders that he would not meet. Henry Augustus Middleton additionally owned considerable land in Newport, Rhode Island, which he and his family visited during the summer, like many wealthy white Charlestonians in his era and class who went to the U.S. North for a portion of the year. In 1860, Henry Augustus Middleton was listed among the wealthiest U.S. Southerners: he owned \$110,000 in real estate and a startling \$200,500 in personal estate, based on the large number of enslaved people that he claimed to own.¹⁶¹ On the eve of war, Henry A. Middleton had seventeen enslaved laborers at his home in Charleston and another two hundred working at his

¹⁶⁰ Both Henry Izard Middleton and Cleland Kinloch Middleton are buried at Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston County, South Carolina, where many of the Middleton family were interred. Henry Izard died at St. Margaret's Home [for the Insane] in Charleston, South Carolina, while Cleland Kinloch appears to have died at the McLean Asylum for the Insane in Belmont, Massachusetts.

¹⁶¹ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Prince George Parish Division 2, Georgetown, South Carolina*; Roll: M653_1219; Page: 295; Family History Library Film: 805219.

Georgetown plantations.¹⁶² Henry had been born at his father's plantation, "his father's seat on Ashley river," and was "educated at schools in Charleston, at Harvard College and Litchfield Law School." Ultimately, Henry had turned away from the life of a lawyer "to the life of a Country gentlemen, at his estates of Acton, Kensington, and Weehaw and later resided at his town house in Charleston." In a highly simplified and biased descriptor made by an adoring South Carolinian in 1900, Henry was called "a large land owner" with a "taste for art and architecture by travel in Europe." After the U.S. Civil War, the same subjective source described Henry Augustus Middleton: "Retiring and reserved, taking little part in politics, he was indomitable, alike in youth when he defied the greatest duelist of his time, as in age the ruthless invaders and crazed negroes, before his burning house at Weehaw" during the war.¹⁶³ Unfortunately for Cleland, his father Henry had incredibly high expectations, and he laid them immediately on his young son.

Cleland was named after his famous maternal grandfather and thus had significant shoes to fill. He was allegedly "educated at Charleston and Philadelphia schools and Harvard College," at least to some extent, as it appears that he never graduated. In contrast, Henry Augustus Jr., his younger brother, five years younger than Cleland, became much more successful likely due to his stable mental health. He managed their father's Weehaw plantation "with great ability and success" in the antebellum period, and during the U.S. Civil War, he "joined in raising and equipping a troop of Cavalry, but seeking active service volunteered in Co. A, Hampton Legion." While Cleland

¹⁶² United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls; United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

¹⁶³ "Middleton of South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Charleston, South Carolina: The Walker, Evans & Cogswell Company, 1900), 258.

comfortably resided at a private lunatic asylum in the U.S. North, Henry Augustus Jr. “after conspicuous gallantry was mortally wounded at the battle of Manassas 21 July 1861” and died six days later.¹⁶⁴ Cleland’s uncle, Henry Augustus’s brother, Thomas Middleton, died at the asylum in 1863. Although other Middletons would briefly reside at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum and some would even die there, for much of his life, Cleland took to U.S. Northern private asylums, primarily the McLean Asylum for the Insane in Massachusetts and the Maryland Hospital for the Insane. However, Cleland did briefly experiment with the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum but did not find it to his liking, so he simply walked away from it just as he had swiftly and spontaneously departed Harvard in his youth. Cleland was the product of wealth and privilege, and his mental illness does not appear to hamper his expectations for his life and its comfort. Instead, it may have saved him from the responsibility of plantation management, Confederate military service, and a gruesome death during the U.S. Civil War.

Unlike the Rumph father and daughter, whose records are primarily gravestones, and the Gully family, who can be found on the census and ridiculed in local history, important correspondence and financial documents belonging to Cleland K. Middleton have been preserved and protected at a historical society archive. His collection, embedded in “The Middleton Family Papers,” frankly displays “his institutionalization” at two U.S. Northern hospitals and includes obvious reference to perhaps his first mental episode, which occurred years earlier when he attended Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A number of important professors wrote Cleland’s father Henry Augustus Middleton warning him about his son’s erratic behavior and poor grades while enrolled in classes, beginning around June 1841 when “one of the Professors”

¹⁶⁴ “Middleton of South Carolina,” 258-259.

explained Cleland “has in some respects failed in attention to his studies.” Cleland scored “four out of eight” in Greek, “which is rather low,” and he had been routinely absent in prayers to the point that “he has been already privately admonished by the [Harvard] President.”¹⁶⁵ By November 1841, Cleland appears to have abruptly taken leave of Harvard, simply walking off campus and out of the lives of his classmates and faculty, some of who unsuccessfully sought to find him.¹⁶⁶ Several distressed letters between Cleland’s parents in Charleston and sympathetic friends in Cambridge reveal that eventually Cleland was found residing with newly made companions in a tavern.¹⁶⁷

In the following years, Henry Augustus worked to ensure that Cleland was set back on track, but his son struggled with his studies, most likely due in part to incipient mental illness. In the early 1840s, Cleland lived off campus with a highly reputed scholar and pastor, Rufus Phineas Stebbins, who personally taught Cleland with Henry Augustus’s distant financial support.¹⁶⁸ Yet in September 1842, Cleland again disappeared from the house of his professor, C. Francis, who was forced to write Henry Augustus admitting that the young man had gone missing. He sorrowfully penned, “It was by no wish of mine that he left my table,” and further declared, “If in any way I can render you a service in relation to him [Cleland], I shall be happy to do it.”¹⁶⁹ The frustrations of Henry Augustus Middleton and his family must have been immense, but they continued to support him financially throughout this time and the ensuing crises.

¹⁶⁵ June 5, 1841. P. Sarah Folsom to Henry Augustus Middleton letter. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

¹⁶⁶ November 3, 1841. C. Folsom to Henry Augustus Middleton letter. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ April 18, 1842. Rufus P. Stebbins to Henry Augustus Middleton letter. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

¹⁶⁹ September 28, 1842. C. Francis to Henry Augustus Middleton letter. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

While Cleland was partially unstable due to mental illness, his personal understanding of his place in society allowed him to believe that he was not destined to suffer at Harvard. He returned sometime during the antebellum period to Charleston, South Carolina, but his father Henry Augustus pushed him to find treatment at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. However, Cleland's stay was so brief that he did not receive a line in the admission ledger. Cleland later commented airily to his father, "finding that a residence at the asylum in Columbia did not suit me, I left there on the 24th of March, and made my way to Nashville, Tenn.," where Cleland unexpectedly invited himself into his friend Arthur Rutledge's house.¹⁷⁰ On April 27, Arthur wrote Henry, noting he and his mother "presumed of course that [Cleland] still labored under his mental malady" but after visiting with Cleland, they believed that from "both his conversations & his actions that his conduct precludes all idea of his being insane at this time, however much he may have been so three months ago." Arthur Rutledge further explained that he assumed "it inexpedient but wholly wrong on my part to use any force or make him do anything contrary to his inclination," such as being forcibly removed to the U.S. North to a private lunatic asylum or sent back to Charleston. Furthermore, Cleland clearly objected to institutionalization to Arthur, "saying that he would as soon die as to return to a L.A. [Lunatic Asylum], that if a relation or friend had come, he would have gone with them, but that he would not travel with Policemen." And so, Rutledge pleasantly ended his letter to Cleland's father, explaining that he would "extend to him all the kindness of a

¹⁷⁰ May 7, 1853. Cleland K. Middleton to Henry Augustus Middleton letter. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

relation, as long as he chooses to remain at my home,” but concluded pointedly, “with the hope that some of his friends will come to him who will induce him to travel.”¹⁷¹

On May 7, 1853, Cleland finally wrote his father and mother for the first time after his arrival in Tennessee, declaring that he had not find the state lunatic asylum “suit[able]” and found, as he had hoped, “a kind reception from Mrs. Rutledge and her son, Mr. Arthur Rutledge.” In Tennessee, Cleland enjoyed “this pleasant society, and with the advantage as far as exercise is concerned, of fine roads and a beautiful country, I find my health rapidly improving, a fact, I know, which will greatly relieve the minds of those who take an interest in my welfare.” He then unceremoniously explained that he had spent the “32 dollars” which he had when he left Columbia and requested “not more than fifty dollars” from his father. And then Cleland suddenly concluded his letter, “I am, Very truly, Yours, C. K. Middleton, Nashville. Tenn.”¹⁷² Although we do not have any subsequent correspondence, it does not appear that Cleland remained long in Tennessee with his surprised but amiable hosts. By 1860, he could be found at McLean Asylum, a part of Massachusetts General Hospital, where he would remain until his death in 1876.

Cleland Middleton did not live a modest life while institutionalized at the private insane asylum far from his family during the U.S. Civil War or Reconstruction. Surviving receipts from the McLean Asylum for the Insane in Massachusetts and the Maryland Hospital for the Insane both show that Cleland continued to live luxuriously and excessively, showing little to no concern for his father and mother. The receipts for his asylum account were often itemized, revealing his peculiar and opulent purchases: the

¹⁷¹ April 27, 1853. Arthur Rutledge to Henry Augustus Middleton letter. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

¹⁷² May 7, 1853. Cleland K. Middleton to Henry Augustus Middleton letter. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

first known receipt for July to September 1860 shows charges for his room and board, envelopes, an atlas, sixty-four dollars in “pocket money,” mending, dental services, a map of the vicinity of Boston, and a hair brush and comb, all of which amounted to \$322.34 for three months¹⁷³ Other receipts from the early era of the U.S. Civil War show Cleland’s purchases of exotic books, fine clothes, a linen handkerchief, daily newspapers subscription, hair oil, and slippers.¹⁷⁴ Although Henry Augustus Middleton struggled during the war to maintain his plantations and enslaved laborers, as well as support the Confederacy, Cleland did not reduce his expectations. Instead, we can see that he continued to desire and purchase items that likely made Henry Augustus cringe, if not scowl. Cleland continued his daily newspaper subscription throughout the war and made regular purchases of new slippers, new socks, tooth brushes, and even the occasional dental operation during the U.S. Civil War.¹⁷⁵ Now preserved in the South Carolina Historical Society archives, there are a few surviving letters from 1870 and 1871 and several more receipts from McLean Asylum in 1873 and 1875-1876. These documents reflect Cleland’s continued dismissal of his father’s well-being and excessive spending behavior in a time which must have tried his entire extended Middleton family.

In May 1876, Cleland died at McLean Asylum in Somerville, Massachusetts, a small private U.S Northern hospital. His body was transported south to be interred at the Charleston’s Magnolia Cemetery, where most of the Middleton family was buried. Not so

¹⁷³ July 1 to September 30, 1860. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

¹⁷⁴ October 1 to December 31, 1860; January 1 to March 31, 1861; April 1 to June 30, 1861; and July 1 to September 30, 1861. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

¹⁷⁵ January 1 to March 31, 1863; April 1 to June 30, 1863; July 1 to September 30, 1863; January 1 to March 31, 1864; April 1 to September 30, 1864. Middleton, Cleland Kinloch, 1824-1876. Papers, 1840-1876. (1168.02.09) South Carolina Historical Society.

distant from him are Thomas Middleton and Henry Izard Middleton, though neither are physically proximate to their cousins in death. Henry Augustus Middleton, Cleland's father, was still alive when his eldest son died in 1876, and he purposefully chose a significant spot for the body of his child. Cleland's six-foot long flat gravestone is the same design style of Henry Augustus's other children and his wife. The stone declares, "Cleland Kinloch Middleton / eldest son of / Henry A. Middleton Esq. / and Harriott his wife," which provides final, profound validation of Cleland's position as vital to his parents in life and death, even if they had conflicted feelings about their son. The rest of Cleland's epigraph seems to reference the U.S. Civil War and explains why he as the son of a prominent U.S. Southerner did not fight for the Confederacy: "Debarred by God's will from / joining his brothers in the / defence [sic] of his Country." The phrase "God's will" parallels Christian Rumph's similar epigraph which suggested that "while health lasted" he could be a minister of God. The Middletons' post-mortem offering of Cleland's non-service as a part of God's plan flatly denies that his mental illness prevented his service in the Confederacy. A contemporary or modern-day passerby could not imagine that Cleland was institutionalized for most of his adult life, including during the U.S. Civil War, nor speculate that he expressed little interest in the survival of the U.S. South, slavery, or the Confederacy.¹⁷⁶

The final italicized line that Henry Augustus Middleton chose for his disabled son's gravestone is in Latin: "*ferrea sors vitae difficilisque permit.*" The phrase comes from Publius Ovidius Naso, better known as Ovid, the Roman poet whose classical works were foundational for highly educated U.S. Southern white men such as Henry Augustus

¹⁷⁶ Cleland Kinloch Middleton (1823-1876) is buried in his father's family plot at Magnolia Cemetery in Charleston, South Carolina.

and Cleland Middleton. Based on his correspondence, Cleland likely read and enjoyed Ovid during his time in Harvard and Massachusetts, and it seems possible that his father included a line from the poet as a tribute to his son. However, one can sense that even this small piece of writing reveals that Henry Augustus and his family wanted something else for Cleland: to finish his degree at Harvard, to excel as a Confederate officer, and to help redeem the U.S. South for later generations. Instead, the son that Henry Augustus had was one who repeatedly spurned and scared his family with his sudden absences and who drained the pockets of his already debt-ridden, defeated planter-father. The line from Ovid originates in “Tristia,” Latin for “Sorrows,” a work where the poet lamented about his exile from Rome. The phrase “ferrea sors vitae difficilisque premit” translates to “I too am oppressed by a harsh and difficult lot in life.”¹⁷⁷ Other scholars have more literally translated the phrase to mean: “I too am crushed by an iron and difficult lot.”¹⁷⁸ The profound weight of this line of poetry when viewed in the context of Cleland Middleton’s life – and the once high expectations that his father had for him – can itself be crushing. An advantaged young man sent to Harvard to study Ovid would later have the poet’s mournful cry inscribed on his gravestone once those very dreams were dashed.

Unlike Cleland who has tremendous documentation about his life, his cousin Henry Izard Middleton seems to have left little in the public record. Cleland’s 1840s correspondence with his father while at Harvard provides a window into his existence when everything in his life changed due to the emergence of his mental illness. Henry Izard’s family did not preserve similar correspondence when his abnormal behavior was first noted, but we do know that his mental instability happened at a fairly young age

¹⁷⁷ Matthew M. McGowan, *Ovid in Exile* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 145.

¹⁷⁸ Arthur Leslie Wheeler, *Ovid: Tristia Ex Ponto* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1939), 220.

based on the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum records. When he was admitted a second time to the institution in January 1868, thirty-year-old Henry Izard was considered an “old case.”¹⁷⁹ He had been first committed in nine years earlier at age twenty-one in April 1859, having been “five months” insane from a “hereditary” cause. He was listed as an unmarried “student / painter” and was supported by his father, Nathaniel Russell Middleton.¹⁸⁰ Henry Izard did not reside at the asylum for long, however, as he was “removed to Philadelphia” on May 20, 1859 – just forty-two days later.¹⁸¹ His father Nathaniel Russell Middleton was an extremely wealthy and prominent Southerner, owning several plantations and serving as the president of the College of Charleston from 1857 to 1880.¹⁸² A significant contingent of Charlestonians lived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania during the antebellum and war periods; some moved there permanently, but others went north only for short stays. Nathaniel Russell Middleton and his family, including Henry Izard, were included among those U.S. Southerners who routinely went north for pleasure.¹⁸³

During the U.S. Civil War and its aftermath, Henry Izard did not live freely in Philadelphia but instead resided in “the Philadelphia Hospital for the Insane... for several years.” In the middle of the U.S. Civil War, Sidney George Fisher, a native Philadelphian and in-law to the Middletons, commented on his brother’s war-time financial support of “several persons besides his [immediate] family – Mrs. Arthur Middleton, who is abroad,

¹⁷⁹ Henry Izard Middleton, #1577, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

¹⁸⁰ Henry Izard Middleton, #1095, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² The Nathaniel Russell Middleton papers, 1823-1881, can be found at the Marlene and Nathan Addlestone Library at the College of Charleston. Some of his essays and speeches have been digitized by the College of Charleston and can be found online. These include secessionist tracts while he was the sitting president of the College of Charleston.

¹⁸³ See Nicholas B. Wainwright, *A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sydney George Fisher* (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1967) for an extensive discussion of the U.S. Southern presence in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

& Kitty, his wife's sister, who is here insane, and an insane son of Henry A. Middleton, in the hospital, none of whom get anything from South Carolina.”¹⁸⁴ Catherine “Kitty” is yet another cousin in the Middleton family who suffered with life-long mental illness, and the so-called “insane son of Henry A. Middleton” is Cleland, the Harvard refugee. In 1864, this same Joshua Francis Fisher tried writing Nathaniel Russell Middleton to discuss how to send his son Henry Izard out of Pennsylvania back to Charleston, but it is unclear if the plan occurred or not. By the end of the war, Joshua ranted to his brother Sidney George, declaring, “The Middletons are all ruined, that Middleton Place was burned, that all the gentleman were reduced to poverty.”¹⁸⁵ The fate of Nathaniel Russell and Henry Izard Middleton sunk in the total collapse of slavery and the rice kingdom. The father and son pair survived, but, with Confederate defeat, their lives would forever altered. However, for Henry Izard, mentally disabled since his early twenties, his existence was already profoundly changed, and he would only notice the world transform from within institutional walls.

By 1868, Henry Izard was living in Charleston again, but he had returned to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, where he then resided for at least the next six years. The institution provided descriptions of his behavior and condition, first in 1868 then again in 1874. Henry Izard's admission portrayed him as a “gentleman is from Charleston S.C. of good family, and while in health, a young man of decent abilities.” The asylum staff-person observed that Henry Izard “is uniformly quiet and orderly, and conducts himself with propriety,” a sign of his education and gentlemanly upbringing. Physicians found that Henry Izard was “generally silent but when addressed speaks intelligently.” He

¹⁸⁴ Wainwright, 210.

¹⁸⁵ Wainwright, 249.

proved “entirely submissive to anything required of him.” At age thirty, Henry Izard had been “insane” for nine years, and “from the nature and long standing of his mental disease, entire recovery [is] not be expected.”¹⁸⁶

An update to his patient treatment records came in April 1874, showing that Henry Izard had not improved and was still residing at the state lunatic asylum. He was now thirty-six years old and labored “under the delusion that he [had] discovered perpetual mortality.” He had constructed “a wood mold of his machine constituted by his own hands” and “takes great pleasure in exhibiting and explaining his machine and theory when asked to do so.” This peculiar revelation demonstrates that Henry Izard Middleton had been provided materials and allowed to create and keep a small complex object in his quarters. It is unclear if other patients, particularly those who arrived to the institution impoverished, were allowed such liberties and indulged similarly. Furthermore, the asylum physicians and staff appear to have treated him kindly enough by requesting he explain his machine and its workings rather than deride his invention; even its inclusion in his patient treatment records suggests an indulgence due to his social class, race, and sex. In 1874, after an additional six years of residence at the institution, Henry Izard continued to be “usually very quiet and docile,” but physicians declared him “a confirmed case of delusional insanity.” For unknown reasons, Henry Izard eventually left the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, though the precise date cannot be ascertained. For nearly forty decades, it is unclear where Henry Izard Middleton resided, but he almost certainly spent most of this time institutionalized.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Henry Izard Middleton, #1577, Vol. 3, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

¹⁸⁷ Henry Izard Middleton, #220, Vol. 3, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

At the very end of his life, Henry Izard can be found in the 1920 U.S. Federal Census for Charleston, South Carolina, living at St. Margaret's House, a private institution for the disabled. He was a reportedly an "80" years old "in-mate," a single white elderly man who had been mentally ill since age twenty-three. Like many hospitals at the turn of the twentieth century, his age was only estimated. He was actually eighty-nine years, ten months, and twenty-nine days old, though he may have been a year younger, if one trusts his gravestone rather than his death certificate. Henry Izard had been frequently, if not consistently or continuously, institutionalized for fifty-seven years, from 1859 to 1920. Many of the other "in-mates" of St. Margaret's House were similarly elderly, most being between seventy and eighty-four years old. Their original commitment dates are unknown, but they, too, could have been mentally ill and regarded as disabled for decades. In their elderly years, their families were unwilling or unable to care for them; some may have never had children or spouses, but all received financial support which allowed them to stay at a private institution in Charleston rather than the state hospital in Columbia, the distant capital city.¹⁸⁸

On September 9, 1923, a final document of Henry Izard's long life and mental disability emerged: his death certificate. He died at St. Margaret's Home in Charleston, South Carolina within a few blocks of his father's former mansion. The certificate confirmed he had never married but did not note or label his mental disability. He died from "arteris-schlerosis," now known as arteriosclerosis, which is the hardening and plague build-up of arteries and often leads to heart disease.¹⁸⁹ Henry Izard was buried one

¹⁸⁸ Year: 1920; Census Place: *Charleston Ward 12, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *T625_1688*; Page: *11B*; Enumeration District: *70*; Image: *420*.

¹⁸⁹ Certificate 014082, South Carolina Department of Archives and History; Columbia, South Carolina; *South Carolina Death Records*; Year Range: *1900-1924*; Death County or Certificate Range: *Charleston*.

day after his death in Magnolia Cemetery outside Charleston, where the rest of his immediate family had been interred years prior. His father Nathaniel Russell was buried in the lovely park-like cemetery in September 1890 with the inscribed words: “Beneath his stone rest the early remains of Nathaniel Russell Middleton... Himself a humble seeker after truth / His work, on earth, was to point his / fellow sojourners, to God; / And his solution of the mystery of life / was Prayer.” He chose a beautiful plot for his family in one of the eldest parts of Magnolia Cemetery near a deep pond surrounded by huge hardwood trees. The care given to his memorial indicates the great love and respect that Nathaniel had for himself and his intimate family: an excellent, elegant place for their mortal remains near the city they long lived in and loved deeply.¹⁹⁰

A disturbing insight comes from the placement of Henry Izard Middleton’s burial place in Magnolia in relation to his family. The gravestone of Henry Izard’s half-sibling, named after their father Nathaniel Russell, reads, “The Only Son of Nathaniel Russell Middleton and Anna DeWolf Middleton,” his second wife.¹⁹¹ Henry Izard’s own mother Emma Izard died in 1836; her grave is in Charleston’s Saint Philips Episcopal Church Cemetery.¹⁹² However, both Nathaniel’s second wife and their namesake son were buried next to the family patriarch. Henry Izard, notably, was buried elsewhere in Magnolia Cemetery, far from his father and half-siblings and even more distant from his mother. In contrast to the magnificent, massive tree that towers over the family plot by the green-glistening pond, Henry Izard’s mortal remains lay by scraggly grass and a worn path. The

¹⁹⁰ Nathaniel Russell Middleton (1810-1890) is buried in a stone-rimmed family plot by water in Magnolia Cemetery in Charleston, South Carolina.

¹⁹¹ Nathaniel Russell Middleton (1851-1896) is buried with his father and mother in the Middleton family plot in Magnolia Cemetery in Charleston, South Carolina.

¹⁹² Margaret Emma Izard Middleton (1811-1836), Nathaniel Russell Middleton’s first wife and the mother of Henry Izard Middleton, is buried at Saint Philips Episcopal Church Cemetery in downtown Charleston, South Carolina.

Middleton cemetery plot had run out of room by 1923, and Henry Izard likely could not be placed there without considerable dis-and-re-interment. His rather squat gravestone includes only his name, his birth-date, and his death date – a remarkable contrast to his father’s beautiful six-foot long flat stone with its faith-based inscription and the similarly styled gravestone of his half-brother, which even noted his place of death in the Middleton family home on South Battery Street in Charleston. No one inscribed the truth that Henry Izard Middleton had died at St. Margaret’s House, a private institution for the disabled, rather than the house of his father. He was not marked as “Son of Nathaniel Russell Middleton and Emma Izard.” He could be just another Middleton – a final member of a magnificent family fallen far from prestige by the early twentieth century. At the very least, he was finally buried in Magnolia Cemetery in the vicinity of his father and half-siblings, rather than being interred in the already neglected asylum sections of the city cemeteries in Columbia, South Carolina. But he remained distant from his father, mother, and half-siblings, even in death.¹⁹³

Henry Izard’s medical care had been financially supported for decades and decades, almost certainly by his family members, first from his father then his half-siblings then to even more distant relatives. Similarly, Cleland received financial consideration from his father, even in the heat of war. Neither were forced to stay at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum their whole lives; both resided at private institutions offering more individualized attention and better quality accommodations. The Middleton cousins’ did not live up to their family’s high expectations when their mental illness developed, but they were treated differently than paupers with similar disabilities, even

¹⁹³ Henry Izard Middleton (1834-1923) is buried away from his father’s family plot at Magnolia Cemetery in Charleston, South Carolina.

during wartime and Reconstruction. Social status and wealth, even after the loss of Confederacy and the end of slavery, permitted Cleland's autonomy while he exhibited erratic behavior and Henry Izard's multiple admissions to private hospitals for almost six decades.

The Middleton cousins and Gully family reveal different sides of the spectrum in terms of familial experiences at the South Carolina and Georgia Lunatic Asylums.

Cleland Kinloch and Henry Izard Middleton both briefly resided at the state asylums but left for smaller, private institutions that could provide higher quality, personalized care.

However, those in poverty during the 1860s had much fewer choices, and unfortunately for many taking care of disabled relatives, the only place to turn was far outside of their local community to the state lunatic asylum. Susan Gully, widowed and penniless,

gradually gave up each of her adult children because of their intellectual disabilities and her inability to support them in her and their older age during wartime. She lacked the

physical sex and gender to acquire a significant occupation and income and resorted to begging in the streets. In contrast, Nathaniel Russell and Henry Augustus Middleton

utilized their rice-harvested wealth, which was founded on the enslavement of African-Americans, to care for their young adult sons. Even though they were severely affected

by the Confederate defeat in the Civil War, neither reduced their financial support for

their sons, continuing for decades to provide funds for their care to distant institutions in

the U.S. North. To a lesser extent, Willis Bobo assisted both his daughters through their mental health episodes by paying for local medical care and then admissions to the state

lunatic asylum. The powerful contrast between the Gully, Bobo, and Middleton families should help us recognize that class disparities affected the experiences, lives, and deaths

of the disabled throughout the nineteenth century. Although all may have wanted quality care, treatment, and cure, not all mentally disabled people could find these, either privately or publicly. The consequence, then, for both individuals and families was a changed life experience based on where they resided and received treatment.

These stories span from the 1830s to the 1920s and involve four unique accounts of the mentally ill and disabled during the transformative nineteenth century. Christian Rumph never encountered the Gully, Bobo, or Middleton families, yet his early walk through the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum and his suicide there laid a foundation for subsequent patients, including that of his daughter. Christian's gravestone betrays a faint hint of something dark within him - "& while health lasted, [he was] a zealous & useful minister of the gospel" – and these traces of knowledge lend to a different understanding of U.S. Southern families of all kinds. In the Bobo family, physicians on the local and state level discussed a hereditary influence on mental illness with Mary and Rhoda, and these white men placed great blame on their female bodies. Still, all of these men – from father, to husband, to doctors – wanted cure for Mary Bobo Baker and Rhoda Narcissa Bobo. In the Gully family, we can see the struggles of a poor white woman in the 1850s and 1860s with the loss of her husband and the gradual inability to provide for her intellectually disabled adult children. Her desperation when she sought out the Georgia Lunatic Asylum is not unlike the pained hope of Christian Rumph's family, who desired an end to his mental illness but found little reassurance. Even the Middletons' loved ones may have hoped for improvement but eventually became accustomed to paying for their male relatives. The death of Anne Rumph at home may indicate some relief to such stories, but her heavy dependence on her sister and the ease which her existence

disappeared from the record prove to be considerable warning reading about disabled people in the nineteenth century.

Even though darkness does not pervade some of the life stories of Thomas, Cleland, and Henry Izard Middleton, these three men never recovered from their mental and physical disturbances; all three died at institutions designed for the disabled rather than with family. The differences in their deaths, which occurred in 1863, 1876, and 1923, can illuminate different aspects of the U.S. Civil War, Reconstruction, and the early twentieth century in distinct ways. We must add disabled people residing at institutions – state lunatic asylums and private hospitals – to have a better, fuller understanding of the long transition of the United States through some of its greatest fundamental transformations. The Middleton men exuded great privilege and yet they suffered due to their disability. However, variations in suffering should be noted: the difference between Christian and Anne Rumph, the Bobo Baker sisters, the various Gully siblings, and the three Middleton men existed in large part due to their social class and their varied admissions in time and space. Although blood linked these relatives, so did their mental illness and disabilities. Their institutional experiences tie in with each other's in ways that their families understood and we today witness as important and intimate. Although none here truly escaped their time in the asylum, their families still strove for total cure, even facing historical and familial legacies of disability and suffering.

CHAPTER 3

War

Innumerable American men shot, bled, deserted, and died during the U.S. Civil War. Their corpses were dropped in ditches, wells, and fields, and only rarely returned home. Countless civilians engaged in the conflict directly and indirectly; unknown numbers suffered from all shades of trauma, starvation, disease, and war crimes. Letters on all kinds of paper, written by all kinds of instruments, traded spaces across the United States from the far West, North, and South. Letters were clutched to chests and breasts; they were dampened with tears, blood, sweat, mud, and sickness; they were created with love, fear, pain, frustration, anxiety, and affection. We relish the intimate writing found in these war letters and savor the revealed kinship and emotion visible on the crumbling pages.

In 1861, a young officer from Rhode Island declared to his wife: “My love for you is deathless, it seems to bind me to you with mighty cables that nothing but Omnipotence could break; and yet my love of Country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me irresistibly on with all these chains to the battlefield.”¹⁹⁴ A week later, his life poured out at the First Battle of Bull Run. His words have endured as an eternal testament to love in the war-torn nineteenth century. Similarly, a transitionally literate father from South Carolina pledged to his soldier son in 1862: “I hope soon to sea you again but if it shold be the will of god that we shal never meet on eart again I hope will

¹⁹⁴ “My Very Dear Wife – The Last Letter of Major Sullivan Balou,” Manassas National Battlefield Park, accessed January 1, 2016, <https://www.nps.gov/resources/story.htm%3Fid%3D253>.

meet in heaven.” Within a few months, his son was dead from a severe streptococcal skin infection in Richmond, Virginia.¹⁹⁵ These distant words inform modern Americans about the spoken language and private familial bonds in the nineteenth century. While the elite easily exchanged letters and notes, “emotions prompted, in fact compelled... the little-educated... to write no matter how rudimentary their skills.”¹⁹⁶ The voices of the dead rise true in these letters, yet some still have not managed to be heard, for their letters vanished when their lives deteriorated in mental and physical disability. We have some of their stories from partial accounts at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums, and their unspoken and unwritten hardships illuminate the war’s furthest, most shadowed margins.

Between January 1861 and December 1865, three hundred patients were admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum and another two-hundred twenty-six people entered the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. These numbers represent a noticeable decline from the antebellum period. The fewest admissions came in the years 1864 and 1865 when the Siege of Petersburg and the Atlanta campaign occurred and those across the U.S. South struggled to continue a relatively normal existence. Many admitted to the state lunatic asylums were civilians whose families became unable or unwilling to care for them during the increasingly difficult war period. Some were physically disabled children, others were feeble elderly relatives. Very few were enslaved African-Americans.

Instead, the overwhelming majority of those admitted were white U.S. Southerners. During the 1860s, at least twenty men were explicitly identified as soldiers or veterans at

¹⁹⁵ “Culbertson3,” J. M. Culbertson to Thomas Hiram Culbertson, eHistory, February 17, 1862, accessed January 1, 2017, <https://drupal-staging.itos.uga.edu/ehistory/common-tongues/node/10894>.

¹⁹⁶ “Introduction to Common Tongues,” eHistory, accessed January 1, 2017, <https://drupal-staging.itos.uga.edu/ehistory/common-tongues/introduction>.

the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, though many more undoubtedly served in the Confederate military. The South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, which recorded less information, only explicitly identified eleven men as soldiers between 1861 and 1865. However, these two U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums encountered numerous people affected by the U.S. Civil War, even if physicians only briefly and vaguely noted the connection between the conflict and patient health. At the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, only a handful of patients received war-related entries for their “cause of insanity.” These include Susan J. Gregg, “whose only son died in battle,” and Oscar D. Jones, whose “wound in battle” left him insane and paralyzed.¹⁹⁷ Several had their cause of insanity marked as “war excitement” or “the effects of war.” Even as late as 1869, a young white woman came to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum for “war trouble.”¹⁹⁸ While the Georgia’s narrative evaluative admission style provides more details about the men, women, and children damaged by war trauma, those at South Carolina also suffered from the difficulties and terrors of the U.S. Civil War.

Scholars have recently worked to understand the effect of “the living hell” of war on soldiers and civilians during the 1860s and beyond. The belief that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can be found in past conflicts, specifically the U.S. Civil War, has taken hold in the mainstream American public. In the early twenty-first century, scholars addressed PTSD in the U.S. Civil War in such public spaces as *The New York Times*, the Smithsonian, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.¹⁹⁹ Twenty-first century

¹⁹⁷ Susan J. Gregg #1462, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947; Oscar D. Jones, #1600, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

¹⁹⁸ Catharine J. Browne, #1713, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

¹⁹⁹ Sarah Handley-Cousins, “PTSD and the Civil War,” *The New York Times* (August 13, 2014); Tony Horwitz, “Did Civil War Soldiers Have PTSD?” *The Smithsonian Magazine* (January 2015); Matthew J. Friedman, “History of PTSD in Veterans: Civil War to DSM-5,” U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accessed January 1, 2017, <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/basics/history-of-ptsd-vets.asp>.

historians have explored the experience of PTSD in Union and Confederate soldiers, including Eric T. Dean's foundational work, *Shook Over Hell: Post-traumatic Stress, Vietnam, and the Civil War* (1997), Diane Sommerville's research into suicide and Southern soldiers (2011-2016), Megan Nelson and Amy Taylor's *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the U.S. Civil War* (2012), Michael C. C. Adams' *Living Hell: The Dark Side of the Civil War* (2014), Brian Craig Miller's *Empty Sleeves: Amputation in the Civil War South* (2015), and Dillon J. Carroll's *The Scourge of War: Injury and Suffering in the U.S. Civil War* (2016). Although a few of these scholars have investigated U.S. Civil War veterans admitted to state lunatic asylums in the postwar period, none have focused fully on patients and their families at these institutions during and after the U.S. Civil War. The men and women traumatized by war who were admitted during the 1860s arrived at the two state lunatic asylums in a state of unstable institutional and societal transition. The battlefield and hospital were immediate places of horror, but the homestead and state lunatic asylum became later sites of struggle and survival.

The U.S. Civil War has always been considered via intersectionality and positionality. Journalists and biographers have long contrasted Johnny Reb and Billy Yank, including their regional differences, stylized masculinities, and political positions. Recent historians have considered the similarities and distinctions between enslaved and freed African-Americans during the conflict, as well as the plight of white women in the Southern, Northern, and Western United States respectively. If we can discuss the unique positions of these subpopulations, then we should also carefully consider those who entered state lunatic asylums in the U.S. South. Within this unusual group, we examine the intersection of race, gender, class, and disability during conflict. A traumatized poor immigrant

seamstress will have a different life story to a wealthy white physician's wife. Similarly, a Confederate doctor struck down by typhoid fever will experience the war quite differently than a Confederate surgeon cycling through periodic episodes of mental instability. While all the cases in this following chapter are white adult U.S. Southerners, their additional identity variables fractures and fragments their story, creating a more complicated vision of those suffering with disability due to the U.S. Civil War.

Women at War: *P.J. Fitzgibbon, Elizabeth Shockley, and Susan J. Gregg*

The traditional favorites of U.S. Civil War history resonate in classrooms, small towns, preserved battlefields, and national parks throughout the country. Children learn Fort Sumter, Gettysburg, Appomattox; tourists trail through the Siege of Petersburg and dip into the grass-carpeted crater; and drivers fly by historical markers designating homes of Lincoln, Lee, Jackson, Davis, and Grant. However, millions of unknown Americans experienced the U.S. Civil War, and their stories are still hidden away in places not so easily accessed by the public. Few living Americans know of Mrs. P. J. Fitzgibbon, though some know the name of her attackers – the Rattlesnake Club of Savannah, Georgia, a vigilante secessionist organization between late 1860 and mid 1862. Unlike the spatial sites that we have preserved, Mrs. Fitzgibbon has disappeared into the darkness; she left only a slight imprint on the world, and no one strove to keep her experiences alive in the record. However, P.J.'s lived experiences of physical assault and institutionalization reveal more about the 1860s than the antebellum furniture in Robert E. Lee's mansion on the hill, and she and her life should be critically considered.

The actions taken against Mrs. Fitzgibbon force a reconsideration of the U.S. Civil War, even if she personally left us little behind to study. Her clearest appearance in the print record is an April 24, 1861 admission entry at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum where she received just eight scant sentences of attention from physicians. Ten days earlier, the Battle of Fort Sumter had concluded, and Mrs. Fitzgibbon's hometown of Savannah was roiling with heated displays of Confederate patriotism and Southern manhood. Mrs. Fitzgibbon was a forty-five-year-old widow; she was an Irish immigrant who had resided in Savannah for fifteen years. She had practiced hatmaking in the city, but she had little means and was viewed as a pauper. For some reason, in those unsettled days of April 1861, a few men perceived Mrs. Fitzgibbon as an abolitionist and sympathetic to the African-American plight. While this judgment may have been mistaken, it could have been correct, and it is impossible to discern if Mrs. Fitzgibbon held any abolitionist or Unionist beliefs nor if she enacted any sympathetic actions towards local African-Americans in Savannah. Nonetheless, she attracted the violence of the Rattlesnake Club, a secret organization of secessionist Southern men. Sometime in early April, 1861, a number of unknown white men cornered her and "threatened [her] severely," causing such "fright" that her mental health declined and the Chatham County Inferior Court sent her away to the lunatic asylum in Milledgeville for treatment.²⁰⁰

Mrs. P.J. Fitzgibbon herself is difficult to follow in history, in significant part due to the loose records kept by the asylum attendants, who did not expound upon her first or middle name, wrote no personal contact or address, and did not record her ultimate fate, such as her discharge or death at the asylum. Yet her attackers – the Rattlesnake Club – are fairly well-known to U.S. Civil War historians who occasionally remark on their

²⁰⁰ P. J. Fitzgibbon, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 20-21.

temporary presence in Savannah, Georgia during late 1860 and early 1861. One group of scholars described the “notorious” club as a “citizen vigilante group organized early in the war.”²⁰¹ They were “the fire-eating Rattlesnake Club, which some would call a gang.”²⁰² Savannah’s secessionist organization harked back to the Revolutionary War symbol of the coiled snake with the motto of ‘Don’t Tread On Me.’ The Rattlesnake Club was joined by two other “vigilante groups” called the Savannah Rifles and Blue Cups, and all three “reportedly consisted of ‘all the rowdies in town.’” Another victim of the Rattlesnake Club once “claimed that, although its members called themselves ‘minutemen,’ the group was little more than a ring of racketeers, offering to protect ‘members’ from the wrath of the mob.”²⁰³ As the secession began to stir certain Georgian hearts and minds, one barely organized group of white men violently targeted those that they believed questioned the foundational values of the U.S. South and what would be the Confederacy.

In January 1861, *The New York Times* noted that there was a “kind of half regulated and systematized mob law which controls society” in Savannah, and that while “property is not secure... the ‘Rattlesnake Club’ offer to protect holders who will see their members comfortably supplied and provided.”²⁰⁴ Somehow, Mrs. Fitzgibbon had instead earned their violent attention – and, in April 1861, she was at least verbally assaulted by members of the vigilante secessionist group. She may have escaped physical violence, which may be due to her gender rather than her age or immigrant status, but

²⁰¹ Barry Sheehy, Cindy Wallace, and Vaughnette Goode-Walker, *Civil War Savannah: Savannah, Immortal City* (Austin, Texas: Emerald Book Company, 2011), 377.

²⁰² Sheehy, Wallace, and Goode-Walker, *Civil War Savannah*, 441.

²⁰³ Jacqueline Jones, *Saving Savannah: The City and the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Civil War Library, 2009), 125.

²⁰⁴ “Affairs in Savannah,” *New York Times*, January 16, 1861.

then again, she may have been physically assaulted, the records are left unclear. Notably, the Rattlesnake Club would become infamous in for violently attacking potentially Unionist men, not women. Their rare attack on Mrs. Fitzgibbon – which may have lacked physical contact – did not make the local or national press, but the organization’s violence was more severe when it came to men who appeared Unionist, abolitionist, or sympathetic towards African-Americans. P.J.’s invisibility may be due to the lack of physical violence against her, but her gender likely stopped both great bodily harm and media attention regarding her threatening encounter with the secessionist gang.

Months prior, in November 1860, the Rattlesnake Club tarred and feathered a U.S. citizen named Mr. Blyer. One of the few surviving records of this incident comes in the 1878 property claim of David R. Dillon of Savannah, who argued he was a unionist and deserved compensation for destroyed property during the war valued at \$348,000. In his testimony, one of the Rattlesnake Club’s earliest acts of violence emerged. David was a life-long resident of Savannah, “owned fifty or sixty slaves,” and “appears to have been a bold and enterprising speculator, especially during the war.” He did not have strong “political sympathies” during the conflict, but in November 1860 around the election, he showed “kind-hearted conduct toward Mr. Blyer, when he was tarred and feathered” by the Rattlesnake Club for reportedly being a Union-leaning man. David R. Dillon visited Mr. Blyer after the attack and “assisted the poor fellow.” David’s claims were highly questioned considering his long and profitable speculating during the war and were ultimately rejected due his obvious disloyalty to the United States during the U.S. Civil

War.²⁰⁵ This particular incident of the Rattlesnake Club's violence never emerged in the national news, but the organization had clearly and viciously targeted a local white man with Unionist leanings in the intense 1860 election. When Georgia seceded from the United States in early 1861, the Savannah men escalated in their violence and crossed clear political boundaries that catapulted their assault onto the international stage.

In February 1861, the "members of the Rattlesnake Club, a local secret Society, seized [British sea Captain Vaughn] and took him to the edge of the city; there they shaved his head, tarred and feathered him, flogged him, and forced him to walk back" into Savannah in his crippled state of agony. The vigilante organization had apparently targeted Vaughn because he "socialized with blacks"; in particular, he had "invited several black stevedores to dine in his cabin" on an occasion a few days earlier. Although Savannah citizens responded with outrage, Vaughn, "apparently frightened, weighed anchor and fled."²⁰⁶ The horrified mayor of Savannah offered \$500 and the British consul \$1,000 "for the apprehension of the offenders, who had been disguised." The explicit reason reported in the media that provoked the Rattlesnake Club's attack was that Captain Vaughn had allowed "the negro stevedore eat his dinner in the captain's cabin," and once "the mate seems to have misrepresented this to the people on the shore," the Rattlesnake Club intervened with violence.²⁰⁷ A few of his white male attackers were eventually found and charged with riot, but when released on bail, none returned to attend

²⁰⁵ House of Representatives Second Session of the Forty-Fifth Congress, *Index to the Miscellaneous Documents of the House of Representatives, 1877-1878* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), 17-23.

²⁰⁶ Eugene Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service and the U.S. Civil War* (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 1994), 64.

²⁰⁷ Milledge Louis Bonham, *The British Consuls in the Confederacy*, Volume 43, Issue 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), 139, 505.

their trial.²⁰⁸ After the incident, the *Albion* newspaper in New York compared the Rattlesnake Club to “the Dead Rabbits” of New York and the “Plug Uglies” of Baltimore” – other infamous violent city gangs – except the Rattlesnake Club had attacked men and women with a ferocity supported by secession and racism.²⁰⁹

Days after the attack, *The New York Times* stated that “since Capt. VAUGHAN, of the British ship *Kalos*, was lynched at Savannah, because he chose to eat dinner with a colored stevedore, and yet we do not hear by mail or telegraph that any one of the perpetrators of the outrage has been arrested.” The newspaper smartly attributed the lack of arrests that “the C.S.A. [is yet in] good working order, -- if that day shall ever arrive.”²¹⁰ No justice was found for Captain Vaughan – or for Mr. Blyer – or Mrs. P.J. Fitzgibbon. No arrests came. The reward money offered (only for one of the incidents) was never handed out. The February 1861 attack on British Captain Vaughan seems to have occurred directly after Georgia’s secession, while the assault on Mrs. Fitzgibbon happened only days after the official military start of the U.S. Civil War in early April 1861. Earlier, in the turmoil of Lincoln’s election in November, 1860, the vigilantes went after a possibly Unionist man, tarring and feathering him in the style of the patriots in the Revolution. When the men of the Rattlesnake Club had inflamed spirits, they took to the streets and attacked whoever marginally spoke against the inchoate Confederacy. Although Mrs. Fitzgibbon may not have been physically attacked, the incident drove her further to mental instability and a commitment on the cusp of war to the state lunatic asylum. She may have escaped being tarred and feathered due to her gender, age, or poverty, though the first seems the most likely significant variable. Her trauma changed

²⁰⁸ Eugene Berwanger, *The British Foreign Service and the U.S. Civil War*, 64.

²⁰⁹ “Rattlesnake Club,” *The Albion*, February 16, 1861.

²¹⁰ “What Will They Do About It?” *The New York Times*, February 15, 1861.

her life, however. As Georgian boys mustered into military service, Mrs. P.J. Fitzgibbon, a poor Irish widow, arrived at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum suffering from “fright.” Her record does not reveal when or if she ever left.

By October 1862, a Northern-born merchant residing in Savannah informed *The New York Times* that the Rattlesnake Club “at whose instigations so many outrages were committed on Union men and strangers at the commencement of the movement, have pretty much died out.” His explanation was that “the better class of citizens were compelled to discountenance them in self-preservation, and to save their whole social fabric from tumbling into anarchy.” Furthermore, the Savannah resident suggested that the vigilantes themselves had joined the Confederate military and thus “relieved the city from much of the terrorism that formerly existed.”²¹¹ Times had changed: now the young Confederacy had to struggle with their men fighting in distant battles, their women laboring on the home-front, and their enslaved laborers fleeing to freedom. Southern women – white or black – did not escape suffering because much of the war was elsewhere. Instead, the vast trauma of isolation, abandonment, and grief fell upon many women across the U.S. South, particularly white women with male relatives serving in the Confederacy.

In March 1863, Elizabeth Shockley, a twenty-one-year-old woman, appeared at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, having been “insane about two months” and furthermore had been “attacked with measles about three months back.” At the time of her “convalescence,” her family had gotten word that three of her brothers who had enlisted in the Confederacy at the same time had collectively fallen sick in an Atlanta hospital. Her father Thomas Shockley traveled from Gainesville to Atlanta – about sixty miles

²¹¹ “Matters and Things in Savannah,” *The New York Times*, October 7, 1862.

from Northeast Georgia to the center of the state – to tend to his sons.²¹² Elizabeth was one of ten siblings, and her mother remained with her during her own sickness while her father could attend to her brothers. Thomas may have felt more comfortable as a man going through conflicted country to nurse his three sick sons, while the family may have felt safer with his wife and daughters at home in Gainesville away from city and camp disease. Nonetheless, life was unmanageably difficult for Elizabeth, a young single woman suffering from measles, disturbed mental health, the sudden separation from her father, and extended separation with her brothers.

At age twenty-one, Elizabeth experienced several new kinds of suffering for the first time in her life. Her life worsened considerably when her father and three brothers all died at once in the Atlanta hospital in July 1862. Disease dragged the four men down into death. Her father Thomas was himself a War of 1812 combat veteran, but another war took his life as well as that of his three sons: his namesake Thomas Shockley, Aquilla Milton Shockley, and John Tyler Shockley.²¹³ Elizabeth's three brothers had joined Company K, 43rd Georgia Infantry in March 1862, fighting in Alabama in April, Chattanooga in June, and Atlanta in July.²¹⁴ Their deaths in late July 1862 came after only four months of service, made even more complicated by the related loss of their father to the same disease in the same city, most likely in the same hospital.²¹⁵ Elizabeth, already sick and mentally unstable, confronted the deaths of her father and brothers and was so shocked that physicians believed the trauma worsened "the original disorder of

²¹² Elizabeth Shockley, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 88.

²¹³ National Archives and Records Administration. *Index to the Compiled Military Service Records for the Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the War of 1812*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. M602, 234 rolls.

²¹⁴ National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, online <<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>>, acquired 2007.

²¹⁵ The Shockley brothers are buried at the Shockley Family Cemetery, Lula, Hall County, Georgia.

her mind.” She began exhibiting symptoms of disturbed mental health to such an extent that her mother and sisters felt they were unable to care for her properly at home. Her surviving family brought her mental illness to the attention to the Sheriff of Hall County and the county Inferior Court, who agreed to send her to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum in March 1863 during the apex of the U.S. Civil War.²¹⁶

Elizabeth appeared at the state lunatic asylum “generally excited” and willing to “commit acts of violence to others.” She repeated to asylum physicians that “she has committed the unpardonable sin and is now in Hell and suffering all the torments of the damned, is burning up, &c.” Her fixation on her burning torture in Hell grimly reminds modern readers that the U.S. Civil War invaded the lives, minds, and bodies of Americans far beyond the traditional battlefields. Elizabeth’s concern about her personal sins may seem strange, but her interpretation of her recent losses and suffering may have led her to religious fears of damnation. She likely had begun obsessing about Hell at home with her struggling surviving family. By March 1863, Elizabeth had overcome her physical illness and seemed “to be now in good general health” upon admission to the asylum. However, she ate and slept “only tolerably,” which combined with her obsessive feelings of Hellish torment meant that she was committed to the state lunatic asylum for treatment for her physical and mental health concerns.²¹⁷

It is unclear how long Elizabeth Shockley remained at Milledgeville because of negligent war-time record-keeping, but she is marked in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census as residing her mother and sister in Hall County, Georgia. In 1870, five years after the war, her mother and namesake was sixty-one, keeping a small home and farm worth just over

²¹⁶ Elizabeth Shockley, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 88.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

\$680. Both Elizabeth and her older sister were still single and living at home. Three formerly enslaved teenaged African-Americans worked on their farm. Three of her four surviving brothers lived next door with their wives and children.²¹⁸ According to census records, Elizabeth appears to have never married and remained in Hall County the rest of her life. She primarily resided with family, including her older unmarried sister and later a niece and nephew. For several decades in the early twentieth century, an African-American farmer named John resided with Elizabeth in apparently the same household; their relationship remains entirely unknown, and it appears utterly fascinating that the two shared a house with clearly different racial designations in the U.S. Federal Census. John's labor on the Shockley farm likely brought in enough money that Elizabeth could survive and not have to labor in her old age; John worked for her at least between 1900 and 1910, possibly earlier and later.²¹⁹ John's fate is currently unknown, but Elizabeth died on July 8, 1920 in Hall County at the age of eight-six, her life forever altered by a war almost sixty years prior.²²⁰

Disease had destroyed Elizabeth Shockley in many ways: it had caused her to fumble further into a disturbed state at a young age, and it had taken the lives of her father and three brothers at a pivotal point in her development. While she would remain close to her surviving brothers and sisters, she never appears to have flourished financially or began a family of her own. Yet her time at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum did not cause her to be marked disabled for subsequent censuses, and she lived fairly

²¹⁸ Year: 1870; Census Place: Polkville, Hall, Georgia; Roll: M593_155; Page: 360A; Image: 321106; Family History Library Film: 545654.

²¹⁹ Year: 1900; Census Place: Polkville, Hall, Georgia; Roll: 202; Page: 16A; Enumeration District: 0081; FHL microfilm: 1240202; Year: 1910; Census Place: Polkville, Hall, Georgia; Roll: T624_196; Page: 11B; Enumeration District: 0082; FHL microfilm: 1374209.

²²⁰ Certificate Number: 20838-B, State of Georgia. *Indexes of Vital Records for Georgia: Deaths, 1919-1998*. Georgia, USA: Georgia Health Department, Office of Vital Records, 1998.

independently into her old age in the county of her birth. The effects of her temporary mental health crisis cannot be fully understood, but physicians in the U.S. Civil War attributed it to the death of her father and brothers to disease while in the Confederate service. The burden that Elizabeth carried into the twentieth century was built on a collapsed cause and the stolen lives of young and old men alike from the U.S. Civil War.

Similarly, the burden blanketing the shoulders of Susan Gregg, a “physician’s wife” from Sumter County, South Carolina, had all to do with death and the failed Confederacy. At her institutionalization to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, Susan was identified as a fifty-year-old white woman whose bloodline stretched far back into the earliest eras of South Carolina history. Both her father and grandfather served in the American Revolutionary War, although her mother was a recent Irish immigrant to the area.²²¹ Susan had married into a prevalent wealthy Southern family, and her husband Dr. Ezra McKnight Gregg was a planter and physician who graduated from the South Carolina College in 1819.²²² In 1860, he owned real estate worth \$25,000 and had personal estate at \$45,000.²²³ As expected of an elite Southerner with considerable wealth, Ezra had enslaved seventy-six African-American laborers and worked them on plantation land in Sumter County, South Carolina. His enslaved workers ranged from a year-old infant to a ninety-five year-old woman. Between 1850 and 1860, he had increased his enslaved population from fifty-one people to seventy-six, at least somewhat through the natural increase of those on his plantation.²²⁴ Ezra’s real estate had risen

²²¹ Year: 1860; Census Place: Sumter, Sumter, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1227; Page: 121; Family History Library Film: 805227.

²²² Maximillian La Borde, *History of South Carolina College* (Columbia, South Carolina: Peter B. Glass, 1859), 441.

²²³ Year: 1860; Census Place: Sumter, Sumter, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1227; Page: 121; Family History Library Film: 805227.

²²⁴ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*.

incredibly between 1850 and 1860 from an estimated \$8,000 to \$25,000.²²⁵ By all appearances, the Gregg family seemed successful, but during this time, Susan and Ezra were excruciatingly unable to grow their very own family.

After the pair were married in the early 1830s, Susan and Ezra Gregg had several children throughout the decade. Her first infants did not survive childhood, and little record endures about their very brief time of life on Earth. Her next three daughters persisted past their first year: Mary Jane, Sarah Eliza, and Cornelia Carter born in 1834, 1836, and 1839 respectively. Yet Susan only had a short time with her little daughters as scarlet fever struck each of them down between July 1840 and September 1841. Their gravestones in white marble are considerable. The girls waited for their parents at the Mount Zion Presbyterian Cemetery in Lee County, South Carolina. But Susan and Ezra Gregg tried one more time in the midst of their daughters' gradual deaths. The pair conceived in the very same month that their first daughter died, and a son was born six months before their final two daughters passed away.²²⁶ They named their miracle son William Carter Gregg after Susan's father who had died decades earlier. He would be the only child of theirs to reach adulthood. He survived the scarlet fever that destroyed his young sisters, and all the hopes of Susan and Ezra fell upon him. He attended school as early as age nine.²²⁷ At nineteen in the months before the U.S. Civil War, William was a

Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. M432, 1,009 rolls; United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

²²⁵ Year: 1850; Census Place: Sumter, Sumter, South Carolina; Roll: M432_859; Page: 375A; Image: 138; Year: 1860; Census Place: Sumter, Sumter, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1227; Page: 121; Family History Library Film: 805227.

²²⁶ The Gregg family is primarily buried at the Mount Zion Presbyterian Cemetery in Bishopville, Lee County, South Carolina.

²²⁷ Year: 1850; Census Place: Sumter, Sumter, South Carolina; Roll: M432_859; Page: 375A; Image: 138.

student in college, possibly the alma mater as his father.²²⁸ He would not remain there during the incipient conflict, however, and enlisted early in the Confederate service.

Susan's only son William joined Company K, 23rd Regiment, South Carolina Infantry (Hatch's Coast Rangers) as a private.²²⁹ It is unclear when he mustered into service, but his company organized in Sumter, South Carolina in the fall of 1861 while the larger regiment "was composed of men and boys from the city and county of Charleston."²³⁰ Upon enlistment, William Carter Gregg was about twenty years old, and he joined a company of similarly young men, whose initial forays in war were hunting squirrels, fishing and finding oysters, and "feast[ing] on the fat of the land." The company spent time defending Morris Island in 1862 before heading to Petersburg and Richmond, Virginia, passing through Columbia, South Carolina and Charlotte, North Carolina along the way.²³¹ Company K's first casualties came on July 30, 1862, when a clash between Confederate and U.S. Federal forces left three of the company dead and another nineteen wounded. William Carter Gregg likely watched his superior officer, Captain D. R. McCallum search through the night with a torch-light to find the wounded of Company K after the battle.²³² Between 1862 and 1864, William saw combat at Sharpsburg, Maryland; Kinston, North Carolina; Vicksburg, Mississippi; and the Siege of Petersburg, including the infamous Battle of the Crater.

On July 30, 1864, the date of the Battle of the Crater, several companies of the nearby 22nd South Carolina Regiment "were buried in the ruins" in the unexpected

²²⁸ Year: 1860; Census Place: Sumter, Sumter, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1227; Page: 121; Family History Library Film: 805227.

²²⁹ National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, online <<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>>, acquired 2007.

²³⁰ W. J. Andrews, *Company K., 23rd South Carolina Volunteers in the Civil War, from 1862-1865* (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet & Shepperson, 1909), 3-4.

²³¹ Andrews, *Company K*, 5-7.

²³² Andrews, *Company K*, 13.

explosion underneath their position at Petersburg, Virginia. Surviving veterans of William's regiment later argued that the 23rd South Carolina Regiment's "removal to the right on [the previous] afternoon... was a merciful providence, for otherwise Twenty-third Regiment would have met the fate of the Twenty-second in its stead," that is, facing death by the explosion or being buried alive in the crater.²³³ William Carter Gregg almost certainly participated in the Company K's assault on the vanguard force of African-American soldiers led by U.S. Brigadier General Edward Ferrero, who were forced into the Crater. Several of his fellow soldiers fought close to the Crater and later participated in "the burying of 500 human beings in this Crater and around it." In the subsequent days after the Battle of the Crater, William and others in Company K "made negro prisoners drag the bodies of their dead and throw them into holes dug for their reception" while the Confederates removed their own dead at night.²³⁴ A surviving veteran later described the aftermath: "The pestholes and pools of blood, coupled with the beaming, scorching rays of an August sun, filled the whole atmosphere with a foul vapour, which we inhaled at every breath. Green flies without number buzzed audibly all around us and added to the hideousness of the scene... None, save those who were in or near the Crater in this trying time, can have any adequate conception of what we endured."²³⁵ It is unknown what William wrote to his mother, Susan Gregg, during this disturbing period in his young life. He was only twenty-three, and the Siege of Petersburg was not yet done.

As the summer of 1864 faded and the spring of 1865 swept over the U.S. Civil War, Company K ended a brief peaceful rest and marched once more to Petersburg. At midnight on March 24, 1865, the company "rested in an oak grove" and slept "on wet

²³³ Andrews, *Company K*, 21.

²³⁴ Andrews, *Company K*, 24.

²³⁵ Andrews, *Company K*, 25.

ground until two hours before day” when they awoke and marched “to the iron bridge, halted and left all our baggage.” The brigade commander, General Wallace, ordered Company K to hold the recently captured U.S. Fort Stedmen, but U.S. Federal forces were still very much in the area, determined to retake their lost possession. As Company K of the 23rd South Carolina Regiment occupied the batteries and Fort Stedmen, Union artillery and infantry unloaded on the Confederates. Almost immediately upon settling into position, a well-loved lieutenant of Company K was wounded in the thigh. Fifteen minutes later, William Carter Gregg was suddenly shot in the head and was violently killed. In the following areas, the Federal U.S. forces behaved like men possessed, and their ferocious attempt to retake Fort Stedmen led to a desperate Confederate retreat and a rapid Union victory. William took his place among the battle’s dead, including seventy-two Union men and approximately six-hundred Confederate men. Many of his fellows in Company K were captured and held prisoner at Point Lookout Prison after they failed to escape Federal U.S. soldiers at the battle’s end.²³⁶ They would not return home until early July 1865 after Confederate defeat, surrender, and their eventual parole in late June. It seems William Carter Gregg never returned home, neither alive nor dead, though his mourning parents erected a beautiful gravestone in Bishopville, South Carolina in his memory soon after his death.²³⁷

We have no surviving public letters between Susan, Ezra, and William, though they must have exchanged many considering their wealth, education, literacy, and his role as their only son. The unfortunate consequence of the lack of their family letters

²³⁶ Andrews, *Company K*, 26.

²³⁷ William Carter Gregg is almost certainly buried near Fort Stedmen in Petersburg, Virginia, considering the rapid retreat of Confederate forces and the capture of most of his Company within hours of his death at the site. His family is buried at Mount Zion Presbyterian Cemetery in Bishopville, Lee County, South Carolina, and they erected a gravestone in his memory at this same location.

means that we must rely instead on the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum to complete the vision of Susan Gregg's experience of mourning after William's death. By late spring 1865, the Confederacy was in steep decline after multiple failed battles, an offensive campaign burning through Georgia, and the vast numbers of emancipated "contraband" freedpeople moving towards Federal U.S. forces. Susan Gregg must have imagined that William, her only son and her only child to reach adulthood, would return home, even if they lost everything else. However, her long-lasting hope was crushed into bloodied dirt when William was killed during the final days of the Siege of Petersburg in March 1865, just two weeks before the formal surrender at Appomattox. We have no record of Susan's immediate response to his death or even the Confederacy's defeat, but she did not emotionally manage either event well. Over a year later, in July 1866, Susan J. Gregg was committed to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. The physicians plainly listed her cause of insanity as "death of only son in battle," suggesting her long-time grief over the loss of William in the war had finally led her to such mental instability that her husband Ezra felt unable or unwilling to care for her at home. We can only wonder at what sorrows engulfed Susan over the long and yet short year between her son's death and her admission to the state lunatic asylum.²³⁸

Initially noted as "rather depressed" and "growing worse," Susan left the institution sometime before 1870, although her specific discharge date is not in the record. She does not appear to have excelled at the asylum, but she was either discharged or removed within the subsequent four years after her admission. By 1870, Susan Gregg and her husband were in a distinctly different and dire state but residing together in Sumter County, South Carolina. At the age of seventy, Ezra was listed in the 1870 U.S.

²³⁸ Susan J. Gregg, #1462, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

Federal Census as a farmer instead of a physician or planter. His real estate had plummeted to \$5,600 from \$25,000, indicating that he had sold or lost a significant amount of land. His personal estate had fallen almost 100% to \$400 due to the loss of his enslaved laborers. Susan was marked beside her husband in the U.S. Federal Census for Sumter County as “Without Occupation,” but she was also notably not listed as insane. The lack of an “insane” designation was almost certainly because neither she nor Ezra told the census enumerator about her stay at the state lunatic asylum several years earlier.²³⁹ Unexpectedly, within two years, Susan Gregg was dead and interred beside her son’s memorial in Bishopville, Lee County, South Carolina. Her gravestone, etched with a weeping willow, matches the palm tree on her son’s memorial stone. Her death date was marked as May 3, 1872. There is no specific cause listed for her death, but it is difficult to say that the U.S. Civil War had not shortened her life, as it had for her son.²⁴⁰

Susan J. Gregg’s admission at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum enriches her last experiences in this world: her son’s death right before the end of the war and the U.S. South’s capitulation meant profound sadness and the end of so many dreams for Susan and her husband. She is among the many war-wrecked; their lives are understood in the context of war, where disease and death struck them like minié ball. But the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum records reveal another key part of their lives – perhaps the most vital part, where they suffered, struggled, survived, and ultimately often succumbed to what happened in those terrible years of the war. Countless white U.S. Southern women confronted terrors and horrors unique to the U.S. Civil War. Those who entered the

²³⁹ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Mount Clio, Sumter, South Carolina*; Roll: *M593_1509*; Page: *125B*; Image: *97727*; Family History Library Film: *553008*.

²⁴⁰ Susan J. Gregg is buried to the right of her son’s memorial stone at Mount Zion Presbyterian Cemetery in Bishopville, Lee County, South Carolina.

Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums were marked with trauma in ways that were distinctly gendered and exclusive to war and death in the 1860s.

Disabled Doctors: *Dr. Joseph Simpson and Dr. Fleming J. Mathews*

Education and socio-economic status did not and does not prevent mental illness or disability. Regardless of time period, a wealthy man with an excellent educational background may be able to afford and receive better treatment and medical attention, but his chance at developing schizophrenia or receiving a Traumatic Brain Injury is relatively similar to that of any other man. Some declare that “mental illness is the great equalizer,” as in, organic mental illness does not know a person’s socio-economic position and can affect anyone regardless of their position in society. For the mid-nineteenth century, a small but significant number of highly educated white male physicians entered the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums suffering from a wide variety of mental and physical disabilities. At least seven white male physicians were admitted to South Carolina, and another nine physicians (including one “female physician,” “Mrs. Anice J. Harris” of Bibb County) arrived at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum during the 1860s. Many of these white men earned their medical degrees at notably early ages, unlike modern Americans, who tend to receive their medical diploma around age twenty-four before moving on to a multiple-year medical residency. In contrast, many white men in the mid-nineteenth century already began practicing medicine by their early twenties.²⁴¹ Because “roughly half of all lifetime mental disorders in most studies start by the mid-teens and three-fourths by the mid-20s,” a number of nineteenth century physicians were already

²⁴¹ “Table A-6: Age of Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools at Anticipated Matriculation by Sex and Race/Ethnicity, 2013-2014 through 2016-2017,” Association of American Medical Colleges, <https://www.aamc.org/download/321468/data/factstablea6.pdf>.

practicing medicine in their community or serving in the Confederacy when their mental instability first emerged.²⁴²

In the case of Dr. Fleming J. Mathews, he may have shown symptoms of insanity before the war itself started, but his repeated episodes did not seem to cost him much time or his reputation in the Confederacy. He served the military and performed surgery on soldiers while actively undergoing mental health disturbances. In contrast, Dr. Joseph Simpson had no underlying mental illness, but due to his contraction of typhoid fever in the military service, he suffered extensive brain damage, which led to a life-long and life-ending disability. While Fleming was only twenty-two when he first appeared the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, Joseph was thirty when typhoid fever disabled him and he arrived at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum seeking assistance. Although both men would be repeat patients to their state lunatic asylum, Joseph died at the asylum in 1870 at age thirty-eight, while Fleming died at home in 1908 at the age of seventy-one. Their divergent paths as disabled doctors can inform us about the lives and experiences of highly educated Confederate physicians struggling with mental and physical issues during and after the U.S. Civil War.

Dr. Joseph Simpson could have been much more than how his life concluded. In the 1860 U.S. Federal Census for Laurens County, South Carolina, he was marked as “D. J. Simpson,” already a physician at the age of twenty-four. He was still residing in his uncle’s house; Dr. John Wells Simpson was a wealthy “farmer,” with \$12,500 in real estate and \$30,780 in personal estate, which included at least nine enslaved African-

²⁴² Ronald C. Kessler, Paul Amminger, Sergio Aguilar-Gaxiola, Jordi Alonso, Sing Lee, and T. Bedirhan Ustun, “Age of Onset of Mental Disorders: A Review of Recent Literature,” *Current Opinion in Psychiatry* 20.4 (2007), 359-364.

Americans.²⁴³ Joseph's own father, William Wells Simpson, had been dead for decades: he had died in 1836 after he and his wife had twelve children, including Joseph, born in 1832, and his older brothers, Edwin Garlington and James Lafayette, born in 1815 and 1826 respectively.²⁴⁴ Both Edwin and Joseph had turned to medicine. By the 1850 U.S. Federal Census, Edwin was a marked physician, with his own real estate worth \$1800, which increased to \$16,750 by 1860.²⁴⁵ Just before the war, he could boast \$17,450 in personal estate: he claimed to own thirty-five African-American slaves.²⁴⁶ In contrast, the much younger Joseph was still living in the house of his uncle, unmarried and with no estate of his own.²⁴⁷ Yet Joseph and his brothers could feel honored that they were descendants of two "families [that] have long been prominent in South Carolina and America, and have given their country distinguished men in all the professions and walks of life and many of them served with credit and some of them gave their lives during the Colonial, Revolutionary, Civil and more recent wars."²⁴⁸ The Simpson men of Laurens County were well-educated, well-bred, and well-off: they went to medical school, they were known for owning slaves, and they would all serve the Confederacy.

When the U.S. Civil War began, the Simpson family offered itself to the Confederate military. Many of the men descended from John Simpson, born in 1751 and dead by 1815, turned to the infantry of the new infant nation, including several of his grandsons:

²⁴³ Year: 1860; Census Place: Laurens, Laurens, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1222; Page: 222; Family History Library Film: 805222.

²⁴⁴ For full description of the Simpson family, see Rev. Z. L. Holmes, *The Simpson Genealogy* (Cross Hill, South Carolina: Self-Published, 1885).

²⁴⁵ Year: 1850; Census Place: Laurens, South Carolina; Roll: M432_855; Page: 221A; Image: 42; Year: 1860; Census Place: Laurens, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1222; Page: 232; Family History Library Film: 805222.

²⁴⁶ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

²⁴⁷ Year: 1860; Census Place: Laurens, Laurens, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1222; Page: 222; Family History Library Film: 805222.

²⁴⁸ Yates Snowden, *History of South Carolina* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1920), 250.

Joseph, James Lafayette, and Edwin Garlington. Because the massive amount of children that John Simpson had – and then in turn, how many children his own children had – the Simpson men helped fill the muster roll of Co. A, 3rd South Carolina Infantry. Alongside Joseph and at least two of his brothers, a long list of his many cousins joined the Confederacy as well: William Dunlap Griffin, William Wade Simpson, C. A. Simpson, Richard Wright Simpson, Taliaferro N. Simpson, J. D. Simpson, O. F. Simpson, Amos Sharpe, Richard S. Watts, Elihue Clayton Griffin, David H. Boazman, Archibald Young Wright, and Richard Casper Simpson. Most joined Co. A, 3rd SC Infantry, and most were ruined, at least in some way, by the ensuing Civil War and their time in the Confederate service. Of these sixteen Simpson descendants, eleven died in the war, nine being killed in battle and two dying of camp-related illness.²⁴⁹ Dr. Joseph Simpson is almost never considered a casualty of war on these lists, which is an unfortunate falsehood: he contracted typhoid fever along with his brother James Lafayette while in camp, and, although James died from disease during the war, Joseph was paralyzed, disabled, and lingered for years past the conflict.²⁵⁰ The nature of typhoid fever meant that Joseph may have survived its immediate effects, but he was utterly destroyed by them in time.

Like his brother Edwin, Joseph had likely graduated from the Medical College of Charleston, South Carolina.²⁵¹ He took his place in Co. A, 3rd South Carolina Infantry alongside his brother James Lafayette and his many male relatives, including his younger cousins Taliaferro and Richard Wright Simpson. These two men's correspondence have

²⁴⁹ For the long list of Simpson men who fought and died in the U.S. Civil War, see Rev. Z. L. Holmes, *The Simpson Genealogy* (Cross Hill, South Carolina: Self-Published, 1885).

²⁵⁰ Rev. Z. L. Holmes describes Dr. Joseph Simpson's U.S. Civil War service and death as such: "Upon breaking out of the war, he promptly volunteered as a private but subsequently was appointed assistant surgion [sic] (He belonged to Co. A, 3rd S.C.V.). In 1862 he took typhoid fever in Virginia, and relapsed twice. When the fever left him, he could neither talk nor walk, and in this condition he lived for several years, being taken care of by his brother, Dr. Edwin G. Simpson" in *The Simpson Genealogy*, 13.

²⁵¹ Snowden, 250.

been meticulously preserved, transcribed, and published by descendants, in part because the two Simpson brothers were both articulate and deeply self-reflective during their military service. In these carefully penned words, we can find mention of Joseph, who otherwise, due to his disability, disappears around this point in history. Similarly, we can see the intimate familial relationships amongst the Simpson men that were formed long before the war but were painfully tested by hardships of illness and conflict.

In *The Wartime Letters of Dick and Tally Simpson*, Joseph and his relatives become real and vibrant as disease, disability, and death swarmed and overtook them. In particular, Taliaferro or “Tally” was quite the close companion to Joseph’s younger brother, James Lafayette who was called “Cousin Jim.” On October 1, 1861, the 3rd South Carolina Infantry was camped at Charlottesville, Virginia, and the Simpson men were already displeased and exhausted. Taliaferro wrote his sister: “I am sick and tired of camp life. All are of the same opinion with myself. Cousin Jim is the most anxious man to return home you ever saw.”²⁵² A month later, Taliaferro lamented to her again: “Ah, you have no idea how a poor sick fellow suffers in this place. Sleeping on the hard ground, standing about in the smoke, and eating the poorest fare in the world is enough to kill a well man, much [less] a sick one.” He noted that “Cousin Jim has been unwell for a long time. One day he feels better, the next worse,” and mentioned that Joseph, who everyone appeared to call Doc or Dr. Simpson “advised us to go back to Charlottesville, Virginia.”²⁵³

In fall 1861, while James Lafayette or “Cousin Jim” Simpson constantly fluctuated in physical health, all eyes focused on him and the other Simpson men who had long been

²⁵² Guy R. Everson and Edward H. Simpson, Jr., *‘Far, Far From Home’: The Wartime Letters of Dick and Tally Simpson, 3rd South Carolina Volunteers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 74.

²⁵³ Everson and Simpson, Jr., *‘Far, Far From Home,’* 87.

suffering under various diseases. Yet suddenly on December 4, 1861, Taliaferro wrote to his sister and explained: “Doc Simpson has been unwell for several [?]. He has ben sent back to Charlottes[ville], I think with typhoid fever. He looked very badly before he left and perhaps will have a very hard time of it.” The illegible word marked [?] clearly once indicated a specific time; it seems most likely that Joseph had been unwell several days, rather than weeks, since he had been well in Taliaferro’s previous and fairly recent letter.²⁵⁴ Joseph contracted typhoid fever “through water or food that had been contaminated by feces of an acutely infected or convalescent person or a chronic, asymptomatic carrier” – almost certainly while encamped with the 3rd South Carolina Infantry, especially considering his role as an assistant surgeon in the unit which routinely experienced contagiously spread disease. Joseph seems to have been struck particularly hard by typhoid fever, which, if like in most classic cases, began “with gradually increasing fatigue and a fever that increases daily from low-grade to as high as 102°-104°F by the third to fourth day of illness.” Although Taliaferro did not describe the details of Joseph’s case, Joseph almost certainly suffered with “headache, malaise, and anorexia [which] are nearly universal and abdominal pain, diarrhea, or constipation are common” symptoms. In the twenty-first century, the medical solution to typhoid fever is a strong dosage of antibiotics, but in the U.S. Civil War, medical answers were incredibly limited for soldiers and civilians alike.²⁵⁵ For Joseph, he was taken away for convalescence in a hospital in Charlottesville, Virginia. A fellow physician joined him to aid in his recovery, but, ten days later, Taliaferro desolately reported: “Doc Simpson is no

²⁵⁴ Everson and Simpson, Jr., *Far, Far From Home*, 93.

²⁵⁵ Anna E. Newton, Janell A. Routh, and Barbara E. Mahon, “Typhoid & Paratyphoid Fever,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed on January 1, 2017, <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2016/infectious-diseases-related-to-travel/typhoid-paratyphoid-fever>.

better. Doctor Dorrah says he is afraid he will die. We can only pray for his restoration to health.”²⁵⁶ Early indications of Joseph’s poor response to typhoid fever were absolutely correct; while he would survive the disease, he would be forever altered, and so too in turn would his life and death.

On January 15, 1862, Taliaferro wrote one of the last comments about Dr. Joseph Simpson in the surviving record: “Doc Simpson has had a relapse, and the last report from Charlottesville said that he was very low and his recovery doubtful. It is said that it is one of the worst cases that has been in that hospital. Dr. Ed[win Garlington] Simpson says the worst he ever saw.”²⁵⁷ After this letter, Taliaferro never again mentioned Joseph, who, according to other sources, returned to South Carolina as a fully disabled man – unable to walk or talk – sometime in 1862. His brother Edwin Garlington Simpson and his sister-in-law took care of him during the U.S. Civil War, at least for some time during 1862 and 1863. However, the burden must have been too difficult, and it likely had something to do with the need for Edwin elsewhere in the Confederacy as a military surgeon and physician. On September 24, 1863, Dr. Joseph Simpson arrived at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in Columbia – one year, nine months, and twenty days after Taliaferro first wrote home about Joseph’s prolonged struggle with typhoid fever. The state lunatic asylum identified Joseph as a single man, age thirty, from Laurens County, South Carolina. He was given the “Dr.” prefix in the ledger, and his occupation was listed as “physician.” In the small box of the “How Long” column, the attendants wrote “2 years,” which is incredibly precise in its accuracy, and in its adjacent column “Cause of Insanity” they scribbled “typhoid.” Joseph was a pay patient, which meant his family was

²⁵⁶ Everson and Simpson, Jr., *Far, Far From Home*, 98.

²⁵⁷ Everson and Simpson, Jr., *Far, Far From Home*, 106.

providing several hundred dollars on a monthly basis so that the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum would care for him. His “Who Supports” was his brother, Edwin Garlington Simpson, who in 1863 remained engaged in the Confederate service. In this asylum admission, Joseph did not receive any additional information: he did not attract patient treatment notes or a medical history. Instead, he slipped into the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum as a physician suffering from the consequences of typhoid fever – with nothing evident in his admission of his Confederate service or his contraction of the contagious disease while in serving in camp as a military assistant surgeon.²⁵⁸

Within only seven months’ time, Joseph Simpson was “removed,” almost certainly at the request of his brother Edwin.²⁵⁹ The word “removed” strongly indicates that family requested Joseph to return home rather than the phrase “discharged” which the asylum staff wrote when they felt treatment had led to a cure and thus a safe and sane return home. Instead, Joseph was still experiencing the terrible effects of typhoid fever – and he would do so at home, starting in May 1864 and lasting until December 1867, long after the war had concluded. Joseph’s removal came five days after the Battle of the Wilderness was fought in Spotsylvania County and Orange County, Virginia, which had resulted in nearly four thousand killed men and thousands more wounded, captured, or missing. Three days after Joseph’s return home to Laurens County, the first soldier was interred at Arlington National Cemetery, and the long tradition of memorialization of U.S. Civil War soldiers and veterans in death formally began. However, Dr. Joseph Simpson would not be granted such nobility and dignity befitting a man of his race, education, and social status, as his disability consumed his life and finally his death.

²⁵⁸ Dr. Joseph Simpson, #1358, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

²⁵⁹ Joseph Simpson, Removed 1864-05-10, SCSHI Admissions and Discharges, 1860-1964.

We have no evidence about Joseph's existence during the final year of the U.S. Civil War or the earliest years of Reconstruction. However, the conflict and the defeat of the Confederacy badly impacted the Simpson family. James Lafayette "Cousin Jim" had succumbed of the very same disease that disabled Joseph during the conflict, and nine of his cousins had been obliterated in battle.²⁶⁰ Even Taliaferro Simpson, whose letters reveal the moment that Joseph contracted typhoid fever, had been killed; he was supposedly "shot through the heart whilst gallantly pushing forward in the front rank of his company" at the Battle of Chickamauga in 1863.²⁶¹ Thomas A. Tobin, a fellow soldier in the 3rd South Carolina Infantry, wrote a cousin to the Simpsons about Taliaferro's final moments: "Death is supposed to have been instantaneous... He was shot a second time through the head by a grape shot, but the general impression is that he was dead when the ball struck him." Thomas discussed the treatment of Taliaferro's body in tedious detail and reflected on the "severe loss the company & service has sustained in the death of dear Tally." In his finest lamenting description, Thomas declared: Taliaferro "was a noble boy, such a good Christian, so meek & gentle with his comrades, so forgiving at heart & withal as brave as a lion."²⁶² Taliaferro's commanding officer proclaimed him "a sacrifice worthy of the cause," and the unit's chaplain decreed: "He

²⁶⁰ James Lafayette's death is described as such: "James Lafayette Simpson, eighth child of William Wells and Nancy Garlington Simpson, was born May 6th, 1826, died Oct. 1864, at Adams Run. James Simpson was a splendid character. I loved him as a brother. He had as much decision of character as any man I ever knew, and was very successful in life. His health was poor, having some incurable disease. Notwithstanding his poor health, he promptly volunteered in the Confederate War but was sick most of the time. When he started back to his command the last time, he told me that he knew the exposure of camp life would aggravate his disease and speedily terminate his life, but that he felt compelled to render his Country all the aid in his power. He only lived a few weeks after returning to camp" in Rev. Z. L. Holmes' *Simpson Genealogy*, 12.

²⁶¹ Everson and Simpson, Jr., *'Far, Far From Home,'* 290.

²⁶² Everson and Simpson, Jr., *'Far, Far From Home,'* 290-291.

tried to live right, and he died in the discharge of his duty.’²⁶³ These fond words about the poor young dead soldier must have both lessened and worsened the sting of Confederate defeat in the hearts of U.S. Southerners who desired life and victory instead.

Although Joseph’s brother Edwin had survived the U.S. Civil War, unlike hundreds of thousands of U.S. Southern men, Edwin’s real estate which was worth nearly \$17,000 in 1860 had decreased in value to \$2000 by 1870. Edwin’s massive personal estate at \$17,450 – which mostly came from the humans that he was enslaving – had plummeted to a meager \$500.²⁶⁴ Other male relatives in the Simpson family experienced similar socio-economic downfalls – that is, those that had managed to survive the war. It is unclear what occurred in Edwin’s household in these few years after Confederate defeat and early Reconstruction; it was undoubtedly a difficult time. On December 16, 1867, it appears that Edwin was either unable or unwilling care for Joseph any further. Although one might want to be judgmental of Edwin in this moment, he appears to have lost much of his fortune, and his profession of physician, while desperately needed in the war’s aftermath, was not one that always meant customers could and would pay for services provided. Joseph almost certainly needed constant care throughout the day, every day, every month, and every year, as long as he continued to live. The stress of seeing Joseph so reduced and disabled may have played a role as well in Edwin’s admission of his brother to the state lunatic asylum once again.

In contrast to 1863 when Dr. Joseph Simpson arrived as a pay patient, in late 1867, he was admitted as a pauper patient supported by the Committee of the Poor: a tremendous

²⁶³ Everson and Simpson, Jr., *Far, Far From Home*, 295.

²⁶⁴ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Laurens, South Carolina*; Roll: *M653_1222*; Page: 232; Family History Library Film: 805222; Year: 1870; Census Place: *Cross Hill, Laurens, South Carolina*; Roll: *M593_1501*; Page: 23B; Image: 213592; Family History Library Film: 553000.

fall from the high reputation and significant wealth of the Simpson family of the antebellum period. The pauper admission also came because Edwin was not funding Joseph's admission and stay, as he had in 1863, when the Confederacy and slavery were still alive and financially valuable. The institution marked Joseph as a single man, now age thirty-five. He continued to be given the respectful title "Dr.," and his occupation was still noted as physician, although he had not practiced in years. His "Cause of Insanity" was "exposure in Army," and the length of his disability was simply "[it's an] old case." The phrase "exposure in the Army" indicates both exposure to disease but also to the elements, as nature was often imagined as the enemy of soldiers during their war experience. Although neither of Joseph's ledger-book admissions precisely connect his Confederate service to his suffering, he was undeniably a casualty of the U.S. Civil War.²⁶⁵

In December 1867, Joseph first received patient treatment notes at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum; this record exists as the only full, formal description of his disability. An unknown asylum physician explained that Dr. Joseph Simpson "was in the Confederate service during the early part and the exposure and suffering he underwent while in the army was supposed to be instrumental in producing the mental derangement under which he labors." Unfortunately, mid-nineteenth century medicine rarely connected the brain damage resulting from typhoid fever with anything except insanity and mental disorder. Although Joseph was certainly experiencing neurological complications from typhoid fever, the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum understood him to be an insane person. They described his case as "one of entire dethronement of reason," and that while he "had some disposition to talk... his thought [was] for the most part

²⁶⁵ Joseph Simpson, #1575, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

unconnected.”²⁶⁶ It is unclear if Joseph was suffering from aphasia, which occurs when the brain experiences specific damage in the speech and language areas and can occur in people suffering from the long-lasting effects of typhoid fever.²⁶⁷ As explained by modern medicine, different damaged areas of the brain can lead to different kinds of aphasia: damage to the front part of the brain may result in “choppy or non-fluent speech,” while damage to the posterior regions can mean patients’ “speech may contain the wrong words or made-up words.”²⁶⁸ Whatever was happening to Joseph in 1867 was undoubtedly the result of brain damage from unchecked typhoid fever that he contracted in the fall of 1861 while serving in Co. A, 3rd South Carolina Infantry. The state lunatic asylum understood the connection, and so did Joseph and the rest of the Simpson family.

In a strange description, the asylum claimed that Joseph’s “feet suffered so much from exposure to cold that he is unable to walk and must remain a cripple for life.” Nowhere else did Joseph receive this particular claim, and it is unclear if the typhoid fever had caused immobility or if he had suffered in other ways during his Confederate service or while at home between 1864 and 1867.²⁶⁹ Joseph’s immobility may have been due to his typhoid fever, because rare complications of the disease include Parkinson’s syndrome, Motor-neuron disease, and Symmetrical sensory-motor neuropathy, all disorders of bodily motion due to extensive nerve damage.²⁷⁰ However, he could have also suffered in other ways, and we cannot tell if he truly experienced “exposure to cold.” Joseph apparently “had little regard for cleanliness,” which is the mid-nineteenth century

²⁶⁶ Joseph Simpson, #1575, Vol. 3, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

²⁶⁷ S. Vidyasagar, S. Nalloor, U. Shashikiran, and M. Prabhu, “Unusual Neurological Complication of Typhoid Fever,” *Internet Journal of Infectious Diseases* Vol. 4, No. 1 (2004), available at <https://ispub.com/IJID/4/1/12733>.

²⁶⁸ “Aphasia,” The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2017, accessed January 1, 2017, <http://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/Aphasia/>.

²⁶⁹ Joseph Simpson, #1575, Vol. 3, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

²⁷⁰ Vidyasagar, Nalloor, Shashikiran, and Prabhu, “Unusual Neurological Complication of Typhoid Fever.”

phrasing for a patient not practicing hygiene and self-care. To the asylum, his physical disability did not explain his inability to clean himself, and instead physicians implied that Joseph did not focus on his cleanliness on purpose. Ultimately, the state lunatic asylum physicians understood that the effects of typhoid fever were profound: there would be “no probability that his mind will be restored.”²⁷¹

And indeed Joseph did not survive the disease that disabled him and tore through many in the Confederate ranks: he was eventually listed in the Admission/Discharge book on November 17, 1870 as “D. D. J. Simpson. Laurens [County]. Pauper. Died.”²⁷² There is no indication whether or not Edwin came for his brother’s body; it is not even clear if the state lunatic asylum would have contacted Edwin or other family members considering the Committee of the Poor was the support listed in Joseph’s case. There is the strong possibility that Dr. Joseph Simpson, a physician of the Confederate infantry, struck down by rampant typhoid fever in the camps, was buried in a Columbia city cemetery in a grave now utterly lost to time. It seems unfortunate to suggest that Joseph would have been better treated if he had only been shot by a minié ball or blown into bits by an artillery shell. However, his many relatives who died in the war certainly passed away differently than him and, in turn, were remembered quite differently. Taliaferro Simpson, his young cousin, was shot down at the Battle of Chickamauga in September 1863, much to the horror of his surviving family. Although Taliaferro had been first interred near Chattanooga on the battlefield, his family soon “brought [him] home to the land he had died to protect.”²⁷³ Indeed, a close cousin “procured for his body quite a handsomely finished oak coffin in Atlanta,” disinterred Taliaferro a week after his

²⁷¹ Joseph Simpson, #1575, Vol. 3, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

²⁷² Joseph Simpson, 1869-11-17, SCSHI Admissions and Discharges, 1860-1964.

²⁷³ Everson and Simpson, Jr., *Far, Far From Home*, 296.

battlefield burial, wrapped him in a blanket, and sent him south via wagon or train during the war. Once Taliaferro's body arrived home, his parents then respectfully reburied him in their "little family cemetery."²⁷⁴ In a painful contrast, we have no clarity on Dr. Joseph Simpson's burial, but it best appears that he died at the state lunatic asylum, disabled from the Confederacy, and was buried in the city cemetery in Columbia, South Carolina with a temporary marker, which has now either been removed or rotted away. If any Simpson – brother, cousin, or another relative – mourned his death in 1870, we have no surviving records of their response to Joseph's demise.

Instead of terminated service, glory, and manhood, we must also consider when those experiences were disrupted by disability in the U.S. Civil War. Unlike Dr. Joseph Simpson, who otherwise seems to have been good health before contracting typhoid fever, Dr. Fleming Jordan Mathews of Oglethorpe County, Georgia was unstable before his entrance into the Confederate service. Over the course of the 1860s, Fleming was committed four times to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum and once to the state institution for the insane in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. We have record of four of his admissions to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum.²⁷⁵ The account that emerges from these rare and revealing reports exposes a Confederacy desperate for experienced surgeons as well as medicine in a time period that understood and permitted the rapid recovery and relapse of "insane" patients. According to his first admission entry at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, Dr. Fleming J. Mathews was a recent graduate of a Philadelphia medical school, having achieved his degree in March 1860.²⁷⁶ By July 1860, Fleming resided in the U.S. Federal Census in the household of Moses Arnold in Washington, Georgia, a wealthy slave-

²⁷⁴ Everson and Simpson, Jr., *'Far, Far From Home,'* 289, 296.

²⁷⁵ Dr. Fleming J. Mathews, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 29, 98, and 231.

²⁷⁶ Dr. Fleming J. Mathews, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 29.

holding planter. Fleming was marked as “M.D.” but appears to have no real estate or personal estate of his own.²⁷⁷ In early 1861, Fleming relocated to nearby Lexington, Oglethorpe County, Georgia and began privately practicing medicine. Almost precisely at this time, however, he began to exhibit symptoms of a mental health disturbance. When he finally entered the Georgia Lunatic Asylum in June 1861, the attendants noted “positive cause [of insanity] not known... but some of his friends seem to think the attack was brought on from disappointed affections. Others thought religion the cause and others again masturbation.” Whatever was happening to Fleming, he was now considered a “lunatic and pauper patient” of the Georgia Lunatic Asylum.²⁷⁸

For some people, including white wealthy men, one admission to a state lunatic asylum could mean the end of freedom, a destiny for death at the institution, and a burial in its backyard. But Dr. Fleming Jordan Mathews escaped such fate, almost certainly because within a short time he appeared relatively normal once again. Even his first admission entry shows how this may have occurred: He is “disposed to be quiet, but violent at times. Very cleanly in his habits.” These short descriptions of Fleming’s behavior show that he was still following certain societal norms and expectations, particularly those behaviors followed by highly educated white men. While he was unstable, he was not constantly violent or aggressive with the attendants. Furthermore, Fleming cleanliness was something to be rewarded: it meant less work for the asylum and gave him more of an air of civility and decorum. The vast uncertainty of his friends as to what caused his insanity may also have helped: the range of subjects, from disappointed affections to religion to masturbation, were clear, articulate possibilities and all could be

²⁷⁷ Year: 1860; Census Place: Wilkes, Georgia; Roll: M653_141; Page: 831; Family History Library Film: 803141.

²⁷⁸ Dr. Fleming J. Mathews, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 29.

overcome with time and treatment. Yet a keen observer can see his friends' guesses as hints at Fleming's otherwise unwritten behavior: was he acting frustrated or depressed (disappointed affections), was he experiencing delusions of grandeur (religion), was he hyper-sexual and thus being sexually inappropriate, publicly or privately (masturbation)? He appears to have ceased some or most of these symptoms, because just over two months later in September 1861, Fleming was discharged and sent back out into the world, imagined as cured of his temporary insanity.²⁷⁹

Six months after his discharge from the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, in early 1862, Dr. Fleming Jordan Mathews entered the Confederate service as an assistant surgeon in "Colonel Smith's Regiment." This "Colonel Smith" appears to be Colonel Melancthon Smith, who worked with the artillery of the Army of Tennessee in 1861 and 1862. Colonel Melancthon Smith continued to serve in the Tennessee area until May 1864 when he joined the Atlanta Campaign.²⁸⁰ This conflict-ridden area of the country meant that Fleming's skills as a surgeon were in dire need: after working under Colonel Smith, Fleming was eventually moved to "one of the Hospitals in Tennessee." In all probability, as an Assistant Surgeon in the Confederate States of America, Fleming dug bullets of muscle, tied metal through flesh, and sawed through bone and sinew. He heard fevered profanity and pitiful appeals to God; he saw blood pour out and saturate wood; he smelled infection, disease, and death. In April 1863, he fell himself to a fever of some kind. As he recovered, his fellow physicians and nurses noticed "signs of returning insanity," which became so "palpable" that Fleming was discharged from duty. On July 30, 1863, he returned to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum with "his general health at this time

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Larry J. Daniel, *Cannoneers in Gray: The Field Artillery of the Army of Tennessee* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1982), 175.

very much disordered.” The asylum found that he was “quite feeble and disinclined to eat.” Although he was “usually quiet,” he was “sometimes disposed to commit acts of violence towards any one.” As in his first admission, Fleming received no clear cause of his insanity, and the asylum did not describe much of his behavior to help modern readers contemplate what ailed him. Unlike before, the attendants did not mark when he was discharged.²⁸¹ We only know that he eventually did leave as a living man because in January 1868 – several years after the war had ended – Fleming once again appears in the admission book as a newly received patient to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum.

Fleming’s January 1868 admission reveals what happened to him at the close of the U.S. Civil War: “On both occasions” of his prior admissions “he was fully restored and discharged” by the asylum. At some point between 1863 and 1865, Fleming returned to the Confederate service as a surgeon, as if he had not been a repeat patient at a state lunatic asylum or could possibly ever experience mental disturbances again. He likely put suffering soldiers at risk as he performed medical interventions on them. In early 1865, he was stationed in Alabama and was once more practicing medicine as an Assistant Surgeon for the Confederate army. Yet he began showing symptoms of insanity again, “relapsed[,] and was placed in the institution at Tuscaloosa, Alabama, near which he was at that time stationed.” It appears that during his residence at the Alabama hospital that the war itself concluded, because when Fleming “recovered,” he “returned home, to resume private practice.” The ease at which Fleming overcame his unstable episodes and the frequency of them during the 1860s may seem alarming to modern readers, but Fleming repeatedly managed to be committed to lunatic asylums, leave them, and return

²⁸¹ Dr. Fleming J. Mathews, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 98.

to normalcy, which for him met practicing medicine on soldiers, citizens, and war veterans.²⁸²

On December 25, 1867, Dr. Fleming Jordan Mathews, who had been “quite well,” married a young local woman named Melita J. Hardaman.²⁸³ Nevertheless, on January 1, 1868, just a few days after his marriage, he “was again insane.” Lacking any behavioral descriptions, it is difficult to tell how his new wife or his friends realized that Fleming was “again insane.” The final line of his third admission reads: He “is always quiet and orderly, but much deranged.” The ambiguity of “again insane” and “much deranged” contrasts poorly with Fleming’s easy ability to return to medicine and society. Whatever Fleming did to indicate to others that he was mentally unstable, he continued to act badly at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, but just like his other three commitments, Fleming did not remain that way for long. Within three months, on April 13, 1868, he was discharged and returned home to his new wife.²⁸⁴ However, almost immediately, Fleming was forcibly brought back to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, indicated by a short “Returned & Discharged May 5, 1868” added to the end of his third admission entry. He may have not been as well as the asylum suspected when they discharged him on April 13, leading to his immediate return in late April, and then again his quick release on May 5, 1868.²⁸⁵

One wonders what would happen to Dr. Fleming Jordan Mathews, now out of a lunatic asylum for the fifth time (once in Alabama and four times at Georgia). He was newly married Confederate veteran and was practicing medicine in his hometown. Furthermore, Fleming had the astonishing tendency to become mentally unstable, return

²⁸² Dr. Fleming J. Mathews, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 231.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

to sanity, reintegrate into society, and begin the cycle again. In July 1870, the U.S. Federal Census marked him as “practicing physician” with real estate of \$268 and personal estate of \$200. He was not marked “insane” in the explicit column “Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane or idiotic.” He resided with his wife Melita, who was eight years younger than him, and his first child, Mary, who was born in May 1869.²⁸⁶ A simple equation tells us an fascinating, hidden story: Fleming returned home on May 5, 1868 and around three months later, he and his wife conceived Mary. However Fleming had repeatedly convinced the Confederate military that he was fit for duty – he had done the same with his wife Melita to persuade her to marriage and parenthood.

By the 1880 U.S. Federal Census, we see that Fleming continued to expand his family: he now had seven children, including their first child Mary but excluding a son who had not survived infancy.²⁸⁷ Fleming was still listed as “physician” and still not marked as “insane” in the check-mark column now efficiently titled “Insane.” Later in the 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Fleming, now a widower, was living next to his adult daughter Mary, who had married and had a number of children of her own. Fleming remained the head of the household at age sixty-three, and the record confirms that he and Mary had produced another four children, meaning that in total, the couple had at least twelve offspring. Fleming had his last child at age fifty. By age sixty-three, he had been a widower for eight years, as Mary had died in 1892.²⁸⁸ Eventually, Dr. Fleming Jordan

²⁸⁶ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Madison, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_164*; Page: *32A*; Image: *69178*; Family History Library Film: *545663*.

²⁸⁷ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Grove Hill, Madison, Georgia*; Roll: *157*; Family History Film: *1254157*; Page: *21B*; Enumeration District: *071*; Image: *0045*; Their son G. J. Mathews is buried with them in Mathews Family Cemetery in Madison County, Georgia.

²⁸⁸ Year: 1900; Census Place: *Grove Hill, Madison, Georgia*; Roll: *210*; Page: *5A*; Enumeration District: *0067*; FHL microfilm: *1240210*.

Mathews would die in 1908 at the age of seventy-one.²⁸⁹ Nearly fifty years prior, he had been first committed during a mental disturbance to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, but that – nor any of the other admissions to lunatic asylums – had stopped Fleming from participating in the Confederacy, practicing surgery on screaming soldiers, marrying a wife in the postwar period, producing a dozen children by her, and dying in the twentieth century at home with his children. We may have expected something different for Fleming, but that, too, speaks to our modern biases and how we imagined the nineteenth century functioned. The unusual life story of Dr. Fleming Jordan Mathews suggests instead that we must consider mental illness and disability only one variable in the life of people and patients: there were many more factors that determined the outcome of a person's life, including but not limited to their sex, gender, race, age, education, wealth, skills, and military service.

Although Joseph and Fleming clearly experienced disability quite differently, the two men tumbled through the U.S. Civil War as rolling artillery shells, destroying expectations and changing lives. Their stories add to our continuing understanding of the U.S. Civil War. For some, war's legacy can be felt in the body, in disease, ruination, and the loss of potential. For others, however, war barely disrupted ongoing mental illness, and unwell doctors served the military without much intervention from authority. The disappearance of a man from the muster roll did not always mean immediate death: it could mean prolonged suffering and an ugly fade into the soil, or it could mean a brief stint at the local lunatic asylum before a valiant return to surgical operations on fellow soldiers. Education and class did not prevent Joseph and Fleming from mental illness or disability, but their struggles were distinctively influenced by their roles and experiences

²⁸⁹ Fleming Jordan Mathews is buried at the Mathews Family Cemetery, Madison County, Georgia.

as civilian and Confederate physicians. While Joseph did not survive his war disease, his endurance through the conflict into the home of his physician brother and the state lunatic asylum happened largely because of his position in U.S. Southern society. Similarly, Fleming likely escaped a permanent admission to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum because of his talents and skills as a physician and the need in the Confederacy for a practiced surgeon. The lives of these two Confederate physicians adds complexity and disability to the ever-expanding web of war, trauma, and the complicated veteran experience.

Veteran Disability Pensions: *Oscar D. Jones and Elisha Dagnet*

Casualties of the U.S. Civil War occurred far beyond the short period of bloody battlefield combat. Some would argue that the very last U.S. Civil War veterans, those few men who lived until the 1950s on the cusp of the civil rights movement, may have been the last casualties of U.S. Civil War. In the immediate years that followed the war, many soldiers, now veterans, had their time in the service haunt and terrorize them in a myriad of ways. Much later in the U.S.-Vietnam War, Americans confronted what they termed post-Vietnam syndrome, which later transformed into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which we still see affecting those exposed to war today. Although soldiers and veterans of the U.S. Civil War did not utilize this medical terminology, they were profoundly and badly affected by the conflict and combat. Confederate veterans experienced disabilities of all kinds, including long-term psychological and emotional trauma, the lingering effects of disease, the tendency to turn to substance abuse or domestic violence, and the consequences of battle wounds ranging from bullets to

artillery shells. Long-term mental and physical disabilities occurred in all forms for these U.S. Civil War veterans, and they could mean ruin and poverty even decades later.

Two Confederate veterans who came to the Georgia and the South Carolina Lunatic Asylums, one in 1867 and the other in 1868 then again in 1870, suffered from their service and the years following their time in the military. Oscar D. Jones from Elberton, Georgia and Elisha Dagnel from Augusta, Georgia both arrived at state lunatic asylums a few years after their Confederate military service. Although Oscar was explicitly identified with insanity that occurred from his war-time “wound,” Elisha had “for years been regarded as a weak minded person, but served for a considerable time in the army.”²⁹⁰ Both veterans suffered in the post-war period, but, while Oscar’s disability directly stemmed from his military service, Elisha’s diagnosis is an unclear and confusing one. Regardless of the cause of his disability and mental disturbance, each man eventually took advantage of Confederate pensions in the post-Reconstruction era. As with county court petitions and gravestone records, we can create a fuller, more nuanced portrait of U.S. Civil War veterans if we include Confederate pension documents with their state lunatic asylum records. With the long-term acknowledgement of disability and poverty, Oscar and Elisha become more than just male names on muster rolls; they become fuller and truer people and patients with their own struggling families and communities.

Oscar D. Jones first appeared at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in March 1868: he was noted as a thirty-five year-old widower who worked on a farm in Elberton, Georgia. He was a pay patient supported by J. H. Jones, apparently a close male relative

²⁹⁰ Oscar D. Jones, #1600, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947; Elisha Dagnell, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 202.

and friend. Although the asylum was “uncertain” at the length of insanity, the cause was clear and simple: a “wound” from the U.S. Civil War.²⁹¹ His third admission in October 1870 more specifically identified the cause as “wound in battle.”²⁹² In 1868, the asylum physicians first wrote about his case: “During the war in one of the battles in Florida, he rec’d [received] a wound from a musket ball in the parts near the sacrum, implicating the spinal marrow, so much so that for some time he was paralyzed in his lower extremities.” Oscar’s physical disability originated in his war service and in his combat wound; it ultimately destroyed whatever chance he had previously had at a normal, comfortable, or fully functional life. While his patient treatment notes explain that “he gradually recovered, at least so far as to be able to walk,” he suffered from “the effects of the spinal injury,” which asylum physicians believed somehow impacted “the brain, and insanity was the result.” The actual physical trauma that Oscar suffered can never be fully known, and we must rely on this sparse description to understand the extent of his disability. The asylum further explained, Oscar’s “rectum and bladder have never fully recovered from the paralysis and in consequence he is affected with incontinence of urine and obstinate constipation.”²⁹³ His disability was deep and thorough, and he never overcame the bullet that slammed into the large bone at the base of his spine. He survived the initial wound, but its after-effects cost him severely for the rest of his life.

In March 1868, Oscar D. Jones was described as suffering from “almost helpless insanity.” After his admission to the asylum, he was “turbulent, mischievous, and noisy, so much that it [was] necessary to confine him much of the time.” In particular, Oscar was “much inclined to tear his clothing and could only be prevented by confining his

²⁹¹ Oscar D. Jones, #1600, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

²⁹² Oscar D. Jones, #1824, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

²⁹³ Oscar D. Jones, #1600, Vol. 3, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

hands.” The reason for Oscar’s aggression and activity may have been a result of his spinal injury, but we cannot precisely understand his experiences from when he first received his war wound to his eventual 1868 asylum admission. He may have sustained brain damage, had poor reaction to medical treatment, or another mysterious complication that worsened his disability. The asylum believed he “might possibly recover, but [it’s] not likely.” Reading his patient treatment records, one can scarcely imagine that Oscar could and would be released from the state lunatic asylum: he was a war veteran who had overcome paralysis but was still physically disabled, physically aggressive with himself and others, and had to be restrained else he do harm. However, eight months later, Oscar was somehow “cured and discharged.” Those concise words can seem completely baffling considering the significant extent of his physical and mental trauma. He had bested his paralysis but not the related incontinence from the bullet to his sacrum. He may have been less aggressive with the attendants and may have been restrained less. For reasons unnoted, the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum believed, after months of residence and unknown treatment at the institution, that Oscar D. Jones could and should return home. They imagined incorrectly he would return to Florida, but Oscar actually went home to his residence in Elberton, Georgia.²⁹⁴

Not unexpectedly, he would only remain in Elberton for a short time. Less than two years later, in June 1870, Oscar re-appeared at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. He received no admission entry for this second commitment, but physicians now provided a medical history for him. Much of this June 1870 document validates his patient treatment record from March 1868: the immediate cause of his insanity was a “gunshot wound.” Yet his medical history describes other strange behavior from Oscar, including the

²⁹⁴ Oscar D. Jones, #1600, SCSHI Admissions and Discharges, 1860-1964.

delusion that “he is commandant of an army” and an observation that he suffered from “epilepsy and palsy” over the last “2 months.” He had a medical catheter of some kind to help alleviate his incontinence. He was neither prone to suicide or violence against others, but he was restless day and night. These new behaviors, which seem to include delusions and seizures, suggests that Oscar’s condition had worsened. He seems more disabled, both physically and mentally, just within a few years of his first discharge.²⁹⁵ Yet again, somehow, Oscar D. Jones was once again “cured and discharged,” two months after his June 1870 admission. In some ways, it did not matter because he soon rapidly returned to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum – he only remained in Elberton for three months before being re-admitted in October 1870.²⁹⁶ He was thirty-seven, suffering from a “wound in battle,” but apparently was discharged once again at some unknown point, only to arrive finally at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum in 1872 for the final time. Once at the state lunatic asylum, Oscar seems to have stayed there permanently for the next seventeen years until he succumbed to disability and death on April 14, 1889 while still residing at the institution.²⁹⁷

Before being shot in the spine and losing his chance at societal normalcy, Oscar D. Jones was marked in the 1860 U.S. Federal Census as a young farmer with incredible wealth in real estate and personal estate. He had \$7,000 in real estate and \$16,400 in personal estate, which included the value of the nineteen African-Americans that he had enslaved.²⁹⁸ He owned 550 acres of farmland and the many slaves that he had inherited

²⁹⁵ Oscar D. Jones, #1600, SCLA Physicians’ Records, 1860-1874.

²⁹⁶ Oscar D. Jones, #1824, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

²⁹⁷ Oscar Jones, Baldwin County, *Confederate Pension Applications*, Georgia Confederate Pension Office, RG 58-1-1, Georgia Archives.

²⁹⁸ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Elbert District, Elbert, Georgia*; Roll: *M653_120*; Page: 867; Family History Library Film: 803120.

from his father.²⁹⁹ In 1860, Oscar had married within the last year to a young woman named Anna, but she died before the end of the decade. By July 1870, Oscar had lost almost everything: it is unclear if he still owned any land, but he certainly did not enslave African-Americans anymore. His wife had died, and he appears to have no children by her. Between his second and third admissions in 1870, Oscar was residing in the house of the relative who supported his first 1868 asylum admission: John H. Jones, a fifty-three year-old dry goods merchant who still managed to claim an impressive \$16,000 in real estate and \$15,000 in personal estate. Oscar lived with John as well as the man's wife, their several children, and five African-American farm and house laborers. Oscar was one of many in this massive house, but the census enumerator marked him differently, designating him unusually as "wounded (brain)."³⁰⁰ After his October 1870 asylum entry in the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, he can be found at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, having been admitted to the more local institution sometime in early 1872. His frequent departures from asylums stopped with this final commitment to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. He would remain there until his death as a mentally and physically disabled war veteran.³⁰¹

Before his death in 1889, however, Oscar D. Jones attracted the concern of a local Georgian politician, Judge W. H. Harrison, who felt that the man deserved a Confederate pension even as an inmate at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. On January 16, 1888, Harrison wrote to the pension authorities: "Enclosed find application of Oscar D. Jones for

²⁹⁹ Militia District Number: 202. *Georgia Tax Digests [1890]. 140 volumes.* Morrow, Georgia: Georgia Archives.

³⁰⁰ Year: 1870; Census Place: Elbert, Georgia; Roll: M593_148; Page: 206B; Image: 164001; Family History Library Film: 545647.

³⁰¹ Oscar Jones, Baldwin County, *Confederate Pension Applications*, Georgia Confederate Pension Office, RG 58-1-1, Georgia Archives.

allowance. Mr. Jones is an inmate of the [Georgia] Lunatic Asylum, has been since 1872. He is sustained there by [the] state.” Harrison believed in his “opinion, Mr. O. D. Jones is entitled to the allowance (unless his being insane at the Asylum disqualifies him). His wounds cause his present mental as well as physical disabilities.” In the clearest language, we see the judgment of Judge W. H. Harrison regarding Oscar’s war wound: that his battle injury as a Confederate soldier had led to all his disabilities, including his mental instability. He was owed something for his military service twenty-three years prior in the failed effort to secede from the U.S. Unlike most Confederate veterans who sent in their pensions themselves, Oscar needed someone outside to assist him in receiving better care and financial support. Harrison’s pension application requested further information from other state authority figures: “Is applicant an inmate at the Lunatic Asylum? If yes, how long has he been there? Is he there as a pay patient or otherwise? The Ordinary of the County of Elbert will please answer and answer the papers with such other statement as he thinks necessary to enable the Dept. to know all the facts.” The Baldwin County Ordinary – the county where the Georgia Lunatic Asylum was located – replied on the pension application that he was not “acquainted” with Oscar D. Jones and could not answer the questions.³⁰²

Regardless of the confusion around Oscar’s case, Harrison filled in the rest of the pension form with what he certainly knew: during the U.S. Civil War, Oscar had “served as a private in Company I of 2nd Regiment of Florida Volunteers.” The application specifically noted that Oscar was wounded at the Battle of Natural Bridge in Woodville, Florida, which occurred on March 6, 1865. Historians have described this late battle as

³⁰² Oscar Jones, Baldwin County, *Confederate Pension Applications*, Georgia Confederate Pension Office, RG 58-1-1, Georgia Archives.

“the last Confederate victory in the U.S. Civil War,” where both teenage and elderly Confederate forces defended Tallahassee, Florida from a U.S. Federal military invasion. During the battle, a bullet tore through Oscar’s “left hip, passing through into [his] right hip, and from said wound” he became “disabled for life, mentally and physically.”³⁰³ Although certainly someone - anyone – could have helped Oscar apply for a Confederate pension before January 1888, no one appears to have done so. Even after his application, it is unclear if Oscar was ever awarded any pension assistance while residing at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. He had been supported by the state, like many pauper patients, but at least one person of authority believed that he was owed further due to his Confederate service and the terrible disability inflicted on him due to the war. We cannot discern if he received additional support with what records have survived.

Oscar remained at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum between 1872 and 1889, and through this time, it seems that more people knew about his presence at the asylum as well as his disability and Confederate service. On April 14, 1889, *The Atlanta Constitution* elaborately marked his death: “Captain Oscar D. Jones died at asylum at Milledgeville last Thursday, and his remains were sent to Elberton for burial. He was seriously wounded during the late war and his mind became impaired from suffering and he was sent to the asylum. His body was taken charge of by the confederate veterans [sic] and interred in the cemetery at Elberton.”³⁰⁴ In death, Oscar was awarded his military rank, which neither state lunatic asylum ever gave him on any of his admissions during his lifetime. Similarly, Oscar was given a profound dignity that was not frequently provided to state lunatic asylum patients: his body was returned home. In Elberton, Georgia, he

³⁰³ Oscar Jones, Baldwin County, *Confederate Pension Applications*, Georgia Confederate Pension Office, RG 58-1-1, Georgia Archives.

³⁰⁴ “Deaths in Elberton,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 14, 1889.

was granted a small white marble gravestone with a clean, clear inscription: “IN REMEMBRANCE of Col. O. D. Jones. Born May 12, 1834. Died April 13, 1889.” It is completely unclear what military rank Oscar had earned: in his newspaper obituary, he was a Captain; on his gravestone, he was a Colonel; and in the South Carolina and Georgia Lunatic Asylum records, he was a private. Oscar was buried in Elmhurst Cemetery in Elberton, Georgia, where he was born, where he was raised, where he left for war, where he returned disabled, and where he left behind to reside at the South Carolina and Georgia Lunatic Asylums.³⁰⁵

Not all Confederate war veterans were so directly disabled by the conflict as Oscar D. Jones, whose life and legacy were changed by a bullet that destroyed his hipbones and spine. Instead, many soldiers serving the Confederacy had lingering issues after their service, some of which may be indirectly related to their military experiences. In the case of Elisha Dagnel – misspelled as Dagnall in the Georgia Lunatic Asylum record – we see a more complex and confusing portrait of Confederate war veterans whose disability and poverty may not have been tied so back to their time in battle or the camps. When he arrived in April 1867, Elisha was recently living in Augusta, Georgia but was a native of South Carolina. He was a thirty-year-old married “common laborer” with two children. The asylum bluntly noted that he had “for years been regarded as a weak minded person, but served for a considerable time in the army.” During his war service, he had experienced “an attack of fever, specifically affecting his head.” The details of this event are lost to time; countless soldiers on both sides of the conflict experienced fever and other common ailments. The Georgia Lunatic Asylum noted Elisha had “never [been] sent home” due to this attack of fever; he was kept in the military

³⁰⁵ Oscar D. Jones (1834-1889) is buried at Elmhurst Cemetery in Elberton, Elbert County, Georgia.

during the war. Ultimately, Elisha survived the war and restarted his life in Augusta, Georgia. However, around March 1867, years after the end of the conflict, Elisha had accidentally fallen from a high scaffold “15 or 20 feet into a cellar, striking on his head.” Those who gathered around him believed that “for a short time [he was] apparently dead” after this tremendous fall. Friends and family “confined [him] to bed for two days thereafter” and, although Elisha survived this event too, “since that his mind has manifestly been disordered.” With these two incidents clear in the minds of his friends and family, Elisha Dagnel was relocated to Milledgeville, Georgia, where he was admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum for treatment.³⁰⁶

The state institution particularly identified a key problem in Elisha’s case: “A prominent feature” of his mental disorder “is a disposition to get away, which he makes constant effort to accomplish.” Regular attempts at eloping or escaping the Georgia Lunatic Asylum occurred with a number of patients, some of whom actually did manage to escape the property. The physicians stated that he was “not disposed to commit acts of violence” and he was neither “destructive” nor “filthy.” While his “general health seems tolerably good,” he did “not eat or sleep satisfactorily.” Elisha’s restlessness combined with the intense fever during his war experience and his terrifying fall and comatose reaction. The Georgia Lunatic Asylum kept him as a pauper patient for the next two years and eleven months, finally discharging him on March 30, 1870. One wonders what had occurred during this time: Had Elisha gotten less restless and the trauma to his head seemed less pronounced? Did he eat and sleep better? Did he seem robust and able-bodied? The word “discharged” certainly indicates that the asylum believed his case improved enough that he could return home. However, Elisha would not become so fully

³⁰⁶ Elisha Dagnall, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 202.

successful that he never again appeared as a Confederate veteran struggling in the aftermath of conflict amongst a rebuilding U.S. Southern society.³⁰⁷

Elisha re-emerges much later in the record in an 1895 Confederate Indigent Pension filed in Augusta, Georgia. Although he never again visited the Georgia Lunatic Asylum as a patient, he was now a Confederate pension applicant, and he was evidently disabled, in part because of his service to the defeated cause. Marked as having resided at 1136 D'Antignae Street for the last forty-five years, Elisha explained his case of poverty and disability. He had been born in Edgefield County, South Carolina in 1831, and, at the age of thirty-one, he enlisted in Co. I, Cobb's Legion Cavalry in Augusta. He served with the unit for the next three and a half years and surrendered with his fellow soldiers and officers at Appomattox. Since the end of the war in 1865, he had worked as a common laborer, but he had been disabled for at least the last ten years, beginning in 1885, specifically from "rheumatism." He requested a Confederate pension for "infirmity and poverty" and tragically listed his worldly possessions as "nothing." His wife resided with him, while his only child, a thirty-year-old daughter, lived nearby with her husband. Elisha scribbled a sloppy signature on the application before asking a fellow soldier from his former unit to serve as his pension witness. The man verified Elisha's claims, including his disability, stating that he had been friends and neighbors with him since the U.S. Civil War three decades earlier. In rapid time, Elisha Dagnel received his pension, which he was then granted from 1895 and every year until his death in 1906. After he passed away, his widow received the pension from 1907 until her death in 1911.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Oscar D. Jones, Elbert County, *Confederate Pension Applications*, Georgia Confederate Pension Office, RG 58-1-1, Georgia Archives.

The reason or reasons for Elisha's poverty and disability are terribly unclear. Even the timing of his disability is vague: the Georgia Lunatic Asylum record in 1867 would suggest that he may have been "weak-minded" his entire life, while his 1895 pension states his "rheumatism" only began in 1885. However, in the 1880 U.S. Federal Census, Elisha can be found in Augusta, Georgia, unable to work, listed as "At Home," with the misspelled word "Paralized" written beside his name. His wife Nancy was keeping house, while his daughter Sarah, age fifteen, was working in the nearby textile mill. The couple appear to have had a second daughter, Martha, age four, who does not appear to have survived childhood. Many of the other poor white people on their street in Augusta had young daughters working at the textile mill. One wonders how many older fathers from the failed Old South were being financially supported by young daughters of the rising New South. The extent of Elisha's "paralyzed" disability cannot be ascertained via the census record, but its earlier date from his pension record suggests that it could have more to do with his Confederate service than later developing "rheumatism."³⁰⁹

By the 1900 U.S. Federal Census, sixty-eight-year-old Elisha was not marked as disabled, although we can certainly tell he was by that point. He was now employed at least in some way: he was cleaning a local cemetery, one of the many located in Augusta, Georgia. The extent of Elisha's pay and employment as a cemetery caretaker cannot be ascertained. He was still receiving his Confederate pension, so the job was certainly not bringing him out of poverty. Elisha may have given or requested the activity of cemetery cleaning due to his Confederate service decades earlier. He could have been cleaning

³⁰⁹ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Augusta, Richmond, Georgia*; Roll: 163; Family History Film: 1254163; Page: 3884; Enumeration District: 100; Image: 0558.

Confederate soldier or veteran gravestones. He certainly could have been working in the very cemetery that he would be buried in when he died in 1908.³¹⁰

Upon his death, Elisha Dagnel was interred in the Confederate Survivor's Association section located in the center of the Magnolia Cemetery in Augusta, Georgia: a respectful selective section of the much larger city cemetery intended only for Confederate war veterans. The 1893 Confederate Memorial Day ceremony at Magnolia Cemetery explained the place of men like Elisha in U.S. Southern society: "Year by year richer grows the harvest until now many more perhaps have passed over to the majority than are left to answer the roll call... Survivors, soldiers, friends, let us drop a tear in their memory, and salute their gallant and knightly spirits."³¹¹ Elisha was one of a few Confederate veterans interred in this small section of the cemetery: "A total of twenty-nine men were eventually buried in this lot. Sixteen of them were single or widowed, eight were married. The last burial was in 1941. Most held working-class or lower-middle-class occupations: shoemaker, operative, machinist, carpenter, clerk, wood dealer."³¹² In March 1907, Elisha Dagnel's body was covered with a long rectangular marble stone which read, "ELISHA J. DAGNEL. CO I. COBB'S LEGION." It admitted neither his birth or death date and did not suggest anything about his poverty or disability. Instead, Elisha was still totally defined – along his place in the world – by his Confederate military service from forty years earlier.³¹³

³¹⁰ Year: 1900; Census Place: *Augusta Ward 4, Richmond, Georgia*; Roll: 219; Page: 15B; Enumeration District: 0063; FHL microfilm: 1240219.

³¹¹ Kristina Dunn Johnson, *No Holier Spot of Ground: Confederate Monuments and Cemeteries of South Carolina* (Charleston, South Carolina: The History Press, 2009), end of Chapter 4, no page numbers given in book.

³¹² LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1995), 264.

³¹³ Elisha Dagnell (1831-1907) is buried in Magnolia Cemetery, Augusta, Richmond County, Georgia.

The combination of Confederate pension applications and state lunatic asylum admission records provide surprisingly helpful insight into the post-war lives of war veterans and survivors. Undoubtedly many white Southern men struggled with disability and poverty in the long years after the war; some lived only briefly, but others lasted decades. The meaning of a life of poverty, disability, and being war veteran of a defeated cause cannot be a simple one. Yet this was the short and long term fate of many men across the United States, including U.S. Northern men as well as U.S. Southern ones. The deterioration of U.S. Civil War veterans in the late nineteenth century was manifold: some struggled where bullets busted flesh and bone, and others suffered with slower effects of war, such as ambiguous disability and profound poverty.

Mental illness and disability in the context of war provides a terrible but true journey into the best and worst of humanity. Whether those affected are survivors, soldiers, veterans, dependents, victims, or refugees, we witness a full range of possibility in the human condition, including post-traumatic stress disorder, survivor's guilt, complicated grief, and other mental and physical disabilities. In the twenty-first century, U.S. federal government, academia, and the public try to study and support the nation's soldiers and war veterans. Although there are still considerable difficulties, even the modern U.S. military attempts to provide its combatants with assistance for their mental and physical health during service and after their return to the United States. When we consider citizens, soldiers, and veterans from the U.S. Civil War, we may want to establish diagnoses for mental and physical disability. It feels easy and even appropriate to say that men and women suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder due to the bloodiest and costliest war in U.S. history. However, we should not fall into the trap of

modern medical diagnosis: these people and patients' nineteenth-century stories cannot be found in twenty-first century psychiatric labels or disability terminology.

Instead, we should consider these war survivors as they more understood themselves: as members of families and communities. Their suffering was not just their own: it extended outwards into their immediate families and to their loved ones, reverberated in their small towns and their great cities, and echoed even further across the United States far beyond the immediate U.S. Civil War period. The familial and social connections of state lunatic asylum patients mattered tremendously to their daily, monthly, and yearly lives. These relationships were all altered by the war and its aftermath, including the political and emotional struggles of Reconstruction. We should reflect on these issues for our modern war survivors, including the dependents of soldiers and veterans as well as refugees from war-torn regions. Although many other patients at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums during the 1860s experienced vast and diverse disabilities, many of them related to the war, the selected patients in this chapter show a range of different lives and deaths. Although we end with the ambiguous yet tragic story of Elisha Dagnel, a poor disabled Confederate veteran, we also see so much more: from Susan Gregg, who fell into deep mourning for the loss of her only son, to typhoid-wracked Dr. Joseph Simpson; from Elizabeth Shockley, sick from disease and grief, to bullet-paralyzed Oscar D. Jones; from Mrs. P.J. Fitzgibbon, intimated and assaulted by fire-eating secessionists, to the wildly unstable and cyclical Dr. Fleming Jordan Mathews.

War affects people differently; it was and is a racialized, gendered, and classed experience. The U.S. Civil War itself is historically situated and socially constructed, as were the experiences of soldiers, veterans, and home-front survivors. Even war disability

affected these people differently. Socio-economic status altered the life trajectories of many men; wealth could alleviate some burdens, and race and gender could elevate a veteran significantly higher when society approved. Even death affected citizens, soldiers, and veterans of the U.S. Civil War differently. While some men were torn to bits by artillery fire, others were devastated by bullets, disease, or malnutrition. Some were buried anonymously in ditches and fields, others were returned home after great familial desperation and concern. Some received massive monuments to their honor and memory, while others vanished into the soil, their blood and existence disappearing into the earth. These differences define the U.S. Civil War, including the various ways people and patients died and were remembered. Only through considering disability, race, gender, and class can we gain a nuanced understanding of the war and its consequences on individuals and families across the U.S. South.

CHAPTER 4

Slavery

In early November 1875, William Fields arrived at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum as a “colored” man with “no history.” Although he was diagnosed with “Acute Mania,” William Fields showed few symptoms of poor mental health. Instead, he was profoundly physically ill. The physicians described him as a “breathing corpse.” His incomplete “Personal and Medical History” form included fifteen fields to identify him as a patient and concisely note his mental health issues. In late 1875, William Fields was one of the first recipients of this new medical documentation at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. However, his race and societal position as a new freed-person affected how the physicians completed his form. Assigned the number 2654 and designated “Colored,” William’s case primarily received two words: “No History.” The lack of information can seem stunning: the eleven unanswered questions encompassed his “Place of Birth,” “Residence,” “Age” “Occupation, and “Civil Condition,” as well as simple questions about his alleged mental illness. The reason for “No History” was ultimately William’s racial identity: as a freed African-American and former slave residing in South Carolina during Reconstruction, he garnered only so much attention from state authorities as a suffering person and patient. The state’s neglect of his personal and medical history echoes the indifference that many across the U.S. South had towards William and other African-Americans in their new state of freedom. Although William was technically a citizen, he would not receive the individualized kindness that white disabled men had

during the antebellum period. Once committed to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, no one further investigated his “Medical and Personal History,” leaving him in a tragic position that would only end in his prolonged suffering and death.³¹⁴

The “GENERAL REMARKS” in William’s file reveal his tragic physical condition. An unknown lunatic asylum staff-person, certainly white and most likely male, wrote plainly: “Wm Fields is a colored man brought to the Institution in a Dying condition. He is sadly emaciated, has a severe cough, has vomica and left lung profuse expectoration, diarrhea + night sweats.” This hurried description exposes hints of horrors that William had already experienced: he seems to have received little medical intervention from family, friends, or community prior to his admission to the state lunatic asylum. The staff-person ended the “REMARKS” with a cold and terrifying description: “Mentally he is an imbecile and physically he is a breathing corpse.” William – a freed African-American man of unknown age, occupation, marital status, and residence – struggled in ways that we will never know, starting from the days of slavery through emancipation until his asylum admission in late 1875. His appearance at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum would not mean his redemption or return to U.S. Southern society.³¹⁵

Instead, William Fields only lived another four months before succumbing to “phthisis pulmonalis” – tuberculosis, a well-known disease of poverty – in February 1876. His death as a “colored” man with “no history” undoubtedly meant his hasty burial in a segregated section of a cemetery in the city. His internment in the earth, much like his life on Earth, has been utterly lost to time, in large part because few people have

³¹⁴ William Fields, #2654, South Carolina State Hospital for the Insane Case Histories, 1875-1915, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (Columbia, South Carolina), (hereafter SCSHI Case Histories, 1875-1915).

³¹⁵ Ibid.

found him worthy of attention and care. Yet William Fields – a suffering, breathing human corpse – forces us to reconsider both southern society and U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums during the U.S. Civil War and early Reconstruction era. In these unstable moments, we can finally witness what went so terribly wrong that men like William arrived emaciated and dying to state lunatic asylums only ten years after emancipation. The neglect of African-Americans as U.S. citizens commenced before they achieved freedom: to understand their poor treatment in the late nineteenth century, we must first consider the experiences of enslaved disabled African-Americans arriving at U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums during the early days of the U.S. Civil War.³¹⁶

This chapter focuses on mentally ill and disabled enslaved African-Americans in the U.S. Southern state lunatic asylum system, focusing on three case studies admitted to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum between 1860 and 1865, as well as the white South Carolinian men who enslaved them. Like many societal institutions during the antebellum period, the Georgia Lunatic Asylum refused to admit any freed or enslaved person of color for medical treatment. In contrast, South Carolina had agreed to accept enslaved people on behalf of white owners in the late antebellum era and reluctantly took in wealthier free people of color in rare cases. Both Georgia and South Carolina saw very few commitments of people of color during the U.S. Civil War period: in total, South Carolina only received seven patients of color during this time. However, when African-Americans gained their freedom and subsequent citizenship rights, they were also suddenly given access to the state lunatic asylum. Treatment for their mental health issues became a strange but remarkable human right that the once enslaved were finally allowed to utilize. In the chaotic decade of the 1860s, we see the simultaneously swift and slow

³¹⁶ Ibid.

outrages committed against African-Americans as they struggled and suffered their way into freedom and citizenship. During the U.S. Civil War, we witness the very beginning of this terrible transition.

The centuries-long maligning of African-Americans has been thoroughly investigated: American and European politicians and philosophers routinely denigrated people of color, especially those originating from Africa. Scientific racism degraded not only enslaved blacks, but also freed blacks and other people of color. Many nineteenth-century scholars disparaged the intellectual and mental capacity of freed and enslaved African-Americans. On the eve of the U.S. Civil War, the pseudoscience of skull-reading known as phrenology had begun to emerge which argued for the physical diminished capacity of African-Americans intellectually and thus societally. Many across the U.S. South believed the natural place of “negroes” was in slavery. In March 1861, the Confederacy’s Vice President Alexander H. Stephens explained this foundational belief in his now infamous Cornerstone Speech: “Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea [of equality]; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery – subordination to the superior race – is his natural and normal condition.”³¹⁷ With these words, the mental capacity of African-Americans and how much attention should be paid to his thoughts were fully and formally denigrated in the creation of the Confederate States of America. Nonetheless, a small but significant number of prominent South Carolinian men – all white, all supporting the Confederacy – brought enslaved people to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum for mental health treatment, an institution that otherwise only treated and

³¹⁷ Stanley Harrold, *The Slavery Reader*, including Alexander H. Stephens’ “The Cornerstone Speech,” (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 61.

cared for white patients. These few admissions of enslaved African-Americans thus disturb the rampant scientific racism of the 1860s U.S. South and suggest more nuance than we may previously have considered.

Throughout the antebellum era, white U.S. Southerners sought expensive medical treatment for their slaves, and “no topic occupied more space in slave management discussions than health care.” Although some claimed “duty and humanity played significant roles in the desire to maintain a healthy slave population,” ultimately “the chief motivation was economic: a sick slave was unprofitable and a potential financial liability.”³¹⁸ Due to their biased understanding of African-Americans, white slaveholders were almost entirely concerned with the physical health of their slaves and rarely considered mental health issues. In 1858, one Georgia planter declared: “Everyone knows that negroes are deficient in reason, judgment, and forecast – that they are improvident, and thoughtless of the future, and contented and happy in the enjoyment of the mere animal pleasures of the present moment.”³¹⁹ He concluded that “the mental state of the negro is highly favorable with health and long life; for apart from his superstitious notions, which are generally a kind of Turkish fatalism, and which rather serve to claim his mind and quiet his fears in the midst of disease, he is perfectly at ease.” Imagined as satisfied with his submissive space in the U.S. South, the African-American slave “has no regrets for the past, and no anxieties about the future.” Ultimately, then, many white men in the U.S. South considered “Southern slaves, “with very few exceptions, the happiest people on the face of the broad earth.”³²⁰ Contrary to the delusional beliefs of most white

³¹⁸ James O. Breeden, editor. *Advice Among Masters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980), 163.

³¹⁹ Breeden, 212.

³²⁰ Breeden, 218-219.

U.S. Southerners, African-Americans across the country, both enslaved and free, suffered with mental illness and other emotional and intellectual struggles. However, the extreme lack of information about slave mental health indicates that planters did not consider insanity a major or even marginal concern when managing a population of enslaved laborers for field and home.

The most unusual accusations about African-Americans may come from the American physician Dr. Samuel A. Cartwright, who was educated in Pennsylvania and practiced medicine throughout the U.S. Gulf Coast. In 1851, he invented “drapetomania,” a mental illness which occurred when black slaves who were treated “as equals... abscond from service.” Cartwright suggested that when “the white man attempts to oppose the Deity’s will, by trying to make the negro anything else than ‘the submissive knee-bender’... the negro will run away.” He recommended keeping African-Americans in “the position of submission” and treating them “kind[ly] and gracious[ly],” so to make “the negro... spell-bound, and [unable to] run away.” Similarly, Cartwright hypothesized the existence of “dysaesthesia aethiopica,” a mental and physical disability that led to laziness among both free and enslaved African-Americans. He asserted that skin insensitivity was a symptom of the mental illness, and that either stimulating the skin “with warm water and soap” or whipping oiled skin could relieve the condition.³²¹ Even during his time period, some questioned Cartwright’s medical knowledge, but he was well-known and well-reputed throughout the U.S. South during the 1850s and 1860s. Many white U.S. Southern men believed in scientific racism and pseudoscience,

³²¹ Samuel Cartwright, “Disease and Peculiarities of the Negro Race,” *DeBow’s Review: Southern and Western States*, Volume XI (New Orleans: 1851).

including these imagined mental and physical disabilities, particularly those planters who interacted with and profited from enslaved African-American laborers.

To some, it may seem surprising that slaves would be ever admitted and treated at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, but we must understand the lengths at which white Southern planters went to ensure efficiency and productivity in their economic affairs. The innumerable plantation ledger-books that sit on dry, cold metal shelves in libraries and archives affirms that planters primarily concerned themselves with excellent, efficient labor on their Southern plantations. We frequently ignore the mind-numbing lists of numbers where overseers and planters performed mathematical considerations of plantation management. Instead, we relish the correspondence between these two parties: we desire specificity about enslaved people (looking for names, punishments, children, personalities) and seek any and all signs of plantation life, sunup to sundown and sundown to sunup. Yet the numbers that so worried planters and overseers clarify the reason behind any letter written between the two peoples: every U.S. Southern plantation was managed to make money and pay off debts, all of which were quantitative in nature. By 1860, millions of humans had been inherited and bought for this process of profits across the United States: for the production and sale of everything from agricultural crops to metalworking to shipbuilding to child-care to birthing new slaves.

An enslaved person's admission to a state lunatic asylum matches the planter's relationship with other physicians, especially those specializing in gynecological practices. During pregnancy, childbirth, and post-natal complications, enslaved African-Americans "maintained a healthy suspicion of the [white] male doctor and questioned whether his presence was for better or worse." Similar to these intimate moments, we can

assume many slaves relied “for help on the familiar” – friends, families, and their own community’s medical-spiritual guides – when first encountering a mental health crisis. However, like “when childbirth took an unnatural turn,” many enslaved women who were experiencing mental illness “submitted at the slaveholder’s insistence to treatment by the slaveholder’s physician.” Instead of being treated in slave quarters, in a few rare incidences mentally ill slaves were taken out of their own local community and brought to the state lunatic asylum.³²² For those who remained in the slave community amidst friends and families, white physicians “joined a drama already in process, one largely under the control of [slave] women.”³²³ Ultimately, we will never have reliable numbers on how many white male physicians assisted mentally ill or disabled enslaved people at plantations and households across the U.S. South. However, we do know that relatively few African-American slaves were ever committed to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum: only six, five female and one male, entered during the 1860s.

The question of consent arises when considering enslaved African-Americans who were admitted to state lunatic asylums. The early twenty-first century has quite different laws regarding involuntary commitment than what was considered the norm in the mid-nineteenth century. South Carolina’s current 2005 law, Section 44-17-580, explains that the involuntary hospitalization of a person can only occur under certain circumstances: 1) “the person lacks sufficient insight or capacity to make responsible decisions with respect to his treatment” and/or 2) “there is a likelihood of serious harm to himself or others.”³²⁴ However, in the antebellum and U.S. Civil War period, the state had no explicit standard

³²² Marie Jenkins Schwartz, *Birthing a Slave* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 145.

³²³ Schwartz, 177.

³²⁴ Section 44-17-580, South Carolina Code of Laws. Online transcription: <http://www.scstatehouse.gov/code/t44c017.php>.

about the consent of slaves, in part because white U.S. Southerners believed enslaved African-Americans did not have significant capacity or need to consent to medical treatment. The six enslaved people committed to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in the 1860s were primarily female, and this gender disparity is complicated by the nature of sexual consent experienced by enslaved African-American women. Increasingly towards the mid-nineteenth century, slaveholders utilized white male physicians to assist in pregnancy, childbirth, and post-natal complications with their female slaves, which was often met with little resistance. Even in cases of extreme gynecological surgery, “enslaved women had little choice but to submit to the surgical procedures recommended by doctors and approved by owners.” Enslaved women, in particular, “were ill equipped emotionally or physically to resist overtly, and outright physical resistance was generally ineffective.”³²⁵ When a planter or merchant decided to commit a slave to the state lunatic asylum, the African-American person likely had little opportunity to resist, especially if they were in the midst of a traumatic mental health crisis.

Only a few white U.S. Southerners brought African-American slaves to the state lunatic asylum: just six planters did so in South Carolina between 1860 and 1865. Of these six patients, five were female and one was male. Four of the six were given the surname of their enslaver, while two are listed only by their first name. Five had ascribed ages: 22, 25, 25, 25, and 26; the average age at first admission was 24.6. These African-American slaves came from major cities in South Carolina, such as Charleston and Columbia, as well as plantations in Kershaw, Abbeville, and Fairfield. Their enslavers – the people who permitted and financially supported their asylum admission - were all male: they include South Carolina’s most famous families, such as the Middleton and

³²⁵ Schwartz, 232.

McRae, as well as smaller planters, such as J. H. Marshall, Henry Cobia, and Thomas Lavender Roseborough. The combination of age and gender in this particular account should not be underestimated: these were older white men, primarily committing young African-American women, during the U.S. Civil War. These few enslaved patients were not feeble elderly, disabled infants, or physically injured men and women: they were young women and one young man, at the height of their physical and reproductive production, in a time of serious crisis in their lives and the infant existence of the Confederacy. They were the future of the Confederacy, if only it could win.³²⁶

Just like the war itself, the occurrence of mental illness in an adult slave could interrupt or end labor efficient production, either in the city or on a plantation. A suddenly sick “house slave” changed the entire routine of a slaveholder’s household from daily fundamentals such as cooking and cleaning but also more complicated necessities, such as child care and hosting guests. A long-time physically disabled slave faced entirely different repercussions than one suffering from acute mental illness. Indeed, the slaves admitted to the 1860s South Carolina Lunatic Asylum were only recently experiencing mental illness. These were not life-long sufferers of physical or mental disabilities: those slaves never entered the state institution for advanced medical treatment, especially not mid-war. At their commitment, both Ellen and Phebe had been unstable for just “10 weeks” each, while Henry Logan had been showing symptoms for “6 months” and Violet Roseborough, for “7 months.” The longest length of time was Tenah Middleton, who had been unstable for “2 years.” It is unclear how long Martha Cobia suffered before being admitted to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. However,

³²⁶ See January 1, 1860 to May 1, 1865 in the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum Admissions Books, 1828-1947, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina (hereafter SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947).

considering many white patients suffered for years and sometimes decades before admission, the rapidity which these slaves showed symptoms and were committed to the lunatic asylum betrays a frightened urgency and need for their sanity and return to normal production and servitude.³²⁷

Enslaved By A Secession Signer: *Tenah Middleton*

On October 16, 1861, Tenah Middleton, a “colored” woman walked through the doors of the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum and was accepted for mental health treatment. She was just “25,” but had been suffering with some sort of mental illness for the last “2 years.” She was entered as a pay patient; her financial benefactor was her enslaver, Williams Middleton, a planter-politician from Charleston. Eleven months earlier in December 1860, Williams had helped initiate the U.S. Civil War by slanting his signature on the Ordinance of Secession of South Carolina. Although Williams owned hundreds of slaves, he gave Tenah particular attention in October 1861 by sending her away to Columbia for medical treatment for her insanity. Tenah may have worked for Williams in an intimate setting, but, as we will see, trying to discern her exact location in Williams’ life is deeply problematic.³²⁸

The close proximity between enslaver/enslaved parallels the experience of white families across the U.S. South when a white family member became noticeably and worryingly disturbed. Although most white families attempted to handle their loved one at home for a time, often for months and sometimes years, many eventually sought further assistance in the state lunatic asylum. Enslavers confronted the same challenge: a

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Tenah Middleton, #1267, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

disturbed African-American slave, especially one close to the planter and his family, meant an unwanted changed routine and provoked concern for their capability and productivity. Whatever their duties, if an insane slave was not performing their tasks appropriately, a white U.S. Southerner did have the exceedingly unusual option to pay for mental health treatment for their enslaved laborer. If he wanted, he could permit an extended absence in hope for cure and return to work. For Tenah in October 1861, her enslaver Williams Middleton did just that: he sent her away, expecting her return to sanity, his ownership, and to labor for him.

Tenah's admission draws attention to the striking fact that five of the six enslaved patients in the 1860s South Carolina Lunatic Asylum were female. Ultimately, this gender disparity validates the specific gender expectations that white U.S. Southerners regularly placed on their enslaved people. A misbehaving, mentally ill male slave might have been punished or sold away, but the need to retain a female slave, particularly one in her twenties, was high. She was valued for her reproductive capability and her capacity to care for children. Thus, if possible, it would have been ideal if she was cured and returned to her particular gendered abilities. Five of the six enslaved patients – Tenah, Ellen, Martha, Phebe, and Violet – were African-American women in their twenties: key productive and reproductive years. Although mental illness and disabilities affected many slaves, these five women were unusually admitted to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum by their enslavers, because their primary production laid within their functioning female sexed bodies. Tenah's extraordinary commitment reveals strange but fundamental experiences between powerful white men and enslaved black women in the U.S. South during the U.S. Civil War.

At the bottom of a crumbling ledger page, situated between a twenty-two year-old white woman “very sick” with “spinal disease” and a sixty-three year-old poor white man, is an enslaved woman marked as “Tenah Middleton.”³²⁹ An initial glance might mistake “Tenah” for “Jenah,” as the latter seems more familiar to a modern reader who knows the name “Jenna.” However, “Tenah” is the correct spelling for what is an African-derived female name, often found in lists of enslaved people at U.S. Southern plantations. In his work, *Slaves in the Family*, Edward Ball mentions “Tenah,” an enslaved woman living on his ancestor’s plantation in South Carolina around the American Revolution. He expounds on the origins of the name: “‘Tenah’ (if pronounced The-nay) would be the English spelling for a girl’s name common among the Mende in West Africa... It is quite possible that Tenah’s culture of origin was among this clan; circumstantial evidence supports this conjecture.”³³⁰ Indeed, many black women named “Tenah” can be found in the 1870 and later censuses throughout the U.S. South, especially South Carolina, confirming continued use of this much older African name.

The Tenah Middleton of the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum was born in approximately 1836, according to the state lunatic asylum admission ledger. Her name clearly defies white Southern naming practices and suggests that at least one branch of the Middleton family allowed its enslaved people to name themselves and their children. When examining the so-called “slave registers” of Middleton Place in Dorchester County, near Charleston, a few different enslaved women named “Tenah” appear. A similar name, “Binah,” is also common. Edward Ball also discovered “Binah”’s when he investigated the slaves of his South Carolina ancestors: “Like the name Tenah, Binah (if

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Edward Ball, *Slaves in the Family* (New York: Farrer, Strauss, and Giroux, 1998), 70.

pronounced Beh-nay) can be read as the English rendering of a girl's name commonly used among people from the inland of Guinea and Sierra Leone."³³¹ Similarly, Cheryll Ann Cody found that Binah was "a common name for slave girls on the Ball plantations" in her investigation and believes that "Binah may have had West African origins in the names Binta or Beneba."³³² These African names indicate the continuation of individual and collective African memory, though the people and their descendants were then far removed from their original continent.³³³ Furthermore, to be named "Tenah" in a world controlled by Europeans and their descendants imbued the enslaved child with the potential for power, both individual and collective, and the subversive knowledge of African practices. Most likely, the Tenah who entered in the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum was named after an earlier female member in her family line – a common pattern found in many plantation records across the U.S. South. The South Carolina Lowcountry, with Charleston as its seat, utilized extensive name-sharing: "Sharing a kin name was a useful device to connect children with their past and place them in the history of their families and communities."³³⁴ Both white and black U.S. Southerners often named children after parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, etc. As a consequence, Tenah may have been named after her grandmother or another older female relative, perhaps even someone had survived the horrors of a slave ship from Africa.

Notably, Tenah was not named something "whimsical, satirical, or condescending in intent," such as "Venus, Cato, Hercules, Bacchus, Pompey [which] reflect planters'

³³¹ Ball, *Slaves in the Family*, 72.

³³² Cheryll Ann Cody, "There Was No Absalom on the Ball Plantations: Slave-Naming Practices in the South Carolina Low Country, 1720-1865," *The American Historical Review* Vol. 92, No. 3 (June 1987), 576, 585.

³³³ See Liseli A. Fitzpatrick, "African Names and Naming Practices: The Impact Slavery and European Domination had on the African Psyche, Identity, and Protest (M.A. thesis, Ohio State University, 2012).

³³⁴ Cody, "There Was No Absalom on the Ball Plantations," 573.

own educations and libraries” rather than mirror a respect for enslaved African-Americans.³³⁵ She was also not given one of the English-translated day-names, such as “Monday” or “Friday,” which derived from “African nomenclature... a set of fourteen names (seven male and seven female) used in the tribal custom of naming a child for the day of the week on which he or she was born.”³³⁶ She was also not given an event name, such as for a Christian religious holiday like “Christmas” or “Easter,” as some South Carolina slaves were.³³⁷ She also was not called “London,” “Baltimore,” “Norfolk,” “Richmond,” or even “America,” although quite a few Carolina slaves had those names.³³⁸ Instead, Tenah was most likely named for a West African female ancestor when she was born around 1836 in the rice world of Charleston, South Carolina. According to John C. Inscoe’s study of African names given to slaves in North and South Carolina, between 1830 and 1839, only 9% of slaves received “pure African names” while another 15% had a name of “probable African origin or influence.”³³⁹ Tenah stands triumphant as a reflection of her African family, both intimately and abstractly. In an era where she could have been “Cleopatra,” “Wednesday,” “Mary,” or “Venus” – she was instead Tenah.

The other issue surrounding the name “Tenah Middleton” is her surname. Most records that include slave names were “written by white hands and must be viewed in light of how those names may have been recorded, either intentionally or through sheer misunderstanding, as something other than what the slaves themselves perceived their

³³⁵ John C. Inscoe, “Slave Names,” NCPedia, <http://ncpedia.org/slave-names>.

³³⁶ John C. Inscoe, “Carolina Slave Names: An Index to Acculturation,” *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (November 1983), 532.

³³⁷ Cody, “There Was No Abasalom on the Ball Plantations,” 575.

³³⁸ Inscoe, “Carolina Slave Names,” 537.

³³⁹ Inscoe, “Carolina Slave Names,” 535.

own names or those of their children to be.”³⁴⁰ We will never know if Tenah identified with the surname Middleton, if she believed she was human property belonging to the Middleton family, or if she viewed herself as a member of the Middleton family. Asylum attendants may have included the Middleton surname in the Name column for any number of reasons. Perhaps because only a few slaves entered the asylum, they wanted to make sure she was understood as a Middleton family slave. Other enslaved patients had this standard repeated in their cases: both “Martha Cobia” and “Henry Logan” later were given the surname of their enslaver in their admission. As a consequence, Tenah being referred to as “Tenah Middleton” can only be extrapolated so far: it may remark less on her understanding of her own identity and more on the expectations of the white men who wrote down her name in the ledger-book.

In the By Whom Supported column (BWS), often marked with “C of Poor” (or Committee of the Poor), Tenah Middleton is further identified by the jumbled name “Williams Middleton.” Though the writer had managed to get “Williams” in the column, he or she ruined the chance of including all of the longer surname “Middleton,” only getting in “Mid-” then pushing the remaining “-dleton” above the surname itself in a tight scrawl. The specificity of the BWS column typically correlates with the patient being “Pay” – as in, a specific individual was paying for their admission and stay in the lunatic asylum. This adjacent column – with only two options, either “Pay” or “Pauper” – is always filled out. Those with Committee of the Poor in their BWS column are marked as paupers. Tenah Middleton, although an enslaved woman, was not considered a pauper; she had her own wealthy benefactor, her enslaver-master, the man who believed he

³⁴⁰ Inscoc, “Carolina Slave Names,” 531.

owned her as property and trafficked her at his will, including sending her away to the state lunatic asylum.

Tenah's BWS, Williams Middleton (1809-1883), may be best known for his signature on the Ordinance of Secession of South Carolina, which he penned on December 20, 1860. In death, he shares a large stone mausoleum with his great-grandmother (1731-1761), whose husband Henry (1717-1784) was the President of the First Continental Congress; his grandfather, Arthur Middleton (1742-1787), who signed the Declaration of Independence; his father, Henry (1770-1846), a Governor of South Carolina and long-time Minister to Russia; and his daughter, Elizabeth (1849-1915), who worked to preserve the family plantation in the late nineteenth century. All are buried at a massive plantation called Middleton Place, located northwest of Charleston, which now acts as a tourist destination and stands on the National Register of Historical Places. Williams inherited Middleton Place in 1846 when his father died; he also inherited all of his father's slaves, as they were considered human property and inheritable possessions. Tenah would have been around ten years old at this transition in 1846, while Williams himself was thirty-seven. Like many plantations near Charleston that were erected and maintained by the rivers that flowed out to the city port, Middleton Place primarily grew rice. Throughout the early and mid-nineteenth century, the Middleton men reigned as rice kings in the Cotton Kingdom.³⁴¹

Nevertheless, Tenah may not have worked in the rice fields at Middleton Place in Dorchester County. In the Residence column in the admission ledger, Tenah's home is clearly marked as Charleston. Similarly, Charleston was listed as the place of residence in

³⁴¹ See Barbara Doyle, Mary Edna Sullivan, Tracey Todd, and Charles Duell, *Beyond the Fields: Slavery at Middleton Place* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008).

Tenah's discharge in the asylum's Admissions and Discharges book. While Dorchester County and Charleston are proximate, the attendants did not mistakenly write the city. Williams Middleton, like most wealthy planters in the area, owned a separate house in the city of Charleston away from his family seat in Dorchester, and Tenah appears to have worked there instead of a plantation in Dorchester. In 1855, Williams purchased a truly impressive house located at 1 Meeting Street – the very first building on Charleston's grand Meeting Street, towering on the corner of South Battery Street. The enormous three-piazza house still overlooks the lovely oaks of White Point Garden and gazes out into the Charleston harbor linking Ashley River and the Atlantic Ocean. Although Williams owned the house before, during, and after the war from 1855 to 1870, the enormous structure is known as the George Robertson House, who built it in 1846. Williams Middleton can be found in the post-bellum city directories, listed as "Middleton, Williams, planter, N. cor. S. Bay and Meeting," as in 1869.³⁴² He never strayed far after he sold the house in 1870: he was residing at 18 Meeting Street in 1873, 5 East Bay Street in 1875, and 4 Meeting Street in 1877.³⁴³ In 1880, Williams was seventy-eight years old, still viewed as a "rice planter," but was now a resident at a Charleston boarding house with his wife and thirty-four-year-old still-single daughter, Susan. Unlike in 1870, where the family had plentiful African-American servants living

³⁴² *Illustrated Charleston City Directory and Business Register, 1869-1870* (Charleston, South Carolina: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, 1869), 89.

³⁴³ *Directory for 1872-1873* (Charleston, South Carolina: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, 1873), 87; T.M. Haddock and J.E. Baker, *Charleston City Directory, 1875-1876* (Charleston, South Carolina: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, 1876), 115; and *Sholes' Directory for the City of Charleston for 1877-1888* (Charleston, South Carolina: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, 1878), 177.

and working for them in their enormous mansion, the 1880 U.S. Federal Census only identifies the three family members living in another person's house.³⁴⁴

There is a disturbing contrast between what is known about the houses of Williams Middleton and what is known about the life and death of Tenah Middleton. Although now we have access to high-definition photographs and videos that meticulously tour nearly every room in Williams' grandiose Charleston house, we have only a few "slave registers" from Middleton Place and state lunatic asylum records that barely mention Tenah Middleton. Even though Williams and Tenah were both named in the ledger book and were written by the same pencil in the same script, information pours out when investigating Williams but entirely ceases when searching for Tenah. The difference is not that one was an unstable patient of the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum and the other, the affluent supporter of an insane person. Many wealthy men and women resided at the Asylum for decades, and information is plentiful for them regardless of their mental illness. The disparity between Williams and Tenah dwells in their difference in other matters beyond mental health. The extraordinary privilege of Williams Middleton cannot be underestimated: he was the correct sex, race, age, class, wealth, social status, education level, occupation, and lineage for the early 1860s U.S. South. Tenah was nearly his opposite in all ways: a young black enslaved woman, descendent of African slaves, likely without any significant education, wealth, or possessions. She was also apparently suffering from mental illness. While Williams' house (that likely Tenah and people like her labored in) continues to demand obsessive attention, Tenah's

³⁴⁴ Year: 1880; Census Place: Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina; Roll: 1222; Family History Film: 1255222; Page: 211C; Enumeration District: 062. And Year: 1870; Census Place: Charleston Ward 2, Charleston, South Carolina; Roll: M593_1486; Page: 53A; Image: 354116; Family History Library Film: 552985.

presence is only felt as a ghost gliding through space and time, slipping along the periphery.

Tenah appeared at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in October 1861. The state had seceded ten months earlier, with the help of her enslaver-master. Within a few months, South Carolina was joined by several other Southern states and established the Confederate States of America. Williams had signed the Ordinance of Secession in Charleston only a few streets away from where Tenah appears to have worked at 1 Meeting Street. In her childhood Tenah was likely considered the property of Williams' father, Governor Henry Middleton. In 1846, an enslaved female named "Tenah" appears on Henry's 290-person Hobonny Plantation slave register; she was valued at \$200. There is also an "Old Tenah," valued at "\$0," who may have been her namesake. Tenah's low value at \$200 seems to suggest that she was a young non-reproductive woman, considering most female names had higher associated prices, ranging from \$400 to \$600. Enslaved women with the prefix "Old" were listed at prices ranging from \$0 to \$200.³⁴⁵ Another "Tenah" on Middleton's 217-person Nieuport/Newport plantation was valued at \$250, and yet another "Tenah" lived on Middleton's 39-person Middleton Place plantation valued even higher at \$500.³⁴⁶ The immediate question is clear: Which Tenah of the Middleton slave family was sent to the lunatic asylum in 1861? It was certainly not "Old Tenah," because the patient at the asylum was twenty-five years old, but was it the Tenah worth \$200, or \$250, or \$500? What can we learn from the simple, careless violence that occurs when we are forced to identify a person by their assigned monetary value trapped in an oppressive system of enslavement?

³⁴⁵ Doyle, Sullivan, Todd, and Duell, 50-52.

³⁴⁶ Doyle, Sullivan, Todd, and Duell, 53-54.

Starting in 1846, Williams Middleton owned several plantations and hundreds of enslaved African-Americans, and his passionate beliefs about an empire of slavery were enough for him to ultimately sign the Ordinance of Secession that provoked the U.S. Civil War. When Williams Middleton took over his father's plantations in late 1846, he inherited all of his father's slaves as well. In his 1849 marriage to Susan Pringle Smith, he also received twenty-slaves as a dowry gift. One slave woman in the dowry was also named "Tenah," in addition to the four "Tenah"s listed in the 1846 slave registries. We cannot be certain where this dowry newcomer was sent to labor considering the many different "Tenah"s working on Middleton plantations.³⁴⁷ She could perhaps have been the "Tenah" later found at the Horse Savanna plantation in 1853. This "Tenah" remained at Horse Savanna during the following year and was noted as "cook for the people," the other 93 slaves at the plantation. If this is the dowry-gifted "Tenah," she may have been presented to Williams and his wife as an experienced and skilled enslaved woman who could take care of other slaves and make the newly weds' lives easier in their early years of plantation management. However, three years later, the 1856 Horse Savanna register no longer lists any "Tenah," making it unclear what happened to her.³⁴⁸

Around the same time, the \$500 "Tenah" listed in 1853 Middleton Place record was marked as having a child named "Lucy."³⁴⁹ In the seven years between registers, Middleton Place recorded an increase in the enslaved population, rising from 39 to 45 people. A year later, in 1854, Middleton Place again listed the \$500 "Tenah" as having "2 children." In a single year, Middleton Place has seen its slave population increase from 45 to 57. Two years later in 1856, Middleton Place boasted "77 slaves," and the \$500

³⁴⁷ Doyle, Sullivan, Todd, and Duell, 54.

³⁴⁸ Doyle, Sullivan, Todd, and Duell, 55.

³⁴⁹ Doyle, Sullivan, Todd, and Duell, 54.

“Tenah” had born three children: Lucy, Josey, and Celia. However, Josey was marked “dd” which the register explained “indicated death of a slave.”³⁵⁰ In 1861, a plantation record about “clothes and blankets given to children at Middleton Place” showed “Tenah’s” two children as Lucy and Celia.³⁵¹ A similar record in 1863 again noted “Tenah’s” children, Lucy and Celia, working at Middleton Place with their mother during the U.S. Civil War.³⁵²

It does appear that the \$500 “Tenah” was absent for one list – the “Clothes Distribution List for Women at Middleton Place” for 1863 (an approximate date). All the other enslaved women on this clothing list appear on the later list “Children and their Mothers at Middleton Place, Horse Savanna, and Jerry Hill,” but the \$500 “Tenah” is only listed on the subsequent children/mother list.³⁵³ This absence may indicate that the \$500 “Tenah” was at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, and she was not counted as a slave woman given clothing in 1863. However, one should firmly note that these slave registers originate from the numerous rural Middleton plantations and do not include the Charleston ‘house slave’ population. There could have been yet another “Tenah” who lived at 1 Meeting Street in Charleston with Williams and his family; the available records do not list the enslaved people who worked for Williams in the city. All of the Middleton slave records ceased when the war began to conclude, and no other word about any of the “Tenah”s owned by the Middletons has been found. If there were surviving “Tenah”s previously enslaved by the Middleton family, they do not appear to have kept the Middleton surname.

³⁵⁰ Doyle, Sullivan, Todd, and Duell, 55.

³⁵¹ Doyle, Sullivan, Todd, and Duell, 57.

³⁵² Doyle, Sullivan, Todd, and Duell, 58.

³⁵³ Ibid.

It is impossible to discern *which* Tenah from *which* Middleton plantation was sent to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, but she was undoubtedly claimed by Williams Middleton, as he was listed as her “By Whom Supports” who paid for her admission and treatment. Williams’ attention to the “Tenah” who went to the state lunatic asylum indicates that he interacted with this “Tenah” in ways significantly unlike the other hundreds of slaves that he owned across at least four plantations and his Charleston house. As frequent with most patients, something likely had changed in her behavior or in her supporters’ ability to take care of her. Perhaps Williams Middleton himself had personally noticed Tenah’s erratic behavior, or she became unable to perform her household tasks which trickled up to reach the attention of Williams Middleton. Eleven months removed from secession, Williams made the decision to pay additional expenses to save the sanity of a slave.

Thus, one of the enslaved “Tenah”s who worked for Williams Middleton was sent to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum on October 16, 1861 to be treated and cured of insanity. As typical for slaves and later for many freed-people, she was not given a marital status or a cause of insanity in the ledger book. The asylum attendant also left the space blank in the Occupation column. In fact, nowhere in the admission ledger does it explicitly declare Tenah’s skin color or social role as an enslaved woman. Nevertheless, careful observation reveals Tenah’s status: although a pay patient, which was a relatively rare thing, especially during the war, she has several noticeable blank spots in her record. Later, when freed-people began to be admitted into the asylum, their records were left similarly blank, even though many were in long-term committed relationships and had life-long skilled occupations. The subtle discrimination is the purposeful decision of

white physicians and attendants to leave out important information, to avoid deeper investigation, and to ignore the humanity of a suffering patient in a place supposedly dedicated to providing individualized care.

Tenah did not die at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. She survived her time at the budget-tight, war-tense asylum and was discharged “cured” on November 14, 1862. Again, the attendants did not mark her as “colored” or as a “slave,” but her position in Charleston society was long betrayed by details in the admission ledger. The final fate of Tenah Middleton, just like her specific identity, is impossible to discern, for all the reasons demonstrated in the countless statues glorifying the rebel dead in contrast to the invisibility of slave burial grounds scattered across the U.S. South. One can find Williams’ weather-worn mausoleum on his lush plantation which survived the war, raids, debt, and depressions. Although parts of the main house burned during the Civil War, the destruction only adds to the appeal for thousands of thirsty tourists, both domestic and international, who travel to visit Middleton Place. They imagine a romantic world of rice and ruins. They do not envision Tenah, the enslaved woman who was sent away to Columbia for her mental health as hundreds of thousands of soldiers clashed over her citizenship rights. She altered the world around her, that very world of rice and magnolias, of powerful white men and sweating black bodies. She labored for a man who worried for her mental stability and yet fought to keep her as a slave. She produced for Williams Middleton – she almost certainly gave him new slave workers in the form of children, and she provided a range of labor at his request. He needed her, even in the slow burn of the early months of the war, and so he paid to have her treated and cured of her apparent insanity. And when her mental health issues were supposedly cured in 1862, she

likely returned to 1 Meeting Street in Charleston or a Middleton plantation, to continue to serve Williams Middleton, a powerful white planter-politician who helped start the U.S. Civil War.³⁵⁴

Had anything changed for Tenah in the 395 days that she stayed at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum? The war had progressed poorly; the ruthless cheer of the first few months had faded as casualty lists grew. Whatever fire that Williams had in December 1860 had been tampered by casualties and battlefield defeats. In the days following Antietam, as soldiers shook off the blood and brain splatter of friends, Tenah was behind marble walls, being treated for insanity. She likely reappeared in the Charleston area sometime before the Emancipation Proclamation declared on January 1, 1863. But by then she had vanished, swept out of the record as a person unable to speak or save her own story. Crucial truths about the nineteenth century U.S. South reveal themselves in the small part of Tenah's story that we can manage to reconstruct. She lived and suffered in a time where slavery and sacrifice tangled with war, insanity, ruin, and death. Tenah's admission to a lunatic asylum during the U.S. Civil War reveals a peculiar feeling that enslavers expressed towards their human property – something close to care and a desperate need for efficient (re)production as well as a strange acknowledgement that black bodies and minds were not that all that dissimilar to those of white U.S. Southerner elites. Tenah's fleeting presence in the written record exposes the depth of U.S. Southern discrimination, then and now, regarding enslaved African-Americans, particularly women, the disabled, and mentally ill.

³⁵⁴ Tenah Middleton, Discharged on 1862-11-14, South Carolina State Hospital for the Insane Admissions and Discharges Books 1860-1964, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina (hereafter SCSHI Admissions and Discharges, 1860-1964).

An Enslaved Woman and A Free Woman: *Martha Cobia and Mary Eason*

War led Henry Cobia of Charleston to do strange things. In the matter of four months, between September 1861 and January 1862, he financially supported the state lunatic asylum admissions of two different women, both unrelated to him: the first was Martha Cobia, an African-American enslaved “houseservant,” who most likely worked for him, and the second was Mary Eason, a white female businesswoman who maintained a local boardinghouse in Charleston. No other person during the 1860s supported two different asylum patients that were also unrelated to him. Henry Cobia is not the primary focus of this story: the women that he financially supported are key. However, due to what has survived from this era, most of the still available information is about Henry Cobia, rather than Martha the enslaved woman or Mary the boardinghouse keeper. Through him, we can see both Martha Cobia and Mary Eason as complex suffering people and patients who would later die at the asylum. As their wealthy benefactor, Henry Cobia serves as a central bridge connecting Martha and Mary’s two distinct stories of white and black war-time womanhood and time in the state lunatic asylum.³⁵⁵

In the antebellum period, Henry Cobia was a prominent merchant trading on the South Carolina coast: in 1850, he owned \$15,000 in real estate in the Charleston city area³⁵⁶ and doubled it by 1860. He had a jaw-dropping \$75,000 in personal estate in the 1860 U.S. Federal Census, suggesting an upward trend which would have continued if the U.S. Civil War had not interrupted him.³⁵⁷ Henry Cobia excelled in Charleston for

³⁵⁵ Martha Cobia, #1259, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947, and Mary Eason, #1277, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

³⁵⁶ Year: 1850; Census Place: *St Michael and St Phillip, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *M432_850*; Page: 273B; Image: 387.

³⁵⁷ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Charleston Ward 4, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *M653_1216*; Page: 349; Image: 332; Family History Library Film: 805216.

reasons that were distinctly U.S. Southern: he invested much of his money in humans. In 1840, he declared that he owned nine slaves, and then twenty in 1850.³⁵⁸ On the eve of the U.S. Civil War, Henry was marked as the owner of twenty-two African-Americans. He worked a wide variety of enslaved people of color, including children and elderly.³⁵⁹

Although Henry Cobia clearly used African-American slave labor, his exact business as a trader, merchant, and slave-owner is uncertain. He was a prominent businessman, running his self-titled “H. Cobia & Company,” and trading in the prominent crops of the day, including Carolina rice and Southern cotton. Ultimately, he was not a “negro trader.” While he was someone who dealt in human beings and their forced labor, he does not appear to have routinely sold African-Americans, although he certainly used them as laborers in the city. Instead, Henry Cobia repeatedly appears in the antebellum Charleston directories as an “auctioneer,” running his own company or working alongside other merchants, such as “Blum & Cobia.” Most of his business occurred at 26 Vendue Range, which was located only a few blocks from the Charleston City Market and the Charleston harbor itself.³⁶⁰ He was in the midst of many close networks of prominent white U.S. Southern men, including the South Carolina Institute, which was incorporated in 1850 “for the promotion and encouragement of the arts, agriculture, ingenuity, mechanics, manufactures, and a general development of industry”

³⁵⁸ Year: 1840; Census Place: Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina; Roll: 509; Page: 89; Image: 782; Family History Library Film: 0022508; United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. M432, 1,009 rolls.

³⁵⁹ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

³⁶⁰ James William Hagy, *Charleston, South Carolina City Directories for the Years 1830-1841* (Charleston, South Carolina: Clearfield, 2009), 74.

in Charleston.³⁶¹ Alongside the area's predominant planters and politicians, Henry Cobia served as a director for the South Carolina Institute in spring 1859.³⁶²

Henry Cobia's life changed in the U.S. Civil War: he transformed his mercantile business into a blockade-running company. "Cobia & Co." became blockade runners and owned the ship "Gem," which was most active between August 1863 and March 1865. According to at least one source, the Gem was successful in its two attempts of running the Union blockade.³⁶³ Henry established the "Charleston Importing & Exporting" company sometime during the early or middle part of the U.S. Civil War and served as its president. Surviving \$1000 share notes from his company display a blockade runner ship at the note's top and a bale of wheat at the note's bottom.³⁶⁴ The twenty-two slaves that Henry owned in 1860 likely worked closely with Henry as he transitioned from a peace-time merchant to a blockade runner. A young African-American woman named Martha appears to be one of those enslaved people. She seems to have worked for Henry Cobia as a personal "houseservant." She emerges as an unusual character in U.S. Civil War because she began to suffer considerably in late 1861 – several months into the conflict. Although the record remains frustratingly unclear, Martha fell to a "2nd attack" of insanity in September 1861, the cause of which was assumed to be "hereditary." Henry Cobia seems to have noticed a change in her behavior and believed her mentally unwell in late 1861. Nothing is known of Martha's "1st attack" of insanity nor why her mental illness

³⁶¹ *Premium List of the South Carolina Institute* (Charleston, South Carolina: Evans, Walker, & Cogswell, 1870), 8.

³⁶² "Untitled," *Abbeville Press and Banner* (Abbeville, South Carolina), May 13, 1859, 2.

³⁶³ "Confederate States: Blockade Covers," Schuyler Rumsey Philatelic Auctions in San Francisco California, accessed January 1, 2016, <http://www.rumseyauctions.com/auctions/chapter/43/40>.

³⁶⁴ "Blockade Runners and State Bonds," Stamp Auction Network, accessed January 1, 2016, <http://stampauctionnetwork.com/f/f13424.cfm>.

was considered “hereditary,” but she does not appear to have been institutionalized before 1861. Whatever her symptoms, they were recurrent.

With his own mind distracted by worries about blockades, battles, and cotton prices, Henry Cobia sent Martha as enslaved African-American “houseservant” to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum for mental health treatment. He paid for her stay, like all the white men who committed their slaves. As was standard for slave admissions, the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum did not mark Martha’s marital status, and it furthermore did not record her age. The physicians and staff barely recorded anything about her case, and they listed her as “Martha Cobia (colored)” in the ledger book.³⁶⁵ Because the staff did not note her age or other key features, we cannot easily identify Martha. She could be one of any of Henry’s eight female slaves that he declared in the 1860 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedule. She could have been a new slave that he had acquired between June 1860 and September 1861, the date of her commitment. Martha could even have been the enslaved servant of a friend, family member, or neighbor, and Henry was merely financially supporting her stay the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. While it seems most likely that Martha was Henry Cobia’s personal “houseservant,” her exact identity remains painfully unclear. She may have worked at his magnificent house at 128 Wentworth Street in Charleston, which was a “two story stuccoed brick Italianate style house [built] sometime after 1852” and boasted “white marble mantels and elaborate plasterwork and woodwork.”³⁶⁶ But Martha also may have been more of a stranger to Henry – an African-American enslaved woman who he was helping not for her sake but for her owner,

³⁶⁵ Martha Cobia, #1259, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

³⁶⁶ “Wentworth Street,” Charleston County Public Library, accessed January 1, 2016, <http://www.ccpl.org/content.asp?id=15652&catID=6026&action=detail&parentID=5747>.

because he as a profitable blockade-runner could relieve the financial burden of those in Charleston during the war.

Four months later, in January 1862, Henry Cobia financially supported the commitment of another patient to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum: a middle-aged white woman named Mary Eason. Both of her parents had died before the war, and her two surviving sisters had relatively little means themselves. Mary was a resident of Charleston, South Carolina, and Henry Cobia must have known her and the Eason family to extend his financial support to her in such dire times. As a single thirty-seven-year-old woman, Mary had her own occupation to support her: like her mother before her, she kept boarders in Charleston. When her mother had died in 1857, she seems to have left her large residence to Mary, who was her oldest daughter, to manage and profit from. It is unclear with whom Mary had been residing during the early part of the Civil War, but her deteriorated mental health was noticed somehow by someone. In January 1862, the state lunatic asylum believed that her insanity was caused by “war excitement” that had been occurring for the last “4 months.” Henry Cobia became involved with her financial care, perhaps because the two were local businesspeople. Mary Eason’s institutionalization to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum came on the heels of Henry’s assistance with Martha, the enslaved African-African woman who seems likely to have been enslaved and worked for him. The two women may have met in Charleston or in the state lunatic asylum, but perhaps they did not considering the extreme lengths of racial segregation across the U.S. South. Yet, while Mary Eason would remain at the asylum another twenty-five years, Martha Cobia would not last more than another two years at the state institution. Martha never saw freedom: she lived and died as a slave. Martha and Mary’s

paths were briefly entangled by powerful men and their similarly unsettled mental health, but they would diverge sharply in death.³⁶⁷

Although the full impact of the U.S. Civil War on Henry Cobia cannot be ascertained, he survived the war and continued his work as a merchant and auctioneer in postwar Charleston. In October 1865, his business “Henry Cobia & Co.” was selling “15 bales heavy gunny cloth” as well as “20 barrels crushed sugar” and “20 barrels (B) coffee” to whoever could afford such goods.³⁶⁸ A month later in November 1865, Henry advertised “110 Boxes English Dairy Cheese” for sale.³⁶⁹ In April 1866, “Henry Cobia & Co” was once again located at 26 Vendue: early in the month, he advertised “75 tons Genuine Peruvian Guano” and, at the end of the month, he was selling “two bales of upland cotton and bananas.”³⁷⁰ He was nominated for city alderman in late 1865 and, although he received hundreds of votes, he was not elected to the position.³⁷¹ Due to emancipation, Henry had no enslaved laborers working for him in the postwar period, but he continued to employ African-Americans in his mercantile business and at his large house. Martha, his former slave, had been dead for two years, but perhaps some of her surviving family still worked for him.

When Henry Cobia died of “congestion of the lungs” in February 1870 at the age of sixty-five, the highest echelons of Charleston responded by collectively mourning.³⁷² *The Charleston Daily News* reported under “CITY AFFAIRS” about the “Funeral of the Late Henry Cobia.” The newspaper declared, “The death of Mr. Cobia cast a saddening

³⁶⁷ Mary Eason, #1277, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

³⁶⁸ *Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, South Carolina), October 19, 1865, 3.

³⁶⁹ *Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, South Carolina), November 17, 1865, 15.

³⁷⁰ *Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, South Carolina), April 10, 1866, 8 and April 26, 1866, 5.

³⁷¹ *Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, South Carolina), November 2, 1865, 5.

³⁷² *U.S. Census Mortality Schedules, South Carolina, 1850-1880*; Archive Roll Number: 2; Census Year: 1870; Census Place: *Charleston Ward 4, Charleston, South Carolina*; Page: 3.

influence over business circles yesterday, but his loss was most keenly felt by the various organizations which he was a member. The German Friendly Society, the Board of Trade, and the Pioneer Fire Company, each met and proceeded in a body to the house of mourning, where they formed a part of the funeral cortege.” Furthermore, the Charleston Chamber of Commerce joined the funeral, as did “the presidents of officers of the banks and public institutions, and representations from the prominent business firms.”

Interestingly, the newspaper noted “the presence of the orphan children, who filled one of the galleries” of the church during his services, which seems to suggest that Henry was particularly charitable towards the city’s orphans, perhaps even moreso in the postwar period. On the day of Henry Cobia’s funeral “the flags of the shipping in the harbor” in Charleston were lowered to half-mast in his honor.³⁷³ His remains were interred at the lovely Magnolia Cemetery outside of Charleston; his grave was adorned with a huge obelisk of white marble pronouncing this to be his final resting place. A curved “HENRY COBIA” rests above the broad chiseled words: “Departed this life / Feby 13, 1870 / In the 65th year / of his age.” Soon his wife and daughter came to rest beside him, and their own names and death dates were inscribed on the other sides of the Cobia obelisk using similar secular language.

Time ticked on. Mary Eason remained at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. She no longer served as a white businesswoman in Charleston; she was now a life-long patient of the state lunatic asylum. Mary was present for both the 1870 and 1880 U.S. Federal Census, which marked her at age “51” and then age “65.”³⁷⁴ She never appears to

³⁷³ *Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, South Carolina), February 15, 1870, 3.

³⁷⁴ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Columbia, Richland, South Carolina*; Roll: *M593_1507*; Page: *157B*; Image: *332639*; Family History Library Film: *553006*; Year: 1880; Census Place: *Columbia, Richland, South Carolina*; Roll: *1238*; Family History Film: *1255238*; Page: *328A*; Enumeration District: *167*.

have overcome her mental health troubles which first emerged during the U.S. Civil War. Although the state institution claimed that the cause of her insanity was “war excitement,” Mary most likely suffered from another mental illness beyond temporary acute trauma. Kept in the asylum from 1862 until her death in 1887, Mary Eason appears to have never married. It seems possible that the estate of Henry Cobia continued to pay for her care, but in the postwar period, particularly after Henry’s death, Mary Eason’s status may have fallen from a “pay” patient to a “pauper.” Although there is no correction in the ledger, very few edits were ever made in the record. Her death came after years of mental health trouble, and the asylum deemed her cause of death “Exhaustion from mania.” Only a few years before the twentieth century, Mary Eason died at age seventy-eight. She was marked as a native of Charleston but a resident of Columbia for twenty-six years. Her long-time residence at Columbia was entirely had at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum – through most of the U.S. Civil War, all of Reconstruction, and far into the New South, she stayed at the state institution.³⁷⁵

In a highly rare event, when she died in 1887, Mary Eason was not brought to a Columbia city cemetery, like most state lunatic asylum patients in the late nineteenth century. Instead, she was returned to Charleston in death and buried alongside her family at the Magnolia Cemetery, not all that far from Henry Cobia, his wife, and daughter. Her death certificate states that she was “Buried at Magnolia” and that she was “Non contagious” in death.³⁷⁶ The Eason family obelisk, towering and dirt-speckled, now stands beside a massive oak draped in Spanish moss. Upon her death, Mary’s name, birth date, and death date were inscribed in a tight space between her similarly unmarried sister

³⁷⁵ Death Certificate for Mary Eason at Columbia, South Carolina. *South Carolina Death Records*. Columbia, South Carolina, USA: South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

and a married sister whose new surname is in a markedly different font. On the front face of the obelisk, her father and mother have their names chiseled deeply into the stone. The opposite side of the obelisk lists the many Eason sons who did not achieve full adulthood: Benjamin, who died at age five; James Henry, who died at eighteen; William, who died at ten; and J. Edward, who died at age seventeen. Although Mary and her sisters reached adulthood, two of the three did not marry, and it is not clear if any produced children. Mary herself spent more than a quarter of a century in the state lunatic asylum. Yet her parents, her brothers, her sisters, and she all reside in death in a family plot at Magnolia fenced in by low stone, the small entrance of which still reads “PERPETUAL CARE” and, then in larger text, “EASON.” One side of the obelisk – like many of those in U.S. Southern cemeteries – remains blank, as if future children in the Eason family could still be born and die and be buried.

In death, Henry Cobia resides along a worn grey path in Magnolia Cemetery, his wife and daughter interred beside him. Prominent men of the Old and New South stood by his grave when his body was lowered into the soft South Carolina soil. Not physically far from him but temporally much later, gravediggers shoveled space into the Eason family plot, avoiding the plots of her many long-dead brothers and parents. Although Mary Eason had resided in the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum for much of her life, committed for “war excitement” and chronic mental illness, Mary’s body was silently returned to Charleston, where she had lived before the war. The two came to rest in Magnolia Cemetery as well-positioned white U.S. Southerners, survivors of war and some of Reconstruction. Neither Henry Cobia nor Mary Eason’s separate familial

obelisks suggest their close associations with the state lunatic asylum, either as a financial supporter of the institution or as a recipient of its long-term care.

The complex narrative of life and death of these two South Carolinians grows even more ambiguous considering where the enslaved “houseservant” Martha Cobia now lies in death. Martha died of an unknown cause in June 1863 – a month before Gettysburg, months before emancipation, and years before the end of the Civil War. Martha died at the state lunatic asylum, far away from Henry Cobia or whichever white U.S. Southerner claimed her as an enslaved “houseservant.” Only in a particularly rare instance would Martha have returned to Charleston in death; many white patients were buried at city cemeteries, even those whose family had some means, and the asylum treated them better than “colored” patients, even before the war. In the midst of battle, blockade, and bread riots, Martha Cobia was almost certainly brought to a nearby segregated section of a rural or city cemetery and buried with very little to identify her. Henry Cobia, still alive in 1863, was most likely notified of her passing, probably in a short message. We will never know what crossed his heart and mind reading about Martha’s death. If she was his personal “houseservant” who he worried about and hoped would improve, it may have stung. If she was the slave of a friend or neighbor, and he was providing financial support for her out of kindness or obligation, he may have been relieved to no longer send monthly payments to the state lunatic asylum while running a dangerous blockade business. Beyond Henry, one dares to contemplate the other enslaved African-Americans that cared for Martha: Did Henry Cobia tell her family and friends about her death? Did she have a husband, children, parents, or siblings to mourn her passing? Did Henry mention where or how she was buried, or just that she died in

Columbia at the state lunatic asylum? Did Martha's loved ones ever try to find her body after emancipation and the war's conclusion? Where is Martha now? How would we ever truly know if we found Martha?

For now, Martha resides in the state lunatic asylum ledger book with her enslaver's surname and the label "(colored)": not quite gone, but certainly no longer reachable. Although it means something peculiar that Martha as an enslaved African-American woman was committed to the state lunatic asylum during the U.S. Civil War, her life and death remind all who encounter the few words written about her that her personal health was the selfish concern of the men focused on her. Her abilities as a reproductive laborer and a "houseservant" working in Charleston were key to her identity and asylum commitment: her death ended her assistance to white U.S. Southerners, and so she disappears, disposable in death.

According to the 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Henry Cobia's household employed four older African-Americans, two men and two women: a butler, two domestic servants, and a cook.³⁷⁷ Did Martha once work alongside these four in service to the Cobia family? Were any of these four a relative of Martha or loved one of hers? Were they all new to the Cobia family in the postwar period? Whatever happened to the twenty-two enslaved African-Americans that Henry Cobia claimed in 1860? We know that Martha – if she was indeed one of those listed – had the highly unusual experience of becoming mentally ill, being sent away to the state lunatic asylum, and dying far away from all that she knew in the middle of the U.S. Civil War being fought over her very existence and citizenship. Few other African-Americans had a similar experience, yet these strange cases can reveal

³⁷⁷ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Charleston Ward 4, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *M593_1486*; Page: 223A; Image: 367528; Family History Library Film: 552985.

much about the conflicted and intimate inner-workings of the mid-nineteenth century U.S. South.

Enslaved By An Interstate Slave Trader: *Henry Logan*

Henry Logan was the only enslaved man to be committed to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum during the 1860s. He is an unusual case given the few other enslaved patients: he was male; he was admitted in August 1864, towards the end of the war; and his enslaver was Charles Logan, a prominent slave trader. The state lunatic asylum admissions of slaves in the early 1860s were highly gendered: five of the six were female. Unlike Henry, who was committed in late 1864, these female slaves were all admitted in 1860 and 1861. As with the other enslaved patients in the early 1860s, Henry Logan was a pay patient, meaning he was accepted on the financial support of a white man, who was most likely his own personal enslaver. Similar to the enslaved women, Henry was in his mid-twenties, listed at age “25.” Furthermore, the asylum continued their indifferent standard towards enslaved patients by disregarding his marital status: they simply left the column blank in Henry’s case. Although they did comment on the cause of his insanity, they marked it as “unknown.” The institution claimed that Henry had been insane for “6 months,” or since February 1864.³⁷⁸ In the separate admission/discharge ledger, the asylum further stated that Henry was “Demented.”³⁷⁹ Unfortunately, the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum did not investigate Henry Logan’s mental or physical health any further. They would ultimately continue this standard far into Reconstruction with most African-American patients, but it began here with Tenah, Martha, and Henry. It is unclear what

³⁷⁸ Henry Logan, #1393, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

³⁷⁹ Henry Logan, Discharged on 1865-5-11, SCSHI Admissions and Discharges, 1860-1964.

the asylum physicians meant when they described Henry's symptoms as "Demented," but the phrase does suggest that Henry was behaving abnormally or inappropriately, for freed or enslaved people. More than anything, his unusual commitment to a state lunatic asylum indicates that his enslaver – as well as those at the asylum – believed Henry to be mentally unwell enough to warrant further and more significant treatment.³⁸⁰

To heighten the rarity of Henry's case, he also was committed to the asylum deep into the U.S. Civil War in August 1864. The Confederate and Federal troops were two years removed from the Battle of Antietam and a full year beyond the Battle of Gettysburg. Two months prior to Henry's admission, the Battle of Cold Harbor had cost the Union horrendously, but the long sieges against Petersburg and Atlanta were both still bloodily engaged. We now know that August 1864 was just eight months removed from the end of the war in April 1865 and only six months before Columbia and the state lunatic asylum were captured by U.S. Federal troops in February 1865. Even though Henry's enslaver, Charles Logan, certainly did not have the prophetic foresight to discern either of these events, he certainly knew that the Confederacy was in dire straits and suffering from profound difficulties in the summer of 1864. While we have no evidence about the relationship between Charles and Henry, ultimately Charles, who was a prolific urban slave trader, decided late in the U.S. Civil War to commit an enslaved man to the state lunatic asylum. He did not keep Henry with him; he did not work him less; he did not wait to see how the war progressed, paled, or ended. Instead, Charles Logan sent Henry away for medical treatment for his disturbed mental health.

³⁸⁰ Henry Logan, #1393, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

In 1864, both Charles and Henry resided in Columbia, South Carolina, the site of the state lunatic asylum. As a local slave trader, Charles Logan knew about the state mental institution and that both poor and wealthy whites entered the asylum before and during the war. He may have known that enslaved people had already been admitted to the asylum; he must have known that African-Americans could be treated at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum because he committed Henry Logan, who was conspicuously marked as “(colored)” in the ledger book. Although Henry had no stated occupation, it seems clear that he was enslaved due to his declared racial identity and Charles Logan’s notorious activities as a slave trader. It may seem startling to realize that a domestic slave trader, a man who specialized in human trafficking, would want the treatment and cure of a slave’s mental health issues. Unlike the five enslaved women admitted before him, Henry Logan was not intrinsically valued for his reproductive capabilities. As an enslaved man in his mid-twenties, however, he was still valued for his ability to produce offspring, although he would not carry them within his body and his children would not be his enslaver’s unless the person also owned the mother of his children. Henry might have been valued for his strength and vitality as an enslaved man in his mid-twenties; his disturbed mental health may have prevented his labor or production for Charles, thus forcing Charles to commit him to the state lunatic asylum. However, the life and experiences of Henry Logan remain unknown because, while his labor and reproductive abilities were profitable, his daily hardships and joys were not considered worthy of preservation by those in power.

It is difficult to recreate Henry’s life, but we can reconstruct some of the world where Charles Logan resided. Charles has a peculiar path through the antebellum U.S.

South: he was born in Ireland around 1815, and his immigration to the United States did not direct him immediately into the domestic slave trade. He first appears in the 1850 U.S. Federal Census at age thirty-one, working as a shoemaker, living in the household of Thomas and Elizabeth Boyne, both younger than him, with Thomas being a Scottish immigrant.³⁸¹ However, by 1860, Charles Logan, age forty-four, was listed as a “negro trader” with \$6,000 in real estate and \$20,000 in personal estate, primarily in human property. He had taken a much younger wife, Louisa, age twenty-six, who was a native South Carolinian. They did not have their own children in the household, but instead Charles’s nephews, both Irish immigrants, James and Charles Graham, were residing with them.³⁸² At the time of the 1860 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedule, Charles claimed fifteen slaves: most were in their teens and twenties, with two in their early thirties and just one was age forty.³⁸³ As an active participant in the domestic slave trade, Charles Logan seems to have specialized in young labor: he did not seek out older skilled slaves but instead worked to perpetuate the market in humans by buying and selling healthy, malleable, and young African-Americans. It is possible that Henry Logan, the only male slave committed to the asylum in the 1860s, is listed among the slaves owned by Charles in the 1860 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedule. However, due to the dehumanization rampant in the slave schedule, neither Henry nor any other slave are marked as having names – just a biological sex and age.

³⁸¹ Year: 1850; Census Place: Columbia, Richland, South Carolina; Roll: M432_858; Page: 18B; Image: 42.

³⁸² Year: 1860; Census Place: Columbia, Richland, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1227; Page: 5; Image: 16; Family History Library Film: 805227.

³⁸³ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

The experiences of Henry and Charles Logan during the U.S. Civil War can only vaguely be estimated. Charles continued his service to slavery by supporting the Confederacy. Henry was likely forced to aid him in his contributions. In 1860, Charles owned several “small personal jails or ‘holding pens’ where blacks were kept for a time, and a brick structure in the rear of Logan’s home at the corner of Assembly and Senate streets long was pointed out as a ‘slave market.’”³⁸⁴ Henry himself may have been held here, but he could have also worked there, helping subdue and sell other enslaved African-Americans. Charles Logan was pointed in his dealings with the Confederacy around his enslaved people: in December 1863, nine months before he committed Henry to the state lunatic asylum, he petitioned the Confederate government because he alleged one of his slaves had died in service to the Confederacy. Charles demanded that he be paid for the slave’s worth by the Confederacy because he had lost his human property during the man’s contracted-out service to the new government. In particular, the enslaved man was “lost whilst in the employment of the State, on the obstructions in the Santee River,” according to the petition reached the Confederate “Committee on Claims and Grievances.”³⁸⁵ The unknown enslaved man had been, “by order of the Executive, removed from the Granby Quarries,” where Charles Logan had contracted him out to the Confederacy, and moved to the Santee River which flows into the Atlantic Ocean. In May 1863, this unnamed African-American man was traveling back to Columbia and “drowned in the Congaree River, by the breaking of the pole with which he was poling a flat-boat.” The Committee on Claims and Grievances pushed Charles Logan’s demand

³⁸⁴ John Hammond Moore, *Columbia and Richland County* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 119.

³⁸⁵ General Assembly of South Carolina, *Journal of the Senate of the State of South Carolina, Being the Sessions of 1863* (Columbia, South Carolina: Charles P. Pelham, 1863), 67.

for compensation to the State Auditor, and it is unclear if he was repaid the price of his slave by the young Confederate government.³⁸⁶ Similarly, we have no knowledge what occurred between December 1863, when Charles Logan's petition turned over to the State Auditor, and August 1864, when Henry Logan was committed to the state lunatic asylum. This unusual story of Charles's drowned Confederate slave and his demand for compensation certainly and strangely adds to the exceptional story of the enslaved Henry's state lunatic asylum admission.

Charles Logan can be easily found in post-war Columbia, South Carolina. The end of the U.S. Civil War also meant the end of the domestic slave trade, and so Charles Logan could no longer be a successful "negro trader." In 1870, he stated he was a simple "farmer," but he still had substantial means. He claimed \$15,000 in real estate and \$12,000 in personal estate.³⁸⁷ In subsequent years, Charles transitioned into "horse trading and real estate, acquiring along the way a small fortune." One scholar claims that he also gained a "reputation as a solid citizen, a pillar of the community."³⁸⁸ By 1880, Charles, at age sixty, no longer had a listed occupation, a trend which continued for the rest of his life.³⁸⁹ The 1900 U.S. Federal Census reveals that he and his wife never had any children: the columns for births and living children are marked "0" and "0." They had been married forty-eight years. Still living in Columbia after an astonishing sixty years, Charles owned his house without mortgage. Yet times had changed: his neighbors included a "carpet salesman," several "street car conductors", a couple of "R.R. clerks",

³⁸⁶ General Assembly of South Carolina, *Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, Passed at the Annual Session of 1863* (Columbia, South Carolina: Charles P. Pelham, 1863), 307-308.

³⁸⁷ Year: 1870; Census Place: Columbia, Richland, South Carolina; Roll: M593_1507; Page: 181A; Image: 334404; Family History Library Film: 553006.

³⁸⁸ Moore, 120.

³⁸⁹ Year: 1880; Census Place: Columbia, Richland, South Carolina; Roll: 1238; Family History Film: 1255238; Page: 250A; Enumeration District: 162.

and a few “photographers.”³⁹⁰ The changing occupations of his neighbors do not indicate that Charles Logan had fallen into a lower socio-economic state of poverty. On the contrary, his successful antebellum career as a domestic slave trader had led to significant real estate and stable income in rent and other proceeds in the following decades, which allowed him to exist easily in the New South city of Columbia, South Carolina.

In 1903, when Charles Logan passed away at age eighty-nine, he laid out a will which revealed his astonishing wealth: “His estate was found to be worth between \$300,000 and \$500,000.” He had “made a fortune in Richland county,” where Columbia and the state lunatic asylum resided. His will declared that when his widow died, “four acres of land on Elwood avenue, a part of the old race track and \$40,000 goes to the city of Columbia for a school to be known as the ‘Logan School.’” Of that impressive amount, “Nine thousand is invested, the proceeds go to enforcing the law, by the city of Columbia, against cruelty to animals” with another \$5,000 “to the city hospital.” These were some of the most charitable contributions of the era. Lacking in children, Charles looked after his remaining friends and family in death: “\$5,000 to Richard Keenan, a friend, and \$1,000 each to ten friends. An annuity \$500 each during life time [sic] is left to a niece and nephew. The remainder is to be divided between the heirs of his brother and sister.” Many of these were scattered throughout the United States, and several were still in Ireland. His wife would remain in Columbia until her death in 1921, and she continued to add to his positive legacy.³⁹¹

Many remembered Charles Logan for charity upon his death. He first gave a significant investment to the state regarding laws against animal cruelty: He gave “\$9,000

³⁹⁰ Year: 1900; Census Place: *Columbia Ward 1, Richland, South Carolina*; Roll: 1539; Page: 9A; Enumeration District: 0083; FHL microfilm: 1241539.

³⁹¹ “40,000 for Columbia’s Schools,” *Keowee Courier* (Pickens, South Carolina), December 16, 1903, 3.

to the city of Columbia in trust, to invest and use the income in aid of carrying out all laws and ordinances for the protection of animals and prevention of cruelty to animals.” He also provided \$5,000 “to St. Peter’s Catholic Church” in Columbia. Some reports made it clear that the Logan School was intended only for “white children,” but most left it implicit in his donation.³⁹² One newspaper included the will’s language: The “public school, elementary or high, to be named ‘Logan school,’ or ‘Logan High school,’ as the case may be, and shall cause within the same time a school with teachers to be opened therein for pupils, which shall be free and open without cha[r]ge under the laws and regulations governing the free public schools of said city, and to which other white children may be admitted such terms as may be prescribed by the proper authorities of said school.”³⁹³ Charles had been planning his death for some time: the original will was first written in 1886 – seventeen years before he actually passed. His attention to animals and white children were not far removed from his time in Reconstruction, when everything in his world had fundamentally changed. None of Charles Logan’s investments in death assisted African-Americans, as institutions throughout Columbia remained segregated and exclusive for white U.S. Southerners.

Even in death, Charles Logan stood on high due to his work as an antebellum domestic slave trader. In 1903, his estate purchased him a casket worth \$650 – the highest cost out of any customers in this period in Columbia, South Carolina. The coffin was listed as “slate 6/3 solid copper Bev. Plate glass full tufted lid.” The Logan estate had bought Charles a solid metal coffin, which “were highly regarded, being expensive and thought to offer exceptional protection.” The unusual “Bev. Plate glass” phrase “indicates

³⁹² “A Generous Irishman,” *The Watchman and Southron* (Sumter, South Carolina), December 16, 1903, 1.

³⁹³ “A Good Example,” *The Manning Times* (Manning, South Carolina), December 16, 1903, 1.

that the coffin had a beveled plate glass viewing port, probably over the upper torso.” The glass would have been covered by a “full tufted lid”: the ‘full’ meaning “from toe to head,” and the ‘tufted’ regarding “the interior finishing” of the coffin itself.³⁹⁴ The gigantic mausoleum erected for Charles Logan in Columbia’s Elmwood Memorial Gardens declares his long-term profits and success. The massive stone structure is six feet tall and wide and four feet deep and imposes dramatically on the landscape. Two crib or coffin-styled graves in front of the monument indicate the final resting place of Charles and his wife in explicit physical display. As if expecting frequent visitors, a wide stone path runs from the family plot’s entrance to the large memorial and goes between the two long graves. The words on the family stone announce high hopes for Charles in the afterlife: “ETERNAL REST GRANT TO HIM O LORD, AND / LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE ON HIM.” His wife Louisa does not have a similar epigraph of religious aspiration and praise. Between the coffin and the monument, the memorial seems to be primarily for Charles, and his death appears to be one to lament fondly.³⁹⁵

The many obituaries of Charles Logan fail to mention his role as a domestic slave trader. Even today, most descriptions of his legacy completely disregard his past in human trafficking. The Historic Elmwood Park Neighborhood Association website simply states: “On November 29, 1903, Charles Logan died. As part of his last will and testament, he bequeathed four acres of land on the north side of Elmwood Avenue, between Lincoln and Gadsden Streets to the City of Columbia to be used as a site for a

³⁹⁴ “McCormick Funeral Records, Volume 2, December 1903 through April 1906,” Chicora Foundation, 10-11.

³⁹⁵ Samuel Charles Logan (1815-1903) is buried at Elmwood Memorial Gardens in Columbia, Richland County, South Carolina.

school.”³⁹⁶ Similarly, the National Register of Historic Places explains that the Historic Logan School at 815 Elmwood Avenue was “named for Charles Mercer Logan who in 1904 gave four acres of land and \$40,000 to the City of Columbia to be used for a school.” The area owned by Charles had been “used for the State Fair Grounds from 1859 to 1903.”³⁹⁷ One obituary in 1903 admitted that Charles had gained his wealth “through speculative deals of various sorts,” but “even this faint hint of tainted money was forgotten as soon as Logan’s bequests became known.”³⁹⁸

Other structures in Columbia, however, declared Charles Logan’s real legacy: in the 1930s, the Federal Writer’s Project took photographs of his slave pens in the state capital.³⁹⁹ The deteriorating brick building had two wooden doors and two small barred windows. The inside was not investigated or photographed, which may suggest that it was private property or unsafe to enter. However, the University of South Carolina today admits to their connection to urban slavery: the then-titled South Carolina College interacted with many slaves, some of the “3,300 by 1860” that resided and worked in Columbia. The University of South Carolina further explains that “masters also frequently hired out slaves to Columbia residents and institutions, including South Carolina College,” and that numerous laws and regulations prohibited the freedoms and activities of urban slaves. The University also clearly shows its proximity to Charles Logan’s slave pens in an explicit city map, demonstrating in bright red the proximity of the South Carolina College to the “Logan slave pen,” which was only two blocks away.

³⁹⁶ “About Us,” Historic Elmwood Park Neighborhood Association, accessed January 1, 2016, <http://www.historicelmwoodpark.org/about/history.shtml>.

³⁹⁷ United States Department of the Interior, “Historic Logan School,” accessed January 1, 2016, <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/richland/S10817740046/S10817740046.pdf>.

³⁹⁸ Moore, 120.

³⁹⁹ “Campus Slaves & Slavery,” University of South Carolina Libraries, accessed January 1, 2016, <http://library.sc.edu/digital/slaveryscc/urban-slavery-in-columbia.html>.

The immediacy implies that Charles Logan himself may have contracted out labor to the University of South Carolina. Notably, Charles Logan's slave pens – used to imprison African-Americans in the domestic slave trade – endured, albeit crumbling, far into the twentieth century. Unlike his school and the fair-grounds, however, they were not preserved or remembered by those in power. Instead, they were expected to vanish, just like the scars of slavery and human trafficking in Columbia and across the U.S. South.

Ultimately, the enslaved patient Henry Logan is lost to time because he was made to be lost to time. Charles Logan, too, helped South Carolina and scholars ignore the dark methods of his twentieth century success. Yet here and there, we see the truth of slavery during the U.S. Civil War: the institutionalization of Henry Logan in August 1864 came not because Charles sympathized with the enslaved man, but because he wanted a cure for him and a return investment to his business as a slave trader. If there is some ambiguity in the story of Charles Logan, an antebellum anecdote should firmly remind readers that he was absolutely a man of his time and place. In the pre-war period, a man named Jacob Rife as well-known in Columbia for being a “jolly rhyming keeper of the Congaree Bridge,” who one day confronted Charles Logan, “recently arrived from the old country – a buckish young man of twenty-three or four, a great lover and frequent attendant at these frolics.” In a rhyme, Jacob Rife teased Charles Logan about making a brogan (shoes), causing Charles to reply: “Well, old Jacob Rife / How's your nigger wife?” The gathered crowd laughed at Jacob, who left, “taken aback.”⁴⁰⁰ Even as a young Irish immigrant, Charles Logan knew the racial hierarchy of South Carolina, and he

⁴⁰⁰ Julian A. Selby and William Gilmore Simms, *Memorabilia and Anecdotal Reminiscences of Columbia, S.C: And Incidents Connected Therewith* (Columbia, South Carolina: The R.L. Bryan Company, 1905), 83-84.

profited considerably from it, well into the twenty-first century as many continued to ignore his extensive use of the domestic slave trade to his and their benefit.

On May 11, 1865, the formerly enslaved Henry Logan left the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. Although the Emancipation Proclamation had actually freed him on January 1, 1863, nearly a year and a half before his commitment, Henry finally had his full freedom in May 1865 after the surrender at Appomattox, Lincoln's assassination, and Jefferson Davis's capture a day earlier. The South Carolina Lunatic Asylum discharged Henry Logan as "cured," indicating that he no longer was showing symptoms of mental illness.⁴⁰¹ Whatever was happening with Henry, he entered a world in wild transition: slavery was now freedom, wealth was now poverty, and war was now peace. We cannot follow Henry any further than the first steps outside the state lunatic asylum. We have no way of knowing where he went next: Did he return to Charles Logan? Did he work for the man that had once enslaved him? Did he leave Columbia? Did he leave South Carolina or the U.S. South altogether? Did he return to a wife and children? Did he find love and friendship, or sickness and struggle, over the next few days, months, years?

Unfortunately, Henry Logan exits traditional known history when he left the state lunatic asylum. Like his former enslaver, Henry may have lived until the twentieth century, but he could have also died shortly after his discharge. The great unknowns about Henry Logan's life contrast grotesquely with the level of detail that we can still find today regarding his enslaver and slave trader. However, Henry's existence reveals great heights and depths in the U.S. South during the U.S. Civil War as well as the subsequent transformative decades. Henry is at once exceptional and ordinary. His struggles were his own; yet his suffering was also shared with all of U.S. Southern

⁴⁰¹ Henry Logan, Discharged on 1865-5-11, SCSHI Admissions and Discharges, 1860-1964.

society and all enslaved African-Americans. The divergent legacies of Henry and Charles Logan critically expose our current feelings towards this time period as well as how Americans have remembered and preserved the power dynamics established long ago by slavery and human trafficking.

Only a few enslaved African-American patients ever entered the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. During the war-torn 1860s, a small handful were brought to the institution for treatment for mental illness; most were discharged, but some died behind asylum walls. As the U.S. Civil War concluded with the defeat of the Confederacy and the death of President Abraham Lincoln, both the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums were challenged by the new Reconstruction governments to accept African-Americans as aspiring citizens. When the state lunatic asylums began to receive African-American patients, they had decades and centuries of scientific racism and pseudoscience to rely on when considering the next stage of development. Instead of treating African-Americans like the new full-fledged citizens that the upcoming amendments would affirm them to be, both Georgia and South Carolina were indifferent in their descriptions and admissions of African-American patients. While still providing significant detail for many white patients, the two states did not further investigate the medical and personal histories of their freed African-American patients beginning in late 1865. This trend continued for the rest of the nineteenth century.

William Fields arrived, suffering and dying, to the asylum in November 1875. Only ten years separated the moment that Henry Logan stepped out of the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum as a freedman and the day that William Fields entered it, fully expecting to die there. This decade could have made all the difference for disabled and mentally ill

African-Americans. The Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums could have regarded these new patients much like their middle-class or elite white patients, giving them extensive case histories and admission records. Instead, the institutions relied on how they treated African-Americans during the antebellum and war-time periods, which meant providing very little information and attention to these individuals. We might want to imagine a world where medical professionals, objective and concerned about human suffering, overlooked race, gender, and socio-economic class to treat, rescue, and cure the disabled.

However, the mid-to-late 1860s was not a time of miraculous bounty for the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. On the contrary, the institutions poorly transitioned from very few patient admissions during the war to skyrocketing commitments of impoverished blacks and whites during the later part of the decade. While some white patients still garnered significant attention and description, almost all African-American patients were relegated within the previously established racial hierarchy at the U.S. Southern lunatic asylums. Since Georgia had never accepted African-Americans before 1865, they brushed over the presence of freed-people in their admission books when they first arrived. In South Carolina, the cases of African-Americans became increasingly medicalized, and individuals received noticeably less personal concern than white patients.

Ultimately, these early slave admissions during the U.S. Civil War period expose the foundation on which freed African-American patients later entered the state lunatic asylums during Reconstruction. These three case studies reveal the rare incidents that enslaved African-Americans facing mental health crisis found relief – or death – at the

South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. The experience of a war-time asylum admission was highly gendered for slaves: they were primarily female, and their enslavers were entirely male. Although we will never truly know the complex reasons for their admissions, these few enslaved people – Tenah, Martha, and Henry – show a strange range of experiences that occurred in the U.S. South during the U.S. Civil War. While we do not know where they were interred in death, we can glimpse a slight window into the lives of these suffering enslaved people.

CHAPTER 5

Violence

Beside articles devoted to controversial politics and racial violence ran the headline: “HORRIBLE MURDER – A CRAZY MAN KILLS A POOR BLIND MAN.”⁴⁰² The story may seem familiar to modern Americans, especially those who wonder “Why People With Mental Illness Are Able to Obtain Guns.”⁴⁰³ It hardly seems surprising that Americans in earlier eras also stressed over these same issues. In the nineteenth century, many such cases ended at the state lunatic asylum, which operated as both a site of sanctuary and a place of last resort. Violent impulses could lead to extreme acts that deviated from the relatively loose norms of a remarkably violent time. White men whose assaults on wives, children, and slaves seemed particularly deranged sometimes found themselves committed to their state lunatic asylums. Women who attacked husbands and killed children arrived at the same place, although their violence often had markedly different origins. Even those who wanted to take their own lives were sent away to state institutions. And thus the homicidal, the abused, the suicidal, and the depressed were all thrown together and forgotten as individuals.

This chapter attempts to disaggregate the violent U.S. Southerners who ended up in the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums in the mid-nineteenth century, focusing on several important questions. Who received treatment, and for how long? Who was allowed to return home? What racial, gender, and class assumptions laid

⁴⁰² “Horrible Murder,” *The Daily Phoenix* (Columbia, South Carolina), March 10, 1868.

⁴⁰³ “Why People With Mental Illness Are Able to Obtain Guns,” *New York Times* (New York City, New York), January 6, 2016.

beneath these decisions? Where some successfully utilized their societal privilege, others suffered under impatience and neglect. During the 1860s, the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums accepted one thousand four hundred and ten admissions. Until 1866, the overwhelming majority of patients were white at South Carolina's asylum, because although the institution accepted some free people of color and slaves, they did so rarely and only for high fees. Until Reconstruction, the Georgia Lunatic Asylum refused to accept people of color under any circumstances. While almost all violent patients were white during the 1860s, the gender divide seems fairly balanced, though males were more often committed. Women and men both attacked those closest to them: spouses, parents, children, their enslaved laborers, their neighbors. South Carolina lacks qualitative descriptions of their patients, but Georgia wrote extensive admission entries during the 1860s. Of the 881 admissions in Georgia during the 1860s, 311 or 35% have some descriptor of violent behavior, though more may have exhibited such symptoms. Of those 311 violent patients at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, 41% were female and 59% were male. Some threatened violence, while others committed it against themselves, family, friends, or strangers. Southern lunatic asylums accepted such individuals because their families and communities were unable or unwilling to live with them as they behaved violently towards themselves or others. In their violence, these people reveal an extraordinary array of strange situations that resulted in even stranger outcomes.

The following ten cases of violent patients include five white men and five women, including four white women and one Cherokee woman. Three of the five men harmed African-American slaves. Five of the ten patients had killed another person, including one enslaved "negro," two small children, one adult son, and one disabled

neighbor. One of the ten ultimately committed suicide. These patients range from the educated elite of the planter class to farmers and farmer's wives and poor urban immigrants. These ten patients demonstrate a range of problems and were subject to a range of solutions proposed by individuals, families, and society in response to violence in the home and community. One might assume that a violent mentally ill person in the mid-nineteenth century, especially a murderer, would live out the rest of their days in a jail or asylum. On the contrary, U.S. Southerners, both experts and laypeople, treated insanity and the violence that it produced on an acutely individual basis, as the final destinies of these ten patients clearly illustrate. As no two cases of mental illness were the same between these ten people, neither were their acts of violence and harm, nor the familial, societal, and medical understandings of each individual patient. Some went home to spouse and children after only a year of institutionalization, while others stayed decades and died alone at the asylum, effectively abandoned by their family. Countless variables affected the consequences of violence brought on by mental illness, though race, wealth, and gender are the best predictors of patient treatment.

Violence in Postwar Charleston: *Peter Murphy*

Disturbed persons with violent impulses can do damage in any era, but their motives and the subsequent societal response are always historically situated and socially constructed. In the case that began the chapter, for instance, "the crazy man" was Peter Murphy, an Irish immigrant living in postwar Charleston, and his victim, Hugh Teague, also Irish, was a disabled neighbor, blind for twenty-one years "and bedridden for the

past seven weeks” before his murder.⁴⁰⁴ The year 1868 saw America was still embroiled in Reconstruction, and the nation’s media outlets gave significant attention to violence, especially unusual incidents. All of the Charleston, South Carolina newspapers ran the story, but so did the presses of other states, including *The Evening Star* in Washington D.C. and *The New York Times*. Peter Murphy committed murder only a few years after the bloody end to the U.S. Civil War; he did so in urban Charleston, once ruined, finally rebuilding. Hugh Teague and his family subsisted only on postwar government rationing since he was unable to work.⁴⁰⁵ In contrast, Peter Murphy had “been in the employ of the Gas Company between eight and ten years, being esteemed a very correct and steady workman.”⁴⁰⁶ They shared a kitchen; Peter lived on the upper level, and the Teague family lived on the lower floor.⁴⁰⁷ In a strange affair, Peter had recently paid Hugh Teague’s teenaged son a small sum when it was discovered that Peter’s cat had killed several of the boy’s domesticated pigeons. Few could tell if this unusual incident related to Peter’s sudden hostility towards Hugh or his family in March 1868.⁴⁰⁸

Early one spring morning, Peter burst into the Teague apartment. Blind and sickly Hugh was laying in bed with his son sitting beside him; both were eating breakfast while the rest of the family was out getting government rations. Peter shouted at the disabled Hugh, “What sort of man are you?” before shooting him point blank in the right temple with “a seven-shooter pistol.”⁴⁰⁹ What Peter meant by his declaration is unclear: Was it a reference to Hugh Teague’s long-term disability, either his blindness or recent illness? Or

⁴⁰⁴ “Horrible Murder,” *The Daily Phoenix* (Columbia, South Carolina), March 10, 1868.

⁴⁰⁵ “Horrible Murder,” *The Progress-Index* (Petersburg, Virginia), March 12, 1868.

⁴⁰⁶ “Murder of a Blind Man by his insane Neighbor,” *New York Times* (New York City, New York), March 23, 1868.

⁴⁰⁷ “Horrible Murder,” *The Daily Phoenix* (Columbia, South Carolina), March 10, 1868.

⁴⁰⁸ “A Diabolical Murder,” *Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, South Carolina), March 9, 1868.

⁴⁰⁹ “Horrible Murder,” *The Wilmington Morning Star* (Wilmington, North Carolina), March 14, 1868.

was it in regards to the Teague family's reliance on government relief during the postwar period? Or perhaps Murphy was in the grips of some delusion conjured by his mental illness? Regardless, Murphy fled the scene "with a pistol in each hand" and later "delivered himself to the British Consul," believing that as an Irish citizen perhaps the British would protect him.⁴¹⁰ Every newspaper that ran the murder story ended their articles similarly: "Murphy is supposed to be crazy, and some of his recent acts would indicate such a state of mind. He appears to have some method to his madness, however, by claiming the protection of the British flag."⁴¹¹ The coroner's inquest returned a verdict "that the deceased came to his death by a bullet from a pistol in the hands of Peter Murphy about 8 A.M. on the 7th," which was read in front of the grieving widow and her three children in their apartment, the murder scene.⁴¹² By Hugh's funeral, there had been significant discussion about Peter's mental illness, but his subsequent actions in jail cemented public opinion about his instability.

On April 10, 1868, *The Charleston Daily News* reported that "Peter Murphy, the man charged with the murder of Hughey Teague, the blind man... attempted to commit suicide in the jail yesterday morning." Somehow Peter had "procured a glass bottle, which he broke, and opened the veins of his arms with the fragments." Discovered by the guard, he received "prompt attention," which staunched his bleeding and led to an unsuccessful suicide attempt. *The Charleston Daily News* remarked, "As there is good reason to believe the man insane, a committee *de lunatic de inquirendo* has been summoned, and if they report favorably, Murphy will be sent to the asylum."⁴¹³ Peter was

⁴¹⁰ "A Diabolical Murder," *Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, South Carolina), March 9, 1868.

⁴¹¹ "Horrible Murder," *The Progress-Index* (Petersburg, Virginia), March 12, 1868.

⁴¹² "A Diabolical Murder," *Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, South Carolina), March 9, 1868.

⁴¹³ "Attempted Suicide," *Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, South Carolina), April 10, 1868.

found to be legally insane, and he was admitted on April 26, 1868 to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. The asylum attendants wrote “unknown” under cause and length of insanity and left his marital status and occupation blank.⁴¹⁴ They explained that “it is not known how long his mind has been impacted or what was the original cause.”

Subsequent patient treatment notes clarify the institution’s understanding of his case. The record describes Peter as “a criminal lunatic, sent... by the City Authorities of Charleston... a native of Ireland, 48 years of age, and not married... a common laborer.” The reason for his admission was that “he committed murder upon the person of Hugh Teague and was decided to be in a state of lunacy.”⁴¹⁵ There was no mention of cats and pigeons, Irish citizenship and British consuls, or even Peter’s motive for the murder. He was simply insane.

The South Carolina Lunatic Asylum noted that Peter Murphy had shown “a great inclination to commit suicide and [had] made several attempts before he was brought here.” However, once in the asylum and no longer living in jail conditions, Peter showed “no proclivity” to commit suicide. Indeed, after physicians observed Peter Murphy, who was a confirmed murderer and officially recognized lunatic, they stated the belief that his “general health” was “feeble” but if his health “improves [then] his mental derangement will probably pass off.”⁴¹⁶ Despite the optimistic claim, Peter Murphy remained at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum for eleven more years and finally died within the state

⁴¹⁴ Peter Murphy, #1608, South Carolina Lunatic Asylum Admissions Books, 1828-1947, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina (hereafter SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947).

⁴¹⁵ Peter Murphy, #233, Vol. 3, South Carolina Lunatic Asylum Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880), South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina (hereafter SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880).

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

institution on June 11, 1879.⁴¹⁷ Without any known family or friends to take his body elsewhere, Peter Murphy was almost certainly buried alongside the other white pauper insane within the Columbia city cemetery.

Today, it may seem surprising that Peter's caretakers were so optimistic of his recovery. Peter had murdered his closest neighbor, who was disabled and defenseless in bed, in front of the man's shocked young son, for reasons that are at least unclear and most likely delusional. In many ways, however, the U.S. South in the mid-nineteenth century gave white men such enormous latitude – allowing them, for instance, to gun down other men for perceived slights of honor – that Peter's behavior seemed only a fractured version of typical white male behavior.

Unpredictable Violence on the Plantation: *Jesse M. Vason, Isaac Rowdon, and James Henry Colclough*

Some cases of violent mental illness in the U.S. South involved the abusive actions of plantation-owning men who lived with vulnerable dependents, including spouses, children, and enslaved laborers. A significant number of white male patients fit this profile who stayed at U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums in the 1860s. This study considers three representatives from this subpopulation: Dr. Jesse M. Vason, Isaac Rowdon, and James Henry Colclough. All three exploited enslaved African-Americans in U.S. Southern states; two of the three committed murder, and the third assaulted his wife, children, and slaves. All ultimately left the asylum and returned home. Scholars have already shown that the unchecked power of white men ruined the lives of many in the U.S. South. Yet few have considered the absolute horror of living on an isolated

⁴¹⁷ Peter Murphy, #1608, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

plantation with a mad, murderous patriarch. In these instances, the full range of racial, class, and gendered privilege emerges, demonstrating that the impressive advantages of being a white, wealthy man in the 1860s U.S. South extended even into the state lunatic asylum.

In March 1867, a year before Peter Murphy shot and killed his neighbor, a troubled physician from Alabama crossed through the doors of the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. Dr. Jesse M. Vason was not there to give treatment but to receive it. He had been unstable “for several years” and had recently grown “more uncontrollable until it [had] become necessary to place him under restraint.” However, his erratic behavior had allegedly occurred only over the past “four years.” He had resided in the U.S. South for most of his life, but it had been a struggle.⁴¹⁸ In 1836, Jesse first graduated from the University of Georgia and then the University of Pennsylvania with a medical degree in 1838.⁴¹⁹ He was a widower twice over by the time of the war. He wedded Lucy, his first wife, the same year of his medical graduation, but she passed away in late 1841 when she was just twenty years old.⁴²⁰ Within eight months, he married his second wife, Elizabeth. The couple stayed together for nearly two decades from 1842 to 1861 before Elizabeth died at age thirty-four on the eve of the U.S. Civil War.⁴²¹ He was apparently quite affected by the loss of his second wife, and asylum physicians noted that he had grown volatile “since the death of his wife.”⁴²² Shortly after the fateful year of 1861

⁴¹⁸ Georgia Department of Public Health, Central State Hospital, Medical Case Histories, vol. 3 (October 9, 1860 – July 31, 1873), 198.

⁴¹⁹ *Catalogue of the Trustees, Officers, Alumni, and Non-Graduates of The University of Georgia, from 1785 to 1894* (Atlanta: The Foote & Davies Co., Printers, 1894); *General Alumni Catalogue of the University of Pennsylvania* (1922).

⁴²⁰ “Died,” *The Columbus Enquirer* (Columbus, Georgia), December 22, 1841.

⁴²¹ Her gravestone is located in Tuskegee City Cemetery in Macon County, Alabama.

⁴²² Georgia Department of Public Health, Central State Hospital, Medical Case Histories, vol. 3 (October 9, 1860 – July 31, 1873), 198.

commenced, Jesse turned forty-five. By then, he had lost two wives and multiple children. He had seen several of his siblings die in childhood, and his parents had both passed away, his father in 1846 and his mother in 1857. A few more siblings had died in their early twenties.⁴²³ Jesse had several surviving children, but he was now highly unpredictable and his mind had been “to some extent disordered for several years.”⁴²⁴

Roughly two years after his wife Elizabeth’s death, for reasons not discussed, Dr. Jesse M. Vason “shot and killed a negro... and became decidedly worse at that time.”⁴²⁵ The state lunatic asylum made the linguistic decision to remove other identifiers from the African-American victim. The name and gender of the victim were not recorded and were seemingly unimportant to both the legal and medical system. In Jesse’s entry, the choice to use “a negro” exposes the institution’s unfavorable view of African-Americans, even in death. The lack of information about the victim was intentional: “a negro” is interchangeable and disposable just as all other “negroes.” In 1863, most African-Americans in the U.S. South still labored in enslavement; Jesse himself owned enslaved people, and it is most likely that he killed a black slave in his local community. As “the negro” murdered by Jesse was denied identity in death, he or she did not receive justice, either. After all, Dr. Jesse M. Vason found himself at the state lunatic asylum for bending, but not actually breaking, the code of conduct for white gentlemen.

The privileges of white men in the U.S. South during the 1860s did not entirely diminish because of war and Reconstruction. Certain advantages were still accessible, and Jesse enjoyed these as an educated elite slave-holding man, even though he had been

⁴²³ Vason Family Bible, microfilmed on November 23, 1959, located at the Georgia Archives.

⁴²⁴ Georgia Department of Public Health, Central State Hospital, Medical Case Histories, vol. 3 (October 9, 1860 – July 31, 1873), 198.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

wildly unstable and violent for several years. Even as he showed symptoms of what today we might call psychosis (often referred to as mania in his time), Jesse remained at home. His admission divulges that in 1863, around the time of the murder, he “was in such a state as to require control and restraints,” but the file immediately added that “he became better until some months back he became loose and has gradually become more uncontrollable until it has become necessary to place him under restraint.” The consequences of Jesse’s homicide were temporary restraints at home, and he seems to have been free between 1864 and 1867, the asylum having established that he “never offers violence to others unless they do something to offend him or enter into some property question.”⁴²⁶ The acceptance of Jesse’s violence for years demonstrates his power and privilege as an educated slave-holding white man in the war-torn U.S. South. Even when other white men found him legally insane, Jesse retained his social status in the state lunatic asylum. His son-in-law John H. Alexander petitioned to become his guardian, which allowed him to manage Jesse’s affairs in Alabama. Receipts from the Southern Express Company show John frequently sent the Georgia Lunatic Asylum superintendent hundreds of dollars throughout Jesse’s stay at the asylum.⁴²⁷ As a pay patient, Jesse received better treatment and accommodations than pauper patients. He likely interacted with the asylum superintendent in a style fashioned after his high social status and exceptional education.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁶ Dr. Jesse M. Vason, Georgia Department of Public Health, Central State Hospital, Medical Case Histories, vol. 3 (October 9, 1860 – July 31, 1873) (hereafter Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873), 198.

⁴²⁷ State of Alabama, Probate Court Macon County, Financial Papers of Jesse M. Vason, January 25, 1867.

⁴²⁸ A similar case is that of Samuel Austin Cook, whose experiences at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum are detailed in Chapter One. He was a violent man with substance abuse issues. He stayed with the superintendent’s family in their private quarters and courted the superintendent’s daughter while being treated for his unstable mental health. He eventually married her after he was discharged from the asylum.

A few days after Jesse's admission, a letter from his brother, William J. Vason, reached his hometown of Tuskegee, Alabama, which stated William would take Jesse's young daughter, Ida, to live with him in Augusta, Georgia.⁴²⁹ The letter verifies that Jesse had been in close proximity to his child through these tumultuous years, an unusual privilege, and he retained his prefix "Dr." The state lunatic asylum considered him "gentlemanly in his deportment, never raving, but talks in a loud tone of voice and sometimes exclaims loudly."⁴³⁰ In the financial letters of his guardian John H. Alexander, he is almost always referred fully as "Doctor Jesse M. Vason."⁴³¹ The asylum further disclosed, "He has always been very peculiar in his manners and habits and extremely punctilious on all points of etiquette. Will receive no visitor unannounced." These descriptions of Jesse as a polite gentleman occur just one sentence before the abrupt appearance of "He shot and killed a negro about four years back." The asylum only seemed to consider his murderous actions towards the end of his file, and even when the incident is finally revealed, his violence reads as a symptom rather than a consideration or condemnation of the crime. After killing a defenseless white man, Peter Murphy was kept eleven years and finally died in the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum; Jesse was back at his plantation in Tuskegee, Alabama in a little over three years.⁴³² The two white U.S. Southern men may have shared skin color and sex, but their social status and their victims differed, and thus so did their treatment in their state lunatic asylum.

The case of Dr. Jesse M. Vason, who murdered an enslaved African-American but faced little consequence, adds to the long legacy of powerful white slave-holding men

⁴²⁹ State of Alabama, Probate Court Macon County, Financial Papers of Jesse M. Vason, April 16, 1867.

⁴³⁰ Dr. Jesse M. Vason, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 198.

⁴³¹ State of Alabama, Probate Court Macon County, Financial Papers of Jesse M. Vason, March 29, 1867.

⁴³² Dr. Jesse M. Vason, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 198.

and their destructive actions in the U.S. South. The indifference regarding his act of murder illustrates the limited options available to vulnerable populations in control of plantation owners. When Jesse's son-in-law answered a questionnaire three decades later, he wrote he could answer "questions correctly" about slavery in the antebellum period: he explained that "Most of them did not want to be free," "the slaves were the happiest on earth," "the women were a great deal more virtuous than they are now – also the men," and "the negro of today does not live as long as the slaves did, they are not as thrifty and do not have regular hours & do not take as good care of themselves as they were by their old masters, which they acknowledge & there is more crime committed by them... we never knew of a Rape Case before the negro was made free." Although John had the opportunity to mention his father-in-law's murder of a slave, he instead wrote, "The community would interfere when it was known that a man was cruel to his slaves and he was ostracized by society." Like many nostalgic white U.S. Southern men in the early twentieth century, John believed "there was a great deal of devotion between master and slave" and "the average slave showed a great deal of interest in his master's welfare."⁴³³ One wonders instead if enslaved African-Americans spent considerable time and energy studying the behavior and movements of white U.S. Southern men, looking for signs of mental or emotional instability, always vigilant for possible violence, trying to protect family and friends and self. Ultimately Jesse's murder of an enslaved person did nothing to alter his son-in-law's misperceptions of African-American behavior.

Asylum records help reveal a U.S. South largely hidden from view, a world that social workers today could perfectly predict given unchecked patriarchy, rampant

⁴³³ Herman Clarence Nixon questionnaire about slavery, 1912-1919, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

substance abuse, violent tempers, and wide license given to the white male ego. The records we have to reconstruct that world are few and far between but one unusual source – separation and divorce county court petitions – can expose the dark shadows that stretched across the Southern states in the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s, when untold numbers of white men held women, children, and enslaved peoples at their mercy on isolated farms and plantations. Two state lunatic asylum patients, Isaac Rowdon and James Henry Colclough, for instance, abused both white family members and black slave laborers in the 1840s and 1850s. Their wives faced unbelievable horror, their children lived in fear, and the family’s enslaved African-Americans were terrorized. Yet the patient records for Isaac and James betray no hint that they had brutalized their family and slave laborers. Isaac’s 1848 admission simply reads: “Isaac Rowdon, lunatic from Talladega County, Alabama, pay patient, age 55, married, farmer, cause religious study, duration 26 years.”⁴³⁴ Similarly, James’ multiple admissions are never accompanied with patient notes; the only surviving detail about his case is an 1860 commitment record which states his insanity was “hereditary.”⁴³⁵ To glean the truth of these cases, we must turn to the county court petitions.

In 1848, Isaac Rowdon – whose surname is variously spelled Rowdon, Rowden, Rawden, and Rhodon, depending on the source – was admitted due to “religious study.”⁴³⁶ This inexplicable understatement denies the depth and severity of Isaac’s mental illness. The reference is also a bizarre one, considering Isaac’s “religious study” was actually the highly ritualistic murder of his son, whose throat he slashed open and whose body he lit on fire on a pyre he constructed as an offering to God. In the 1840s and

⁴³⁴ Isaac Rowdon, #202, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1842-1861, Volume 2.

⁴³⁵ James Henry Colclough, #1160, #2308, and #2316, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

⁴³⁶ Isaac Rowdon, #202, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1842-1861, Volume 2.

1850s, Isaac lived in Talladega County, Alabama with his wife Lydia and son William, as well as over a dozen enslaved African-Americans. He was erratic and violent, experiencing “attacks” which would today probably be diagnosed as psychotic episodes. He relentlessly attacked his slave laborers, and his wife Lydia “begged him to desist in beating his negros [sic] to death.” Isaac persisted his assaults, leaving her “on more than one occasion” to revive beaten slaves “when they were apparently dead.”⁴³⁷ The traditional sunup to sundown slave life that scholars describe could not be found on Isaac’s plantation, simply because his mental illness kept no observable hours. The family’s seventeen enslaved laborers must have lived in a constant waking nightmare, apparently for years, as Isaac periodically and randomly assaulted them.⁴³⁸

Lydia claimed she desperately tried to help their enslaved laborers, but she also admitted she rarely could make Isaac stop his attacks. She found herself in an unimaginable position when one day Isaac took their adult son into the front yard from the house. Their son William was “feeble-minded” according to Lydia’s petition, and his trust in his father was unfortunate. Before Lydia could intervene, Isaac slashed their disabled son across the throat. Blood poured from the wound, and William crumpled onto the Alabama soil. Lydia’s shock swept her into fleeing the plantation, running to the nearby home of Thomas Rowdon, Isaac’s brother. By the time Thomas arrived, Isaac had constructed a wooden scaffolding, dragged William’s bloody corpse atop it, and then set the whole thing on fire. As the flames reached skyward, Isaac proclaimed that he offered

⁴³⁷ Isaac Rowdon petition, *Race, Slavery, and Free Blacks, Series II, Petitions to Southern County Courts, 1775-1867*, Microfilm Part D, Reel 22.

⁴³⁸ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. M432, 1,009 rolls.

“a sacrifice to God, as Abraham had done with his son Isaac,” a confusing statement considering the names of those involved in the heinous act.⁴³⁹

The horrifying murder of William Rowdon certainly could have been avoided if the lives of enslaved African-Americans had higher value in the antebellum U.S. South. Isaac’s repeated assaults of slaves should have indicated that he was a dangerous threat to all near him, not just the enslaved on his plantation. As his instability escalated, Lydia probably did not recognize the danger she and her son were in, partly because there was nothing she could do about it. Isaac wielded tremendous power on his plantation, and until other white U.S. Southern men validated Lydia’s fears of her husband and took him away, she would have remained in his terrifying hold, along with the plantation’s slaves. The death of their son William proved to be the needed horror to admit Isaac to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. He arrived in 1848 and remained there until his death in 1874 – a time period which covered the fracturing of the United States, the entirety of the U.S. Civil War, and much of the subsequent Reconstruction of the South.⁴⁴⁰

Without her periodically psychotic husband and her murdered son, Lydia Rowdon lived relatively alone on their Talladega County plantation for the next thirty years. She procured a divorce based on Isaac’s horrendous behavior, and she took over his estate, the plantation, and the slave laborers.⁴⁴¹ Lydia can be found doing well in several U.S. Federal Censuses: in 1850, 1860, 1870, and 1880. On the eve of the U.S. Civil War, it seems she occasionally accepted boarders, mostly young men with professional

⁴³⁹ Isaac Rowdon petition, *Race, Slavery, and Free Blacks, Series II, Petitions to Southern County Courts, 1775-1867*, Microfilm Part D, Reel 22.

⁴⁴⁰ *Clay County Alabama, Estate Records 1866-1915*; Author: Alabama. Probate Court (Clay County); Probate Place: Clay, Alabama.

⁴⁴¹ *Wills, 1833-1853; Wills and Inventories, 1852-1907*; Author: Alabama. Probate Court (Talladega County); Probate Place: Talladega, Alabama.

occupations, but she continued to manage the plantation, five slave cabins, and the twenty-five enslaved laborers that worked it.⁴⁴² Lydia's was a lonely life: she never remarried, she had lost her only son, and she lived through war, invasion, occupation, and emancipation relatively alone. But by 1866, she had hired enough free laborers to grow significant amounts of cotton, more than many of her neighbors.⁴⁴³ In 1870, in the postwar era of ruin, her plantation and land were still worth a healthy \$8,000, and her personal estate, \$1500.⁴⁴⁴ In the June 1880 census for Talladega County, Alabama, she is listed as "Lidia Rhaden," age 78, marked as either a widow or divorced woman, with a much younger woman and her two daughters boarding with her.⁴⁴⁵ When Lydia died in late 1880, she was buried in Childersburg Cemetery in Talladega County, Alabama, without any nearby family.⁴⁴⁶ Her will reveals her nearest living relatives were nieces and nephews, to whom she bequeathed gold and a gold watch.⁴⁴⁷ Her son's body – knifed and burned – does not appear to be buried in a cemetery, or at least, he never received a permanent headstone. He may have been buried at their plantation, the site of his murder, in a spot now lost to time. His father Isaac Rowdon, by contrast, was memorialized in death after he died at the asylum in 1874, having serially assaulted enslaved African-Americans for years and having killed his only son in a terrific blaze twenty years earlier. He nevertheless obtained and was permitted a gravestone in the Cedar Lane Cemetery in

⁴⁴² Year: 1860; Census Place: *Southern Division, Talladega, Alabama*; Roll: M653_24; Page: 870; Image: 412; Family History Library Film: 803024.

⁴⁴³ Ancestry.com. *Alabama State Census, 1820-1866* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2010. This collection was indexed by Ancestry.com [World Archives Project](#) contributors.

⁴⁴⁴ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Township 20 Range 3, Talladega, Alabama*; Roll: M593_41; Page: 605B; Image: 180625; Family History Library Film: 545540.

⁴⁴⁵ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Childersburg, Talladega, Alabama*; Roll: 33; Family History Film: 1254033; Page: 229C; Enumeration District: 139; Image: 0058.

⁴⁴⁶ Lydia A. Wilkes Rawden (1802-1880) is buried at Childersburg Cemetery in Talladega County, Alabama.

⁴⁴⁷ *Wills, 1833-1853; Wills and Inventories, 1852-1907*; Author: *Alabama. Probate Court (Talladega County)*; Probate Place: *Talladega, Alabama*.

the vicinity of the asylum in Milledgeville, Georgia.⁴⁴⁸ Without Lydia's divorce petitions, we would have no idea about the true story of the Rowdon family. Isaac would have seemed a religiously obsessed patient from Alabama, and elsewhere, Lydia would have appeared as a divorced (or widowed) white woman running a prosperous plantation with over a dozen African-American laborers. However, with the inclusion of just a few leaves of paper, a different story unfolds, and the shadows pour forth, casting the U.S. South in a deeper darkness.

Similarly, James Henry Colclough has relatively little in his state lunatic asylum admission – he was admitted once in 1860, twice in 1875, and several times more in later decades.⁴⁴⁹ In this particular case, legal petitions from Sumter County, South Carolina detail a long history of James' psychotic behavior, which was the reason for his multiple admissions to the state lunatic asylum. Shortly after his first admission in 1860, James' wife Susan filed for a legal separation from him, explaining that “his mad jealousy [had] made him a raving maniac.” James had two primary symptoms of severe mental illness: paranoia and violence. He had accused his wife of having a sexual affair with a family friend and denounced two of his enslaved female workers, Jane and her daughter Rebecca, as practicing witchcraft. He believed he heard strange noises at night, which kept him awake, and he also alleged that his wife Susan had ordered the plantation slaves to act disorderly “to vex him.” His paranoia led him to unpredictable bouts of violence: he destroyed most of their possessions during a fit of rage, “whipped the servants [the enslaved people] very severely... so much as that one or two were laid up,” and assaulted

⁴⁴⁸ Isaac Rawden is buried at Cedar Lane Cemetery, Baldwin County, Georgia.

⁴⁴⁹ James Henry Colclough, #1160, #2308, and #2316, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947. Subsequent census records from the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum indicate he returned and resided at the institution in the late nineteenth century. He can be found in the 1880 U.S. Federal Census for the institution under the name “Colclough.”

his wife and their children repeatedly over several days. In short, James reigned as a mad king on his plantation, and neither his white family nor his enslaved African-American laborers could hide from his fury. By the time of the petition, he was at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, and his wife Susan and children had taken refuge with her brother. She requested that the court allow her to access her husband's inheritance, the ability to hire an overseer to manage the plantation, and, most importantly, that she and the children be permitted to live "separate & apart" from James, suggesting that she feared he might return from the asylum and run wild again – a fear that proved all too well founded.⁴⁵⁰

It was February 1860 when James Henry Colclough entered the state lunatic asylum and Susan filed for her legal separation. Both James and Susan were thirty-three years old. They had been married twelve years; they had five children, and Susan was about eight weeks pregnant.⁴⁵¹ While Susan was marked as James' financial support for his time in the state lunatic asylum, she had few skills that would help her.⁴⁵² Instead, Susan relied on the local court system to aid her in managing James' plantation, which worked a remarkable sixty-nine enslaved people in 1860, and possibly an additional one hundred and two slave laborers inherited from his recently deceased father. The enslaved people who had been at James' mercy were black and "mulatto" children, women, and men; in his absence, Susan felt no sympathy for them.⁴⁵³ Instead, she complained in her legal petition: "There is now no white person on the said plantation of her husband, nor

⁴⁵⁰ James Henry Colclough, *Race, Slavery, and Free Black Petitions to Southern County Courts, 1775-1867*. Microfilm Part A, Reel 11.

⁴⁵¹ Year: 1860; Census Place: Sumter, Sumter, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1227; Page: 115; Image: 241; Family History Library Film: 805227. She was pregnant with Emma Buford Colclough, who would be born in September 1860.

⁴⁵² James Henry Colclough, #1160, #2308, and #2316, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

⁴⁵³ His father's estate: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

has any one control of the negroes thereon.” She asked permission to hire a white man to oversee the plantation in James’ absence.⁴⁵⁴ The contrast between Lydia Rowdon, who appears to have managed a plantation and its enslaved and freed laborers, and Susan Colclough could have much to do with their circumstances. Lydia was alone with her only son murdered, and Susan was caring for six children – one in the womb and five others ranging from age two to eleven. The Sumter County court seems to have granted Susan her requests, for her legal protests stopped.

Bewilderingly, though, James was apparently discharged sometime before 1862. His physical presence was felt on his plantation by the results of his sexual intercourse with Susan: a seventh pregnancy and eventually their sixth son, Alexander G. Colclough.⁴⁵⁵ The subsequent years for James and Susan Colclough demonstrate that the 1860s had a fairly lenient understanding of mental illness and the consequences of abnormal violent behavior expressed by white, wealthy men. Although Susan had clearly declared the sins of her husband to numerous powerful white men in the county, and they believed her enough to bring James to the state lunatic asylum, when he returned to her, the couple continued as if blood had not been spilled and bruises had never formed. In the ten years after his institutionalization between 1862 and 1872, Susan gave birth to another six children, two of whom were twin daughters. James can be found in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census for Sumter County residing with his large family – his wife and nine of his children.⁴⁵⁶ Without Susan’s local court petition, we would not know the extent of

⁴⁵⁴ James Henry Colclough, *Race, Slavery, and Free Black Petitions to Southern County Courts, 1775-1867*. Microfilm Part A, Reel 11.

⁴⁵⁵ Alexander G. Colclough (1862-1954) is buried at Evergreen Cemetery, Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida.

⁴⁵⁶ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Bradford Springs, Sumter, South Carolina*; Roll: *M593_1509*; Page: *35B*; Image: *90823*; Family History Library Film: *553008*.

his violence against her, their children, and enslaved African-Americans. With that knowledge, however, we must admit that it seems as if Susan excused his psychosis in 1860 – at least enough that Susan allowed herself and her children to live with him again and she continued to produce children by him.

Nevertheless, James was a clearly unwell man, and he appeared once again to lose his mental stability in 1875. He went twice to the asylum in 1875; the first time he was sent away because he did not have the appropriate paperwork, but the second time he did. In March 1875, James returned to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, “recovered,” and was discharged in August 1876.⁴⁵⁷ He was about forty-eight years old, and he already had his last child by Susan, a son named Benjamin Davis Colclough in 1872. The pair had, in total, twelve children who survived to adulthood from 1849 to 1872; nine sons and three daughters, including twins. James only played a partial role in their lives, however. In 1880, he was again at the state lunatic asylum, as evidenced quite clearly by his surname “Colclough” on the official 1880 U.S. Federal Census that lists the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum patients while Susan was marked as the head of the house back in Sumter County.⁴⁵⁸ From his first admission was in 1860, James was a frequent visitor to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, but these short residential stays did not totally alter his life, which speaks to the power and privilege of being a white Southern man of wealth and land. He was not excluded from his family; instead, he fundamentally helped create and expand it.

⁴⁵⁷ James Henry Colclough, #1160, #2308, and #2316, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

⁴⁵⁸ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Columbia, Richland, South Carolina*; Roll: 1238; Family History Film: 1255238; Page: 330A; Enumeration District: 167. And Susan at Year: 1880; Census Place: *Spring Hill, Sumter, South Carolina*; Roll: 1241; Family History Film: 1255241; Page: 279A; Enumeration District: 124.

The story of the Colclough family ends as unusually as its many twists and turns. James Henry Colclough was repeatedly admitted to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum from the 1860s to the 1890s, and he was each time discharged as a man completely cured of his insanity. Yet he continued to return to the asylum with symptoms for decades. He eventually passed away, seemingly at home, in April 1895.⁴⁵⁹ His wife Susan had died five years earlier in 1890, meaning her only time apart from him was the months he spent away at the state lunatic asylum.⁴⁶⁰ By 1890, two of their twelve children had died, but the rest either remained in South Carolina or moved to Alachua County, Florida, like a significant number of people from South Carolina during the mid-nineteenth century. Most married, started families, and lived until the late 1940s and early 1950s.⁴⁶¹ The extent of James' mental illness cannot be clearly discerned in their lives, but his repeated absences must have worn on their relationship with their father. Nonetheless, James managed what many never did: he enjoyed extensive time back at his plantation, surrounded by family that could not or did not leave him, and he continued to act as the family patriarch in a number of ways. Even his memorialization in death suggests very little of his profound violence and lifelong mental instability: his obelisk rises high at the Saint Philip's Episcopal Cemetery in Lee County, South Carolina, still surrounded by his family, now in death. His exceptional life and death can be best understood as products of the Old and New South, where white Southern men walked with privilege that extended into the most unusual of situations.

⁴⁵⁹ James Henry Colclough is buried at Saint Philip's Episcopal Cemetery, Lee County, South Carolina.

⁴⁶⁰ Susan Emma Richardson Colclough is buried beside James Henry Colclough at Saint Philip's Episcopal Cemetery, Lee County, South Carolina.

⁴⁶¹ Charles Axson Colclough died in 1943; Emma Buford Colclough died in 1951; and Edward Bertrand Colclough died in 1935.

Puerperal Violence: *Temperance Aven Curtis, Elizabeth Pardue, Permelia Wilson, Sophronia O. Horne, and Fannie Huguley*

As might be expected, female state lunatic asylum patients faced much different situations than their male counterparts, including diagnoses unique to their female sexed bodies. Most white women experienced suffering unique to their roles within the conservative and patriarchal U.S. South. Many experienced high expectations in their youth: to marry well; to produce and educate and care for children; to be devoted, Christian, and kind. Yet mental disturbances could end or expose the emptiness of these the dreams, especially when death and war further troubled the situation. Similar to today, women struggled with mental illnesses that turned them against their bodies and their offspring. In the early 1860s, four white female patients and one female Cherokee patient found treatment after they enacted violence against those that they traditionally held dear. The stories of Temperance Aven Curtis, Elizabeth Pardue, Permelia Wilson, Sophronia O. Horne, and Fannie A. Huguley show the terrible stresses of motherhood in the antebellum era and the severe impact of mental illness on young U.S. Southern mothers during the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction. These were women defined by their female sex and physiology, and their lives were determined by their physical experiences and peculiar mental terrors.

In September 1861, Mrs. Temperance Aven Curtis was admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, experiencing delusions and acting violently towards herself and her loved ones. At twenty-eight years old, Temperance was married and had born four children, only two of which were still living when she came to the state lunatic asylum.

By late 1861, Temperance had lost both her first child, Arietta, and her most recent child, Clarence, when each was approximately four months old. Arietta had been born and died in 1855, and Clarence had lived only briefly in 1860. Temperance's two surviving children were her second child, a son named William Franklin, born in 1856, and a second daughter named Eugenia, born in 1858.⁴⁶² The mathematical equation is tempting: it seems Temperance began showing signs of insanity "18 months" prior, which would have been around the birth of her last child, Clarence, who then died. However, the state lunatic asylum record insists "cause unknown" for her disturbed mental health, ignoring any possible post-partum complications.⁴⁶³

Regardless of the cause of Temperance's insanity, she was clearly a threat to herself and others. The asylum attendants noted that she "attempted on one occasion to strike her husband with an ax."⁴⁶⁴ She had been married for six years to William Naaman Nathan Curtis; he had been twenty-two at their wedding, and she had been twenty-one.⁴⁶⁵ They had regularly produced children since their marriage in February 1854: sixteen months after their wedding day, fifteen months after the first child's birth, twenty months after the second's birth, and twenty-one months after the third's birth.⁴⁶⁶ The rapid conception, pregnancy, and childbirth cycles combined with the early deaths of two infants may have led Temperance down the path of psychosis. Her violence was not only directed at her husband; she also turned sharp weapons against herself. The record describes one disturbing incident: "About a month ago tried to open her abdomen with a

⁴⁶² Year: 1860; Census Place: Calhoun, Gordon, Georgia; Roll: M653_124; Page: 278; Image: 278; Family History Library Film: 803124.

⁴⁶³ Temperance Aven Curtis, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 36.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁵ "Descendants of Nathan Boon of Keowee River, Pendleton District, South Carolina," accessed January 1, 2016, <http://www.genealogy.com/ftm/m/a/r/Decody-B-Marble/BOOK-0001/0004-0004.html>.

⁴⁶⁶ Year: 1860; Census Place: Calhoun, Gordon, Georgia; Roll: M653_124; Page: 278; Image: 278; Family History Library Film: 803124.

razor, imagining there was something there which she wanted out.” The report implies that Temperance had managed to acquire a razor for her purpose and perhaps even cut herself in the process. A subsequent remark emphasizes her delusional state: “Imagines she has no lungs, heart or liver, and thinks she is full of matter.” Temperance’s delusions about her body compelled her to attempt to liberate it through self-surgery. Her fixation to cut into her abdomen, the seat of her many pregnancies, again lends credence to the possibility of post-partum psychosis, but in truth we will never know. The asylum record asserts that Temperance was “generally quiet and cleanly, [but] sleeps badly.”⁴⁶⁷ She was almost certainly admitted with her husband’s approval, as most white U.S. Southern men in the era would have wanted a wife to receive treatment and cure as to ensure the return of his children’s mother to home and family. He desired an end to her homicidal and suicidal impulses and the opportunity to sustain and continue their shared family.

In the antebellum era, Temperance’s husband, William N. N. Curtis, lived in Gordon County, Georgia, beside his parents and many male siblings. He was a farmer, while Temperance did “domestic” work.⁴⁶⁸ With Temperance gone in 1861, he had two children in his care, at ages four and one, but this did not slow his drive to leave house, land, and family to serve the young Confederacy. He was ill-rewarded, however, contracting typhoid fever in 1862, which partially paralyzed him for the rest of his life. Disabled and unable to “hold a sword in his hand,” William was discharged from the Confederate Army.⁴⁶⁹ Before his enlistment in early 1862, he removed Temperance from the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, returning her to Gordon County. She had been at the state

⁴⁶⁷ Temperance Aven Curtis, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 36.

⁴⁶⁸ Year: 1860; Census Place: Calhoun, Gordon, Georgia; Roll: M653_124; Page: 278; Image: 278; Family History Library Film: 803124.

⁴⁶⁹ *Confederate Pension Applications*, Georgia Confederate Pension Office, RG 58-1-1, Georgia Archives.

lunatic asylum for four-hundred ninety-three days, almost a year and a half. The act of “removing” a patient from the state lunatic asylum meant that the asylum physicians had not yet considered the patient cured, but the family wanted the person returned at home. In some cases, attendants would write “Improved” or “Unimproved,” but Temperance was simply listed as “Removed by husband January 22, 1862.”⁴⁷⁰ She likely had not found a “cure” for her mental health crisis; she may have been still showing symptoms of self-harm as well as homicidal impulses. But Temperance’s husband had the power to return her home, even if she was still unwell, and he did just that before he left her and their children for war. Temperance was home, for better or worse.

According to one source, Temperance did not live to see the end of 1862. She died of an unknown cause in September 1862. She was followed in death shortly by her second son, William Franklin, who died just five days after her.⁴⁷¹ At this same time, her husband William was away, sick with typhoid fever, becoming paralyzed for life. Three years later, in March 1865, Temperance’s widower William married a woman fourteen years younger than him.⁴⁷² By 1870, the only sign of Temperance in the U.S. Federal Census is Eugenia, age ten, the only surviving child born of Temperance Aven Curtis.⁴⁷³ In 1889, William became “totally disabled” and “helpless, being unable at any time to do any kinds of work whatsoever” from the typhoid fever he contracted in 1862 in the Confederate service. He experienced a bad “tremor and [was] scarcely able to walk.”⁴⁷⁴ When William died in early 1901, a daughter by his second wife wrote lovingly of him:

⁴⁷⁰ Temperance Aven Curtis, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 36.

⁴⁷¹ Temperance and her son are buried at Curtis Cemetery, Gordon County, Georgia.

⁴⁷² W. N. Curtis and Elizabeth L. Keeter, Cherokee, Georgia on 1865-03-26, County Marriage Records, 1828–1978. The Georgia Archives, Morrow, Georgia.

⁴⁷³ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Gordon, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_153*; Page: *204B*; Image: *272510*; Family History Library Film: *545652*.

⁴⁷⁴ *Confederate Pension Applications*, Georgia Confederate Pension Office, RG 58-1-1, Georgia Archives.

“The Death Angel again hovered over our quiet home and claimed for his own one of our brightest treasures. He bore on his snow white wings to the beautiful realms above the spirit of our father, Rev. W. N. N. Curtis.”⁴⁷⁵ Two years later, his second wife also encountered “the great Angel of Death” which took her “on its snow-white wings to its peaceful home.” By 1901, William had “ten children, seven grandchildren, six brothers, and a host of friends and other relatives to mourn his loss.”⁴⁷⁶ Who was there to mourn for Temperance and her three dead children in the 1850s and 1860s? She is not mentioned in William’s obituary – an invisible first wife who gave him four children, only one who survived to adulthood. Temperance’s mourners could have been many or a few, but whatever the quantity or quality, the sentiment is still undetermined.

Back in 1861, Temperance had clearly needed medical intervention. She received care for a considerable period of time but only after much grief and suffering. Her life ended with a sick, absent husband and a war raging through the country. She may have been dying of an illness alongside her son, contracted easily among those spread by moving troops and supplies. Whatever the case, Temperance lived only a few decades in the U.S. South, yet her case demonstrates the multi-layered suffering that many women experienced in the antebellum and war periods. Her pain was distinctly female: her body created four other humans, two of whom died before her, and her supposedly maternal mind turned against her, leading to delusions and violence against herself and loved ones. If she had been born in a different era, life and death may have been different for Temperance, but she was undoubtedly a white U.S. Southern woman of the antebellum era, daughter of a North Carolina farmer, wife of a Georgia farmer and Confederate

⁴⁷⁵ *Calhoun Times* (Calhoun, Georgia), January 31, 1901.

⁴⁷⁶ *Calhoun Times* (Calhoun, Georgia), January 1, 1903.

soldier, mother to infants that did not thrive and a single daughter who did. She never saw the end of the U.S. Civil War or the marriage of her daughter or the birth of grandchildren. Her husband remarried, disabled by disease, while the war rushed to its horrible conclusion.

Scholars of the post-bellum U.S. South have almost uniformly produced an image of white women propping up their war-torn husbands, sometimes literally, and generally presiding over the manufacture of a Lost Cause that salved male honor in defeat. The ideal was perhaps best realized in an August 1865 *Harper's Weekly* illustration, which showed a melancholic husband with an empty sleeve sitting beside his determined wife who is holding carriage reins with two steady hands.⁴⁷⁷ Yet white U.S. Southern women had their own unique struggles in the war, enduring their own traumas, some of them war-related and others not. As always, difficult experiences often centered around motherhood. One imagines Scarlett O'Hara striking the enslaved girl, Prissy, in the heat of Atlanta burning when sweet Melanie labored horribly in childbirth. Conception, pregnancy, and childbirth did not cease because a war was on; if anything, these common events became all the more fraught.

When modern Americans think of mental health issues around pregnancy and childbirth, they may not assume that nineteenth-century doctors and women knew of such conditions. On the contrary, the very term "postpartum" was frequently used by nineteenth-century physicians in regards to such cases, though they preferred the Latin equivalent – "puerperal." A significant number of white U.S. Southern women appeared at the state lunatic asylum doors suffering from "puerperal insanity" in ways that do not

⁴⁷⁷ Winslow Homer, "Our Watering Places – The Empty Sleeve at Newport," *Harper's Weekly*, Vol. 9 (August 26, 1865), 532.

seem so dissimilar to today's "post-partum depression." Just as in the nineteenth century, the modern U.S. public often concentrates on the rare but terrible consequences of a mentally unwell mother. In 2001, Andrea Yates exposed the severity of post-partum psychosis to many Americans. Although she had been diagnosed with the unusual condition and had attempted suicide numerous times, Andrea's husband kept initiating sexual intercourse, because he wanted more children by her, and he forced Andrea to discontinue her medication. After the birth of their fifth child and the death of her father, Andrea rapidly deteriorated. Although medical professionals tried to intervene by hospitalizing her and recommending her husband stay with her at all times, when Andrea was finally left alone in their house, she drowned each of her five children in the family bathtub. In the subsequent years, the state of Texas pursued the death penalty while Andrea's defense attorneys asserted an insanity defense. A 2002 jury found her guilty and sentenced her to life imprisonment, but in a new 2006 trial, Andrea was found not guilty by reason of insanity and was moved to a mental hospital.⁴⁷⁸ The difference between 2002 and 2006 is the tremendous amount of publicity that emerged regarding post-partum psychosis.⁴⁷⁹ Andrea Yates had an impossibly complicated mental health situation that led to murder and infanticide. Although she suffered in 2001 in ways unique to the twenty-first century, white U.S. Southern women have been struggling with post-partum psychosis for well over a hundred years.

One hundred and forty years before Andrea Yates drowned her five children, Elizabeth Pardue entered the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum suffering from "mania."

⁴⁷⁸ Melissa Chan, "Revisiting Andrea Yates 15 Years After She Drowned Her Children," *TIME Magazine*, June 20, 2016.

⁴⁷⁹ Melissa Chan, "The Difference Between Postpartum Depression and Postpartum Psychosis," *TIME Magazine*, June 22, 2016.

Although an asylum attendant wrote “unknown” under her cause of insanity, they were somewhat clearer in her patient treatment records.⁴⁸⁰ Her official record has noticeable blank spaces in certain places: “Talk and _____. Hair _____. Eyes _____. General health _____.” These missing entries indicate whoever attended her had the intention of filling in the absent information, but that never occurred, leaving Elizabeth’s physical appearance and physical health to unwritten history. The patient treatment record concludes by explaining that this January 1861 admission was her second – she had first been admitted in May 1844, seventeen years earlier. At her first commitment, she was thirty years old, and she had just committed the brutal murder of one of her children. According to the record, Elizabeth “had suffered from an attack of Homicidal mania, during a paroxysm [sic] she cut off the head of one of her children.” The serene cursive handwriting does not depict the horror of this violent act. Elizabeth may have been suffering from post-partum psychosis; we cannot delve any deeper than these few lines slanted in the ledger. She was at a child-bearing age, and the state lunatic asylum record reveals that she had multiple children. The number of children she had born – and the age of the deceased child – have yet to be discovered. In contrast to Andrea Yates in 2001 who was thrown into the criminal justice system, convicted of murder, and sentenced to life imprisonment, Elizabeth was sent to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum for treatment and was home within the year. Although modern Americans felt conflicted about Andrea’s mental illness, even though it was clearly recorded but poorly understood, Elizabeth rapidly “recovered” and was discharged, leaving “about 12 mo’s” later in 1845.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁸⁰ Elizabeth Pardue, #1220, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

Elizabeth Pardue can be found, with some difficulty, in the 1850 U.S. Federal Census for Lancaster County, South Carolina, where her husband and children were identified by their initials. In 1850, she resided beside six children, ranging from seventeen to two years of age. Since these are the survivors of her psychotic episode, which had occurred six years prior, we can do simple mathematics with the registered ages of her remaining children. There is a noticeable gap between “H.” in 1845 and his next oldest sibling, a brother “S.” in 1838. Although one can only conjecture in such a difficult situation, it seems possible that the child that Elizabeth killed was the absent one, a child born after “S.” around 1838 and before “H.” in 1845, possibly indicating that she had been suffering from post-partum psychosis. The other point of note is the son “H.” born in 1845: Elizabeth was actually discharged from the asylum in 1845, which suggests that when she returned home, she immediately conceived to produce “H.” This son was and is the living proof of the Pardue family’s trust in medicine and the belief that Elizabeth would not kill again. The subsequent daughter “C.” in 1848 validates this theory even further: the Pardue family believed Elizabeth had “suffered *an attack* [emphasis mine] of Homicidal mania,” meaning it was a single attack and a temporary one at that. She could yet again be a devoted mother and the producer of children for her family; her role as a white U.S. Southern woman was not negated by her homicide or stay at the state lunatic asylum.⁴⁸² Her body had not betrayed her; her mind had, and that was now supposedly free of violent compulsions.

For reasons marked “unknown,” Elizabeth Pardue returned to the state lunatic asylum in January 1861. She was still married to her husband; her admission lists her as

⁴⁸² Year: 1850; Census Place: Lancaster, South Carolina; Roll: M432_854; Page: 188A; Image: 378.

such, and her discharge identifies her as “Mrs. Pardue.”⁴⁸³ Unfortunately, there is no mention of her children. She still resided in Lancaster County, South Carolina with her husband William Simpson Pardue. He seems to have been a life-long farmer of minor means, as seen in the 1850 and 1870 U.S. Census. Through her husband William, we can discover what happened to Elizabeth after she was yet again discharged “cured” from the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, which occurred in August 1862, a little over a year and half from her second admission. The 1870 U.S. Federal Census for Alachua County, Florida reveals William and Elizabeth living together in their early sixties, their grown children having separated from them. As if her act of infanticide never happened, the two appear alone on the census as “farmer” and “keeps home”; they are counted in a long list of South Carolinians who had relocated to this part of Florida during the antebellum period and U.S. Civil War.⁴⁸⁴ As space and soil eroded in South Carolina, many wealthy planters had turned to the Deep South for more land and bigger profits. In particular, the city of Gainesville in Alachua County, Florida was founded by South Carolinians, who swung the state towards secession when the Confederacy emerged in 1861. Even after the U.S. Civil War, South Carolinians turned to Florida, including, for example, the children of the mad plantation king James Henry Colclough mentioned earlier. The Pardue family – life-long farmers – followed suit.

One Pardue son born around 1840, about four years before Elizabeth killed his sibling, has a collection of a few leaves of papers now residing in the Genealogical Society of Utah in Salt Lake City. This son seems to be the “S.” who the 1850 U.S. Federal Census said was born around 1838, although he was more likely born in

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Alachua, Florida*; Roll: *M593_128*; Page: *108B*; Image: *70793*; Family History Library Film: *545627*.

September 1840.⁴⁸⁵ This record states that James Simpson Pardue, “son of William Simpson Pardue and Elizabeth (Neely) Pardue, born in South Carolina,” married his first wife in 1867 in Alachua County, Florida.⁴⁸⁶ His marriage in Florida rather than South Carolina suggests that Elizabeth and William, along with their children, had relocated sometime in the 1860s before the 1870 U.S. Federal Census registered the pair residing in Florida. Supporting this theory, their son James enlisted in the U.S. Civil War in late March 1861 in Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida. He was just twenty years old, but he survived the conflict, earning the rank of corporal by war’s end.⁴⁸⁷ In 1870, he is ten pages and two days separate from his parents; he, too, lived beside South Carolinians, and like his father, he was listed as a “Farmer.”⁴⁸⁸ Of all of the Pardue children, he is the only one easily identifiable in the scattered records. His dead sibling, written about in quick script, is only known because of his mother’s insanity and her terrible actions.

A plain flat gravestone in Evergreen Cemetery in Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida discloses Elizabeth’s husband’s date of death: December 25, 1890 at the age of 84.⁴⁸⁹ Elizabeth does not have an adjacent gravestone, and her ultimate fate is currently unknown. Yet she still informs us about the nineteenth century U.S. South: a mother could kill her children and still be acceptable as a mate, so long as a state lunatic asylum and treatment were involved. Even after a second commitment, which implies abnormal

⁴⁸⁵ Year: 1900; Census Place: *Lemon City, Dade, Florida*; Roll: 167; Page: 33B; Enumeration District: 0032; FHL microfilm: 1240167.

⁴⁸⁶ Ida. M. Pardue, *James. S Pardue, b. 1840 South Carolina, m. Margaret Louise Zetrouer* (Salt Lake City: The Genealogical Society of Utah, 1990).

⁴⁸⁷ "United States Civil War Soldiers Index, 1861-1865," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FS7K-GPN> : 4 December 2014), James S. Pardue, Sergeant, Company H, 1st Regiment, Florida Infantry, Confederate; citing NARA microfilm publication M225 (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), roll 7; FHL microfilm 880,007.

⁴⁸⁸ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Alachua, Florida*; Roll: M593_128; Page: 113B; Image: 71207; Family History Library Film: 545627.

⁴⁸⁹ William’s grave is located in Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida.

behavior and another round of treatment, she was still seen as a mother and a wife.

Without a few pen strokes in a book, William, Elizabeth, and their children would appear like many South Carolinians in the 1860s: poor white U.S. Southern farmers, their son(s) enlisting in the war, their chance at success not stationary in their state but wherever crops would and could grow, one family of many from South Carolina who relocated to Florida making it a little Carolina. Instead, we have those few significant words - “she had suffered from an attack of Homicidal mania, during a paroxism [sic] she cut off the head of one of her children” – and suddenly their world fractures and fragments, and the story is properly seen as complicated and even inexplicable.⁴⁹⁰

Another young mother who came to Milledgeville in 1863 would also find life and death at the state lunatic asylum. Mrs. Permelia Anna Wishon, a Cherokee woman, was sent away for treatment because she “was attacked with the derangement of mind very suddenly and violently” about eight weeks earlier. At that time, Permelia became “noisy, destructive, and [was] disposed to commit acts of violence upon herself and everyone about her.” As with many women in the 1860s, Permelia had a young child “about 18 months old.”⁴⁹¹ Her mood change may have occurred because of her post-partum mental health fluctuations. She was thirty years old, had four children, and was married to a white man, John Tucker, who was away fighting for the Confederacy, when she experienced her disturbance.⁴⁹² Permelia had rapidly escalated; she “cut her own throat and attempted to kill her children and mother.” She had been prevented from both suicide and murder, but her intentions were extremely violent towards herself and others.

⁴⁹⁰ Elizabeth Pardue, #155, Vol. 3, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

⁴⁹¹ Permelia Ann Wishon, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 94-95.

⁴⁹² Ancestry.com. *Georgia, Confederate Pension Applications, 1879-1960* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2009.

However, as quickly as Permelia became vicious, she suddenly “changed entirely” and became “very still, not disposed to talk at all nor to eat anything.” Today, we might suggest that Permelia was experiencing the elevation and depression of bipolar disorder and perhaps had become catatonic, a state where a person can enter an immobile stupor for hours at a time. In her time period, however, the Georgia Lunatic Asylum struggled to understand Permelia’s symptoms of insanity and speculated “cause unknown unless [it is] the absence of her husband who is in the Army and has been for two years.” John’s absence had apparently created hardship in the life of Permelia and their children, but her sudden rage and her depressive phase surprised family and physicians and prompted her admission to the state lunatic asylum in July 1863.⁴⁹³ Far away in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, soldiers sweated, bled, and perished, but Permelia was withdrawn within herself and the outside world likely mattered little to her.

Permelia would not return home, in life or death. Instead, she is one of the significant number of state lunatic asylum patients who resided for decade upon decade at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. First admitted in July 1863, she died forty-three years and four months later at the asylum in November 1906. She perhaps struggled with her mental disorder for much of her life. The cause of death was “inanition” – an old medical term that references starvation and exhaustion.⁴⁹⁴ Permelia’s final years at the asylum (called the sanitarium in 1906) can never be known, but the institution had transformed horrifically in the four decades of her residence. *The Atlanta Constitution*’s expose in 1909 revealed large-scale, long-term physical abuse and neglect of patients, including sexual assaults against mentally ill women. One report declared, “Without radical change,

⁴⁹³ Permelia Ann Wishon, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 94-95.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

the sanitarium will become a death trap.” Although in the 1860s the average patient population number had wavered somewhere around two hundred people, the Georgia State Sanitarium of 1908 housed an astonishing 3,083 patients.⁴⁹⁵ The last written medical notation about Permelia’s case was made in 1863, as far as records indicate; there is little way to tell what happened to her over the next four decades until her death in 1906. Her mental illness may have abated, continued, escalated, or ended entirely.

Whatever happened, Permelia was buried at the asylum when she died in 1906.⁴⁹⁶ Her husband appears to have divorced her sometime in the 1860s, as he married a second wife in 1869 and had two children by this other woman. His grave is located near their home in Gilmer County, Georgia, but Permelia’s father John Conseene Tucker is buried at a different cemetery in the county. A strange detail emerges when considering Permelia’s case: her father was kept as her contact person in the asylum record, likely because her husband was first away at war and then divorced her. Fascinatingly, Permelia’s father was a truly exceptional individual in Georgia history. John Conseene Tucker’s recently erected headstone claims: “Indian Name (Conseene). Liguist [sic] in Trail of Tears.” Permelia can be found marked on his gravestone as “Anna,” her middle name, as his children were included on his gravestone. These words are chiseled under a magnificent Seal of the Cherokee Nation.⁴⁹⁷ Records indicate that John Conseene Tucker was a Cherokee, as was his wife Ruby Holloway and their numerous children, including Permelia. However, their continued residence in Gilmer County long after the Trail of

⁴⁹⁵ *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, Georgia), August 22, 1909.

⁴⁹⁶ Permelia has a virtual memorial devoted to her on the FindaGrave website (Memorial #99586587), but her original burial site at the asylum is no longer known.

⁴⁹⁷ John C. Tucker’s grave is located in Sharp Cemetery, Gilmer County, Georgia.

Tears determined that Permelia would likely not marry a Cherokee man.⁴⁹⁸ Her husband Eli Owen Wishon appears to be a white man who served the Confederacy, but their children were eligible under the federal government to count as Cherokee Indians.⁴⁹⁹ Eli's obelisk and flat veteran memorial suggest nothing of his interaction with the Cherokee, and Permelia, buried in a now forgotten site at the asylum cemetery, vanishes as well. Yet an admission in 1863 tells us something new about Georgia in this era: mental illness worked similarly with all its peoples, and physicians did not consider the Cherokee wife of a white man "colored." Permelia's long stay at the state lunatic asylum meant she drifted through Reconstruction and Jim Crow, Indian boarding schools, the Ghost Dance and Wounded Knee, and Frederick Jackson Turner's "closing of the frontier." Her Cherokee identity became subsumed under her new existence as a state lunatic asylum patient. Her body was buried beside white U.S. Southerners in a land nowhere near her father, her children, or the Cherokee people.

Permelia was not the only young woman who lost their life – the joys of it and all of it – at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. She was joined for those many decades by Mrs. Sophronia O. Horne (or Horn). Similarly to Permelia, Sophronia had been insane "two years... but was not at all excited or disposed to commit acts of violence until some fifteen days back, since which she has been almost constantly excited." The state lunatic asylum, in her case, had no confusion over her cause of insanity: "Cause supposed to be the influence of the puerperal state."⁵⁰⁰ This "puerperal state" or the state of pregnancy

⁴⁹⁸ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Subdivision 33, Gilmer, Georgia*; Roll: *M653_124*; Page: 52; Image: 52; Family History Library Film: 803124.

⁴⁹⁹ Applications from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Muskogee Area Office, Relating to Enrollment in the Five Civilized Tribes under the Act of 1896; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M1650, 54 rolls); Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁰⁰ Sophronia O. Horn, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 278.

would be an idea somehow lost by the late twentieth century, when mothers who suffered during and after birth were sometimes looked upon critically and callously. In 1869, when Sophronia entered the state lunatic asylum, she had “two children, one about two years old and the other about a month.” She had become “generally excited, noisy, and destructive,” which had led her on one occasion to attempt “to throw her children in the fire.”⁵⁰¹ However, Sophronia seems to have either failed or been prevented from doing any lasting harm, but the incident was enough for her husband, Levi Jefferson Horn, a Confederate veteran and poor farmer.⁵⁰² He sent Sophronia away for treatment to the state lunatic asylum in Milledgeville about one hundred and twenty miles away from their home in Harris County, Georgia. The distance, he imagined, would help the traumatized family, but the distance stretched on much longer than anyone could have initially imagined.

Sophronia would stay at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum from 1869 at age twenty-four to 1912 at age sixty-six.⁵⁰³ Whatever had begun in 1869 for Sophronia Horn seems to have never abated; she may have developed a lifelong mental illness in her early twenties post-partum that continued the rest of her life. Although she may have been loved and highly valued in 1869, over the years, Sophronia likely slipped away from the concerns of her family. She was redundantly marked in the 1880 U.S. Federal Census for Harris County, Georgia as “S.O.,” wife of “L.J. Horn,” with her occupation identified as “Asylum” and marked “Insane,” and she was also listed in the 1880 U.S. Federal Census for Baldwin County at the state lunatic asylum. Her sister Fannie was living with her

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Year: 1860; Census Place: *Georgia Militia District 1186, Harris, Georgia*; Roll: M653_126; Page: 598; Image: 598; Family History Library Film: 803126

⁵⁰³ Sophronia O. Horn, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 278.

family, taking care of Thomas, her teenage son who was marked as disabled, and Pearl, her younger daughter. It is unclear what Thomas suffered from, if his disability was mental or physical. No one in the house – neither adult nor child – could read or write.⁵⁰⁴ Almost no state lunatic asylum patients are double listed like Sophronia during the nineteenth century in the U.S. South; her doppelganger presence implies a real devotion from her family to her, or perhaps a confusion on how to express her living existence elsewhere at the state lunatic asylum. In subsequent censuses, however, Sophronia Horn is found only in the U.S. Federal Census for Baldwin County and the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, as if she became less a wife and more an inmate as the years wore on.⁵⁰⁵

The conclusion of Sophronia's admission entry shows numerous edits where asylum attendants altered her contact information and familial requests over the years. In 1869, she had her husband listed as "Levi J. Horn, Mountain Hill P.O., Harris County, Ga," but twenty-one years later, he apparently changed homes and the asylum updated: "1890 Sept. 18. Hargrett P.O.," the surname of a significant family in the county. On June 22, 1901, the asylum received another update, which reads ominously and suggests a terrible amount of time had passed: "6/22/01 – Bury here." In 1901, Sophronia was fifty-six, yet fate was now sealed for her: she would never return home, she would die at the asylum, and she would be buried in Milledgeville with other insane U.S. Southerners. The subsequent address change in 1904 for her husband to his new home in Alabama indicates that he had moved on from her, and she was effectively abandoned at the asylum. Although Levi would eventually return to Harris County, Georgia, as he

⁵⁰⁴ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Upper 19th, Harris, Georgia*; Roll: 151; Family History Film: 1254151; Page: 510D; Enumeration District: 059; Image: 0485.

⁵⁰⁵ Year: 1900; Census Place: *Militia District 1186, Harris, Georgia*; Roll: 203; Page: 12B; Enumeration District: 0028; FHL microfilm: 1240203.

would die there in 1930, his wife remained in Milledgeville for her final years. He again sent a message in December 1910 which read “Bury Here” as if a miscommunication had occurred since 1901 when the first “Bury Here” was sent.⁵⁰⁶ It is unclear if these messages arrived to the asylum unprovoked or if the asylum superintendent was sending his own updates to Sophronia’s husband, detailing that she had become ill and may be near death, and Levi was writing in response. Regardless, the message of clear: Sophronia would not be brought home.

On March 9, 1912, Sophronia finally ceased in her struggles, dying of “congestion lung asthenia,” or a congestion of the lungs with bodily weakness.⁵⁰⁷ She was indeed “buried here,” and, due to an absurd decision years later to remove grave markers to mow the lawn better, her exact grave site is now lost.⁵⁰⁸ She spent forty-two years and four months at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum – almost exactly the astonishing amount of time that the Cherokee patient Permelia Wishon had resided there as well. If the two knew each other, were friends or rivals, talked or wrote each other, perhaps even lived together, we will never know. But Permelia and Sophronia – violent young women, whose pregnancies led to longer mental health complications – demonstrate the terrible lack of options for mentally ill women in the postwar U.S. South. Their husbands moved on, their children grew up without knowing them, and they were likely buried near each other, one in 1906 and the other in 1912. An invisible relationship ties the two together, even if they never or rarely interacted; they were closer than we could ever imagine, in

⁵⁰⁶ Sophronia O. Horn, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 278.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ Doug Monroe, “Asylum: Inside Central State Hospital, once the world’s largest mental institution,” *Atlanta Magazine*, February 18, 2015.

their decades-long residences at the state lunatic asylum and in their sorry deaths far from family in their new home for the insane.

Many mentally ill white U.S. Southerners came to state lunatic asylums in the 1860s: some had harmed themselves; others had attacked acquaintances, friends, and family; a few had killed friends, neighbors, slaves, or children. Although the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums handled a vast multitude of various cases, we have almost no evidence regarding the medical treatment of U.S. Southerners exhibiting such extreme violence towards self and others. Only one case in the 1860s reveals anything about medical treatment given to violent patients: her name is Fannie A. Huguley and she came from West Point, Georgia. She was admitted twice to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum in September 1864 and October 1865, both times by her husband, William Henderson Huguley.⁵⁰⁹ He was the son of a wealthy planter and continued the profession after the U.S. Civil War, though he eventually became the president of the Alabama & Georgia Manufacturing Company. William and Fannie had produced just one child before Fannie entered the state lunatic asylum: William T. Huguley, who eventually graduated from the University of Georgia, became an editor of *The Southern Alliance* (a Farmers' Alliance newspaper), helped lead the W.H. Huguley & Company (a populist grange movement organization), and took over his father's position as president of the Alabama & Georgia Manufacturing Company. His U.S. Southern fame means that Fannie can be found his biographical sketches; her ultimate fate is betrayed as "died in 1866."⁵¹⁰ Indeed, Fannie was twice admitted to the state lunatic asylum in 1864 and 1865 before her death in 1866,

⁵⁰⁹ Fannie A. Huguley, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 123.

⁵¹⁰ *Biographical Souvenir of the States of Georgia and Florida: Containing Biographical Sketches of the Representative Public, and Many Early Settled Families in These States* (Florida: Southern Historical Press, 1889), 433.

which may have happened either at home or the state lunatic asylum. Her body was buried in the Huguley Cemetery in Chambers County, Alabama, although William was eventually buried far away in West Point, Georgia, in 1917 beside his third and final wife. Fannie lays by William's similarly short-lived second wife; the two have scarred old obelisks, waiting for William who never would lay down in death beside them.⁵¹¹

Fannie's second admission to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum is the exceptional one: here, the asylum divulges a few of its secrets. First, Fannie had been removed by her husband at her first admission in 1864, which was generally done against the asylum superintendent's wishes. Her second arrival at the state institution within the year demonstrates that her previous "removal" was not the best course of action in her case. At the time of this admission, Fannie had "grown rapidly worse until the necessity of returning her to the Asylum has become absolute." She had a "chronic affliction of her bowels" and her "diarrheal discharges [were] occurring from ten to twenty times a day."⁵¹² This is a marked contrast to her first admission, where Fannie was noted as being "excited and noisy" and violent towards herself, others, and her husband's enslaved laborers, "ordering the negroes and pursuing [sic] them to beat them with anything she can lay her hands on."⁵¹³ The change may actually be due to the treatment of her mental disorder: the admission explains that, to ease her bowels, she was given "3/4 of a gram of Morphia" and then "a very heavy drink of whiskey," "since which time she has had no action of her bowels at all." She may have been given something that made her physically sick to begin with, if morphine and whiskey were intended as cures for diarrhea

⁵¹¹ Her grave is located at Huguley Cemetery in Chambers County, Alabama beside Cordelia Glanton Huguley.

⁵¹² Fannie A. Huguley, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 135.

⁵¹³ Fannie Huguley, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 123.

discomfort. However, the morphine and whiskey had led to Fannie being “in a state of partial stupor ever since”; she no longer spoke and had not eaten anything for three days.⁵¹⁴ In such a state of distress, Fannie was brought to the state lunatic asylum, but within the year, she was dead. However, if she died at the asylum or was once again removed home by her husband, we cannot tell through the records.⁵¹⁵ Her violence ended with significant physical illness and gross over-medication, and life slipped away from her concerned husband, who eventually turned his love from her to a second wife, then yet again to a third wife.

Suicide as Self-Violence: *Andrew Jackson Killian*

White U.S. Southern families often wanted the best for their disturbed relatives, and going long distances and taking great steps was not uncommon for treatment and cure, especially for white people of some means and for those key that were to their families, such as husbands/fathers and wives/mothers. However, the state lunatic asylum seems to have had relatively few perfect answers for such families. Whatever medical treatment they bestowed upon violent patients may have worked for some, but ultimately, many remained in the asylum the rest of their dying days or returned home still symptomatic. In the 1861 case of Andrew Jackson Killian from rural mountainous Ellijay, Georgia, we see a quintessential white U.S. Southerner struggling with violent impulses, a poor man of family and promise. Andrew was unlike his presidential namesake in that he was married with six children at age forty and worked as a tailor to

⁵¹⁴ Fannie A. Huguley, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 135.

⁵¹⁵ *Biographical Souvenir of the States of Georgia and Florida: Containing Biographical Sketches of the Representative Public, and Many Early Settled Families in These States* (Florida: Southern Historical Press, 1889), 433.

“support his family until two months ago.” The state lunatic asylum asserted that, although he just recently taken a break from work, “his mind [had] probably been unsound for a long time.” Many white U.S. Southerners worked, lived, and existed with violent mental disorders and only went to a state lunatic asylum when their behavior escalated into particularly dangerous behavior. For Andrew, this meant his “suicidal tendency” had driven him recently to attempt hanging himself, though his family had “been closely watch[ing]” him for some time. He had never expressed violence towards anyone else, but he slept “badly” and clearly intended to kill himself. His local physician Dr. Robert R. Hunt of Ellijay, Gilmer County, suggested the family send Andrew to Milledgeville – about 175 miles far south of their hometown. Andrew, his wife, and children acquiesced to the idea, and he went in February 1861 to the state lunatic asylum. He remained there for a year and nine months, coming home in December 1862.⁵¹⁶ The war had progressed, with or without Andrew, and he was finally reunited with his wife and many children. By 1864, they welcomed a new son onto their family and rural homestead, and Andrew continued his work as a tailor and started to farm after the war. His brief admission to the state lunatic asylum certainly registered with the family, but in what ways, we will never know, for the family left behind relatively little to tell their story. His absence during the U.S. Civil War may not have been so odd considering the separation of many men from their families – but his departure to a state lunatic asylum instead of the battlefield must have been unsettling.

By 1870, Andrew was no longer marked on the U.S. Federal Census as insane. Instead, he was noted as a poor farmer of the northern Georgian mountains with real estate worth \$300 and personal estate worth \$350. He still had his wife, his eldest and

⁵¹⁶ Andrew Jackson Killion, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 245.

youngest daughters, and three sons, as well as his recently widowed daughter and his first grandson.⁵¹⁷ Their little home was full. Notwithstanding his seeming return to normalcy, Andrew struggled with the same violent impulses from years earlier. Nonetheless, he controlled himself and never returned to far away Milledgeville. In 1879, Andrew had been out of the state lunatic asylum for seventeen years. Just over a decade after a heartbreaking U.S. Civil War, the U.S. South had already remade itself into a site of new slavery via sharecropping and convict labor. The region had expanded into Henry Grady's "New South" realm of railroads and cotton expositions. Andrew's family changed, too; he remained in slowly transforming Ellijay, present and needed by his loved ones.

Yet the inner world of Andrew Jackson Killian was not so far removed from the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. He still had those lingering impulses, and he was not always watched anymore. Not formally considered insane, he walked the reconstructed U.S. South as a white family patriarch with darkness in his heart and soul. In November 1879, Andrew procured a gun and completed his long-awaited suicide.⁵¹⁸ The state lunatic asylum likely delayed his suicidal intentions, but his thoughts followed him through war, occupation, and emancipation. His family may have had him those seventeen years from his discharge in 1862 to his suicide in 1879, but a part of him was still at the state lunatic asylum far south in Milledgeville. Like a significant number of violent mentally ill white U.S. Southerners, the state lunatic asylum and the time spent there influenced later life experiences. Whether Andrew was bettered or worsened by his experiences at the

⁵¹⁷ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Subdivision 55, Gilmer, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_152*; Page: *2B*; Image: *256755*; Family History Library Film: *545651*

⁵¹⁸ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; *Federal Mortality Census Schedules, 1850-1880, and Related Indexes, 1850-1880*; Archive Collection: *T655*; Archive Roll Number: *11*; Census Year: 1879; Census Place: *Ellijay, Gilmer, Georgia*.

Georgia Lunatic Asylum is thoroughly impossible to discern. Yet Andrew, like most of the patients discussed here, had a family deeply interested in his improvement – a spouse, children, and a home that awaited his return. Nevertheless, a violent mental illness plagued him and all those similar to him, and they were forever changed, whether they were discharged or removed or “buried here.”

The advantages of being a white man in the U.S. South during the 1860s could extend far beyond home and hearth and into unusual places such as the state lunatic asylum. Yet these cases demonstrate that while race and sex played a significant role in familial and societal responses, so too did the education and socioeconomic status of the so-called insane. While Andrew Jackson Killian briefly resided at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, his family managed without him. However, his return was needed, and they never sent him away again, even though he likely showed symptoms of suicidal impulse. In higher echelons of the U.S. Southern hierarchy, white men like Dr. Jesse M. Vason, James Henry Colclough, and Isaac Rowdon caught the attention of society only briefly for their extreme violent acts before slipping back into the fold of white wealthy masculinity. With poor immigrant men such as Peter Murphy and others whose histories are even less recorded, we can see the alternative: that some men did not so easily escape the state lunatic asylum once committed. Still, none of these men were condemned to prison or the gallows for their terrible violence, so perhaps their sex and skin did save them more than we might initially expect.

U.S. Southern women, particularly those coded as or passing for white, also ventured into the state lunatic asylums with their identities clearly understood by family and physicians. Their female sexed bodies were entangled with their sanity: pregnancy,

childbirth, and motherhood were expected but also feared. Women like Elizabeth Pardue, who decapitated her child, show the antebellum period's understanding of puerperal insanity or post-partum psychosis – that it was temporary obstacle to overcome. Elizabeth was not alone by any means in her female suffering: joined by Temperance Aven Curtis, Permelia Wishon, Sophronia Horn, and Fannie Huguley, she resided in the state lunatic asylum as a vital part of a family who could not permit her presence so long as she attacked herself, her children, and her spouse. Although Elizabeth escaped the asylum, Permelia and Sophronia never returned home. Their invisible burials in Milledgeville, Georgia were certainly not what they expected when they married, conceived, and gave birth. A temporary attack of insanity may never abate, and a husband might not wait, as seen with Fannie, dead too early and replaced twice over. In the midst of the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction, the difficulties of young mothers worsened with absent or disabled husbands and camp disease spread back to the home-front. These women's suffering and insanity were specifically sexed and gendered in some ways, but in many other ways, they were entirely socially constructed and historically situated.

Even the victims of these violent acts expose unfortunate truths about the mid-nineteenth century and its dark realities. To be an enslaved African-American, we know meant unbelievable burdens and terror, yet we have not fully considered the horror and isolation of those imprisoned on plantations by mentally unstable patriarchs. While this may have been a rare experience, it still occurred and further nuances our view of the antebellum and war-time U.S. South. Similarly, the limited options of white women and children as dependents determined their survival – or their deaths – across the U.S. South. The extent that enslaved African-Americans, white women, and white children were

considered disposable is painfully and profoundly seen in these stories of extreme unchecked violence. Although white men could be assaulted or killed by disturbed individuals of their own race and sex, their attackers were more often treated seriously in the aftermath, such as Peter Murphy's life-time commitment to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum after murdering his disabled neighbor. Yet for all these victims that we know about through state lunatic asylum records, county court petitions, and newspaper reports, there are countless more that never came forward, that never could come forward, because their experiences and voices were silenced due to their position in society and the effects of the violence enacted upon them. Though we will not know them, we should count them in some way and consider those whose records we do have all the more seriously.

After his completed suicide in 1879, Andrew Jackson Killian's body was buried high on a green hill overlooking the little town of Ellijay, Georgia. Few Killian family remained in the area in the following decades. Andrew's wife Mahala and son Thomas died within months of each other in 1886 and were both buried beside him. Andrew's other children married further away from home or left the mountains of Georgia altogether. As fewer family stayed in the area, the short obelisk placed in front of the Killian family's burials has begun to topple ever so slowly. The obelisk's thick foundation has been driven ever deeper into the soil, causing it to tilt like a leaning belltower. The marble blocks making up the obelisk have all shifted closer to the edge but have yet to fall flat onto the earth. The small foot-stones that mark each family member's grave have fallen ever further, nearly lying flat on the grass. The worn marble stone with a chiseled "A.J.K." survives half-collapsed, a stone reminder that Andrew never had his

full footing in this world. One side of the family obelisk remains empty, as if waiting for another family member to arrive. Yet Andrew's son Robert, who died in 1911, much later than his father in 1879 and mother and brother in 1886, was buried far away at the very edge of the cemetery, before a cliff covered with a tangled crowd of flowering honeysuckle. His Psalm 23:4 epigraph reads woefully, chosen for reasons lost to time, by a solitary son whose father survived war and a lunatic asylum but not his own hands: *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me...* Sometime in the future, unless friends or fate intervene, the obelisk of Andrew Jackson Killian will fall onto Georgia grass and green clover. Even if someone or something does come to his assistance, the moment may have already passed, one or two hundred years prior. But for now, Andrew stays with his family, a U.S. Southern man slowly disintegrating before all of us.

CHAPTER 6

Sex

Stories of physical sex and human sexuality can be found hidden away in the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums during the Civil War and Reconstruction. However, these cases of post-partum mental illness and hypersexuality are not the notorious charges of hysteria and effeminate homosexuality that would become infamous at the turn of the twentieth century. In the mid-nineteenth century, state lunatic asylum patients and their families experienced sexed bodies and sexuality as well as mental illness and disability, and their lives were forever changed by these four compounding issues. For Matilda Mitcham and Helena Mensing, their mental illness, female gender, and female sex combined in a conservative culture of marriage and motherhood made more complicated by war, emancipation, and Reconstruction. None of the four white women were damned to life and death in the lunatic asylum, and their families accepted their return home often repeatedly. In contrast, white male patients such as Charles Kilgore and Julius Hollemon became sexually aggressive towards their own flesh and blood in a world that did not permit sexual assault against strangers. Their transgressive sexual actions destroyed their family's personal expectations and violated a myriad of elite white male gender norms in the 1860s U.S. South. Finally, the highly unusual case of Eva Fernandez shows that even those patients who sexually trespassed could survive mental illness, even when producing some of the most inappropriate social and sexual behavior.

Extreme sex and sexuality, to the point of mental instability, drastically decreased the chances of patients leaving behind materials about their experiences during and after institutionalization. Women and young men struggling with such mental and physical troubles struggle to be heard through the roar of the nineteenth century. Men and women of color, most of whom were enslaved before emancipation, rarely entered state lunatic asylums during the 1860s for mental disorders relating to their sexuality. Due to the deliberate preference of Georgia and South Carolina towards its white citizens, the following study of sexually disordered patients primarily concerns young white men and women during the 1860s. As the decades wore on, and more African-American patients were accepted into the institutions, cases of postpartum mental illness and hypersexuality became more common amongst African-American individuals. The story of those who suffered and yet never entered the asylum cannot easily be told.

Like many disabilities in the 1860s, gendered and sexed mental illness obfuscated patients' experiences and abilities, and we rarely find their own words to describe their symptoms or life stories. Their stories should still be reconstructed as best possible, for to overlook those with few surviving sources is to agree with those who thought these people were disposable and dispensable, and that their mental illness was so offensive as to warrant their exclusion. For Matilda and Helena, we must recreate a world where white women had a unique and heavy burden in the form of marriage and motherhood. For Charles and Julius, the world that they had been trained and destined to rule dissolved simultaneously to their own mental collapse. And for Eva, the dark experiences of sex, mental illness, and death dominated her life experiences, and yet all three are essential to understanding her mid-nineteenth century existence in the U.S. South.

Being Sexed and Having Sex: *Matilda Mitcham and Helena Mensing*

Seven years and four children: such was Matilda Mitcham's life when she arrived at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum in November 1860. She was twenty-nine years old, and she had allegedly been insane the last six weeks since the birth to her fourth child. Physicians reported contradictory information based on her family's observations: she had either been first insane at puberty or after her 1853 marriage. Matilda had shown particular signs of insanity since her latest childbirth, yet her admission entry does not note specifically most of these for posterity. Instead, the record indicates that she "became violently insane a few days after the birth of her last child" but admitted she had "not latterly shown any disposition to commit acts of violence toward anyone except her husband." Indeed, her family and physicians inherently linked Matilda's violence with her pregnancy, labor, and birth. Her lunatic asylum admission entry declared, "After the birth of each child her mind has appeared rather worse than other times." The record simultaneously commented on Matilda's current state as well as her past behavior, noting she had "not been destructive lately but formerly destroyed her clothes and bedding." Although the underlying cause of Matilda's insanity was not determined, physicians mused that "hereditary predisposition believed to exist." So in November 1860, Matilda Mitcham arrived at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, the mother of four children, including a six-week old infant, with the innate expectation that she would be soon cured and discharged, so as to return to her family in Sumter County, Georgia.⁵¹⁹

The asylum record itself reveals that the institution had not been the first medical intervention that the Mitcham family had taken with Matilda. She reportedly had "been

⁵¹⁹ Matilda Mitcham, Georgia Department of Public Health, Central State Hospital, Medical Case Histories, Volume 3 (October 9, 1860 – July 31, 1873) (hereafter Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873), 9-10.

under the treatment of Doctor Bailey who bled and purged her freely.” The exact identity of ‘Doctor Bailey’ cannot be ascertained with the limited provided information, but he could be either Wilborn Harris Bailey (1828-1905) or Henry Crawford Bailey (1826-1909), two brothers who worked and resided in Sumter County during the 1860s. Both would later serve in the Confederacy; both allegedly served at Andersonville Prison. Unfortunately, since details are minimal, it is only clear that Matilda Mitcham received additional medical care in her local community.⁵²⁰

As in many mid-nineteenth century cases of mental and physical illness, Matilda underwent bleeding and purging. Her suffering was compounded by medical intervention, as humoral theory rested on “the idea that disease results from an imbalance of humoral fluids whose balance the physician might restore by various means, the chief of which was bloodletting.” By the 1830s, Pierre Charles Alexander Louis and his 1836 work *The Effects of Bloodletting on Inflammatory Diseases* decried bloodletting, noting that the practice “was frequently harming and even killing patients... on both sides of the Atlantic.”⁵²¹ However, many physicians continued to utilize and advocate bloodletting and purging, even arguing that “up to four-fifths of the blood could safely be removed from the body.”⁵²² After Matilda Mitcham underwent likely repeated bloodletting and purging sessions, she continued to express symptoms of insanity. The rotation of bloodletting and purging meant that Matilda was bled several ounces of blood and then

⁵²⁰ Henry Crawford Bailey (1826-1909). 1870 Census notes him as a “Doctor of Medicine” with personal estate worth \$1500: Year: 1870; Census Place: Americus, Sumter, Georgia; Roll: M593_174; Page: 299B; Image: 341904; Family History Library Film: 545673 ; Wilborn Harris Bailey (1828-1905): 1870 census notes him as “Physician + Farmer” with personal estate worth \$725: Year: 1870; Census Place: Militia District 884, Sumter, Georgia; Roll: M593_174; Page: 331B; Image: 344458; Family History Library Film: 545673 ; Information about these two brothers can be found at The Family Group Sheet Project, Henry Crawford Bailey Family #2, accessed January 1, 2016, <http://www.fgs-project.com/georgia/groups/b/bailey-henry-crawford-2.txt>.

⁵²¹ William C. Dowling, “Boston in the Time of Cholera,” *The New England Quarterly* (June 2015), 317.

⁵²² Dowling, “Boston in the Time of Cholera,” 318.

given a purgative, which prompted vomiting. The combination of the two could continue for more than a week and even over several months.⁵²³ The belief underlying bloodletting and purging was that “disorder of the spirits” was so present in the body that “it will be proper first to lessen their quantity by bleeding and purging”; the abundance of “vicious humours” would be “relieve[d] or remove[d], and thus “*bleeding* and *purging* are both requisite in the cure for madness.”⁵²⁴ The long-lasting trends of bloodletting and purging in the U.S. South continued through the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth century, to engage young women such as Matilda Mitcham on the eve of the U.S. Civil War. Ultimately, her family made the decision to admit her to the state lunatic asylum for further, more significant treatment by mid-nineteenth century mental health professionals.

The Georgia Lunatic Asylum did not preserve their daily medical treatment records for patients during much of the nineteenth century. Thus, it is unclear what Matilda encountered and experienced in terms of medical treatment while at the institution. She may have underwent further bleeding and purging as well as restorative efforts to calm and ease her body and mind; her medical treatment within the asylum is unknown. Whatever the case, in the view of her physicians, Matilda improved rapidly: she was discharged in sixty-six days in early February 1861.⁵²⁵ In these few months, she appeared sane enough for a discharge, but the nation outside of the asylum had fallen into crisis and chaos. South Carolina led the secessionist charge in December 1860, followed by Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana in January and February 1861.

⁵²³ Allan Ingram, *The Madhouse of Language: Writing and Reading Madness in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Routledge: 1991), 21.

⁵²⁴ Ingram, *The Madhouse of Language*, 22, 24.

⁵²⁵ Matilda Mitcham, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 9-10.

The state of Texas seceded the day before Matilda left the state lunatic asylum. On a more local level, Matilda returned to her four children in Sumter County, Georgia: Rebecca (b. 1854), James (b. 1855), Melissa (b. 1857), and James William Brown (b. 1860), who survived the first few months of life without his mother. After Matilda's return in February 1861, she and her husband did not cease sexual intercourse, pregnancy, or childbirth. She soon had a son, Elijah, in 1862 during the war.⁵²⁶ Her husband William served in Co. G and F. of the 64th Regiment, Georgia Infantry, which spent some time fighting in Florida before joining most of the Confederate forces around Petersburg, Virginia during 1864.⁵²⁷ The couple appears to have seen each other in 1864 or early 1865, as a daughter, Alice, was born in 1865. They then had Nathaniel in 1866 and another daughter, Lou E. or Louella, in 1867. Around the birth of this final daughter, the Mitcham family removed from Sumter County, Georgia and traversed across country to Rankin County, Mississippi, where they were situated when the census enumerator came in 1870.⁵²⁸

It is impossible to tell if Matilda continued to experience what we today might call post-partum depression or psychosis, but she certainly had been recorded as her mind becoming "rather worse... after the birth of each child" in early 1860.⁵²⁹ Yet the Mitcham pair had not slowed their procreation: Matilda had another three children in the 1850s and then five children during the 1860s. They further did not feel tied to Sumter County or Georgia; their remove to Rankin County, Mississippi paralleled many U.S. Southerners

⁵²⁶ Year: 1870; Census Place: Township 6, Rankin, Mississippi; Roll: M593_748; Page: 111A; Image: 51704; Family History Library Film: 552247.

⁵²⁷ National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, online <<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>>, acquired 2007. ; Historical Data Systems, comp. *U.S., U.S. Civil War Regiments, 1861-1866* [database online]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 1999.

⁵²⁸ Year: 1870; Census Place: Township 6, Rankin, Mississippi; Roll: M593_748; Page: 111A; Image: 51704; Family History Library Film: 552247.

⁵²⁹ Matilda Mitcham, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 9-10.

who traversed post-war further west. Although Matilda had been raising concern for many years, no real stigma seemed to follow her. Matilda is not marked in any federal census as “insane,” and because she was always home when the census was taken, she never appears in a census at the state lunatic asylum. She and her husband did not feel so hampered by her brief stay at the state lunatic asylum or physician’s commentary as to cease procreation or limit stressful travel. On the 1870 U.S. Federal Census, there is nothing to suggest that Matilda Mitcham was anything but an ordinary white woman in the U.S. South, long married, with many children, married to a white man who survived war and farmed the earth. Yet this federal record is one of the last in which Matilda appears, and her story, already deviant from the expected norm of the 1860s, changes course even further.

When the census enumerator returned to the Mitcham household in 1880 in Rankin County, Mississippi, he met a new Mrs. Mitcham – the former Carrie Petty, a twenty-seven year-old who William had married in July 1875.⁵³⁰ On their marriage day, she was a youthful twenty-two, while her husband, U.S. Civil War veteran and planter, was fifty years old. Thus, by 1880, by unknown cause, Matilda had died, leaving behind too many children for William to care for alone and an noticeably empty place in his bed. Matilda appears to have died sometime in her early forties during the early 1870s, with her last child, Louella, born in 1867. The 1880 U.S. Federal Census apparently includes the first child of Carrie’s in the household: a daughter, Aimee, whose birth-year has proven incredibly difficult to discern. The maternal divergence between Matilda and Carrie is noted in the “Birthplace of Mother” column: while Louella’s is blank for an

⁵³⁰ Hunting For Bears, comp.. *Mississippi Marriages, 1776-1935* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2004.

unknown reason, beginning with Aimee, the column is filled with “Texas,” where Carrie was born. Ignoring the profound age gap of almost thirty years, William and Carrie had immediately starting their own family around their 1875 marriage. By June 1880, they had four new young children in the home: Aimee, (b. circa. 1874) Marion (b. 1876), Dewitt (b. 1878), and an unnamed infant daughter.⁵³¹

However, Matilda’s exact death has proven truly difficult to determine. Although according to their marriage record, William and Carrie entered into marriage in July 1875, the birth-date of their first child Aimee varies across numerous records. Aimee’s gravestone in Jones County, Mississippi, claims that she was born on December 3, 1872.⁵³² Her death certificate in Mobile, Alabama noted that she was ninety-six when she died in April 1969, which suggests that her birth-date was somewhere in 1873.⁵³³ And the Social Security Death Index asserts that she was born on December 3, 1874.⁵³⁴ The ambiguity and confusion about Aimee’s birth-date makes it difficult to discern precisely when Matilda died, as William likely would have only started to sexually engage Carrie after her death. Nevertheless, Matilda had certainly passed away by 1875 when William formally entered into marriage with Carrie. Matilda’s final child appears to have been Louella in 1867, though it is unclear if she had additional children who did not survive infancy or childhood after this date. By his death in 1895, William Mitcham had eventually helped conceive at least sixteen children: eight with Matilda in the 1850s and 1860s, and another eight with Carrie in the 1870s and 1880s.⁵³⁵ He produced his final

⁵³¹ Year: 1880; Census Place: Pelahatchie, Rankin, Mississippi; Roll: 663; Family History Film: 1254663; Page: 414B; Enumeration District: 077; Image: 0451.

⁵³² Aimee Mitchum Beatty is buried at Hickory Grove Cemetery in Jones County, Mississippi.

⁵³³ Ancestry.com. *Alabama, Deaths and Burials Index, 1881-1974* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

⁵³⁴ Number: 423-68-2019; Issue State: Alabama; Issue Date: 1965.

⁵³⁵ *Probate Records*; Author: Rankin County (Mississippi). Chancery Clerk; Probate Place: Rankin,

child with Carrie around the age of sixty, when she was thirty-seven.⁵³⁶ William L. Mitcham wanted progeny, and he did so with two different women across four decades. His descendants would survive world wars as well as the rise and fall of Jim Crow segregation. Aimee, his first child with his second wife, died three months before Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landed the lunar module on the Moon.

In some ways, we have little information about Matilda Mitcham's life and death. Her Georgia Lunatic Asylum admission entry reveals Matilda had struggled throughout her life with violent outbursts, what were perhaps even manic episodes. Although none could determine the cause or origin of her mental disturbance, Matilda seems quietly marked as a troubled woman. Yet she remained married, she continued to produce children, and she went through the world with only two months of institutionalization. Records demonstrate she had become "violently insane a few days after the birth" of her fourth child, and she also routinely became "rather worse... after the birth of each child." The asylum record establishes that her husband William had noticed that "in 1853, one week after her marriage, she was found to be insane," and although "she appeared to have recovered... her husband does not think she has been entirely well since." William himself provided his observations to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum seven years and four children later in November 1860. The comments made about Matilda's medical history were her husband's self-reporting to the state lunatic asylum. He knew of her mental disturbance, and he neither separated or divorced her, nor did he institutionalize her for life. He continued his life with Matilda in the ways that he expected when they married in 1853: she was to be his wife and the mother of his children. In turn, Matilda's world

Mississippi.

⁵³⁶ Year: 1900; Census Place: *Pelahatchie, Rankin, Mississippi*; Roll: 826; Page: 2A; Enumeration District: 0083; FHL microfilm: 1240826.

centered on William and their children: his actions made her a wife, a mother, an asylum patient, and westward migrant. She may have consented to all or none of these; her own commentary has not survived the ages. Her brief appearances in the historical record are bolstered and changed by the inclusion of her state lunatic asylum admission entry in her life story. Matilda becomes more complex; her few years of existence as a woman, wife, mother, and migrant appear markedly different knowing that she struggled throughout her life as her female sex and physical form, mind and all, complicated her opportunities and survival.⁵³⁷

During the mid-nineteenth century, countless white women in the U.S. South experienced mental illness, both transitory and chronic, many in connection with pregnancy and childbirth. Recent studies regarding women's mental health during pregnancy indicate that "up to 20% of women suffer from mood or anxiety disorders during pregnancy." Similarly, women with bipolar disorder experience "high rates of relapse," with one study suggesting that around 70% of the women "experienced at least one mood episode."⁵³⁸ Early twentieth century research into bipolar disorder in women found that "bipolar recurrences occur in 45 to 50% of pregnancies" and "the risk of recurrence is 20% to 50% in women post-partum." Additionally, women often have their "first-time hospitalization for bipolar illness" after giving birth: they are seven times more likely to do so than women who have not given birth. Women with bipolar disorder have been found to have an increased risk of post-partum psychosis: "It begins within 2 weeks of childbirth with symptoms of mood disturbance, confusion, delusional thinking,

⁵³⁷ Matilda Mitcham, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 9-10.

⁵³⁸ Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Women's Mental Health, "Psychiatric Disorders During Pregnancy," 2015, accessed January 1, 2016, <https://womensmentalhealth.org/specialty-clinics/psychiatric-disorders-during-pregnancy/>.

hallucinations, poor concentration, and impaired judgment/insight.” Medical scholars explain “this is a psychiatric emergency that requires complete screening for thoughts of harming self or others (possible increased risk of suicide and infanticide) and necessitates immediate treatment in a hospital setting with anti-manic agent or antipsychotic agent or ECT [Electroconvulsive Therapy].”⁵³⁹ Although much of the medical and cultural conversation in the twenty-first century focuses on “management” of mental disorders during pregnancy, frequently through medication, the mid-nineteenth century had little similar discussion. Instead, an unknown but significant number of white U.S. Southern women, who were predisposed to mental health disturbances, experienced pregnancy and childbirth with little change to medical intervention. Some may have been bled or purged, as with Matilda Mitcham, but the ultimate mediation was institutionalization. When such white women began exhibiting violence, melancholy, or erratic behavior, their family turned to the state lunatic asylum for much needed medical intervention.

Many women of the 1860s experienced the unsettling consequences of pregnancy and childbirth on their body and mind. Although this study is limited by the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylum sources, which includes nearly only white women, we can certainly assume that enslaved and freed women of color in these two states encountered difficulties in their physical and mental health around motherhood. Unfortunately, the study of these two institutions are hampered by their own structural racism that denied black women’s entry into the asylums, let alone the acknowledgement of their mental and physical suffering. However, not all white Georgians and South Carolinians were long-time Americans and descendants of American Revolutionary War

⁵³⁹ See Dorothy Sit, “Women and Bipolar Disorder Across the Life Span,” *Journal of the American Medical Women’s Association* 2004 Spring, 59 (2), 91-100.

soldiers. Instead, both institutions expected newly arrived immigrants to enter the state lunatic asylums, as indicated by the inclusion of the column “Place of Nativity” in the South Carolina ledger-book. While these two U.S. Southern states did attract immigrants in the antebellum period, their experience is often subsumed in the wildness and terror of war and Reconstruction during the 1860s. In one exceptional case, a German immigrant, Helena Mensing, appears clearly through the turbulent storm of the post-war period to show that recent European immigrants also experienced personal and familial upheaval around issues of mental health and motherhood.

In September 1868, when Helena Mensing first appeared at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, she was thirty-nine years old and was described as the wife of a grocer. She and her husband, Conrad Mensing, resided in Charleston, a marked distance away from Columbia, the capital city. Her arrival at the state lunatic asylum was deliberate and due to her family’s concern as well as local physicians in Charleston.⁵⁴⁰ Unlike many patients at the asylum, Helena received an admission line in the ledger book and additionally what archivists now call “Physician Records,” a template form document that asylum doctors filled out upon interacting with a patient. Unfortunately for later scholars, the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum did not fill out these forms with immense care and attention, leaving many questions blank and others only partially answered. For Helena, the asylum physician simply scrawled, “Yes,” under the question if the patient had received previous medical treatment before being institutionalized. Although we have no further than this one short word, the assumption should be that Helena had

⁵⁴⁰ Helena Mensing, #1641, South Carolina Lunatic Asylum Admissions Books, 1828-1947, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina (hereafter SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947).

already interacted with local physicians, and the next medical intervention was the most significant option that the state had to offer: the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum.⁵⁴¹

Helena Mensing came to the lunatic asylum because she was suffering from “puerperal mania” – the mid-nineteenth century medical term for what we might now refer to as post-partum depression and/or psychosis. The simplicity of South Carolina’s admission book does not allow for any real extensive detail to her case. Her cause of insanity was listed only as “puerperal” in nature, though it was further clarified as “puerperal mania” in her Physician Records / Medical History. She was admitted as a pay patient, with her husband Conrad supporting her admission both financially and emotionally. The History form requested “HOW LONG MARRIED,” which Helena gave as “12 yrs.” Her education was “Liberal,” her occupation was “merchants wife,” and her religious denomination was “Lutheran.” Helena and Conrad had only one living child, marked as “1” under “No. OF CHILDREN.” When she presented to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum physicians, they found her “cheerful” in her “natural disposition” – not melancholy – and “industrious, quiet, quarrelsome” as her “usual habits.” While they noted Helena had a “good constitution,” they also described “weakness” and “headache” as “bodily ailments” that Helena had been “subject to.” Yet Helena’s arrival had little to do with her natural disposition, usual habits, or everyday constitution. She had come to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum as a woman struggling with her female sex and the physical duties required of women across the world in creating new human life.⁵⁴²

⁵⁴¹ Helena Mensing, South Carolina Lunatic Asylum Physicians’ Record, 1860-1874, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, South Carolina (hereafter SCLA Physicians’ Records, 1860-1874).

⁵⁴² Helena Mensing, SCLA Physicians’ Records, 1860-1874.

Based on family and local medical observations, Helena was marked as insane for the previous nine months. Her Physician Record – which was taken at an unknown time, possibly at her admission or on a subsequent date – validates the assertion of “nine months” for her length of insanity: this document claims she was unwell for “9 months” and for “one week very much excited.” Unfortunately due to a combination of limited space and medical short-hand, the intriguing dual questions of “If Patient is Female, be particular in stating any irregularity or obstruction” and the follow-up “Did the present attack occur in child-birth, or during pregnancy, nursing, or any nervous excitement?” invited a simultaneously enlightening and confusing response. The exact answer penned reads: “Since her confinement in Jany [January] regular discharge but about two months since says she is pregnant 2 months, child 8 mths stillborn.” An additional sentence compounds the timeline confusion: Her mental health concerns had started “during her confinement after childbirth.” The fluidity of the physicians’ writings makes it unclear what Helena Mensing had experienced earlier in the year 1868. She appears to have been confined in January 1868 – a nineteenth century term indicating that she began bed-rest and remained at home upon discovering that she was pregnant. After a short time pregnant, Helena seems to have had a miscarriage at eight weeks, giving birth to what local doctors in 1868 termed “child 8 mths still born.” Her subsequent “puerperal mania” was attributed to this March 1868 incident, which they back-dated to January 1868, when Helena was first confined to bed and house. Although the records do not indicate the meaning of the phrase, the question regarding her present attack, if it appears “at stated or uncertain periods, or to be increasing, declining, or stationary,” the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum elegantly and curtly penned: “Growing worse –.”⁵⁴³

⁵⁴³ Helena Mensing, SCLA Physicians’ Records, 1860-1874.

Unlike Matilda, who seemed especially violent and erratic, which likely led to her asylum admissions, Helena appears more physically restless and disoriented. The physicians explained that she was experiencing delusions where she “talks about her servt [servant] with no cause.”⁵⁴⁴ In 1860, the Mensing family did have a domestic servant boarding with them in Charleston: a twenty-year-old German immigrant woman, Augusta Clare, who was from Hanover, like Conrad and Helena.⁵⁴⁵ Helena may have become fixated on Augusta, which escalated to the point of delusion and obsession. The limited information does not allow for great speculation on the situation, but Augusta’s experience must have been highly isolating and disturbing. Beyond delusional preoccupation with her servant, Helena had spoken about “suicide but never tried it.” Furthermore, she had not tried to injure or had injured anyone – “only her husband” – which certainly helped transfer Helena out of their Charleston home and into the state lunatic asylum in Columbia. The document contained only these few descriptions of Helena’s behavior and condition, and we are left with very little else to recreate the world in which she lived and endured.⁵⁴⁶

As the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum – like Georgia – did not preserve daily medical treatment for its patients, it is unclear what medical intervention Helena Mensing encountered during her residence at the institution. She left after a short time like many wealthier white people in the early Reconstruction era, especially women who may have been more needed at home, leading to their early discharge or removal. Her departure came after only four months of treatment at the state lunatic asylum. Although Helena

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Charleston Ward 4, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: M653_1216; Page: 352; Family History Library Film: 805216.

⁵⁴⁶ Helena Mensing, SCLA Physicians’ Records, 1860-1874.

presents an interesting case for the mid-1860s regarding the role of motherhood in the lives of diverse U.S. Southern women, her story seems incomplete without deeper investigation into her life in Charleston before and after her institutionalization.

Fortunately, due to her husband's mercantile business and the family's immigration from Germany, further records survive to flesh out their distinctive lives in the city that fought for the Confederacy secede from the United States.

Long before to her September 1868 admission to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, the Mensing family can be found residing in the urban center of Charleston. Helena's husband Conrad worked as a clerk at the "Welch & Eason Grocers" business located 187 Meeting Street, a step away from the famous Charleston City Market at 188 Meeting Street and the port of Charleston itself on the edge of the city.⁵⁴⁷ By the U.S. Civil War, the Charleston City Market had become a "special Charleston tradition," with its origins in the eighteenth century and its commercial spaces filled with all walks of life, black and white, rich and poor.⁵⁴⁸ Helena and her husband benefited from the vast commercial trade happening down the street from his own business. In 1860, the thirty-one-year-old Conrad worked as a "grocer," and the family boasted a servant, a twenty-year-old woman. Conrad, Helena, and the servant, Augusta, were all born in Hanover, Germany, but Conrad and Helena's first child, Henrietta, had been born in South Carolina. Unfortunately, this child does not seem to have survived childhood, as she vanishes from the census record after her brief appearance in 1860.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁷ *A Directory for the City of Charleston* (Charleston, South Carolina: J. H. Bagget, 1852), 86.

⁵⁴⁸ Charleston City Market, *History of the Charleston City Market*, accessed January 1, 2016, <http://www.thecharlestoncitymarket.com/main/history>.

⁵⁴⁹ Year: 1860; Census Place: Charleston Ward 4, Charleston, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1216; Page: 352; Family History Library Film: 805216.

By spring 1865, Conrad and Helena had survived the U.S. Civil War, avoiding death in battle and bombardment in Charleston. On April 16, 1867, Conrad applied for a passport, leaving a significant legacy behind for future scholars. His provided information to the freshly war-torn United States provides a window into the Mensing family. He claimed to have been born in Sanybadt, Hanover on February 9, 1829. He was described as “5’6, medium forehead, blue eyes, straight nose, average mouth, round chin, light brown hair, blonde complexion, round face.” He wrote a sworn statement on his passport: “I, Conrad Mensing, do swear... that I am a naturalized and loyal citizen of the United States; and about to travel with my wife Helena aged 37 years and my sons Henry + Edward “5 and 1” respectively.”⁵⁵⁰ Notably, by January 1868, the couple appeared to have returned to Charleston, when Helena was confined to bedrest during pregnancy. By September 1868, she would only claim one child living. The 1870 and 1880 U.S. Federal Censuses both confirmed that this surviving son was their eldest son, Henry.⁵⁵¹ Assorted pieces of evidence suggest that Helena and Conrad repeatedly lost children through their marriage, with Henrietta, Edward, and a third unnamed child all dying long before adulthood.

Yet the Mensing family survived the 1860s, including secession, siege, emancipation, and defeat. In 1870, Conrad, allegedly forty-year-old, still worked as a grocer. He claimed \$3000 in real estate and \$2000 in personal estate, an enormous improvement from 1860, when he claimed neither. Considering the tumult of war and the

⁵⁵⁰ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington D.C.; NARA Series: *Passport Applications, 1795-1905*; Roll #: 147; Volume #: *Roll 147 - 12 Apr 1867-30 Apr 1867*.

⁵⁵¹ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Charleston Ward 4, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *M593_1486*; Page: *245B*; Image: *369330*; Family History Library Film: *552985* ; Year: 1880; Census Place: *Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *1222*; Family History Film: *1255222*; Page: *271B*; Enumeration District: *065*.

ensuing dual crisis of emancipation and defeat, the financial success of the Mensing family is quite impressive. Helena had only one son to care for, her young nine-year-old son Henry, but her house had other residents. She and Conrad housed Henry Sletting, an eighteen-year-old grocer who worked for Conrad, and Lizzie Mailes, a domestic servant. Conrad, Helena, and Henry Sletting were all born in Germany, or what they referred to as Prussia. The young Henry and Lizzie were both born in South Carolina and clearly benefiting from the success of these German immigrants in the Reconstruction period.⁵⁵²

Although Helena would not be institutionalized again in the 1870s, she apparently grew ill through the decade, enough that by the 1880 U.S. Federal Census, the Mensing family were both more blunt and truthful with the enumerator. In a rare decision, Helena was declared to be insane on both the traditional 1880 U.S. Federal Census and the 1880 U.S. Federal Census for Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes. Thee 1880 U.S. Federal Census merely requested that families indicate a relative was insane, leaving the enumerator to mark as such on the column. On this document, Conrad, age fifty, ever a grocer, lived with Helena, also age fifty, and their only surviving son, Henry, now eighteen, working alongside his father as a “clerk in a wholesale grocery.” Besides the small pen scratch indicating Helena was insane, the only additional information on the 1880 U.S. Federal Census for the Mensing family was that Henry was the only one born in South Carolina, as his parents were both from Hanover, Germany. The unchanging truth of their lineage finally confronted the similar truth that Helena had been mentally unwell for some time.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵² Year: 1870; Census Place: *Charleston Ward 4, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *M593_1486*; Page: *245B*; Image: *369330*; Family History Library Film: *552985*.

⁵⁵³ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *1222*; Family History Film: *1255222*; Page: *271B*; Enumeration District: *065*.

The 1880 U.S Federal Census and Supplemental Schedules, Nos. 1 to 7, for the Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes included lists of deaf-mutes, insane, blind, and idiots. Helena Mensing was carefully placed under the “Insane Inhabitants of Charleston; in the County of Charleston, State of South Carolina.” Although the census only asked if Helena was an inmate in an institution, the enumerator instead wrote, “At home,” meaning Helena had been and was still residing with her husband and son in Charleston rather than in Columbia at the state asylum. Under “Form of Disease,” the tight black pen swirled out, “Loquacious,” which was an unusual term to include considering few physicians of the period believed it a formal disorder. Still, the word itself suggests that Helena was excessively talkative in 1880, which seems similar to what was indicated on her Physician Records / Medical History form in 1868. The marked duration of “present attack” was “10 years” – an underestimate if Helena’s mental health trouble had begun in early 1868 – but a close generalized estimate nonetheless. In a highly revealing series of questions, the enumerator asked the Mensing household if Helena was “usually or often kept in a cell or other apartment under lock and key, either by day or at night,” and received the answer, “No.” Similarly, the subsequent question about if she was “usually or often restrained by any mechanical appliance, such as a strap, strait-jacket, &c,” was also answered negatively. Although Helena was long-suffering in her mental illness, whatever it was, her family did not feel that she needed to be locked away, physically restrained, or sent far away to Columbia for cure or death.⁵⁵⁴

In a fascinating final comment about Helena’s life experience, the 1880 U.S. Federal Census and Supplemental Schedule asked if she had “ever been an inmate of any

⁵⁵⁴ South Carolina Department of History and Archives; Columbia, South Carolina; *U.S. Federal Census - 1880 Schedules of Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes*; Year: 1880; Roll: 2.

hospital or asylum for the insane,” and the Mensing family answered positively, noting she had been at the asylum in “Columbia S.Ca.” for a length of “4 months.” They were either not asked or did not respond to the subsequent question about when she was discharged from the asylum. Although Helena Mensing apparently struggled for over a decade with “loquacious” behavior and “puerperal mania,” she was never institutionalized beyond those four months. The stigma of her 1868 admission did not follow her into the 1870 census, but somehow, something had changed enough, that she was marked in the 1880 census as insane, to the point of her inclusion in the supplementary census with its additional questions about her mental state and her treatment at home by her family.⁵⁵⁵

Unfortunately, these dual 1880 U.S. Federal Censuses are currently the last known documents marking the Mensing family’s experience in Charleston and the U.S. South. Due to the 1921 disastrous fire which destroyed the 1890 census, we cannot follow them across the following decade. It seems that by 1900, Conrad and Helena Mensing had vanished: either deceased or returned back to Hanover, Germany, though indications would suggest the former. By 1900, their only surviving child, Henry, would have been nearly forty, likely with his own family, yet research has yet to discover his place in the world – bachelor or husband or widower. One wonders how far into his father’s footsteps he followed: Did Conrad die first, leaving Henry to care for his unwell mother? Or did Helena die before the men, leaving them to run their grocery business at the turn of the twentieth century without worry about their beloved yet ill lady at home? Further documents may in time reveal the next stage of the life stories of the Mensing

⁵⁵⁵ South Carolina Department of History and Archives; Columbia, South Carolina; *U.S. Federal Census - 1880 Schedules of Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes*; Year: 1880; Roll: 2.

family, but for now their case closes in 1880, when Helena was finally identified publicly and officially as insane.

As the stories of Matilda and Helena show, the physical experience of being sexed and the frequent action of sexual intercourse often intertwine in the lives and deaths of U.S. Southerners during the 1860s. As female-bodied people, these two experienced menstruation, and both went through multiple pregnancies and births. Both lost multiple children, either as still-births, infants, or young children. They did so in a strikingly turbulent time period: Matilda and Helena survived not only the struggles derived from their female bodies but the broader context that they lived in, which was roiled in war and political tension. The state lunatic asylums of Georgia and South Carolina encountered these two women in several of their darkest moments, and the physicians in those institutions viewed them as women, wives, and mothers regardless of the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction. State asylum physicians similarly regarded certain men as male-bodied and weak in the ways that men especially could be: a significant number of men entered U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums under the causes of hyper-sexuality and “masturbation” as leading to insanity.

Sexual Assault in the Family: *Charles Kilgore and Julius J. Hollemon*

Two white male patients and their families provide intriguing insight into the preoccupation of the Georgia and South Lunatic Asylums in regards to deviant male sexuality and insanity: Charles Kilgore of Walton County, Georgia, and Julius J. Hollemon of the now non-existent Campbell County, Georgia. Although both of these men originated in Georgia, many U.S. states routinely accepted male patients under the

cause of insanity of “masturbation.” Some scholars argue that nineteenth century medical professionals “supported that sexual sins – masturbation, incest, consanguineous marriages, and overindulgence – were at once causes and effects of hereditary disabilities.”⁵⁵⁶ Twenty-first century historians and physicians discuss “the solitary vice” as “the superstition that masturbation could cause mental illness” and “sex as a threat to health and sanity.” The mid-nineteenth century medical cures for “masturbational insanity” could include circumcision and even clitoridectomies, the removal of the clitoris.⁵⁵⁷ However, due to the limited nature of the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylum records, there is no evidence given about what the treatment for male or female patients admitted under the cause of masturbation. Yet Charles and Julius arrived and were treated for excessive self-sexuality.

During the 1860s, South Carolina admitted eight men whose causes of insanity were explicitly marked as due to masturbation, whereas Georgia, which included more information in its admissions, accepted twenty men (one twice) and one woman for “masturbation.” In the mid-nineteenth century, the Georgia and South Carolina asylum staff perceived masturbation as a cause of insanity rather than a separate symptom of a mental disorder. In contrast, in the early twenty-first century, most doctors believe that masturbation and other signs of hypersexuality indicate specific mental disorders in turn, such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. Modern Americans struggling with bipolar disorder claim hypersexuality “is often the most destructive and challenging part of bipolar disorder – troubling families of young children suffering from juvenile

⁵⁵⁶ Margaret A. Winzer, *The History of Special Education: From Isolation to Integration* (Washington D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1993), 156.

⁵⁵⁷ James Whorton, “The Solitary Vice: The Superstition that Masturbation Could Cause Mental Illness,” *Western Journal of Medicine* 2001 (175:1), 66-68.

hypersexuality, ruining marriages, generating life-threatening health problems.”⁵⁵⁸

Excessive and inappropriate sexuality “during depression and mania were observed centuries ago,” and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-III and DSM-IV) contain these as diagnostic criteria. However, even the most recent twenty-first century research is extremely limited on the issue hypersexuality and mania, let alone during the political turmoil of the mid-nineteenth century.⁵⁵⁹ For Charles and Julius, their lives would forever be altered because of their public and excessive sexuality as both frequently attempted forcible sexual intercourse with female family members, enslaved women, and female strangers.

In July 1865, the state of Georgia was several months removed from defeat in the U.S. Civil War and some time into full occupation by federal military authority. For the Kilgore family, the experience of civil war had been an absolute disappointment. In January 1861, Willis Kilgore Sr. had been elected as one of three Walton County delegates to the Georgia Secession Convention; unlike his two counterparts, he had initially opposed secession when he cast his first vote, but once the motion carried, he – like many others – changed his vote for near unanimous signing of the Georgia Ordinance of Secession (only six of the 293 delegates did not sign).⁵⁶⁰ Willis Kilgore Sr. had been well known and reputed in Walton County for decades: he was the county sheriff from 1845-1848 and had been elected to represent the county to the Georgia

⁵⁵⁸ Sara Solovitch, “Opening the Door on Hypersexuality,” BPHOPE, May 2009, accessed January 1, 2016, <http://www.bphope.com/opening-the-door-on-hypersexuality/>.

⁵⁵⁹ Frederick K. Goodwin and Kay Redfield Jamison, *Manic-Depressive Illness: Bipolar Disorders and Recurrent Depression*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 348-349.

⁵⁶⁰ See *Journal of the Public and Secret Proceedings of the Convention of the People of Georgia* (Milledgeville, Georgia: Boughton Nisbet & Barnes, 1861) for the full Georgia secession discussion, votes, and signatures.

House of Representatives during the same period.⁵⁶¹ In 1850, he claimed \$10,000 in real estate and celebrated a large family, including a wife of nearly two decades, five daughters, and three sons, including his eldest son, twelve-year-old Charles.⁵⁶² He also listed owning ten enslaved people, five men and five women.⁵⁶³ By all measures, Willis Kilgore Sr. appears to be one of the ideal white patriarchs of the antebellum U.S. South: a triumphant slave-holder, politician, and civil servant with a large family, farmland, and ambitions.

The following decade continued be kind to Willis Kilgore Sr.: by 1860, he boasted \$8,000 in real estate and an impressive \$27,500 in personal estate, mostly in the form of enslaved African-Americans.⁵⁶⁴ He had increased his numbers from ten enslaved laborers to twenty-six, likely some gains from natural procreation but Willis clearly bought more African-American people using the interstate slave trade that had become so prominent during the 1850s.⁵⁶⁵ With thirteen men and thirteen women, Willis maintained gender parity, though it is impossible to tell if he had done so intentionally. By 1860, Willis had either given or helped his twenty-two-year-old son Charles purchase two enslaved men, a sixteen-year-old and a ten-year-old.⁵⁶⁶ The Kilgore men had a thriving business in Walton County in the form of “a saw mill and grist mill nearby powered by a dam on the Apalachee River only a few yards downstream from the bridge” which later

⁵⁶¹ United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “Kilgore’s Mill Covered Bridge and Mill,” April 14 1975, accessed January, 1 2016, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/76ac959d-d459-4a5a-875b-85dd665d8257?branding=NRHP>.

⁵⁶² Year: 1850; Census Place: Division 88, Walton, Georgia; Roll: M432_86; Page: 3A; Image: 13.

⁵⁶³ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*.

Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. M432, 1,009 rolls.

⁵⁶⁴ Year: 1860; Census Place: Northern Division, Walton, Georgia; Roll: M653_139; Page: 1046; Family History Library Film: 803139.

⁵⁶⁵ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

⁵⁶⁶ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

became a National Registered Historical Place. Although the mills would be demolished sometime before the 1920s, “the area together with the bridge became known as Kilgore’s Mill.” The land would remain in the Kilgore family “for over 75 years” – from 1833, when the land was deeded to Wills Kilgore, Sr. to allegedly around 1908 – perhaps around the death of Willis’s second wife, whose inheritors may have sold the property to someone outside the family.⁵⁶⁷

The two Kilgore men appear beside one another on the 1860 U.S. Federal Agricultural Schedule, suggesting that Willis had provided his eldest son a portion of his land and mill business to assist the young man’s burgeoning success in life. While Willis claimed 380 improved and 1105 unimproved acres of land, Charles listed 75 improved and 525 unimproved acres of farmland. Where Willis’s land was valued at \$8000, Charles declared that his was worth \$2700. As expected, the Kilgore patriarch had more farm equipment, asses/mules, milk cows, working oxen, sheep, swine, and other livestock, but Charles clearly had the initial foundation for a successful farm and business venture. Diverging from the Cotton Kings, the Kilgore pair mainly grew wheat, Indian corn, and oats with only a small production of cotton and wool.⁵⁶⁸ Their financial success lay in the production from saw and grist mill, which appears to have been aided significantly by enslaved laborers. For the most part, the Kilgore men’s journey to monetary and political power during the antebellum era, succeeding together as father and eldest son, appears quite both ideal and expected for prominent white families of the U.S. South.

⁵⁶⁷ United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “Kilgore’s Mill Covered Bridge and Mill,” April 14 1975, accessed January, 1 2016, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/76ac959d-d459-4a5a-875b-85dd665d8257?branding=NRHP>.

⁵⁶⁸ Census Year: 1860; Census Place: *Northern, Walton, Georgia*; Archive Collection Number: *T1137*; Roll: *T1137:6*; Page: *31*; Line: *25*; Schedule Type: *Agriculture*.

Yet the U.S. Civil War had occurred and interrupted countless dreams of slavery, money, and white supremacy that both Willis Kilgore Sr. and Charles Kilgore had anticipated. Although it is difficult to confirm, it appears that Charles served in the war, as most young white men of influence and means did, defending their father's past and their own futures. He served in Company A of Cobb's Legion as a private.⁵⁶⁹ Cobb's Legion was organized in early August, and Charles' enlistment came on September 10, 1861. Charles was "listed as badly wounded on Wofford's casualty list printed in the *Southern Banner* newspaper of 12 August 1863" after the Battle of Gettysburg, where Cobb's Legion particularly saw fighting on the first day of the three day battle. Towards the end of that day, July 2, 1863, the regiment was "assailed there by a strong body of fresh troops and receiving at the same moment an order to withdraw the Brigade fell back at sunset to the grove west of the Wheatfield."⁵⁷⁰ Over a month later, Charles was still languishing at the Camp Winder Hospital in Richmond, Virginia, where many Confederate wounded had been taken in the aftermath of Gettysburg. Although it appears that he rejoined his company after this significant yet undisclosed wound, Charles Kilgore "went absent without leave as of 19 December 1864."⁵⁷¹

We know through the Georgia Lunatic Asylum that Charles survived the closure of the war in the spring of 1865, as he next appears as an admitted "lunatic of and from Walton County Geo" on July 27, 1865 to the state institution. He was described as "28 years of age," "Single," and a "Farmer." The length of Charles' insanity, as described by

⁵⁶⁹ National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, online <<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>>, acquired 2007.

⁵⁷⁰ A Historic Marker at the Battle of Gettysburg for Hampton's Cavalry Brigade details the troop movements that Cobb's Legion took during the battle. A transcription can be found online: <http://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-headquarters/hamptons-cavalry-brigade/>

⁵⁷¹ John W. Busey and Travis W. Busey, *Confederate Casualties at Gettysburg* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., 2017), 526.

the lunatic asylum physicians, transforms the predicted story of success about the antebellum Kilgore patriarchy. The admission entry asserted: “Duration of insanity in the present attack two years or more. Has had repeated attacks within the past twelve years, but at different times, has appeared to be well for some months, but would relapse after 2, 3, 5 on one occasion, 8 months in the same condition again.” The startling realization that Charles had been suffering with mental health issues long before the U.S. Civil War is only compounded by the further understanding that Charles easily and eagerly entered into the Confederate service as a mentally unwell man. Certainly, as the Georgia Lunatic Asylum’s records prove, many white men served in the Confederacy as soldiers, officers, and medical staff, even though they were considered “weak-minded,” had been treated for insanity, or relapsed while in service. Charles appears to join the ranks of these men, previously diagnosed as insane, but not to the extent that they could not be given a weapon and sent into the battlefield. The “present attack two years or more” may indicate that the wound that Charles received at the Battle of Gettysburg aggravated his previously existing mental health troubles – or that once at the Winder Hospital in Richmond, his symptoms became more noticeable. Regardless, Charles survived the war to this July 1865 admission, and yet the state lunatic asylum did not believe the recent tumultuous conflict had any real effect on him. Instead, the physicians wrote, “Cause unknown, unless it was intense study.” The surprising denial of the war’s effect on Charles Kilgore should not be so bizarre, considering very few male patients who served in the Confederacy had their military service listed as a primary, secondary, or even tertiary cause of their present insanity.⁵⁷²

⁵⁷² Charles Kilgore, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 130-131.

By July 1865, Charles Kilgore was behaving inappropriately to the extent that his family mandated his admission to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. His symptoms ranged tremendously: “He is usually quiet, but has irregular paroxysms of excitement in which he will sing and dance and curse most violently.” Although “he is neat and cleanly in his habits and not destructive,” he had “done mischief with fire,” which was a kind way of explaining that Charles had taken to lighting or spreading fires, almost certainly in his father’s home. The unpredictable nature of Charles’ behavior in the immediate post-war period must have been truly exhausting and terrifying for the surviving Kilgore family. His manic expressions of singing, dancing, and cursing likely punctuated whatever calm could be established in the Kilgore household in Walton County, Georgia. His attempts at arson also must have proved disturbing and prompted significant concern, considering the few things that survived intact and in perfect condition by the summer of 1865. Yet the most alarming feature of Charles Kilgore’s insanity was listed only at the end of his admission entry, and it suggests the final and perhaps ultimate reason that he was sent away to the lunatic asylum: he was frequently attempting the sexually assault of his female family members – his mother and sisters.⁵⁷³

Unfortunately, the record of the female experience of the Kilgore family is limited due to the lack of power and preservation experienced by white women in the mid-nineteenth century. The scant information available in the Walton County, Georgia census indicates Willis Kilgore Sr. and his wife, Susan, would have still resided in the area in 1865 in the immediate postwar period. It is unclear which of Charles’ sisters still lived with the family: the 1850 U.S. Federal Census suggests that Charles had five sisters,

⁵⁷³ Charles Kilgore, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 130-131.

but by 1860, only one sister remained in the house.⁵⁷⁴ However, two additional young women appear in the household in the 1860 U.S. Federal Census – Susan Frances and Nancy Adock ages five and four respectively. The identity of these two women has not yet been fully ascertained, though it does appear that Willis and Susan Kilgore adopted the two into their family, as they remain in the household through the war into the 1870 U.S. Federal Census.⁵⁷⁵ Although the identity of the sisters mentioned in Charles’ admission entry cannot be fully determined, records suggest that it could included his full sister Augerline / Arugille as well as his adopted sisters, Susan Frances and Nancy Adock, who would have been respectively ages sixteen, ten, and nine during the spring of 1865 when Charles began his sexual assaults on his family members.

The exact description of Charles’ behavior from the Georgia Lunatic Asylum reads distinctly: “He is very lecherous, pursuing even his sisters and mother and endeavoring to compel them to sexual intercourse with him.” This short solitary sentence betrays a terrifying and disturbing world for the Kilgore family: having barely endured the U.S. Civil War, his mother was confronted by daily attempts of sexual assault from her son, a recently returned veteran, badly wounded at Gettysburg, who had been unwell and erratic for years, though the expectations of his father had never fully lifted off his shoulders. As Willis Kilgore Sr. most certainly brought Charles to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, he explained his observations to the institution, which in turn marked them in his admission entry. The delayed inclusion of Charles “lechery” at the end of his admission perhaps indicates that Willis had not wanted to speak about such issues, yet

⁵⁷⁴ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Northern Division, Walton, Georgia*; Roll: *M653_139*; Page: 1046; Family History Library Film: 803139.

⁵⁷⁵ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Northern Division, Walton, Georgia*; Roll: *M653_139*; Page: 1046; Family History Library Film: 803139 ; Year: 1870; Census Place: *Brantley, Walton, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_180*; Page: 3294; Image: 25729; Family History Library Film: 545679.

ultimately, Charles' sexual pursuit of his mother and sisters proved to be the most pressing and alarming for the family and the asylum alike. The exact actions that took place in the Kilgore household in Walton County during the spring and summer of 1865 will never been known, but one can surmise that Charles repeatedly sexually assaulted his mother and sisters or at least made numerous attempts. The gerund "pursuing" indicates that Charles physically followed and even chased his female relatives in an overtly sexual manner. The possibility that his sisters were ages sixteen, ten, and nine makes the attempts all the more disturbing and quite concerning – for modern readers as well as the Kilgore family. Charles' first admission to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum in July 1865 – and not in 1863, when "the present attack" began, or in 1853, when his first attack occurred – suggests that perhaps he had only recently begun his "very lecherous" behavior towards his mother and sisters, although it could be possible that Charles attempted such sexual assaults of his family long before 1865.⁵⁷⁶

Ultimately, Charles Kilgore did not join the many people who either were rapidly discharged from the asylum after a few months or those who stayed until their deaths, decades later. Instead, he was a short-stay resident of the state lunatic asylum: he was discharged two years and three months later on November 12, 1867. As with the overwhelming majority of admission records at Georgia, no discussion of treatment and Charles' experience was left behind for posterity. Only his point of contact and address concluded his initial admission: "Address Willis Kilgore Esq., Monroe, Walton Co, Georgia."⁵⁷⁷ It was to his father that Charles would return, as revealed in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census of Brantley, Walton County, Georgia, where the young man was listed

⁵⁷⁶ Charles Kilgore, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 130-131.

⁵⁷⁷ Charles Kilgore, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 130-131.

once again as residing with his family. Willis Kilgore Sr. was then sixty-one-years-old, still farming, and still able to claim \$10,000 in real estate but a greatly lessened \$3,000 in personal estate, since the emancipation of his nearly thirty enslaved laborers. His wife Susan was “keeping house,” and Charles was listed next, as the eldest son, before his two younger brothers, Willis Jr., age eighteen, and James, age sixteen. While Willis Jr. was marked as “at school,” the youngest son, James, was noted as a “farm laborer,” working alongside his father in the post-war period. The family’s adopted daughters, Susan Frances and Nancy Adock, ages seventeen and fifteen, resided in the house and had no listed occupation, like most young women in the census of the era.⁵⁷⁸

Unlike a great many number of former patients at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, Charles Kilgore did not escape the stigma of insanity in the federal census: He was clearly marked as “Insane” and was additionally denied voting in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census. Although it is not clear if these two unusual features were linked – his insanity and his denial of suffrage – one must remember that Charles, too, had served in the Confederacy and perhaps had not sought or received a pardon nor made an oath of allegiance to the United States in the subsequent years after the war’s end. Regardless, Charles Kilgore of 1870 appeared bewilderingly different from the version of him in 1860: once a promised prince of slavery and plantation land, now an insane bachelor residing with his parents, without job or future prospects, either in the form of marriage or financial success. His father had signed a secession ordinance for the state, and now Charles could neither vote nor outrun the stigma of insanity and Confederate defeat.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁸ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Brantley, Walton, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_180*; Page: *329A*; Image: *25729*; Family History Library Film: *545679*.

⁵⁷⁹ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Brantley, Walton, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_180*; Page: *329A*; Image: *25729*; Family History Library Film: *545679*.

As expected, there are no mentions beyond the Georgia Lunatic Asylum admission record of Charles Kilgore's inappropriate sexual behavior. Beginning in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census, he is marked "Insane," which is an unusual step for most families in the U.S South during this time period. This designation separated Charles from many others who experienced mental illness, both briefly and chronically, and yet were never forced by their families or the census enumerator to be marked as such in the state record. Yet his actual symptoms were never explored beyond the single admission entry to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. "Insane" was a clear category of difference and deviance, but it also acted as an umbrella term, covering women such as Helena Mensing, who suffered through "puerperal mania," as well as Charles, whose manic behavior included the attempted sexual assaults of his mother and sisters.⁵⁸⁰

Charles Kilgore would again be marked as "Insane" in the 1880 U.S. Federal Census for Brantley, Walton County, Georgia, still a resident with his father Willis but now with Jane, his new stepmother, who was twelve years junior to seventy-year-old Willis. By 1880, Charles was forty-three-years-old, still unmarried, still without an occupation, still marked "Insane," clearly differentiating him from the hundreds of Walton County residents of the late nineteenth century. However, the very details of Charles "Insane" behavior are utterly unknown; they could have continued to be sexual in nature, but they may have been more of the other symptoms marked in his 1865 asylum admission, or were perhaps different and less dangerous behaviors. One wonders what was said to Jane as she accepted Willis's marriage proposal: Was Charles mentioned as a life-long responsibility that she would have to support? Did Charles' previous behavior towards his own flesh-and-blood mother mentioned as Jane agreed to become his

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

stepmother? Did Willis suggest Charles had been insane far earlier than the war or that that his military service had made him insane? Regardless, by 1880, Charles was residing, without siblings or servants, in the house of his father and his stepmother, who still provided for him, financially, emotionally, and more.⁵⁸¹

At this point, however, we encounter the usual problem when dealing with late nineteenth century records: the 1890 census, burnt to a crisp, must be skipped, and thus, moving to the 1900 U.S. Federal Census, two full decades of information have escaped study. Willis Kilgore Sr. had died in February 1891 about the age of eighty-one.⁵⁸² It is currently unknown what happened to Charles in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Likewise, the burial places of the majority of Charles' family is unknown, as there are no publicly available gravestones to Willis Sr. nor any other Kilgore of his lineage. The death date of Charles is thus currently lost. Ultimately, much of the Kilgore family history appears to have dissolved after the U.S. Civil War: the end of slavery and the Confederate defeat left Willis Sr. without free labor and abundant funding to support his two mills and massive crop production. His eldest son – once expected to succeed him in business and power – had survived one of the war's worst battles only to fall to previous internal struggles waging within him. The Kilgore family did not die out in the U.S. Civil War, nor in its aftermath, but the unpredictability of secession and mental health changed its anticipated course.

The story of a second young U.S. Southern man demonstrates the instability of life many confronted during the 1860s: Julius J. Hollemon, a "Pauper Lunatic and

⁵⁸¹ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Brantleys, Walton, Georgia*; Roll: 169; Family History Film: 1254169; Page: 445C; Enumeration District: 114; Image: 0699.

⁵⁸² Willis Kilgore, 19 September 1891, *Estate Papers, 1820-1900 (Walton County)*; Author: *Georgia. County Court (Walton County)*; Probate Place: *Walton, Georgia*.

epileptic of and from Campbell County Georgia.” He arrived at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum on March 16, 1866 – less than a year after the war’s end. He was described as a “Native of South Carolina,” “Age about 27 years,” and “Single.”⁵⁸³ Unlike Charles, Julius was marked as a sufferer of epilepsy, like approximately 13%, or one hundred and fourteen patients, at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum admitted during the 1860s. The institution’s definition of this medical diagnosis can be gleaned through admission entries and generally appears to indicate patients suffered from “frequent epileptic convulsions.” The origins of epilepsy in each patient certainly varies as much as it does today: while some entries suggest traumatic-brain-injuries, others appear to be congenital in nature, and still others may have been due to disease. In the case of Julius J. Hollemon, the Georgia Lunatic Asylum claimed that he had “been the subject of epileptic convulsions ever since he was fourteen years of age.” Neither Julius nor his family discussed an originating incident around the age of fourteen, though the late age of the seizures’ start suggests that his epilepsy was not congenital in nature. From 1853 to 1866, Julius continued to have convulsions, and in turn, “his mind has become gradually more and more affected, and has of late years been liable to paroxysms of violent excitement.” The limitation of the entry does not clarify the phrase “of late years,” but if one assumes the past five years to 1866, the timing implies that Julius had become particularly more disordered during the U.S. Civil War itself.⁵⁸⁴

During the past few years, Julius’s “paroxysms of violent excitement” had led him to become “very dangerous, often endeavoring to kill persons about him.” The significance of the severe language around Julius’s violent behavior demonstrates the

⁵⁸³ Julius J. Hollemon, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 144-145.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

need for his admission: to remove him from his family, so he does not kill anyone, especially during secession and the war. Although many Georgia Lunatic Asylum admission entries discuss violent behavior, the inclusion of “endearing to kill persons” marks Julius as highly unusual, only thirty-four of the eight-hundred and eighty-one admissions during the 1860s being marked as the patient attempting to kill others. Although Julius is one of the less than 4% of patients who attempted “to kill,” he does not appear to have murdered anyone, unlike a small handful number of similarly violent patients, who killed relatives and strangers alike before their admission.⁵⁸⁵

However, Julius was clearly a threat to those proximate to him, or those “about him,” which certainly included his immediate family. In March 1866, his admission was marked with the name and address of his brother, Charles B. Hollemon of Campbellton, Georgia, a town located in southwestern Fulton County on the Chattahoochee River.⁵⁸⁶ Once thriving, Campbellton has become a notorious ghost town because it supposedly refused to allow the Atlanta & West Point railroad to built near town. A passionate description of “Old Campbellton” prior to 1860 appears in *Atlanta and Its Environs*: “Weeds rioted and choked neglected flower gardens. Rows of comfortable homes, once housing a population of some 1200, fell into decay... For two decades the red brick courthouse stood dark and silent the habitation of owls, bats, and ghostly memories of better days, until it was mercifully dismantled.”⁵⁸⁷ The place of the Hollemon family in the desolate city center of Campbellton cannot be ascertained with the limited

⁵⁸⁵ Julius J. Hollemon, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 144-145.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Franklin M. Garrett, *Atlanta and Its Environs: A Chronicle of Its People and Events, 1820s-1870s* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1969), 855.

information still available, but Julius and his relatives resided in the ghost town long before it fully faded away.

By the eve of the U.S. Civil War, very few people remained in Campbellton from its original peak 1200 population, but several members of the Hollemon family were still included in the few hundred remaining residents of town. Julius's point of contact and brother, Charles B. Hollemon, resided and thrived in Campbellton. A frequent flaw in the 1860 U.S. Federal Census for Campbell County, neither had occupations listed, but Charles claimed \$3500 in personal estate.⁵⁸⁸ The significant portion of his personal estate's value came from the five young African-Americans that he enslaved and worked in Campbellton: their ages ranged from six to twenty.⁵⁸⁹ Charles B. Hollemon's early success in life attracted a sixteen-year-old, Eloise Miller, who he married in November 1860, when he was the age of twenty-five.⁵⁹⁰ The couple soon had children during the ongoing U.S. Civil War but quickly faced their own family tragedy when their eleven-month-old daughter Annie died in August 1863.⁵⁹¹ It is unknown if Charles and Eloise had other children during the war and early Reconstruction, but none survived if they did.

By March 1866, Charles Hollemon had survived the nation's many bloody battles, and so too had his father, Edmund, and brother, Julius, who resided nearby in Campbellton. In 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Edmund was a widower of some means, but due to careless census-taking, the exact nature of his financial standing cannot be ascertained. Although the 1860 U.S. Federal Census enumerator noted only \$1000 in

⁵⁸⁸ Year: 1860; Census Place: Campbell, Georgia; Roll: M653_113; Page: 272; Family History Library Film: 803113.

⁵⁸⁹ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

⁵⁹⁰ Hunting For Bears, comp.. *Georgia Marriages, 1699-1944* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2004.

⁵⁹¹ Annie M. Holleman (d. 1863) is buried at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church Cemetery in Powder Springs, Cobb County, Georgia.

personal estate and did not record an occupation for Edmund, the 1860 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedule recorded that Edmund had enslaved sixteen African-American laborers, which suggests that the \$1000 may have been \$10,000 instead or perhaps even another number altogether.⁵⁹² It seems highly significant that few surviving records reveal the experience of Edmund Hollemon, especially considering that he was a fairly wealthy slave-holder who otherwise would have left much behind had war and emancipation not intervened.

The scarcity of census information also creates tension in reconstructing the life of Julius Hollemon, who in 1860 at age twenty-three, was still residing with his father. He had no listed occupation or financial standing, but the poor census-taking suggests that only so much can be extrapolated from the data.⁵⁹³ Although we have no precise data of the immediate post-war period, the Georgia Lunatic Asylum admission record reveals that Julius was still residing in Campbell County in 1865, but it is difficult to confirm if he was staying with his father or brother. Charles's name as his point of contact in the admission could hint that Julius had relocated to his brother's house, or that both he and his father Edmund had moved into Charles's household during or after the war. By the 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Charles and Eloise had removed to the town of Coxes in Cobb County, and Edmund had joined them, age seventy, with his occupation simply marked as "At Sons." The war had proven difficult for the Hollemon family, but Charles was still a "Farmer," with \$1000 in real estate and \$400 in personal estate.⁵⁹⁴ Charles had served

⁵⁹² Year: 1860; Census Place: *Campbell, Georgia*; Roll: *M653_113*; Page: 297; Family History Library Film: 803113 ; United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

⁵⁹³ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Campbell, Georgia*; Roll: *M653_113*; Page: 297; Family History Library Film: 803113.

⁵⁹⁴ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Coxes, Cobb, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_144*; Page: 2584; Image: 43700; Family History Library Film: 545643.

in Company E. of the 1st Regiment, Georgia Cavalry, which primarily saw combat in Tennessee, Kentucky, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. Unlike many of his fellow soldiers in the 1st Regiment, Georgia Cavalry, he survived the conflict relatively unscathed.⁵⁹⁵

Unfortunately, we currently have no evidence of Julius J. Hollemon's experience during the U.S. Civil War. It does seem that his pre-existing epilepsy prevented his military service in the Confederacy, as he does not appear on any known muster roll and certainly not alongside his brother in Company D. of the 1st Regiment, Georgia Cavalry. By 1866, Julius had endured the conflict, along with his father, brother, and sister-in-law, but his behavior was escalating and becoming increasingly disturbing and violent. Although his admission record does not explicitly state the timing on the behavior, the entry revealed Julius had become "exceedingly lecherous, frequently attempting forcible sexual intercourse with any female he encounters, white or black." Eloise, his sister-in-law, was not specifically mentioned as a victim of his attention, unlike Charles Kilgore, whose medical record discussed his sexual assaults of his sisters. However, the phrase "any female he encounters, white or black" reveals that Julius had enough freedom and mobility in the post-war period to leave the house and interact with women beyond his sister-in-law. If one leniently assumes that Julius had only been recently "exceedingly lecherous" in the early months of 1866, these white and black women who he sexually assaulted included traumatized war survivors and emancipated slaves.⁵⁹⁶

In the disastrous aftermath of the U.S. Civil War, Campbellton was already long vanishing but the conflict accelerated its decline, as many moved away from the area to

⁵⁹⁵ See Michael Bowers Cavender, *The First Georgia Cavalry in the Civil War: A History and Roster* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., 2015).

⁵⁹⁶ Julius J. Hollemon, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 144-145.

better populated areas. The Hollemon family remained in Campbell County in 1866, as indicated by Charles' address on Julius's admission, and thus the women that Julius encountered and sexually assaulted were most likely the few remaining women in the dying county. Four years later in 1870, much of Campbell County became Douglas County in an attempt to revitalize the fading region. In early 1866, the white and black women of Campbell confronted a new and different terror in their lives: Julius J. Hollemon, a young white man who had "paroxysms of violent excitement... often endearing to kill persons about him" and was also "frequently attempting forcible sexual intercourse with any female he encounters, white or black." The grieving Campbell County community must have poorly received Julius's physical and sexual violence in the aftershocks of Confederate defeat. The language of his admission suggests that Julius repeatedly and perhaps routinely attempted or completed sexual assaults on female neighbors in the post-war period. Julius's chronic epilepsy and additional tendency towards extreme physical violence may have saved him from criminal prosecution or extralegal punishment for his sexual assaults on neighbors in the community. His behavior in private, in the house of his brother and/or father, had worsened as well: in addition to his other dangerous actions, he was "disposed to be destructive of furniture and crockery," something that must have been interpreted as the final indignity for the Hollemon family in the materially scarce wartime and post-war era.⁵⁹⁷

On March 16, 1866, Julius J. Hollemon was admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum as a "Pauper Lunatic and epileptic of and from Campbell County Georgia," who had attempted to kill people, sexually assault women, and destroyed the household of his family. Unlike many who entered the institution, Julius would not leave: he died there

⁵⁹⁷ Julius J. Hollemon, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, 144-145.

two years and ten months later on January 20, 1869.⁵⁹⁸ His cause of death and burial place are similarly unknown due to poor record-keeping during the mid-nineteenth century. Julius did not receive a gravestone where his family would be buried decades later, suggesting that he was instead buried at the asylum itself. A year and a half after Julius's death, the 1870 U.S. Federal Census shows his brother, sister-in-law, and father residing elsewhere in Cobb County.⁵⁹⁹ By 1880, Charles and Eloise had finally had a child successfully survive infancy, who they gave the name of his father.⁶⁰⁰ The younger Charles, born in August 1877, never met his uncle Julius, dead nearly a decade previous. He would greet the twentieth century at age twenty-three and died several years into the Great Depression in 1933, only a few years after his mother Eloise passed away.⁶⁰¹ The Hollemon family would live through Charles Benjamin Hollemon, who himself had a significant number of children and remained in Cobb County for the entirety of his life.

The legacy that lingered behind Julius and the U.S. Civil War within the Hollemon household can never been known. The great terror of secession, war, and defeat, compounded by Julius's profound violence towards family and neighbors may not have survived through the ages, even if his bloodline persisted through his brother. We can never capture the varied yet almost certainly terrifying experiences of the women in Campbell County who encountered Julius J. Hollemon during the 1860s. However, the knowledge that a violent "Lunatic and epileptic" resided and roamed Campbell in the war's aftermath makes the life of those in the defeated U.S. South all the more exhausting

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Coxes, Cobb, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_144*; Page: *258A*; Image: *43700*; Family History Library Film: *545643*.

⁶⁰⁰ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Powder Springs, Cobb, Georgia*; Roll: *141*; Family History Film: *1254141*; Page: *52D*; Enumeration District: *029*; Image: *0107*.

⁶⁰¹ Charles B. Hollemon is buried at Union Grove Baptist Church Cemetery in Lithia Springs, Douglas County, Georgia.

and distressing. We have no way of determining the length of Julius's physical and sexual assaults on family and neighbors – if it began before, during, or after the war. His behavior clearly escalated to the point that he was sent away to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum in the spring of 1866, perhaps with the understanding that he would never return home to his brother, sister-in-law, and father. One wonders about the lived experience of Julius J. Hollemon in a world of secession, war, and defeat – a world that lacked real medical intervention for his epilepsy and uncontrolled violent behavior. Although we may propose that Julius could have had an improved life in a different time period, he lived during the heat of sectionalism and the U.S. Civil War, and imagining otherwise does him no benefit. Julius's short life – he died before age thirty – and death far from his family show that his body and mind had betrayed him in such a way to deny him a pleasant or easy physical existence. His violent sexual behavior towards women, along with other disturbing conduct, cost him a chance to serve the Confederacy, marry, produce children, and continue in his father's footsteps as a farmer and enslaver of people.

Surviving Nymphomania: *Eva Fernandez Daniel*

Of the twenty cases where sexuality is explicitly mentioned at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum during the 1860s, only two were female, one white, one black. In the mid-nineteenth century, inappropriate sexual behavior appears to have been highly gendered, with men as the perpetrators of immoral sexual actions. However, these two women do appear in the admission records, in part because they behaved inappropriately in terms of their female body and female sexuality. The first of the pair was the 1866

admission of Mary Masterson from Bibb County, Georgia, who physicians “supposed to be the subject of nymphomania” as well as intense violent excitement and nervous temperament. Her rapid discharge after six months reveals how the asylum shrugged off her diverse acts of misbehavior.⁶⁰² In contrast reads the 1867 admission of Winney Ann Pulley from Atlanta, a twenty-seven-year-old “Colored Female Pauper Lunatic + Epileptic,” whose “cause [was] supposed to be epileptic convulsions” and “is the subject of masturbation.” Within a month, she was dead from unknown causes, and her body went anonymously into the ground by the asylum. These brief mentions of inappropriate female sexuality were noted but dismissed as the primary cause of the woman’s insanity or epilepsy.⁶⁰³

Similarly, Eva Fernandez, a nineteen-year-old woman from Jacksonville, Florida, who was admitted to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in August 1865 was deliberately regarded as “suffer[ing] from nymphomania.” Like Mary and Winney Ann, the major concerns about Eva’s case was not her hyper-sexuality but her flailing and uncontained female physical form. Her female appearance and body had gone noticeably awry, and her presence at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, far away from Jacksonville, Florida, indicates the heavy emphasis that the U.S. South’s desired for female controlled behavior and life.⁶⁰⁴ Eva Fernandez’s case also reveals the intimate social networks that persisted through the antebellum era, the U.S. Civil War, and into Reconstruction via her close relationships with her siblings and the bonds of friendship and blood that tied together the Jacksonville, Florida community.

⁶⁰² Mary Masterson, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 181.

⁶⁰³ Winney Ann Pulley, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 212.

⁶⁰⁴ Eva Fernandez, #1422, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

Although most patients admitted to the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums during the 1860s were from the home state of the asylum, a significant number originated from other U.S. Southern states, most frequently Alabama and Florida. Georgia had seventeen admissions from Florida, twenty-one from Alabama, and one from Virginia during the 1860s. South Carolina accepted fourteen from Florida, seven from Alabama, twenty-nine from Georgia, and four from Virginia. Although the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum clearly welcomed Georgia residents into its institution, Georgia did not manage to steal any South Carolinians to Milledgeville. Many of these non-native patients were original residents from Georgia or South Carolina and continued to have family roots in their old home states. Neither Florida nor Alabama had their own state lunatic asylums during the antebellum period; Alabama opened its “Alabama State Hospital for the Insane” in 1861 during the earliest days of the U.S. Civil War.

In the case of Eva Fernandez, her father Stephen Domingo Fernandez was a life-long resident of Florida and had been born in the state during the early nineteenth century.⁶⁰⁵ In his youth, he served in the 1st Florida Mounted Militia between 1836 and 1837 during the Second Seminole War when the U.S. government clashed against the local Seminole tribe.⁶⁰⁶ During the 1840s and 1850s, Stephen had worked as a merchant in Jacksonville, Florida.⁶⁰⁷ In 1850, he claimed fifteen African-American laborers in the U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedule; of these fifteen, eight were marked as “mulatto,” a racial trend for slaves which seems to be particularly common for antebellum

⁶⁰⁵ Year: 1850; Census Place: Jacksonville, Duval, Florida; Roll: M432_58; Page: 94B; Image: 186.

⁶⁰⁶ Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1762-1984; Washington, D.C.; *Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served in Organizations From the State of Florida During the Florida Indian Wars, 1835-1858*; Series: National Archives Microfilm Publication M1086, 63 rolls; Roll #: M1086:9.

⁶⁰⁷ Year: 1850; Census Place: Jacksonville, Duval, Florida; Roll: M432_58; Page: 94B; Image: 186.

Jacksonville, Florida.⁶⁰⁸ Her father Stephen Domingo Fernandez had died in May 1857, long before her admission to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in August 1865.⁶⁰⁹ Although Stephen likely had significant impact on Eva's life, he did not aid in sending her to the far-away institution; instead, the role of guardian and financial support came from the local Jacksonville medical community which Eva Fernandez would be tied into through marriage.

At the time of her father's death in 1857, Eva was only in her early adolescence. In the three years before the 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Eva and her siblings moved in with their eldest sister, Isabel and her recent husband, Dr. Richard Potts Daniel, a local physician and previous resident of South Carolina. In 1860, Richard was thirty-one, claimed \$3,000 in real estate and \$2,000 in personal estate, and, unlike all of the Fernandez relatives residing with him, he had been born in South Carolina. He, his family, and the Jacksonville medical community would become the primary influence over Eva when she became mentally unwell in 1865.⁶¹⁰ Richard and the Daniel family had deep roots in Jacksonville, Florida. He was the son of James Madison Daniel, who served the Jacksonville area as one of its preeminent attorneys throughout the antebellum period. His mother E. Jaqueline H. Daniel had been previously married to William Murdoch with whom she had two sons, one being John Smith Murdock.⁶¹¹ Richard and his step-brother John had an incredibly close relationship throughout their lives, interweaving their medical and personal experiences as they grew up in Jacksonville

⁶⁰⁸ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*.

Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. M432, 1,009 rolls.

⁶⁰⁹ Stephen Domingo Fernandez is buried at Oak Grove Cemetery, Saint Marys, Camden County, Georgia.

⁶¹⁰ Year: 1860; Census Place: Jacksonville, Duval, Florida; Roll: M653_106; Page: 269; Family History Library Film: 803106.

⁶¹¹ James Madison Daniel and E. Jaqueline H. Daniel are buried beside one another in Evergreen Cemetery, Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida.

before, during, and after the war.⁶¹² The two had turned from boys to men together, residing in Columbia, South Carolina with their parents, before heading south in 1847 to “a rough and primitive section of Florida” at the behest of James Madison Daniel. Explaining the move south, Richard wrote, “I was about... eighteen years old and preceded the rest by a few weeks – coming on ahead with a wagon and four or five negro men to prepare things somewhat.” He described that the family “farm was some twenty-two or three miles northwest of Jacksonville... a clearing of ten or twelve acres in the midst of a magnificent virgin forest of yellow pine.”⁶¹³ However, after a few challenging months in the Florida wilderness, James Madison Daniel relocated his family into the city of Jacksonville, which improved the opportunities for both Richard Potts Daniel and his step-brother John Smith Murdock.⁶¹⁴

In 1849, Richard transferred from the Medical College of South Carolina at Charleston went to University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine in Philadelphia, like many wealthy white sons who sought better educational opportunities in U.S. Northern schools.⁶¹⁵ In 1850, he returned to Jacksonville in time to see much of the city, locals and tourists alike, fall to dengue fever, which “was characterized by severe aching and prostration of several days’ duration.” The epidemic was catastrophic for the city: “In many families every grown person was in bed at the same time; business transactions were paralyzed temporarily, and industry suffered.” In 1851, Richard produced a senior thesis entitled “Dengue As It Appeared in Jacksonville in 1850.”⁶¹⁶ After his graduation

⁶¹² Webster Merritt, *A Century of Medicine in Jacksonville and Duval County* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1949), 45.

⁶¹³ Merritt, 46.

⁶¹⁴ Merritt, 47.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid.

⁶¹⁶ Merritt, 19-20.

from medical school, Richard Potts Daniel returned to the city and became a founding member and the first treasurer of the Duval County Medical Society, a society in which his step-brother John Smith Murdock served the first president.⁶¹⁷ During the mid-1850s, Richard was commissioned as an Assistant Surgeon in the United States Navy, serving on the frigate *Columbia*, and traveled the U.S. South while yellow fever swept through the navy, the countryside, and innumerable cities.⁶¹⁸ He survived his military service and repeated extended exposure to yellow fever, to return to Jacksonville, marry Isabel Fernandez, shelter her various siblings including Eva, and witness the start of the secessionist debate.

During the U.S. Civil War, Eva matured from age fourteen to nineteen. Her older brother reached his early twenties, and her younger brother progressed through his teens. Eva's eldest sister Isabel, whose marriage had provided the Fernandez children needed shelter, unexpectedly died in October 1863 a few weeks before her twenty-seventh birthday. Her red marble gravestone was etched with "NEARER MY GOD TO THEE," a simple solace for her surviving husband and siblings.⁶¹⁹ The Daniel family were deeply invested in the Confederacy. James Madison Daniel – Richard's father – attended the 1861 Florida Secession Convention for Duval County, the county of Jacksonville, and can be spotted in surviving photographic collages of secession members.⁶²⁰ Early in the war, Richard Potts Daniel began practicing medicine and surgery for the Confederacy: he joined the 8th Regiment, Florida Infantry and became a surgeon enduring the war and all

⁶¹⁷ Merritt, 29.

⁶¹⁸ Merritt, 47.

⁶¹⁹ Isabel Fernandez Daniel is buried at Evergreen Cemetery in Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida – where her husband's family is buried, not where her father is buried.

⁶²⁰ *Members of the 1861 Secession convention - Tallahassee, Florida*. 1861. Black & white photoprint, 10 x 8 in. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. <<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/24612>>, accessed 1 January 2016.

its horrors.⁶²¹ His unit survived Antietam, Second Manassas, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Cold Harbor, and the long siege of Petersburg, ending their series of hardships at Amelia Court House in early April 1865.⁶²² The heavy burden on Richard's shoulders ranged from the death of his young wife to the endless bloodshed of battle throughout the U.S. Civil War. When he returned to Jacksonville in the end of spring 1865, he was confronted with yet another surprising and exhausting challenge: his nineteen-year-old sister-in-law had become mentally unhinged to an extreme extent and needed immediate institutionalization.

In August 1865, "Miss Eva Fernandez" arrived at Columbia, South Carolina and was briefly marked in the admission ledger-book as a "single" "female" age "19" pay patient from Jacksonville, Florida. A supplementary note explained she had been admitted "by request of Mr. Murdock" – notably not Richard Potts Daniel, her brother-in-law.⁶²³ Instead, the "Mr. Murdock" of Eva's lunatic asylum admission appears to be John Smith Murdock, Richard's step-brother. Prior to the war, John had served as the mayor of Jacksonville, Florida during 1858 and 1859.⁶²⁴ In 1860, John worked as a physician with \$4,000 in real estate and \$12,000 in personal estate, most of which came from thirteen enslaved people, who he housed in three buildings. John's wife and two eldest daughters had been born in South Carolina, adding to the many South Carolina natives residing by Eva Fernandez during the 1860s.⁶²⁵ John Smith Murdock's homestead was situated close

⁶²¹ National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, online <<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>>, acquired 2007.

⁶²² Historical Data Systems, comp. *U.S., U.S. Civil War Regiments, 1861-1866* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 1999.

⁶²³ Eva Fernandez, #1422, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

⁶²⁴ T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), 293.

⁶²⁵ Year: 1860; Census Place: Jacksonville, Duval, Florida; Roll: M653_106; Page: 266; Family History Library Film: 803106.

to Richard Potts Daniel and the Fernandezs, who similarly claimed enslaved people.⁶²⁶ It seems completely reasonable that Eva would be financially supported by John – her step-brother-in-law – in 1865. However, John died in October 1860 – before South Carolina even seceded, let alone the end of the war – suggesting that he could not be the person referenced in Eva’s record.⁶²⁷ The small supplementary note on Eva’s 1865 asylum admission may refer to Mrs. Emma Murdock, John’s surviving widow and neighbor to the Fernandez family, as she was the one in control of his financial estate after his death. Considering the limited number of Murdock relatives in Jacksonville and South Carolina, the brief notation seems to suggest John Smith Murdock or someone in his immediate family and by extension that of his step-brother Richard Potts Daniel.

In August 1865, Eva Fernandez garnered an additional asylum record in the form of Patient Treatment Notes, which further confirms the name “Mr. Murdock” without providing a first name or better identification. The record begins with technical funding issues rather than personal or medical details: “Admitted by request of Mr. Murdock who promises to be responsible for her support and general expenses until satisfactory arrangements can be made by her proper guardian.” The document further reveals the reason for Eva’s admission, which had not otherwise been described in the ledger-book: she was suffering from “nymphomania” and was suffering profoundly from mental illness. At age nineteen, Eva “had to be brought into the house [the asylum] by force – being greatly excited” – though who grabbed onto her to restrain her has been lost to time. She was described as “look[ing] haggard and exhausted” and was found to be

⁶²⁶ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

⁶²⁷ *Probate Packets, Approx. 1805-1906; Index, 1805-1960*; Author: Duval County (Florida). County Judge; Probate Place: Duval, Florida.

“abusive and profane,” which suggests that she was both talkative and obscene towards the asylum staff. It is unclear who brought Eva to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, as “no history accompanied her except the certificate of the Physicians.” It may be that neither Richard Potts Daniel, her brother-in-law, or anyone else from Florida came with her on the long journey to the institution. The local physicians’ note “state[d] that she [Eva] suffers from nymphomania & that she could not be controlled at home.” In their extreme brevity, the condition of “nymphomania” has no details nor description. In the traditional understanding, nymphomania suggests a medical condition of sexual excess, most often in regards to female sexuality, a la the amorous nymphs of Greek mythology.⁶²⁸

In 1865, her family and local physicians declared Eva Fernandez was behaving inappropriately. She was exhausted, perhaps from a lack of sleep or increased activity. She was acting irritable, and the term “abusive” suggests that she was verbally attacking those near her, likely including friends, family, and her doctors. She was noticeably profane, which suggests she was publicly cursing, which was one of the more unfeminine behaviors of the era. And, most surprisingly considering the rarity of excessive and inappropriate female sexuality, she was experiencing “nymphomania” or female hypersexuality. None of these behaviors were acceptable for a young woman, and their combination, sudden beginning, and the length of symptoms must have forced Eva to be admitted to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum nearly three hundred miles north of her hometown in Jacksonville, Florida.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁸ Eva Fernandez, #1422, Vol. 3, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

Like almost all patients at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, we have no knowledge of what occurred in the case of Eva Fernandez once she was admitted to the institution. However, she joined the ranks of those who survived the state lunatic asylum, as she was discharged “cured” on January 13, 1866 – a little over five months since her initial admission.⁶³⁰ Her excess sexuality and other symptoms most likely had subsided enough that she was allowed to leave the asylum and was considered cured of her insanity. Indeed, little of the stigma of mental illness followed Eva Fernandez back down to Jacksonville, Florida, as she soon married her brother-in-law, Richard Potts Daniel, a man sixteen years her senior, who had sheltered her as a teenaged girl. In the 1870 U.S. Federal Census, Eva appears beside Richard, a “Doctor of Medicine” with real estate worth \$5000 and personal estate worth \$2000, both considerable values considering the recent U.S. Civil War. Richard, age forty-two, had clearly married Eva, whose name is written Evelina, age twenty-four. A seven-year-old boy named Bowen Daniels follows them on the census; the identity of this child cannot be ascertained, but he could be the only child of Richard Potts Daniel and Isabel, Eva’s sister. Two of the other Fernandez siblings, Edwin and Alice, now ages twenty-seven and twenty-four, still resided with Richard and Eva. Two domestic servants lived and worked in the Daniels-Fernandez house: William Wescott, a sixty-five-year-old mulatto man from South Carolina, and Fanny Forrester, a forty-seven-year-old black woman from Florida. Of all the household, only William and Fanny could not read or write, likely indicating that both had been enslaved before the war. Nothing on the official federal record in 1870 suggests that Eva

⁶³⁰ Eva Fernandez, Discharged on 1866-1-13, SCSHI Admissions and Discharges, 1860-1964.

had experienced a severe episode of mental disorder in the previous years; she is not marked insane and appears to have a large, successful family in otherwise dire times.⁶³¹

Unfortunately, Eva Fernandez Daniel did not survive to the 1880 U.S. Federal Census: she died on July 20, 1879 and was buried beside her elder sister, who had died sixteen years earlier during the U.S. Civil War. Their resting places reside together in Evergreen Cemetery in Jacksonville, Florida with their shared husband Richard located nearby. Yet at age fifty-one, Dr. Richard Potts Daniel was not sated with an empty marital bed. He soon married his third wife, Ella Greenwood Christopher who was thirty-two years his junior, twice the age difference that he had experienced with Eva. In the 1900 U.S. Federal Census, their marriage date is revealed to be 1886 – seven years after Eva’s death. The federal record also confirms that Richard and Ella never had children together, although Ella’s twenty-nine-year-old sister lived with them. In addition, in 1900, a black woman and man, age thirty and twenty-two, worked and resided in Daniel house.⁶³² The 1910 U.S. Federal Census botches Ella’s age, claiming thirty-five instead of fifty, but it does reveal that Richard continued to be highly successful well into the twentieth century. His occupation was still identified as doctor, he was employed on his own account, and he was residing in a home he had bought in the previous century in downtown Jacksonville, Florida.⁶³³

When Richard Potts Daniel finally passed away in 1915, he left behind a significant will for his third wife, Ella G. Daniel. He bequeathed his “general library” to

⁶³¹ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Jacksonville, Duval, Florida*; Roll: *M593_129*; Page: *491B*; Image: *100821*; Family History Library Film: *545628*.

⁶³² Year: 1900; Census Place: *Jacksonville, Duval, Florida*; Roll: *167*; Page: *10B*; Enumeration District: *0041*; FHL microfilm: *1240167*.

⁶³³ Year: 1910; Census Place: *Jacksonville Ward 1, Duval, Florida*; Roll: *T624_159*; Page: *1A*; Enumeration District: *0068*; FHL microfilm: *1374172*.

Ella, “for life, and at her death to my nephew Richard P. Daniel, Jr., absolutely,” revealing he had found a namesake through one of his siblings (interestingly not his step-brother John Smith Murdock). He gave his two newest sisters-in-law monetary benefits and awarded his third wife Ella his properties in Jacksonville, Florida, including portions of his large plot in Evergreen Cemetery. There are no mentions of his U.S. Civil War experience or legacy, nor do Isabel or Eva Fernandez appear in any way. The horrors of war and his first two marriages disappeared long before his death. Only his third wife Ella G. Christopher and his nephew, his namesake, appear with repetition and fondness in his final earthly document.⁶³⁴

One might want to read conspiratorially into Richard’s final decades and finding absence of the Fernandez sisters, declare absence equals trauma or stigma, but many men moved on from the mid-nineteenth century as they embraced the twentieth. Isabel and Eva were a significant part of Richard’s early life, but as time wore on, and age crept through his bones, Richard moved onto new and different parts of existence. Eva’s temporary yet terrifying episode of excessive sexuality was but one experience in her life – and the lives of all those around her. Her behavior warranted an extreme journey further north to Columbia, South Carolina to the state lunatic asylum, but she was not determined by her brief or chronic mental illness. Nothing beyond her solitary South Carolina Lunatic Asylum record suggests that she had a troubled experience that dealt with her female sexed body and sexual urges. She may have, but these were never again recorded by the state institution or the U.S. federal government.

⁶³⁴ *Last Wills and Testaments, 1856-1922*; Author: *Florida. County Judge's Court (Duval County)*; Probate Place: *Duval, Florida*.

Where many men languished and died behind lunatic asylum walls because of their excessive male sexuality – their tendency towards masturbation or even sexual assault – some institutionalized women experienced a different, more forgiving U.S. Southern society. For Eva, she survived the U.S. Civil War, along with being orphaned and the death of her sister, to marry one of the wealthiest and most educated men of Florida's largest mid-nineteenth century port. While she did not live into the 1880s, she was not damned to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, and her inappropriate, "insane" behavior did not mark her for life. Yet she also did not survive alongside Richard Potts Daniel into the twentieth century, and her influence on this world has been minimized by her short existence. As a woman imagined at best to be a wife and mother, Eva Fernandez Daniel may not have achieved the highest success, but she did succeed in surviving mental illness and institutionalization to leave some record of her life.

CHAPTER 7

Freedom

The deliberate dismissal and silencing of African-American voices during slavery and immediately after emancipation occurred on various levels from local individuals to the federal U.S. government. The current abysmal dearth of sources for the African-American experience during the 1860s originates in the U.S. South's profoundly ambiguous view of the African-American citizen in society during this same time period. Many scholars have debated and discussed concerns about twentieth-century projects that tried to understand the enslaved African-American experience, such as the Works Project Administration Slave Narratives.⁶³⁵ Some historians refuse to use these interviews, citing prejudiced white interviewers, uncomfortable black interviewees, and the significant length of time since the original experiences. Yet a significant number chose to utilize the W.P.A. Slave Narratives because so few sources have survived that allowed enslaved African-Americans to tell their own stories about life under slavery. As scholars scour the world searching for sources during antebellum period and war years for African-American experiences, we occasionally find new sites to study, such as Jim Downs' impressive investigation of the Medical Division of the Freedmen's Bureau. Although the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums do not have the impressive breadth or depth to compare with what Downs found in the Medical Division of the Freedmen's Bureau, these institutions left behind similarly revealing stories to aid in the ongoing

⁶³⁵ An excellent description of the debate and discussion around the W.P.A. Narratives can be found by Marie Jenkins Schwartz, "The WPA Narratives as Historical Sources," in *The Oxford Handbook of African American Slave Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

effort of understanding African-American struggles during early Reconstruction.⁶³⁶ When these state lunatic asylum records are considered in conjunction with materials held by the Freedmen's Bureau, a more complex view of enslaved and freed people of color during the 1860s emerges.

The following chapter delves into the three state lunatic asylum admission entries of freed people of color in the immediate years after the U.S. Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation. These two men and one woman were some of the first to integrate the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums after the Confederate defeat and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, which prohibited the existence of slavery in the U.S. Notably, the commitments of Lewis Griffin, Mourning Flournoy, and James C. Holloway respectively occurred in September 1867, July 1868, and January 1869; two of these admissions came before the July 28, 1868 ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, which guaranteed citizenship rights and equal protection of the laws for newly freed African-Americans. Reflecting the variety of lived experiences of people of color during the postwar period, Lewis was sent from the Freedmen's Bureau Hospital in Augusta, Georgia; Mourning was committed by her African-American brother; and James was apparently sent by the City of Charleston itself although he was actually the heir to a long-standing family legacy that included his grandfather and father owning enslaved black people.

Patients of color in the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum records are quite difficult to discern, because there was only a lackluster and haphazard attempt to identify patients as "colored" or "negro" in the admission and discharge books. However, the Georgia Lunatic Asylum clearly marked African-American patients as "colored" or infrequently

⁶³⁶ Jim Downs, *Sick from Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

as “negro.” The words “colored” or “negro” were most commonly the first or second word in an admission entry. These African-American lunatic asylum admissions mark a transition in vocabulary used at the institution: previously, any mentions of African-Americans had been made with the word “negroes,” recurrently describing them as victims of violence by white men and women. For example, Maney Quarles, a white male patient from Towns County, Georgia “escaped from this Institution some months past, went home, and under circumstances that the party returning him knows nothing of, is represented to have killed a negro in the neighborhood.”⁶³⁷ Only seven of the ninety-six admitted African-Americans to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum were called “Negro” instead of “colored”: the use of the word seems to be highly specific to one unknown individual who wrote these seven admissions in the ledger-book, as all seven arrived in 1868 and six came arrived over the span of six days in March 1868. Notably, white U.S. Southerners were not identified by a racial descriptor in their admission entries, betraying the institutional and societal belief of the era and place that white people were both the neutral and best standard of humanity, while the “colored” or “Negro” patients were the manifest deviation. In this instance, the very absence of the term “white” accentuates the privilege of white patients versus those with darker skin. While white patients were seen as the norm, black patients in the Georgia Lunatic Asylum were pointed out as differently racialized beings, first and foremost, with “colored” being the primary descriptor of their entry of their skin and status alike.

Although this chapter does not included any patients of color who were admitted by white persons, such as employers or former enslavers, eighteen of the ninety-six (or nearly 19%) of the “colored” Georgia Lunatic Asylum patients appear to have white

⁶³⁷ Maney Quarles, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 162.

persons explicitly named as their point of contact. Only three of the ninety-six (about 3%) have a black person listed as their address, and of these three patients, the following chapter concerns one, Mourning Flournoy. Thirty-one of the ninety-six (32%) included phrases such as “No history can be furnished by the party bringing her” or “No history of her case could be given.” Twenty-one of the ninety-six (about 22%) between 1867 and 1869 were sent by the Freeman’s Bureau, most frequently a Freeman’s Bureau Hospital in a major urban area of Georgia, such as young men like Lewis Griffin, who is studied first in this chapter. Five of the ninety-six (5%) were explicitly sent by an Inferior County Courthouse. And seventeen of the ninety-six (about 18%) simply do not name who or what entity sent the “colored” patient to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum.

Lewis, Mourning, and James are not to be understood as exemplars or representatives of the African-American experience in U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums during early Reconstruction. No individual or small selected group bears the burden of responsibility to represent all mentally ill and disabled people, let alone people of color in one of the most turbulent periods of U.S. history. Instead, these three individuals were chosen primarily because of the additional information that asylum physicians and staff provided in their admission entries, which was certainly rare among people of color at the asylum. To put a quantitative understanding of the difference between white patients and patients of color at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum between 1867 and 1869, we can study, compare, and contrast the number of words written for patients in regards to their medical history, their personal biography, and their symptoms. Dorcas Cook in September 1868, William Patterson in December 1869, and Mary Jane Johnson in September 1868 received the most words in their admission entry for African-

American patients at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum during the late 1860s: 110 words, 116 words, and 120 words. Most “colored” patients received such little provided information that there are no scholarly avenues to find more about their identity or their experience under slavery and in freedom. The vast majority of “colored” patients at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum during early Reconstruction received less than 75 words in their admission, with many receiving less than 40 words and several receiving 20 or less. By contrast, most white patients during the 1860s received around 100 words on average, with some receiving much less, especially those found wandering in the countryside or white patients who were considered “idiots,” especially “congenital idiots.” In an objective quantitative comparison, “colored” patients received similar attention in their admission entries as “Idiots and Epileptics” or those who had been abandoned to the wilderness.

To put these numbers further in perspective, some of the longest entries for white Georgia Lunatic Asylum patients during the 1860s were “Miss E. I. Evans” of Florida in August 1860, who received 361 words; “Mrs. J. H. Sterchi” of Knoxville, Tennessee in June 1862, who received 330 words, and “Mr. Carl Yules” of Tallahassee, Florida in August 1862, who received 397 words. The tendency to include more information for out-of-state white patients appears to be due the party who brought the patient to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. The impressive level of detail included in the Evans, Sterchi, and Yules admissions could each spin an astonishing spider web of knowledge for those trying to recreate their lived experiences. For example, we can tell through the admission entry of Elizabeth I. Evans that she had an uncle, her “father’s brother, who became insane from pecuniary embarrassments resulting from speculation in Morus

Multicaulus.”⁶³⁸ This peculiar comment in Elizabeth’s entry revealed that her uncle had become mentally unwell after a poor investment in ‘*Morus Multicaulus*,’ the “seedlings of the new species” of silk plant that became wildly popular in the 1830s but became horrendously unsuccessful after a blight of epidemic proportions and the Panic of 1837.⁶³⁹ Although the inclusion of a disastrous silk investment may seem tangential to Elizabeth’s story, every detail – no matter how strange – provides necessary nuance and complexity to her lived experience, her case of mental illness, and her family’s understanding of her mental troubles. Many white patients, male and female alike, received between 200 and 250 words, well into the post-war period, when patients of color, poor whites, and the intellectually disabled attracted notably less consideration in terms of description of their personal history and medical symptoms.

An example of one week of commitments in 1867 can assist in unfolding the charge of subtle discrimination at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum during the late 1860s towards its white and “colored” patients. On the week of August 18th 1867, the Georgia Lunatic Asylum witnessed a surprisingly high number of admissions: sixteen on three days of the week. While Sunday and Monday saw no commitments, Tuesday the 20th saw the admissions of two black women, Winney Ann Pulley and Anna McCarty, from the Freedmen’s Bureau Hospital in Atlanta. They received 69 and 64 words respectively. On Thursday the 22nd, a staggering ten men and women suddenly arrived at the institution: nine were unambiguously noted as “colored,” while the tenth was white, a racial designation which was not explicitly written into her file. All of the African-American patients originated at Freedmen’s Bureau Hospitals either in Macon or Atlanta before

⁶³⁸ Elizabeth I. Evans, #842, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1842-1861, Volume 2.

⁶³⁹ J. P. Barnes, “Silk Culture,” *Agriculture of Pennsylvania* Volume 6, Number 4 (1882), 185.

their institutionalization at the state lunatic asylum. The solitary white patient was given the dignified prefix “Miss Sallie Spruce” in contrast to the simple first name and surnames of eight of the black patients and the one-word name of “Esther” of the ninth. Sallie had been a previous patient to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum from 1849 to 1853, and now, at age sixty-seven, she had returned, evidently mentally and physically ill, though “the party bringing her has no knowledge of the case.”⁶⁴⁰ Sallie’s second admission entry earned her 82 words, in contrast the African-American earned an average of 63.3 words.

Two black women and a black man arrived at the state lunatic asylum on Saturday August 24, 1867, with Rebecca White receiving just 28 words and Jane Campbell receiving a pitiful 19 words, similar to Samuel Snipes, who received 27 words. Importantly, it should be understood that most of these 28, 19, and 27 words are from the phrase “No history can be furnished by the party bringing her/him,” and the words for their race (“Colored”) and sex (“male” or “female”). The other words come from “Pauper Lunatic of and from the Bureau Hospital at Savannah.” There are no descriptions of symptoms or current appearance in Rebecca, Jane, or Samuel’s cases; they have no diagnosis for cause of insanity, length of insanity, or chances of recovery. They clearly were not questioned upon admission. We know that the treatment is not a sign of the post-war Reconstruction period because on August 24th – the same day as Rebecca, Jane, and Samuel’s commitment from the Freedmen’s Bureau Hospital – an older white woman, “Mrs. Parthena Corbin,” was admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum.

In the middle of a series of African-American admissions, Parthenia Corbin earned 153 words of attention from the asylum physicians. The first words in her entry were “Lunatic of and from Macon Geo, native of Georgia,” in contrast to the two black

⁶⁴⁰ Sallie Spruce, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 214.

women patients, whose entries began “Colored Pauper. Pauper Lunatic of and from the Bureau Hospital at Savannah.” The brief language provided here suggests that freedpeople had no known nativity or a home origin, which in turn implies that the freedpeople were either not asked these questions or did not provide these to white asylum staff. The lack of knowledge about their patients must be blamed on the white medical authorities in the postwar era; even if recently enslaved disabled or mentally ill African-Americans were unable or unwilling to answer about the histories, the continued lack of attention towards their personal stories which began at the Freedmen’s Bureau and continued into the state lunatic asylum damned these individuals into oblivion. Whereas Parthena’s personal history is carefully broken down and include such comments as “for thirty years there have been marked peculiarities about her which have gradually become more manifest, and for 14 or 16 years, there have been unmistakable evidences of insanity,” Rebecca, Jane, and Samuel appear to have no life experiences before their asylum admission – not under enslavement, not as emancipated people, and not as suffering patients at Freedmen’s Bureau Hospital or the Georgia Lunatic Asylum.

Parthena’s entry further explains that her husband “Mr. Cadwalader Raines” had “managed to control her” but his recent death had caused her to “become gradually more uncontrollable until her friends have been obliged to place her in the Asylum.” Parthena’s explicit social network of a caring husband and concerned friends was not replicated in “colored” patients’ entries at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. The absence does not mean that freedpeople had no such intimate or communal ties in their own lives, only that these were not recorded by the white asylum physicians and staff, either because they did not investigate these issues or they could not elicit the information from their black patients.

However, the strongest argument would be for the first of the two possibilities: that the Georgia Lunatic Asylum did not do its appropriate duty to seek information about its black patients in contrast to what occurred with its white patients, even those who were admitted on the same day within hours of each other. Because the Georgia Lunatic Asylum chose not to invite or include such personal information about its black patients, later researchers – including descendants of patients as well as interested scholars – are left holding wisps of mystery and uncertainty about people who were already pushed to the margins of U.S. Southern society.

The first African-American man admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum stands as a clear example of institutional and societal neglect in terms of the asylum's failure to understand his experience. On August 17, 1865, a white asylum staff-person quickly penned in the ledger book the following three sentences: "A colored man [was] sent to the Asylum by order of the Federal Provost Marshall Gent. From the Freeman's Bureau. Augusta Georgia." The entirety of his given identity was the three lettered name "Jim." Eight (8%) of the ninety-six African-Americans admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum in the late 1860s were listed as having only a first name, whereas all white people of the same period had a provided surname. The asylum acted either in displeasure or indifference when the unknown author concluded Jim's admission entry, "No history of the case furnished. Brought up by a police officer who knows nothing of him." And these few words – these five sentences, two of which are incomplete phrases – were all Jim managed to obtain from medical professionals at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. For the later historian, such miniscule records leave behind a sinister legacy: to seek Jim in slavery and freedom would be to pursue shadow in darkness. Regardless of the

limitations of the records of these two state lunatic asylums, we must bring light into the shadows to see what we can find of the postwar African-American experience at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums.

The Georgia Lunatic Asylum did not deviate greatly in its treatment of African-American patients from the manner that they first accepted Jim in August 1865. Of the ninety-six African-American admissions between 1865 and 1869 at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, three patients had “Age unknown,” which had become common for older white pauper patients as well. Another fifty-one had estimates on their age, with some patients receiving more specific numbers such as “Age about 38” while others seemed more general, as in “Age about 60 years.” Age estimation was frequent in the 1860s, both among white and black patients, rich and poor, most likely due to the inability of the patient and the party who brought them to tell precisely their birth-date, a common feature of the mid-nineteenth century. However, the more general estimates with rounded numbers do appear more linked to those in the working class or formerly enslaved African-American peoples, while the more precise numbers tend to be those who received more information and words in their entries as well as prefixes such as “Miss,” “Mr.” or “Mrs.”

Colored insane pauper, of and from the Bureau Hospital: *Lewis Griffin*

When Lewis Griffin arrived at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum on September 14, 1867, he received an unusual amount of description his admission entry, almost certainly because his most recent experiences were both adventurous and concerning for the state lunatic asylum. Lewis was described as a “colored insane pauper, of and from the Bureau

Hospital at Augusta Georgia.” His age was estimated to be “about 25 years.” It was written that Lewis had “been insane for five years.” It is unclear who provided the length of Lewis’s insanity: if he did, or the Freedmen’s Bureau Hospital, who may have first received it from Lewis himself or from another unknown party. Similarly, when the Georgia Lunatic Asylum wrote that the cause of Lewis’ insanity was “alleged disappointed affection,” it is not obvious who suggested that as the cause – and considering the word “alleged,” a term rarely used in the asylum ledger book, the cause does not appear to have been deeply believed or further investigated. At this point in his admission entry, it becomes clear why Lewis Griffin had earned more attention as an African-American patient in a time period where the asylum and Freedmen’s Bureau listed relatively few details about similar “colored” patients: he had stolen “some man’s horse, who pursued and shot him about the 15th of July, inflicting a sever wound in the thigh, from which he is yet suffering.” Although prior to September 1867, there are a remarkable number of cases of white men attacking and even murdering black men and women, in this incident Lewis Griffin becomes the first patient of color to be admitted as the victim of violence. The lack of racial descriptor about the horse-owner who shot Lewis may suggest that the individual was a white man, but the entry’s ambiguity leaves any truth behind in a misty haze. Ultimately, according to the institution’s understanding of the case, Lewis Griffin had provoked – intentionally or unintentionally – another person to shoot him, likely in an attempt to wound or kill him after an escape from the Freedmen’s Bureau Hospital and an attempted thievery of a horse.⁶⁴¹

Lewis had been wounded on July 15, 1867, and on September 14, Lewis was “yet suffering” from the “severe wound in the thigh,” three months later. The scarcity of

⁶⁴¹ Lewis Griffin, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 218-219.

information in Lewis Griffin's case provokes great contemplation: Was he still suffering because 1867 was a challenging year for Georgia and the Freedmen's Bureau in terms of medical resources? Was he still suffering because he was not treated because he was mentally ill, or because he was African-American, or because he was a mentally ill African-American? Did his escape and stealing of the horse prevent better or more complete medical attention because he was considered a threat or a criminal? How did the negative appearance of his actions of escape and theft compounded by the negative appearance of his skin color, mental instability, and residence at the Freedmen's Bureau Hospital? Was he still suffering because the mid-nineteenth century was not a particularly excellent period to be shot in the thigh? Or was it some complicated combination of all of these possibilities – and others that we cannot easily fathom in the twenty-first century? And perhaps the most concerning question of all: What would the Georgia Lunatic Asylum be able to do for Lewis Griffin in terms of his bullet wound in the thigh, still weeping pus and still causing him pain, three months after the initial injury?

The Georgia Lunatic Asylum did not answer any of these questions in Lewis Griffin's September 1867 admission entry. Instead, the asylum plainly concluded, Lewis "is usually quiet, occasionally noisy, never violent or destructive. General health appears good." The institution never updated his case about what happened to Lewis Griffin; it is unclear if he was ever discharged, if he escaped, or if he died in the state lunatic asylum.⁶⁴² Yet Lewis' commitment to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum had not happened spontaneously: there was an intense discussion amongst Georgians, U.S. Southerners, the Reconstruction government, and the state institution about what would be done for mentally ill and disabled African-Americans. Indeed, Lewis Griffin appears to have been

⁶⁴² Lewis Griffin, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 218-219.

precisely discussed in the surviving correspondence between Freedmen's Bureau Hospital physicians at Augusta and Atlanta: he is the lunatic pauper that so engrossed the two men during early Reconstruction. On July 30, 1867, the Freedmen's Bureau Hospital Surgeon in Chief in Atlanta wrote to the A. A. Surgeon in Augusta that "at as early a date as convenient to take evidence as to the Lunacy and pauperism of certain freedpeople whom you will present before them, and on these two facts being satisfactorily proved before them, to furnish you with a certificate to that effect, on receipt of which, you will notify through this office, the Supt of the State Lunatic Asylum, that you have certain colored pauper Lunatics under your charge for admission to that Institution on the first vacancy, or on the additions to that Asylum being completed."⁶⁴³ Although neither man used Lewis Griffin's name, the "certain colored pauper Lunatic" at the Freedmen's Bureau Hospital was him and only him.

Two weeks later, on August 19, 1867, the Surgeon in Chief of the State of Georgia wrote the A. A. Surgeon in charge of the Freedmen's Hospital in Augusta: "I have the honor to state that notification has been received from the Superintendent that the State Lunatic Asylum is ready for the reception of Patients. As soon therefore as you notify me that the remaining Lunatic in your charge is able to travel transportation shall be forwarded to you for him and one (1) attendant."⁶⁴⁴ On August 30, 1867, the Surgeon-in-Chief made another transportation request, reminding his counterpart to send invoices

⁶⁴³ "Georgia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9GF-GTKG?cc=2331267&wc=SKFN-92Z%3A1438830622%2C1438830635> : 9 December 2014), Augusta (freedmen's hospital) > image 82 of 123; citing NARA microfilm publication M1903 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

⁶⁴⁴ "Georgia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9GF-GR67?cc=2331267&wc=SKFN-92Z%3A1438830622%2C1438830635> : 9 December 2014), Augusta (freedmen's hospital) > image 88 of 123; citing NARA microfilm publication M1903 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

as well.⁶⁴⁵ Although no other preserved letters originate from this exchange, Lewis Griffin was admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum on September 14, 1867 from the Augusta Freedmen's Hospital. The correspondence between the white Reconstruction government agents never uses Lewis Griffin's name, nor do the men describe any details about his case, either his mental illness or the gruesome physical wound that he was suffering from throughout this period. Instead, both surgeons appear more interested in transferring a complicated case of insanity out of the Freedmen's Bureau Hospital, which had been intended to save freedpeople suffering from physical illness, not serve and cure mentally unwell young freedmen like Lewis Griffin.

The Freedmen's Bureau medical department in Georgia had opened hospitals such as the one at Augusta where Lewis had stayed "with the idea of eventually turning them over to state and local authorities." Eventually, the Georgia Lunatic Asylum would receive mentally ill and disabled freedpeople from each the established Freedmen's Bureau Hospitals at Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Macon, and Savannah. During 1866-1867, there were just thirteen white male physicians stretched across these five hospitals, which were located at fairly different regions throughout the state. By late 1868, the Freedmen's Bureau had closed all of its hospitals in Georgia, and "care for the destitute was turned over to local authorities."⁶⁴⁶ The patient registers at these individual hospitals in Georgia read quite similarly to the patient admission lists at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum: long lists of names with a few repeated pieces of information for each patient. In

⁶⁴⁵ "Georgia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9GF-GR6H?cc=2331267&wc=SKFN-92Z%3A1438830622%2C1438830635> : 9 December 2014), Augusta (freedmen's hospital) > image 92 of 123; citing NARA microfilm publication M1903 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

⁶⁴⁶ *Records of the Field Offices for the State of Georgia, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-1872* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Congress and National Archives and Records Administration, 2003), 5.

May 1867, Lewis Griffin first appears on the Registers of Patients at the Augusta Freedmen's Bureau Hospital towards the very end of the monthly list. Noted as twenty-years-old, he was apparently admitted to the hospital on May 26, 1867, and had the highly unusual "Diagnosis" of "Insane" amongst dozens of "Old Age," "Destitute," "Ulcer," "Blind," "Paralysis," "Syphilis," and "Burns" for other patients. Three days later, a freedman named Billey Dennis, age forty-four, also entered the hospital with the diagnosis of "Insane."⁶⁴⁷ Both Lewis Griffin and Billey Dennis, later identified as Billy Dennis, appeared again on the Patient Register for June 1867.⁶⁴⁸ However, although Lewis remained on the Patient Register for July 1867, Billy Dennis was marked as discharged on June 23, 1867, and his ledger line was completely crossed out.⁶⁴⁹ By July, Lewis was the only "Insane" freedperson at the Augusta Freedmen's Bureau Hospital.⁶⁵⁰ Finally, in the August 1867 Patient Register, Lewis Griffin was marked as a "transfer LAGA" on "Sept. 14~" with the "LAGA" meaning the Lunatic Asylum of Georgia.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁷ "Georgia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9GF-GR7S?cc=2331267&wc=SKFN-MJ7%3A1438830622%2C1438863779> : 9 December 2014), Augusta (freedmen's hospital) > image 61 of 90; citing NARA microfilm publication M1903 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

⁶⁴⁸ "Georgia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9GF-GTSX?cc=2331267&wc=SKFN-MJ7%3A1438830622%2C1438863779> : 9 December 2014), Augusta (freedmen's hospital) > image 64 of 90; citing NARA microfilm publication M1903 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

⁶⁴⁹ "Georgia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9GF-GR3Y?cc=2331267&wc=SKFN-MJ7%3A1438830622%2C1438863779> : 9 December 2014), Augusta (freedmen's hospital) > image 67 of 90; citing NARA microfilm publication M1903 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

⁶⁵⁰ "Georgia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9GF-GRQX?cc=2331267&wc=SKFN-MJ7%3A1438830622%2C1438863779> : 9 December 2014), Augusta (freedmen's hospital) > image 70 of 90; citing NARA microfilm publication M1903 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

⁶⁵¹ "Georgia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9GF-GT9L?cc=2331267&wc=SKFN-MJ7%3A1438830622%2C1438863779> : 9 December 2014), Augusta (freedmen's hospital) > image 73 of

And the very next document regarding Lewis' lived experience with mental and physical suffering was his admission to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum on September 14, 1867 which discussed both an escape and serious injury never reported in the patient register for the Freedmen's Bureau Hospital. None of the 1867 monthly reports of sick and wounded at the Augusta Freedmen's Bureau Hospital include an account of Lewis Griffin's gunshot wound. The lack of documentation about Lewis' escape and injury seems to imply that Augusta Freedmen's Bureau Hospital did not want to record either event.⁶⁵²

The forlorn conclusion to Lewis Griffin's story echoes his unknown origins. The first appearance of Lewis seems to be the Patient Registers at the Freedmen's Bureau, and his next known appearance in the state record is the Georgia Lunatic Asylum – all of these records being made in the spring, summer, and fall of 1867. He can be found on the long list of state lunatic asylum patients in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census as “Griffin, Lewis” age “28,” a black man and “Lunatic.”⁶⁵³ Although his initial asylum admission entry does not mark Lewis' fate, we can tell that he lived until 1870 due to his name included in the census. Fortunately, his fleeting appearance in the federal record confirms the hope that he survived his gunshot wound in the thigh from the summer of 1867. But the inadequacy of information in the U.S. Federal Census does not reveal how Lewis had fared in those three years and what happened to his mental and physical well-being. He

90; citing NARA microfilm publication M1903 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

⁶⁵² See the 1867 monthly reports in "Georgia, Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872," images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9GF-GTF1?cc=2331267&wc=SKFN-MNG%3A1438830622%2C1438847181> : 9 December 2014), Augusta (freedmen's hospital) > image 1 of 99; citing NARA microfilm publication M1903 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.).

⁶⁵³ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Scottsboro, Baldwin, Georgia*; Roll: *M593_134*; Page: *261A*; Image: *270807*; Family History Library Film: *545633*.

clearly remained separate from whatever his original friends and family he had known under enslavement, but perhaps he had become a part of a new community of mentally ill and disabled African-American patients at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum.

Amazingly, we again find Lewis Griffin in the 1880 U.S. Federal Census, although now the census has strongly segregated patients into races and sexes. Listed under “Black Males,” “Griffin, Lewis” was now “38” and considered a “Farm Hand,” a prejudiced assumption considering he had been behind institution walls for nearly two decades of his life. The “Farm Hand” occupation does suggest, though, that perhaps the Georgia Lunatic Asylum had used Lewis Griffin – and other African-Americans – to work the subsistence crops that the institution planted in the surrounding area. Notably, a few additional pieces of information in the 1880 U.S. Federal Census aid in reconstructing Lewis Griffin as a person and patient of color: he was marked as unable to read or write and that his birthplace was Georgia. These could have been assumptions on the part of the institution staff, but some of the other black lunatic asylum patients in the same census were marked as able to read and write and had birthplaces other than Georgia, such as Virginia.⁶⁵⁴ It seems redundant to note that Lewis Griffin must have certainly been an enslaved man, freed during the U.S. Civil War, but his illiteracy and place of birth being Georgia provide significant evidence to his plausible experiences as an enslaved person. Assuming Lewis was indeed enslaved somewhere in Georgia and was born sometime around 1847, he would have been in his late teens during the U.S. Civil War, moving into both adolescence and freedom as the war was waged all around him.

⁶⁵⁴ Year: 1880; Census Place: Milledgeville, Baldwin, Georgia; Roll: 133; Family History Film: 1254133; Page: 230B; Enumeration District: 003; Image: 0462.

Due to the disastrous 1921 fire that destroyed the 1890 U.S. Federal Census, it is impossible to tell if Lewis Griffin remained at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum another ten years, but the 1900 U.S. Federal Census no longer lists him as a patient. By the turn of the twentieth century, Lewis would have been in his fifties. If he died shortly before 1900, he had survived decades at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, the very years of overcrowding and underfunding that helped the institution infamously spiral out of control by the mid-twentieth century. It seems most likely that Lewis Griffin died sometime in the twenty years between 1880 and 1900 at the state lunatic asylum and was buried in a segregated section of the asylum cemetery. While Lewis's story rests in pieces, we must carefully gather what we can in hopes of one day finding more, somehow, somewhere. Although we will never be able to fully reconstruct Lewis' life under slavery and in freedom, we can remember him and his suffering at the Freedmen's Bureau Hospital and the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. Furthermore, we can recognize the limitations of white men in the medical profession during Reconstruction to take care and notice of Lewis Griffin as a complicated, worthy person and not an Insane Pauper destined to be transferred and institutionalized due to his mental illness.

Address Daniel Broomfield, Warrenton, Ga: *Mourning Flournoy*

On July 13, 1868, a young African-American woman from Warren County, Georgia was admitted to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum – a little over a year since Lewis Griffin had arrived. By the summer of 1868, Lewis was a one-year veteran of the institution, and the two might have had some interaction, though the sexes do not appear to have been housed together. This patient's name was Mourning Flournoy, and at

twenty-two years of age, the asylum deemed her a “colored lunatic and epileptic.” The asylum staff-person cryptically wrote in Mourning’s admission: “Had one child, would now be three years old, if living.” In other admission entries for white female patients around the same period, similar phrasing suggested that the child had died prior to the mother’s institutionalization. However, Mourning’s commentary seems to imply that she may have been separated from her child, but it could also indicated that her child had already died, like the other female patients who had similar wording in their admissions. The ambiguity about her child does little to aid anyone seeking answers about Mourning’s past. Significantly, Mourning would have had her child in the summer of 1865 after the Confederate defeat and the end of the U.S. Civil War, which suggests she had been around other freed African-Americans in her brief time of free existence. Neither the father of Mourning’s child nor their relationship are hinted in her admission record. However, like most African-American patients between 1867 to 1869, the institution wrote practically nothing about her intimate relationships or social network of family and friends.⁶⁵⁵

Unusually, Mourning’s record does reveal a previous incident that she had with another African-American man during her enslavement. In July 1868, the institution referenced a violent incident “six years back” in 1862 when Mourning “received a blow on the head with the eye of a hoe in the hands of a negro foreman.” With these few short words, we can recreate a disturbing and terrible moment in Mourning’s life: the very assault that led to her subsequent “epileptic convulsions” which began “shortly after” the injury and had now caused her to be institutionalized during Reconstruction. According to Mourning and the party bringing her, the perpetrator was “a negro foreman” – a fellow

⁶⁵⁵ Mourning Flournoy, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 248.

enslaved African-American working under the direction of white overseers and white enslavers. During the U.S. Civil War, enslaved labor continued unabated across farms and plantations in the U.S. South, and the profound act of violence against Mourning in 1862 demonstrates the extensive brutality that maintained slavery even during the bloody conflict fought for her freedom and citizenship rights. Since 1862, Mourning had suffered with “epileptic convulsions” which “now occur about twice a month, when several paroxysms occur within forty-eight hours.” These seizures likely prevented a normal or comfortable experience of life, labor, and love for Mourning Flournoy. As her physical suffering continued through the end of the U.S. Civil War and into early Reconstruction, Mourning’s lived experiences must have been unbelievably burdensome. She had to endure displacement, scarcity of food and clean water, rampant disease, frustrated actions of defeated white U.S. Southerners, and the uncertainty of the future for African-Americans in Georgia, the U.S. South, and the United States as a whole. It is unclear if Mourning ever received medical intervention during these years – under enslavement or during freedom. Her July 13, 1868 admission to the state lunatic asylum came at the behest of her brother, Daniel Broomfield, who was listed as her person of contact and address in her medical record. He may have cared for during these years, but her frequent convulsions may have proved too much for them both, leading to her institutionalization in the summer of 1868.⁶⁵⁶

The Georgia Lunatic Asylum wrote the name Daniel Broomfield almost certainly because he was present with Mourning Flournoy at her admission. He likely also requested any updates on her condition – such as physical sickness or death – and, as such, noted his address to the institution for such future correspondence. The inclusion of

⁶⁵⁶ Mourning Flournoy, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 248.

his name in the admission record was a strikingly important decision for the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. With the two simple words that composed his name, future researchers – including his descendants and academic scholars – could reconstruct Mourning’s world, as well as Daniel’s, in a time period fraught with turbulence and doubt. Of the ninety-six African-American patients admitted between 1867 and 1869, only three received African-American points of contact, with two being explicitly identified as African-American. Daniel Broomfield is the only one of the three not marked as “colored,” though the Georgia Lunatic Asylum certainly knew both his race and social status in the unsteady realm of Reconstruction. The institution chose, in these very few instances, to provide a social network for their “colored” patients: an allowance that deepens our understanding of the Reconstruction experiences of all African-Americans in Georgians, especially those who were mentally and physically unwell.

Mourning’s brother’s full name was Daniel Tucker Broomfield, and he appears in a few other sources in this same time period. Two particularly engrossing documents regarding Daniel come from the U.S. Freedman’s Bureau Bank Records, 1865-1871. Daniel appeared twice, once on October 21 1871 and again on April 6 1872. The Freedmen’s Bureau Bank kept ledger-books with four customers on a page, and eight laid across two pages of an open book. Each rectangular box contained a plethora of information regarding the customer’s personal life and larger social network: his birthplace, “where brought up,” his residence, his age, his complexion, his occupation, his employer, his spouse’s name, his children’s names, his father’s name, his mother’s name, his brothers, and his sisters. It is here that we can establish that Daniel Broomfield and Mourning Flournoy were actually half-siblings, which is left unstated in the state

lunatic asylum record. The October 1871 noted that Daniel's parents were Peter Broomfield (dead) and Rachel Huber (dead). He had ten siblings. His six brothers included Berry, Harris, Doctor, Rial, Thomas Broomfield, and Allen Jackson. His four sisters included Nancy, Elizabeth, Anny and "Morning." This October 1871 record did not include a spouse or children. The information from Daniel's first bank record application is overwhelming in its revealing detail: with these provided names, an interested party could construct a family tree for Daniel and Mourning with great ease. The record prompts the recognition of a close social network of African-American family members in Warren County, Georgia during both enslavement and freedom. The documents also prove that Daniel – surprisingly and impressively employed as a school-teacher in early Reconstruction Georgia – was literate, as he penned a beautiful signature on each application, unlike most other bank customers who provided a simple mark instead.⁶⁵⁷

However, in April 1872, when Daniel applied again for a Freedman's Bureau Bank account, he listed additional different information, which provides even more extraordinary depth to Mourning and Daniel's family history. Daniel noted a wife, Susan, who was marked (d) for deceased or dead. He claimed two living children, Caroline "4 yrs" and Lilian "12 months." He again noted Peter and Rachel as his parents, but this time gave his father a middle name, Tucker, which was his middle name as well. Daniel's list of brothers and sisters had changed somewhat, too: for the first time in April 1872, he marked both full siblings and half siblings. He included Berry, Harris, Thomas, Ryle (previously Rial), and Doctor as full siblings. For his half "bros + sisters," Daniel listed

⁶⁵⁷ *Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865-1874*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. Micropublication M816, 27 rolls.

Elizabeth Allen, Mandy Swain, Mourning Swain, and Allen Jackson. Unlike the previous application six months earlier, Mourning's name was spelled correctly, and she received a surname. These minor details makes the second bank record appear more compelling as further evidence for Daniel and Mourning's family history. The correction, too, of his full brother's name Ryle from Rial and the addition of his father's middle name suggest that this second bank application was more carefully constructed. Similarly, the surprising revelation occurs that Daniel had been married to a woman named Susan and had recently become a widower. Furthermore, he had two living children, two young daughters, otherwise not mentioned on his last application. The Freedman's Bureau Bank Records were never intended to connect with Georgia Lunatic Asylum admissions a hundred and fifty years later, but the combination of the two help brilliantly reconstruct a world that otherwise remains hidden away from modern researchers.⁶⁵⁸

Daniel Tucker Broomfield can also be found repeatedly in the Georgia Property Tax Digests for Warren County and Hancock County throughout the 1870s and 1880s. In 1872, he was among the men listed without an employer who owned property in Warrenton, Warren County, Georgia.⁶⁵⁹ He continued to be one of the few listed without an employer, who for the area were typically white men.⁶⁶⁰ One 1870s Georgia Property Tax Digest marked that Daniel's employer was "C. S. Twins" but that he had a valued \$155 in personal estate all his own.⁶⁶¹ Daniel also appears in the 1880 U.S. Selected Federal Census Non-Population Schedule for Agriculture for Warren County, Georgia as

⁶⁵⁸ *Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865-1874*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. Micropublication M816, 27 rolls.

⁶⁵⁹ Militia District Number: 425. Year: 1872. *Georgia Tax Digests [1890]*. 140 volumes. Morrow, Georgia: Georgia Archives.

⁶⁶⁰ Militia District Number: 425; Post Office: *Warrenton*. Year: 1877-1882. *Georgia Tax Digests [1890]*. 140 volumes. Morrow, Georgia: Georgia Archives.

⁶⁶¹ Militia District Number: 111. Year: 1874-1878. *Georgia Tax Digests [1890]*. 140 volumes. Morrow, Georgia: Georgia Archives.

the owner of “20” acres of tilled land. His land was valued at \$150 and his farm equipment, \$16, though he owned no livestock. He had spent \$10 on repairs on the farm, and \$78 on fertilizers for his land in 1879. The entirety of his farm was worth around \$550 in 1879, according to the 1880 census enumerator.⁶⁶² An 1890 Georgia Property Tax Digest assessed Daniel’s livestock (which he purchased the previous ten years) worth \$50 and his “household and kitchen furniture” worth \$20. The document claimed that “W. A. Johnson” was the employer of Daniel as well as another twenty men and women, most or all presumably African-American.⁶⁶³ Around 1890, Daniel Tucker Broomfield fades off the federal documents that concerned land and property taxes. Since his birth under enslavement, he appears to have resided only in Warren County, Georgia well into the time of freedom for African-Americans and nearly to the turn of the twentieth century. Within a few short decades, Daniel had managed to accumulate some small amount of wealth, in the form of material possessions, land, and livestock, in an area that he and his family had been enslaved and labored without pay.

Yet, returning to Mourning Flournoy, we must consider what limited opportunities that she personally faced in enslavement and freedom. Enslaved by some unknown white man or woman or family in Warrenton, Georgia, Mourning had lived with some of her half-siblings and full siblings. Like Daniel, she may have known the identity of her parents. She appears to have been born around 1846, meaning that she had just reached sixteen when she was struck violently in the head by an enslaved African-American overseer in 1862. She had endured epileptic convulsions for six years – for

⁶⁶² Census Year: 1880; Census Place: *District 425, Warren, Georgia*; Archive Collection Number: *T1137*; Roll: *T1137:20*; Page: 10; Line: 3; Schedule Type: *Agriculture*

⁶⁶³ Militia District Number: 425; Post Office: *Warrenton*. Year: 1890. *Georgia Tax Digests [1890]. 140 volumes*. Morrow, Georgia: Georgia Archives.

three years of continued slavery and for three years of freedom. Mourning was evidently in a miserable state upon her admission to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum as the subject to unexpected and prolonged seizures that must have regularly disrupted her life. The institution claimed that she “does not menstruate regularly” but “seems otherwise in fair health.” An unknown white asylum staff-person wrote that Mourning “is generally quiet and inoffensive” and that she “eats and sleeps satisfactorily.” She was noted as “about 22 years” old and marked down as a “colored lunatic and epileptic of and from Warren County Georgia.”⁶⁶⁴

A final note to Mourning’s asylum record came just sixteen days after her admission: “Died July 28, 1868.” The stunning finality and brevity of these words should not be dismissed. Although Mourning received a longer admission entry than most African-American patients between 1867 and 1869, the attention was certainly due to her successful brother, Daniel Broomfield, and his insistence at her admission to provide more detail about her personal background and medical history. In his absence, it is unknown what the Georgia Lunatic Asylum did for or did to Mourning Flournoy. She had survived six years after a Traumatic Brain Injury as well as six years of seizures that frequently shut down her body for days at a time. Yet, in little more than two weeks at the state lunatic asylum, she was dead. Like a surprising number of patients, both white and black, Mourning received no cause of death in her record, nor did she earn a quick “Buried here.” The implication heavily rests on the idea that she was indeed buried at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, as no staff-person wrote that Daniel had come to retrieve her body nor that he paid for her return home, which was described in numerous cases of wealthier white women and men who died at the asylum. Mourning’s body, which had

⁶⁶⁴ Mourning Flournoy, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 248.

survived fourteen years of enslaved labor, a terribly vicious attack, and great physical suffering, was laid to rest in unknown soil or clay somewhere in Georgia – most likely in Milledgeville, the site of the asylum, or less likely in Warren County, where her family had been enslaved and later lived as freed citizens.⁶⁶⁵ We know that her brother Daniel Tucker Broomfield continued his life as a freedman, applying for bank records, still noting her existence. One wonders eerily if the Georgia Lunatic Asylum had contacted Daniel about her death – if he believed Mourning was alive in October 1871 and April 1872 – or if he was saying that she was his sister, even after death, just as he listed his father, mother, and wife, also deceased, on those close and blood-tied to him, long after their own deaths.

Mourning can be discovered in one last known location: the 1870 U.S. Federal Census Mortality Schedule. There, on the list of fifteen state lunatic asylum patients, black and white, male and female, young and old, who had died in the past year, was “Flournoy Mourning” incorrectly listed as age “45.” Her month of date was her same admission month: July. The “Disease or Cause of Death” supplied was “Epilepsy.” Mourning was one of three patients out of fifteen who had “Epilepsy” marked cause of death. Seven cases were claimed to be “Marasmus,” the nineteenth century term for physically wasting away; three cases of “Dropsy,” now referred to as edema, the collection of fluids in bodily cavities or tissues; and two cases of “Dysentery,” a form of diarrhea that was rampant during the U.S. Civil War and early Reconstruction due to contaminated food and water. Mourning joined the list of the dead in Baldwin County, Georgia; her name rests beside a stillborn black infant “not named,” a nine-year-old black girl Wight Olie who burned to death by accident, and many black children under one year

⁶⁶⁵ Mourning Flournoy, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 248.

old whose parents declared they had died from “teething.” Mortality in Baldwin County, Georgia, both inside and outside of the state lunatic asylum, could come at any age, and the cause of death supplied to the census enumerator did not mean the exact technical reason that a person had passed away. In Mourning’s case, one could blame the enormous oppressive system of slavery, the “negro foreman” that struck her, her unknown white enslaver, the poor Reconstruction governmental system that did not intervene on her behalf, and even the Georgia Lunatic Asylum for not knowing what to do in her case. As there were U.S. Civil War casualties long after the war’s conclusion, there were casualties of slavery, too, years after emancipation, and Mourning Flournoy should be counted among them.⁶⁶⁶

He is of mixed blood but has never been a slave: *James C. Holloway*

However, not all people of color in the U.S. South were enslaved during the antebellum period, and thus not all “colored” patients at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum and the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum were previously enslaved. Astoundingly, a very rare few free patients of color had actually enslaved other African-Americans. James C. Holloway, a “mixed-blood” patient who was admitted to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum on January 6, 1869, had personally never been enslaved. Instead, his father Richard Holloway Jr. and grandfather Richard Holloway Sr. had routinely enslaved other people of color during the antebellum period. All three Holloway men were life-long, well-reputed residents of Charleston, South Carolina long before the Emancipation Proclamation and 13th Amendment. Although his is undeniably a highly unusual case,

⁶⁶⁶ National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; *Federal Mortality Census Schedules, 1850-1880, and Related Indexes, 1850-1880*; Archive Collection: T655; Archive Roll Number: 9; Census Year: 1869; Census Place: Baldwin, Georgia; Page: 6A.

James C. Holloway's admission to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in January 1869 marks one more commitment in a long series of African-American admissions to the state institution during Reconstruction. South Carolina's record-keeping around race was particularly abnormal, especially in comparison to Georgia's, given that the asylum staff seem especially careless in marking the racial skin color and racial status of its patients. Although this may appear to be oddly progressive, in actuality, the lax record-keeping does not suggest that racial identity of patients was not known to the physicians and staff who treated them. Ultimately, these informal accounts prevent later researchers from organizing and understanding the experience of people of color during Reconstruction at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum. For James C. Holloway, the lack of designation of his unusual status as a free person of color, and the neglect of the asylum to include his father's name, hampers further understanding of his exceptional life, but some of his experiences can be reconstructed through the extensive documentation of he and his family's world in Charleston, South Carolina.

During the late 1860s, a significant number of individual patients were explicitly marked as "(col)" for "colored," such as in the case "James Johnson (col)", admitted shortly after James. C. Holloway in 1869. In contrast, the first James was listed as "Jas. C. Holloway" with no racial marker, which might direct some readers to assume that he was a white man. Additionally, James was designated as "married" – unlike a considerable number of African-Americans, who received no marital status, leaving the column space utterly empty. He was identified as a "29" year old male, insane for "18 mos." and suffering from "mania." James' "By Whom Supported" was the City of Charleston, and as a consequence, he was considered a pauper patient and a resident of

Charleston. His place of Nativity was marked as “S.C.” like most patients admitted in early 1869. Yet, unlike other patients beside him in the ledger, James C. Holloway was identified as having a unique occupation that required skill and earned significant profit: “Blacksmith.” Most other patients, white and black alike, received occupations such as “Farmer,” “Field Hand,” or “None.” Nothing about his single admission line in the ledger-book suggests that James C. Holloway was a person of color. Nevertheless, James belonged to an extraordinary family famous in Charleston by 1869: a family of free people of color, who had long dominated the city as skilled carpenters and enslavers. Consequently, James C. Holloway’s case proves the exhausting however fascinating difficulty and uncertainty that comes with studying racial difference and discrimination at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum during the 1860s.⁶⁶⁷

Many patients obtained only an admission line at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, although many also eventually earned a discharge, removal, or death notice in the Admissions/Discharge ledger-book. A small yet significant portion of patients received additional patient treatment notes, typically in the form of a hefty paragraph, which detailed diagnosis, symptoms, and expectations for recovery after a few weeks of observation. Sometime after his January 1869 admission, a South Carolina Lunatic Asylum physician wrote a patient treatment note for James C. Holloway, which reveals a surprising racial and social status not otherwise expected considering his admission line in the institution’s ledger-book. In this separate bound volume, the remarkable life of James C. Holloway is found amongst bizarre and lurid stories of patients. His identity becomes better understood and clarified in the narrative evaluative paragraph than on his initial solitary line of listed information. James’ patient treatment record began with his

⁶⁶⁷ James C. Holloway, #1959, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

name in supersized script followed by “Is a married man, a resident of Charleston S.C. and was brought to the Asylum in a state of lunacy Jan. 6 1869,” all confirmation of material first presented in the admission ledger. Yet the next sentence alters the very deepest understanding of James C. Holloway’s identity and better realizes him as he was in his time period, a free man color accustomed to rather astonishing privilege: “He is of mixed blood but never has been a slave, has a common education and belongs to the better class of African Society in the City of Charleston.” It is perhaps James’ “mixed-blood” that encouraged some lenient documentation in the admission-book and perhaps led to the creation of this supplementary patient treatment record that described more about his case more than what most patients – white or black – received during the same time period. Remarkably, not all South Carolina Lunatic Asylum patients attained a patient treatment record, though it is unclear why some were neglected while others earned additional consideration. In James’ case, this secondary document opens a window to a world that, once fully explored, reveals an unexpected realm showing the life of free people of color in Charleston, their intimate bonds with each other, and their disassociation with enslaved people of color.⁶⁶⁸

In the 1860 U.S. Federal Census for Charleston County, South Carolina, James C. Holloway appears as “James Holloway,” a “mulatto” man, age “35,” working as a carpenter in the city. His real estate was valued at \$1500, suggesting that he owned a small home in Charleston, further validated by the “mulatto” woman Catherine Packer, an older dressmaker, who resided beside him and also owned a place valued at \$1500. James and the rest of the Holloway family all had South Carolina listed as their birthplace, indicating that he, his wife, and their children had never been enslaved though

⁶⁶⁸ James C. Holloway, #248, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

they had always lived in the U.S. South. His wife, Cretea, three years younger than him, was also considered a “m” for “mulatto,” as were their three children, May, Martha, and Ella, ages seven, four, and two, respectively. May, their oldest daughter, was marked as having attended school in 1860 before the U.S. Civil War, while other people of color in Charleston labored as enslaved workers and had illiteracy legally enforced upon them. All around the Holloway family resided recent European immigrants, mostly from Germany and Ireland, who were employed as common laborers, butchers, bakers, and merchants. Somehow James had managed to prevail in a world that denigrated men of color.⁶⁶⁹

The reason for James C. Holloway’s evident success in the 1860 U.S. Federal Census was his father and his grandfather, two freed men of color, both named Richard Holloway. A descendant of Richard Sr. created a Holloway Family Scrapbook, which includes small segments of history of the family, including a miniature portrait of Richard Sr. This small-scale painting reveals a light-skinned well-dressed man with chiseled face and somber clothes; it would not at all be evident that he was a man of color from this image. A 1797 document declared Richard Sr., “a seaman a free Mulatto Man who being duly sworn on the Holy Evangelist of Almighty God... despose testify and declair that he was born in Essex County in the State of Maryland one of the United States of America and has always been in the employ of Citizens of the same.” The document further described Richard as “a Free Mulato Man... about twenty years of age Five feet eight inches high black wooly hair brown eyes yellowish complexion no small-pox mark.” By the 1820s and 1830s, Richard Holloway Sr. was paying significant amounts of money in

⁶⁶⁹ Year: 1860; Census Place: *Charleston Ward 8, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *M653_1216*; Page: 487; Family History Library Film: 805216.

taxes to the City Treasurer because he had begun the incredibly important and challenging work of being a carpenter in the developing city of Charleston.⁶⁷⁰ Richard Holloway Sr. had married the daughter of James Mitchell, a free man of color and one of the founders of the Brown Fellowship Society, an association of free people of color in Charleston. Soon the Holloways would be considered “one of Charleston’s most distinguished free people of color families.” Richard Sr. built many houses in Charleston, including ones located 20 Beaufain Street, 221 Calhoun Street, 96 Smith Street, and 72 Pitt Street. He and his family “lived on the premises” of 20 Beaufain Street “for over 100 years, leading their community, and running a school for free people of color behind their house.”⁶⁷¹ His family’s scrapbook includes many references to his participation in the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as slave bills of sale in the early nineteenth century, clearly indicating that the Holloway family experienced very little cognitive dissonance of simultaneously being religious free people of color and claiming to own enslaved people of color. An 1829 bill of sale for “a negro woman slave named Betty aged about twenty four or six years” indicates the casual yet deliberate approach that Richard Holloway Sr. and his family had towards enslaved people of color. Similarly, an 1837 bid for Richard Sr.’s sale, which is a small scrap of paper, shows “Mr. Gadsden is offd [offered] \$900 each for Holloway’s negroes; it is a good price and Mr. G advises the offer to be taken.”⁶⁷² The interstate trading of enslaved people of color ultimately perpetuated the system of slavery and the oppression faced by people of color long after

⁶⁷⁰ Holloway Family Scrapbook, Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina. A digital reproduction is accessible online: <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:20264>

⁶⁷¹ “Charleston’s Free People of Color,” College of Charleston Special Collections, accessed January 1, 2017, <http://speccoll.cofc.edu/charlestons-free-people-of-color/holloway-family-house/>.

⁶⁷² Holloway Family Scrapbook, Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston in Charleston, South Carolina.

emancipation took hold. The Holloway family of Charleston participated fully and knowingly in such slave trading, and they benefited from a U.S. Southern society and city founded on the beliefs of racial inequality in the form of white supremacy and black inferiority.

Although Richard Sr. and later his son Richard Jr., the father of the lunatic asylum patient James C. Holloway, could have avoided the enslavement of people of color, societal success was often best seen in the ownership of other humans. Indeed, as Bernard Powers wrote in *Black Charlestonians*: “Slaves represented another form of property held by free blacks,” and thus the Holloway family took to human trafficking and enslavement as a show of their wealth, power, and ambition.⁶⁷³ They likely also used enslaved labor to differentiate themselves from enslaved African-Americans: the Holloway family were regarded as “mulatto” or “mixed-blood,” and they fiercely supported the racial stratification evident in Charleston society by maintaining their light-skinned complexion and status as free people of color by enslaving darker-skinned African-Americans. Obviously the Holloway family were not the only free people of color who participated and perpetuated the system of slavery in Charleston or elsewhere in the U.S. South. However, James C. Holloway belonged to this particular unusual family, and it was their extraordinary world of race and racism, power and inequality, that he matured and thrived in.

It is unknown what James C. Holloway, his wife, and his three daughters experienced during the U.S. Civil War and early Reconstruction years. Charleston underwent tremendous transformation between 1860 and 1869, including the signing of

⁶⁷³ Bernard E. Powers, Jr., *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822-1885* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1994), 39.

nation-splitting secession, Confederate armament, artillery bombardment, naval blockade, countless military and civilian death, the joys and fears of African-American emancipation, the blow and relief from Confederate defeat, and the rebuilding of a city occupied by U.S. Federal military forces. History has not yet admitted where James C. Holloway and his family resided during these vital nine years nor the details of their experiences of war and Reconstruction. However, when James appeared at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum in January 1869, his patient treatment notes revealed some clarity about his uncertain situation over the past decade. The asylum described James as “29 years old and was employed in the business of a blacksmith.” The physician further explained that James’ “mind has been more or less affect[ed] for the last eighteen months but no cause has been assigned.” The previous eighteen months would have placed the start of James’ mental disturbance sometime in 1867, with the entirety of 1868 being one of mental illness. The admission book declared that James was suffering from “mania,” which seems appropriately described in his patient treatment notes: “Very troublesome when first admitted, tearing his bedding and clothing, and acting out in different ways.” James’ energy level seemed unusually high, as the asylum remarked that he had “at first propensity to escape and on several has been successful in scaling the walls.” The institution and its staff had managed to keep James within the asylum long enough to write about his case and consider more of his symptoms.⁶⁷⁴

The final description in James C. Holloway’s patient treatment notes indicate that, by the writing of the document, the asylum physicians had studied him for some time, seemingly several days or weeks. The unknown writer explained that “tho’ sometimes” James was “noisy at night he has never been specially talkative but in what he does say

⁶⁷⁴ James C. Holloway, #248, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

betrays evident aberration of mind.” The staff-person continued with the usual concluding comments: “Not inclined to be vicious. General health good, and decided improvement in mind. Will probably recover.” Interestingly, the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum medical records about patients of color, particularly in cases like James, who were “mixed-blood” or “mulatto” and of a “better class of African Society in the City of Charleston,” do not read as prejudiced diatribes about the mental and physical inferiority of people of color. Instead, James’ patient treatment notes – like his admission line – appear quite similar to white patients admitted throughout the 1860s. Some of the wordage is actually identical to that provided for white patients, which suggests a standardized language being constructed within the state lunatic asylum in reference to patients of all kinds across races and specific symptoms. However, James C. Holloway is a remarkably unusual case considering the clearly unique position that he had as a free person of color before the U.S. Civil War, especially as a descendant of Richard Holloway Sr., the famous carpenter of Charleston and leader of black slaveholders in the city. Prior to the war, James had mastered a significant skilled occupation, owned a significant house in Charleston, and supported a solid nuclear family residing amongst immigrants and other “mulatto” people. His unusual role in Charleston had clearly transferred over into the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum.⁶⁷⁵

Both the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum admission book and its admissions/discharges record note that James C. Holloway did not stay long at the state institution. In the space generously labeled “REMARKS” in the admission book, James earned the short sentence: “Cured and sent home in June 1869” in faint lead pencil.⁶⁷⁶ In

⁶⁷⁵ James C. Holloway, #248, SCLA Patient Treatment Records, 1828-1880.

⁶⁷⁶ James C. Holloway, #1959, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

the admissions/discharges book, James obtained greater specificity when the asylum physicians noted that “J.C. Holloway of Charleston” – a pauper patient – was cured and discharged on June 2, 1869.⁶⁷⁷ As the asylum had imagined earlier in the year, James had indeed recovered from his bout of “mania,” at least to the extent that those in the institution believed him cured and safe enough to return home to Charleston. As we know from other patients, James may have been in a manic episode which had dulled or ended, creating the appearance that whatever treatment the state lunatic asylum gave him had its desired effect. James’ return home in June 1869 showed that the asylum believed him, for the present moment at least, cured of his insanity and able to live among other sane people in a crowded urban environment.

A Freedmen’s Bureau document from 1870, the next year, demonstrate that James C. Holloway’s life had changed tremendously since 1860, although these transformations were not noted or investigated in the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum record. James C. Holloway completed a Freedman’s Bureau Bank application on June 4, 1870, as Daniel Tucker Broomfield had done in Georgia during the same time period. James declared that he had been born in Charleston, South Carolina and was “brought up” there as well. He resided at 21 College Street, likely in a home built by his grandfather or father. He was “31” and was of “sandy” complexion. His occupation was “Port Warden” – no longer the “blacksmith” of the 1860 U.S. Federal Census or his 1869 state lunatic asylum records. He marked his wife’s name as Charlotte, and that he had one son named Richard Drayton. This was not the name of his first wife, which indicates she had passed away between 1860 and 1872, and none of his three daughters were listed, either, implying

⁶⁷⁷ James C. Holloway, Discharged 1869-06-02, SCSHI Admissions and Discharges, 1860-1964.

they, too, had died.⁶⁷⁸ Although James had survived the lunatic asylum, his small family from 1860 had not, but he had already gathered around him a young wife and child to restart his world of work, privilege, and kinship. He was joined in applying for a Freedmen's Bureau Bank account by his father, Richard Holloway Jr., who similarly filled out a form detailing family genealogy. He, too, had suffered between 1860 and 1870, but Richard Jr. had been exceptionally successful in the antebellum period, to the point that it would not be impossible to suggest that the war worsened his life rather than bettered it.⁶⁷⁹

One of the earliest state records about Richard Jr.'s life is the 1850 U.S. Federal Census, when he was notably listed residing beside white elites in Charleston. His next-door neighbors included Thomas W. Malone, an English attorney-at-law; F. W. Saltus, a clerk with \$6000 in real estate; George O. Robinson, a Professor of Music from New Hampshire; Edward Cranston, a young clerk caring for an elderly woman and a young boy; W. F. Kugley, the engineer son of an Englishwoman; and Peter Wellington, a Massachusetts shop keeper. By 1850, Richard Jr. was a well-established "mulatto" carpenter at forty years of age; he had long been following in the footsteps of his father Richard Sr. He had inherited both his talent and skill at carpentry and the success that came with being an ambitious free person of color in Charleston. His real estate was worth an impressive \$3000 in 1850. Richard Jr., his wife Eliza, and his children John, Mary, and Edwin, had all been born in South Carolina. Notably, although John and Mary were of school-age, neither had attended school in the last year, unlike their similarly aged white neighbors. It is not clear if they had attended a local school for free children

⁶⁷⁸ *Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865-1874*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. Micropublication M816, 27 rolls.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

of color but not a traditional school that only accepted white Charlestonians. Certainly, Richard Jr.'s children were educated, as he was by his father.⁶⁸⁰ In the 1852 Charleston City Directory, Richard was listed as a carpenter who resided at 38 Mazyck Street. Several other Holloway men worked as carpenters and resided on Beaufain Street, while others with the Holloway surname lived on Calhoun St. and College St. Those of the Holloway name appear well-established in the antebellum era of Charleston as skilled men of color, plainly visible in an environment that otherwise denigrated African-Americans and imagined them best enslaved.⁶⁸¹

In a strange moment that strikes cold realization, Richard Holloway is found in another document in the 1850 federal record: the 1850 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedule for Charleston. Listed beside his neighbors, Martha Kugley – the English mother of W.F. Kugley – and Peter Wellington, the Massachusetts shopkeeper, is Richard Holloway, who was declared as owning a thirty-eight-year-old black man. In the abbreviated lingo of the 1850 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedule, the information appears as: “[Name of Slave Owner] Richard Holloway. [Number of Slaves] 1. [Age of Slave] 38. [Sex of Slave] M. [Color of Slave] B.” In 1850, Richard himself was a forty-year-old “mulatto” man, and it appears quite unmistakably that he had decided to enslave a black man only a few years younger than himself. Nevertheless, an impossibly huge gulf existed between Richard the “mulatto” carpenter and the nameless enslaved “black” man, made all the more apparent by Richard’s decision to enslave him and perpetuate

⁶⁸⁰ Year: 1850; Census Place: *St Michael and St Phillip, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *M432_850*; Page: 222B; Image: 285.

⁶⁸¹ *A Directory for the City of Charleston* (Charleston, South Carolina: J. H. Bagget, 1852), 59.

racial inequality against those deemed “black.”⁶⁸² By 1860, this unknown enslaved man was no longer “owned” by Richard Holloway, who most likely had sold him to another free person of color or a white Charlestonian. Instead, Richard claimed to own a sixteen-year-old black man. The 1860 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedule writes this arrangement as “[Name of Slave Owner] R. Holoway. [Number of Slaves] 1. [Sex of Slave] M. [Color of Slave] B.”⁶⁸³

In the complementary document, the 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Richard Jr. himself was “R. Holloway,” age “57,” again marked as “m” for “mulatto.” He continued his skilled work as a carpenter in Charleston and now boasted a wildly impressive \$7500 in real estate (an increase from 1850’s \$3000 value). Additionally, Richard Jr. claimed \$1500 in personal estate, which included the value of the young man that he had enslaved, as well as his own personal belongings. His wife – and James’ mother – Eliza was “45” and identified as “m” for “mulatto.” The couple had their two sixteen-year-old sons residing with them, one of whom had attended school in the past year.⁶⁸⁴ It seems quite disturbing to consider that Richard also housed another sixteen-year-old young man, the “black” slave that he claimed on the 1860 U.S. Federal Census – Slave Schedule. It is unclear what the relationship between these three young men could have been or must have been. Had Richard Holloway Jr. purchased the unnamed sixteen-year-old “black” slave to be a companion for his two “mulatto” sons? Was this in an attempt at distancing them from enslaved men of color, bringing them to a higher racial and social

⁶⁸² United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1850. M432, 1,009 rolls.

⁶⁸³ United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1860. M653, 1,438 rolls.

⁶⁸⁴ Year: 1860; Census Place: Charleston Ward 4, Charleston, South Carolina; Roll: M653_1216; Page: 333; Family History Library Film: 805216.

stratification, or an attempt to bring them to a better understanding of enslaved life in Charleston? Was this possibly an act of charity, or was this just endless cruelty enacted upon a young man on the eve of war?

Richard Holloway Jr. and his family survived the U.S. Civil War and saw the emancipation of enslaved people of color throughout Charleston, South Carolina, and the United States. On June 10, 1870, a census enumerator described Richard Jr.'s latest occupation as a "Laborer," a noticeable and almost certainly painful downgrade from the skilled "carpenter" of other decades that he had inherited so nobly and purposefully from his father. In another painful injury to the Holloway heart, Richard Jr. had no listed real estate or personal estate. His wife, referred to as Elizabeth, was a "Laundress," the first time an occupation had been assigned to her and undoubtedly one that challenged many of the family's assumptions of privilege and status. Several young girls resided with them: Emma, age eight, and Ann, age ten. Similarly, a young man named John resided with the Holloways, also working as a "Laborer." Two other young women lived with the family who did not share the Holloway surname: E. Guest, age fifteen, and Sarah Bowles, age six. The relationship between these five young individuals – the first three who had the Holloway name but were not Richard and Eliza's children – is unclear and not described in the census.⁶⁸⁵

A tremendous transformation had swept over the Holloway family: in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census, they were first designated as "B" for "Black," each and every member of the household, from Richard Jr. to Sarah Bowles. The antebellum racial designation of "mulatto" utterly disappeared in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census for

⁶⁸⁵ Year: 1870; Census Place: *Charleston Ward 6, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *M593_1487*; Page: *474B*; Image: *11700*; Family History Library Film: *552986*.

Charleston. One wonders how hurt Richard Holloway Jr. and the rest of his family was at its disappearance, or if they even knew that the census enumerator called them “B” for “Black.” The striking demotion must have been a crushing blow to a family that prided itself on racial difference from enslaved African-Americans. However, Emma, Ann, and Sarah Bowles were all marked as having attended school in the last year. Similarly, Richard Jr., Eliza, John, and E. Guest all earned marks that designated them as literate. While certain things had clearly changed for the Holloway family, from superior racial status to monetary savings to skilled occupations, other features, such as emphasis on education and a strong familial network, endured through the war and into Reconstruction.⁶⁸⁶

Like Daniel Broomfield, a stranger to him, and James C. Holloway, his son, Richard Jr. joined the many men of color who applied for a Freedman’s Bureau Bank account. His application came late in February 19, 1872. He declared his address to be “15 College” Street, and the account included his age at “64” and his complexion as “Light.” His occupation was noted as “cask appraiser” – a very unusual profession but made somewhat more understandable as he apparently worked for the “City” of Charleston. His wife was named simply as Eliza, while his children earned full names in lovely, heavy script. Their offspring were: Georgiana H. Shewsbury, James Coming Holloway, and Benjamin Edwin Holloway. Notably, James C. Holloway is included in this list with his full name, which had not yet appeared on any other documentation. The middle name “Coming” is a street name in Charleston, South Carolina, where Richard Sr. had built houses in the early nineteenth century. The touching tribute further emphasizes the intentional difference that the Holloway family saw in themselves and enslaved

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid.

people of color: they were skilled craftsmen and helped construct the city of Charleston. Their very names meant creative construction and hard work. As Daniel similarly supplied on his bank application, Richard Jr. included his father and mother, Richard (d) or deceased, and Elizabeth (d) or deceased, as well.⁶⁸⁷

Before his death on December 20, 1888, Richard Holloway Jr. made one last appearance in the 1880 U.S. Federal Census. Richard Jr. must have felt some sort of pleasure as the census enumerator identified him once again as “Mu” for “Mulatto.” He was a remarkable seventy-three years old and employed in the mysterious profession of “Jury Commissioner,” which evidently showed the City of Charleston’s renewed trust and respect for him and the Holloway family. Eliza, his sixty-four-year-old wife, was “Keeping home,” and no longer working as a “Laundress,” which, again, must have come as a tremendous relief for the family. Three young people in the house – all marked as “Mu” for “Mulatto” – were further labeled as their grandchildren. George, Mary, and Henry – ages 21, 18, and 10 – had bright futures ahead, with George working as a “Boatmaker” and Mary as an “Appren. Mantua Maker.” A sixty-year-old son-in-law, James Da Costa, also worked as a “Boatmaker.”⁶⁸⁸ Nearby on College Street in Charleston was James C. Holloway, Richard Jr.’s son, a brief patient at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, though no other record ever revealed his institutionalization. In 1880, James resided with his second wife, Charlotte, three daughters, and one son, who had also recovered the “Mu” for “Mulatto” label. The arrival of four children in the 1870s – in 1871, 1874, 1877, and 1878 – must have delighted James and Richard Jr. By

⁶⁸⁷ *Registers of Signatures of Depositors in Branches of the Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, 1865-1874*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. Micropublication M816, 27 rolls.

⁶⁸⁸ Year: 1880; Census Place: Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina; Roll: 1222; Family History Film: 1255222; Page: 253A; Enumeration District: 064.

1880, James had returned to work as a “Blacksmith,” instead of doing “Labor,” and was employed a full “12 mos” out of the year. His success must have pleased his father, and their close family network likely thrived as the turmoil of Reconstruction had ceased. After all, Richard Holloway Jr. remained incredibly close to his son: they lived only several houses apart from each other on College Street in Charleston. Their spatial place in life mirrored their proximity on the census with Richard on the 21st page and James on the 22nd. As the nineteenth century wore on, they continued to succeed together, father and son, keeping the Holloway name meaningful and respectable.⁶⁸⁹

A final intriguing feature emerges in the 1880 U.S. Federal Census: the new additions of “Birthplace of Father” and “Birthplace of Mother.” Although for James, these were both filled with South Carolina, as were those columns for his children, that was not the case for Richard Jr. and his wife Eliza. In contrast, Richard Sr. was noted as being born in Maryland, and his mother, South Carolina; although not documented, they were both freed people of color. Even more unusually, Eliza’s father was from Germany, and her mother, South Carolina. The census provides the sudden knowledge that some of the Holloway family’s “mulatto” racial designation originates from Eliza’s German father marrying a South Carolinian woman of unknown racial status. Although James’ racial lineage has not yet been fully understood, it is clear that a great deal of European heritage was understood and prided by the Holloway family through Eliza’s father.⁶⁹⁰ The long legacy of the Holloway “mulatto” or “mixed-blood” racial identity swept down all the way into the postwar South Carolina Lunatic Asylum records, where James C. Holloway

⁶⁸⁹ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: 1222; Family History Film: 1255222; Page: 253B; Enumeration District: 064.

⁶⁹⁰ Year: 1880; Census Place: *Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: 1222; Family History Film: 1255222; Page: 253A; Enumeration District: 064.

escaped the “(colored)” label in the admissions ledger and assumedly lesser quality treatment by the asylum staff and physicians. He certainly attracted additional attention when he received a patient treatment record, which remained a relatively unusual document for most patients during Reconstruction. Furthermore, James C. Holloway survived the state lunatic asylum itself, only staying at the institution for six months. He was never noted as insane in the U.S. Federal Census, avoiding a much more permanent stigma of mental illness.

In the summer of 1871, James C. Holloway was even called as a petty juror for the United States District Court for the November term of the court in – just two years after his discharge from the state lunatic asylum.⁶⁹¹ Notably, in his role as juror, he was marked in Reconstruction as “Colored” – a far cry from the height of antebellum privilege that he relished as a free person of color among millions of enslaved black people. In a bizarre twist of fate, the trial that James C. Holloway served on as a juror was the notorious 1871-1872 Ku Klux Klan trials of South Carolina, where the U.S. Justice Department criminally charged five white Klansmen with violating the Enforcement Act, conspiracy to prevent blacks from voting, and conspiracy to oppress, threaten, and intimate blacks who had exercised their right to vote in 1870 and in the upcoming 1872 election. Most of the men of color who he served with on the jury were previously enslaved men; it proves fascinating to consider if these former slaves recognized James C. Holloway as the son and grandson former black slaveholders.⁶⁹²

⁶⁹¹ “The United States Court,” *The Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, South Carolina), 03 August 1871, page 3.

⁶⁹² “The Ku-Klux Trials,” *The Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, South Carolina), 04 December 1871, page 1; Mark Thornburn, “South Carolina Ku Klux Klan Trials: 1871-72.” *Great American Trials. Encyclopedia.com*, (March 26, 2017), <http://www.encyclopedia.com/law/law-magazines/south-carolina-ku-klux-klan-trials-1871-72>.

Ultimately, as the nineteenth century advanced onward, both James and his father both regained their family's prized racial status of "mulatto" rather than "black" after the tradition-upsetting era of Reconstruction ended in the U.S. South. Nevertheless, in a U.S. South where all men of color were recognized as free citizens, James C. Holloway and Richard Holloway Jr. were most likely more frequently positioned alongside "colored" men who were previous slaves and thus treated more poorly in some areas of society than they had been before the U.S. Civil War.

In 1888, Richard Holloway Jr. was buried at the Brown Fellowship Society Cemetery on Pitt Street in Charleston with the rest of the extended Holloway family, who were all free people of color and had long enjoyed privileged status since the late eighteenth century.⁶⁹³ It is unclear precisely when James C. Holloway died or the exact spot he was buried, but a generous assumption can be made that he joined his parents and grandparents at the Brown Fellowship Society Cemetery on Pitt Street. Founded in 1790 and lasting until 1945, the Brown Fellowship Society now "provides a major historical example of how racism affected the African American community itself, in that lighter-skinned African Americans in the Society considered themselves superior to darker skinned African Americans." Before the turn of the nineteenth century, prominent freed men of color who were members of the interracial St. Phillips Episcopal Church in Charleston created the all-male Brown Fellowship Society so to "establish their own cemetery... believing it would foster a sense of social unity among them" and "to provide respectable funerals for Society members, support widows, and educate surviving children." The term "Brown" in the organization's title refers to the light complexion of

⁶⁹³ South Carolina Department of Archives and History; Columbia, South Carolina; *South Carolina Death Records*; Year Range: 1875-1899; Year: 1888; Death County or Certificate Range: *Charleston*. Person: *Richard Holloway*.

the freed men of color in the Society. Throughout the nineteenth century, enslaved men of color were not permitted to join, and the freed men of color who gained membership paid fairly significant fees for initiation and regular dues. After the U.S. Civil War, the Brown Fellowship Society was forced to change “to include more African-Americans, including women and those of darker skin, and changed its name to the Century Fellowship Society.” In the late 1950s, after World War II, the Brown Fellowship Society cemetery on Pitt Street – where Richard Sr., Richard Jr., and most likely James C. Holloway were all buried – was “paved over so that a parking lot could be built for Catholic Bishop England High School.”⁶⁹⁴ Furthermore, when the College of Charleston broke ground for Addlestone Library in the same area, construction workers found human remains, as one might when a cemetery was deliberately paved over.⁶⁹⁵ In 1990, descendants of those buried in the cemetery erected “a small memorial to their ancestors, who are buried beneath the asphalt” where the high school parking lot had been.⁶⁹⁶ In 2008, the College of Charleston erected and dedicated a monument to the site of the Brown Fellowship Society cemetery on the site.⁶⁹⁷

The threads tying together the stories of Lewis Griffin, Mourning Flournoy, and James C. Holloway are many and are not limited to their racial status as “colored.” Indeed, where Lewis and Mourning were undoubtedly enslaved people in Georgia, identified as “colored” and “negro” and “slaves” in accounts of their lives, James knew

⁶⁹⁴ Sarah Bartlett, “Brown Fellowship Society (1790-1945),” BlackPast.org, accessed January 1, 2017, <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/brown-fellowship-society-1790-1945>.

⁶⁹⁵ “Brown Fellowship and MacPhelah Society Cemeteries,” College of Charleston Special Collections, accessed January 1, 2017, <http://speccoll.cofc.edu/charlestons-free-people-of-color/brown-fellowship-and-macphelah-society-cemeteries/>.

⁶⁹⁶ Sarah Bartlett, “Brown Fellowship Society (1790-1945),” BlackPast.org, accessed January 1, 2017, <http://www.blackpast.org/aah/brown-fellowship-society-1790-1945>.

⁶⁹⁷ “Brown Fellowship and MacPhelah Society Cemeteries,” College of Charleston Special Collections, accessed January 1, 2017, <http://speccoll.cofc.edu/charlestons-free-people-of-color/brown-fellowship-and-macphelah-society-cemeteries/>.

human slavery as a proponent and perpetrator of the oppressive system rather than a victim of its cruelty. However, as both the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylum records show in conjunction with the Freedmen's Bureau Bank records and the U.S. Federal Censuses, these three individuals were understood by white medical professionals and white Reconstruction government agents as people and patients of color. As such, all three were identified as "colored" and treated under that understanding of their racial character and experience. However, conduct towards Lewis, Mourning, and James differed quite extensively, which provides significant evidence that no person and patient of color during early Reconstruction can best exemplify or represent the rest. Instead, the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums must be understood as sites of breathtaking diversity in the lived experiences of those institutionalized within the asylum walls. While a young man like Lewis Griffin, marked insane by the Freedmen's Bureau Hospital system, could be shot for alleged thievery and then remain at the state lunatic asylum for decades, there were also young women such as Mourning Flournoy, who had been terribly assaulted during slavery in the U.S. Civil War and whose brother imagined that she would find aid in the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, though she instead found a rapid and undignified death far from family. To further complicate our understanding of the wide variety of experiences had by people and patients of color during early Reconstruction, we must consider the life of James C. Holloway, the son and grandson of skilled craftsmen and elite freed people of color, who owned both houses and humans in the antebellum period.

Many more patients of color at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylum could have been included in this study, though their stories would have been more

fragmentary than those of Lewis, Mourning, and James. Yet even the tiny shards of life, disability, and death that the state institutions present help further the portrait of African-American existence during early Reconstruction. There are other freed people of color to join James C. Holloway, such as Sarah Mortimer, who was admitted to the South Carolina Asylum in September 1865 and again in August 1873.⁶⁹⁸ Her father, Daniel Mortimer, and the rest of her family were identified as “b” for “black” in the U.S. Federal Census beginning in 1850, “mulatto” in 1860, “black” in 1870, and “black” again in 1880. Unlike the Holloway family, the Mortimer family appear to have been working-class freed people of color in Charleston, with Sarah’s father repeatedly being listed as a “fisherman” and her mother, a “washerwoman,” “laundress,” or “cook.”⁶⁹⁹ There are more confusing and unsettling admissions to the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, such as Venus, a black woman admitted in August 1867, whose marital status and age were both scribbled as “27.” Like James C. Holloway and Sarah Mortimer, Venus came from Charleston, but due to the lack of provided information about her personal background and medical history, her story ends just as it begins.⁷⁰⁰ To make Venus’s case all the more bewildering, her death date was marked as November 13, 1868, about a year and two months after her admission; her name was given as “Chloe alias Venus,”; and her cause of death was identified as “Old Age,” throwing even more confusion on the “27” under both her marital status and age in her admission.⁷⁰¹ Considering the mythological name

⁶⁹⁸ Sarah Mortimer, #1430, #2127, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

⁶⁹⁹ Year: 1850; Census Place: *St Michael and St Phillip, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *M432_850*; Page: 180B; Image: 201; Year: 1860; Census Place: *Charleston Ward 5, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *M653_1216*; Page: 380; Family History Library Film: 805216; Year: 1870; Census Place: *Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: *M593_1487*; Page: 346B; Image: 1587; Family History Library Film: 552986; Year: 1880; Census Place: *Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina*; Roll: 1222; Family History Film: 1255222; Page: 214B; Enumeration District: 062.

⁷⁰⁰ Venus, #1547, SCLA Admissions Books, 1828-1947.

⁷⁰¹ Chloe Alias Venus, Died 1868-11-13, 1862-11-14, SCSHI Admissions and Discharges, 1860-1964.

“Venus,” a frequently provided moniker for enslaved women, Venus appears quite different in both racial identity, historical information, and institutional and societal treatment than her Charleston counterparts, James C. Holloway and Sarah Mortimer.

In the Georgia Lunatic Asylum between 1867 and 1869, the significant variety of people and patients of color committed to the state institution similarly reveal the extraordinary multiplicity of lived experiences of African-Americans during Reconstruction. From Jim, the first African-American forcibly admitted by the Federal Provost Marshall in August 1865, to William Patterson, the last “colored lunatic” admitted during the 1860s on December 28, 1869, the range of experiences, stories, and symptoms is tremendous. While Jim did not receive a description of his life prior to institutionalization, including the total absence of a social network, the admission entry of William Patterson in December 1869 reads very similarly to white patients committed during the 1860s. The asylum staff-person included not only a possible length of insanity but admitted that the cause was “unknown,” rather than leaving it unstated. Almost certainly due to the party bringing him, William received an extended account of his mental illness: “Went to bed in usual health, in the night had an epileptic convulsion, and his mind has been manifestly affected ever since. Is gradually growing worse. Has had no convulsion since. Is generally quiet, but is occasionally excited, and in such a paroxysm, four weeks back, endeavored to kill his father with an axe.”⁷⁰² The inclusion of these additional details breathes life into the dry paper and the otherwise lackluster understanding of patients of color. Unlike in Jim’s case, William has a specific nightly routine, a chaotic convulsion, a pattern of escalating abnormal behavior, and a sudden show of violence towards his living father. He becomes more human with these

⁷⁰² William Patterson, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 279.

supplementary details, which in turn emphasizes the dehumanization that the Georgia Lunatic Asylum intentionally or unintentionally enacted when the institution poorly recorded most people of color, certain poor whites, and those with intellectual disabilities during the 1860s.

Yet, as if to remind us that these two African-American men were not so distant or unrelated, both Jim and William resided at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum in the same time period, even though Jim was admitted four years earlier. Both men met their fate in 1873: Jim was discharged on October 17, but William died of epilepsy on May 13.⁷⁰³ Due to the absence of social network in Jim's case, it is unclear where he went or who he went to once he was discharged from the asylum. However, William's family appears to have been "notified" by the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, as indicated by the single word written after his date and cause of death. His social network back home in Jefferson County would be informed about his passing four years after his institutionalization, but one wonders if any of Jim's family or friends knew where he had gone, or if he knew where to find them once he was released from the asylum. The absolutely amazing diversity of lived experiences of patients and people of color at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylum should not be minimized: this multiplicity provides humanity and clarity to the still lacking stories of life and death of African-Americans during Reconstruction in the U.S. South. Although much more investigative work should be done with these two U.S. Southern state institutions and their records, the first foray into these materials has uncovered great mental and physical suffering, extensive and intimate social networks, and surprising experiences, both common and unusual, shared and unique among people of color during Reconstruction.

⁷⁰³ Jim, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 131.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

In September 1865, Augustus Marks, a “Lunatic and Epileptic of and From Newton Co.,” entered the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. His family “always” considered him “a weak minded person” but noted he “did good work on the farm.” However, “about seven months back,” Augustus had “refused to do so and manifested a disposition to commit acts of violence, particularly upon his Mother.” The Marks family endured seven months of lost labor, erratic behavior, and domestic violence through the end of the U.S. Civil War and the initial months of Reconstruction. Nevertheless, by September 1865, Nancy Marks committed her son, age thirty one, to the state institution for the insane. When she did so, she left behind a concluding note on his admission record: “If he should die, telegraph Mr. W. No. Huff, Conyers, who will come for his remains.” And there in the asylum Augustus Marks did die – five thousand and two days later on June 1, 1879 – through the entirety of Reconstruction and into the early days of Henry Grady’s New South. It is unknown and unclear if Mr. Huff, a presumed neighbor and friend to the Marks family, came for Augustus’s body after thirteen years since his promise to do so.⁷⁰⁴

Asylum staff penned the strange and melancholy phrase “If he should die” in several admission records, not only for Augustus Marks. Another patient, Seaborn Reynolds, admitted in November 1866, had been mentally unwell long before the U.S.

⁷⁰⁴ Augusta Marks, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 133.

Civil War, but when “Shermans Army... burned his father’s house,” Seaborn had been increasingly “excited” and violent, especially towards his family. His lengthy admission ended: “Should he die send his remains to Forest 16 Mile Post Geo. R. R.,” and indeed, Seaborn did die at the Georgia Lunatic Asylum – twenty-one years later on October 4, 1891. As with Augustus, it is not clear if anyone removed his remains to his homestead.⁷⁰⁵ Several men and women, both young and elderly, received similar commentary; some died, others were discharged, and a few have still unknown fates at the asylum. The significance of “If he should die” rests in every word of the phrase: the “if” and “should” may dominate, emphasizing familial and societal ambiguity towards the disabled and mentally ill, but even the “he” and “die” suggest deep understandings of identity, culture, family, and community. These patients were not so thoroughly dehumanized that they lacked gender, sex, class, or race; instead, these key variables of identity controlled their recognition upon admission, their mental and physical treatment during their stay at the institution, and the handling of their body after death. However, through analyzing the mass number of Georgia Lunatic Asylum patients, we can tell that no African-American patients during the 1860s received the peculiar call of “If he should die.” The phrase, it seems, indicating worry and ambivalence of a family residing elsewhere, was not imagined for black patients in the first years after emancipation.

For many, the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums acted as borderlands: fluid places where people became patients and then left as people once more. The profound stigma that we associate with mental illness and disability did not haunt many who were institutionalized during the 1860s at these two U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums. Instead, families and communities brought loved ones and citizens to the grand

⁷⁰⁵ Seaborn Reynolds, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 181-182.

asylum walls as individuals suffering and struggling with disorder, and the state institution transformed them into medicalized patients as it swept them through the doors. While some never escaped the shadowy depths of the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums, others stepped out onto the shore and walked back to civilization. Of these who managed to return to society, there was no certainty or clarity regarding the influence of institutionalization on their lives. Many never returned to a state or private lunatic asylum, and their family never notified federal authorities about their earlier charge of insanity or disability. Some never left home again but were permanently marked as Other, as Insane, in the U.S. Federal Census, in their community, and within their family. And a surprising and significant number traversed the shoreline of the state lunatic asylum, moving in and out of its waters, over sand, and into society, back and forth, as needed, for decades. Some became soldiers, spouses, and parents in their time back in the wider world before stepping back towards the state lunatic asylum; others became veterans, widows and widowers, and orphans during their worldcrossing.

During all of the aforementioned patient-people worldtraveling, the U.S. Civil War raged and ended, and Reconstruction stormed across U.S. Southern society. Reconstruction fundamentally altered the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums, forcing the frequent admissions of people of color, many once enslaved, some always freed, into places originally imagined as sanctuaries for unwell white citizens. As the 1860s unfolded through war and tumult, the two state institutions witnessed the earliest stages of a much longer transformation. Instead of a place where many people only temporarily crossed into patienthood and could return home in life or death, the asylums mutated into permanent warehouses full of suffering forgotten. As the decades advanced,

the Georgia Lunatic Asylum, in particular, no longer frequently permitted return access to U.S. Southern society. Eventually regarded as “the nation’s largest psychiatric hospital” by the mid-twentieth century, the Georgia Lunatic Asylum transmogrified to the Georgia State Sanitarium then Central State Hospital, and patient populations swelled to impossible numbers, leading to rampant abuse and neglect. Through the 1860s, only 804 people – black and white – were committed to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. However, many remained long after the decade ended, some residing at the institution until the twentieth century. In 1904, the hospital averaged an previously unimaginable two thousand eight hundred and eighty patients residing in its various buildings. By the 1950s, newly constructed buildings – absolutely massive in scope and in complete contradiction to original utopian plans – could warehouse thirteen thousand patients at one time. An annual report by the Board of Trustees for the then Georgia State Sanitarium explained that a fundamental difference existed between asylums as “home[s] for the insane, where they are to be cared for at the least possible cost to the state” and asylums as hospitals, “where everything modern science can devise is brought to bear upon its patients in the effort to restore them to health and reason.” The difference could only be created and sustained through one vital ingredient: increased state funding. Yet Georgia and South Carolina alike never received significant state monies to redeem the mentally ill and disabled within their state institutions, and thus, by the early twentieth century, both asylums transformed into warehouses incorrectly labeled as hospitals.⁷⁰⁶

Beginning with the forced acceptance of people of color in the postwar 1860s, both Georgia and South Carolina confronted the reality that the intersectionality of

⁷⁰⁶ Alan Judd, “Asylum’s dark past relived as cycle ends,” *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* (January 20, 2013).

identities would become vital to treatment of its patients. While all patients were understood as unwell and disabled, outcast by society, civilization still infiltrated and cultural norms still reigned, causing segregation to dominate even these distant places. Beginning in 1865 and continuing well into the twentieth century, black and white patients resided in segregated facilities at both Georgia and South Carolina. In death, patients were buried separately according to racial identity, mirroring the experience of the dead outside the institution. Asylum physicians and staff had long addressed the intersection of disability with race, gender, sex, sexuality, and class before the rise of Jim Crow segregation. The vast difference in recorded information for black and white patients reveals a larger acknowledgement of racial difference and societal concern for some and not others. To be a mentally unwell white person in 1865 or 1890 or 1950 was simply a different lived experience than to be a mentally unwell person of color in those very same years. The distinction between their experiences relied on intervening culture, society, and medical authority, who perceived and treated the disabled and mentally ill differently based on the known and unspoken identities of patients, their families, and their communities.

Similarly, the privileges of white masculinity did not vanish upon entering U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums. Instead, gender, sex, and sexuality filtered through societal and cultural expectations and obligations. Although one might imagine a highly erratic doctor would not be allowed to perform surgery, lunatic asylum records reveal that indeed that happened with barely a missed beat from military or medical authorities. In contrast, one might expect a family to cease procreation if medical professionals explained a wife's mental illness was due to her pregnancy, but we repeatedly see women

entering state lunatic asylums for post-partum depression and psychosis, leaving and quickly becoming pregnant, and soon returning for the same reason. In a world where white men ruled as kings with white women as their queens and the producers of royal offspring, the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylum did not forget these predominant societal roles and prospects. A young white woman, “probably been a person of feeble mind all her life” who had recently become “a raving maniac, seeking to commit every possible act of violence,” in September 1866 still earned the prefix “Miss” from the Georgia Lunatic Asylum. Her subsequent discharge from the asylum after only seven months further confirms that race, gender, sex, and class privilege could combine positively for some patients, earning them kinder treatment by asylum staff, a permitted discharge from the institution, and a lack of permanent stigma about their mental illness.⁷⁰⁷

For scholars and historians, the past disregard for the mentally ill and disabled often occurs in the form of insufficient preservation of records. The surviving asylum materials at the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums demonstrate that admitted people were viewed first, foremost, and perhaps only as patients by this state medical institution. There is nothing terribly unusual about medical records making people into medical cases. If scholars and historians only study state lunatic asylum records seeking stories of medicine, however, then that is what they will find. We must do more thorough justice for the people turned into patients who rest in the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylum records during the U.S. Civil War and early Reconstruction. We must view them as suffering people and patients within intimate families, local communities,

⁷⁰⁷ Margarette Morse, Central State Hospital Case Histories, 1860-1873, Volume 3, 172-173.

and the broader U.S. South, as best we can with the limited information provided by the state lunatic asylum and other sources from the era.

Very few scholars have addressed the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums, separately or in conjunction with each other. The most notable historian, Peter McCandless, consistently studies the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum as a medical institution, pulling from its establishment in 1821 to the early twentieth century in the Progressive Era. His most prevalent argument holds that South Carolina was not a backwoods institution grasping for innovation but were instead “influenced by avant-garde ideas of moral treatment and therapeutic optimism” and “tried to emulate the practices of the more progressive northern and European asylums.”⁷⁰⁸ Furthermore, McCandless’s scholarly attention to the issue of race at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum allows for a deeper, much needed discussion of societal and cultural understandings of how racial identity intersected with disability during the nineteenth century before, during, and after the U.S. Civil War. McCandless’s assertion that “the care and treatment insane blacks received was primarily dependent upon the attitude and priorities of whites, who controlled the political, economic, and social institutions of the state” has been repeatedly confirmed in *If He Should Die*, yet McCandless wrote primarily an institutional history rather than an investigation of patient experience.⁷⁰⁹ His larger study of the forced biracial nature of the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum proves to be foundational for any intimate and tender exploration of white and black patients and their families and communities during the postwar era. Although McCandless chose to study the broader financial and political problems that plagued the South Carolina

⁷⁰⁸ McCandless, *Moonlight, Magnolias, and Madness*, 5.

⁷⁰⁹ McCandless, *Moonlight, Magnolias, and Madness*, 6.

Lunatic Asylum, his more abstract analysis of the complicated relations between federal, state, and local government and the state lunatic asylum reveal a place that seemed destined to turn from hopeful sanctuary to tragic warehouse.

In contrast, Diane Miller Sommerville has worked against an institutional narrative of state lunatic asylums to instead use these records as a part of a much larger project to address suffering and suicide of Confederate veterans of the U.S. Civil War. Her earliest work on the subject added to the limited historiography around Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) for U.S. Civil War veterans, in particular Eric Dean's *Shook Over Hell*, which compared and contrasted PTSD among veterans of the U.S. Civil War and the U.S.-Vietnam War. However, as Sommerville focuses on Confederate veterans, she particularly argues that "Confederate veterans suffered even greater psychological damage than their Union counterparts."⁷¹⁰ Furthermore, Sommerville utilizes gender as a lens of historical analysis which neither Dean nor McCandless particularly feature in their work. In her projects, Sommerville tends to refer to the Georgia Lunatic Asylum as "The Milledgeville Insane Asylum in Georgia," and she performs a "small and admittedly unscientific sampling of veterans" which suggested "a higher rate of violent behavior... the object of which was typically family members."⁷¹¹ In her more qualitative analysis, Sommerville utilizes the same admission records examined in *If He Should Die*; however, she does little research on the person-patient-veteran and his family beyond the asylum's commitment material. While Sommerville strove to reconstruct portraits of institutionalized veterans at the state lunatic asylums, her

⁷¹⁰ Diane Miller Sommerville, "Will They Ever Be Able to Forget?" in *Weirding the War*, ed. Stephen Berry (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 2011), 322.

⁷¹¹ Diane Miller Sommerville, "Will They Ever Be Able to Forget?" *Weirding the War*, 325.

attention was their suffering from PTSD and its impact on their families, at least as described by the institutions.

Sommerville later broadened her study to “war trauma” rather than only PTSD in part to include traumatic brain injuries sustained during the U.S. Civil War, while she simultaneously narrowed her focus on the gendered suffering, institutionalization, and suicide of Confederate veterans.⁷¹² As with her earlier work, Sommerville continued to list found incidents of U.S. Southern male trauma during and after the war without examining individual cases for their specific depth and complexity. Her work instead called attention to the great mental distress that many white Confederate men encountered during the U.S. Civil War and in its ugly aftermath. As with *If He Should Die*, Sommerville found that motives and family response to Confederate suicide were both elusive and challenging to understand.⁷¹³ Instead, she provided much needed scholarly acknowledgement of cases of highly gendered suicide among white Confederate soldiers and veterans. Sommerville’s work to understand the place of masculinity with mental illness in the era of the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction demonstrates the necessary next step in examining people and patients struggling during the 1860s through a truly tumultuous time period.

If He Should Die certainly cannot be described as an institutional history, nor was the project ever intended to examine administrative struggles or political shortcomings. Furthermore, the work had little objective in narrowly studying any one subpopulation. Instead, *If He Should Die* – from its database to its myriad of case studies – realizes the meaning of the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums in the lived experiences of

⁷¹² Diane Miller Sommerville, “A Burden Too Heavy to Bear,” *Civil War History* Vol. LIX No. 4 (2013), 453.

⁷¹³ Diane Miller Sommerville, “Too Heavy a Burden,” 461.

patients and their families during the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction. If studying top-down, the institutions themselves appear as an comprehensive, even overwhelming environment that trapped individual medicalized patients. If only studying an occasional patient record, the institutions barely feature at all, further ignoring how a patient arrived and what impact their suffering had on their family and community. Somewhere in between stands *If He Should Die*: the meticulous understanding of the large population of diverse patients at both the Georgia and South Carolina Lunatic Asylums, including common patterns and anomalies, and an intimate rendering of several case studies of patients and their families during the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction. Undeniably each of the 1410 patients admitted in the 1860s had their own extraordinary story. However, *If I Should Die* focused on several broader themes discovered after examining over a thousand commitment records: the multi-generational suffering of mentally ill family members; the impact of the U.S. Civil War on civilians and soldiers; the experience of mentally ill enslaved people; the differing familial and societal reactions to extremely violent white men and women; the complex relationship between sex, sexuality, and mental illness within the family; and the transformation of these two state lunatic asylums with the emancipation of enslaved African-Americans.

Ultimately, more scholarly studies should be done on nineteenth and twentieth century U.S. Southern state lunatic asylums, and they should reach beyond the antebellum era, the U.S. Civil War, and Reconstruction into the later decades of the century, when institutions became massively underfunded and overcrowded. Although the present study is limited to the 1860s, the decade of the 1870s is the pained and exhausting extension of the previous ten years. During the 1870s, noticeably more

impoverished white and black patients entered the two state lunatic asylums.

Consequential decisions made by the state governments regarding funding and building construction led to tragedies both in family homes and the state institutions themselves.

In the early twentieth century, there were innumerable patients that had been residing at the two state lunatic asylums since the 1860s, forty years prior, such as several of the women and men discussed in this investigation. These people admitted during the U.S. Civil War somehow shared space with newly arrived patients, who included male veterans of the Spanish-American War and World War I, perpetrators and victims of Jim Crow segregation and racial violence, women advocating for suffrage and Prohibition, and children to whom the U.S. Civil War was the War of Northern Aggression and whose grandfathers had fought, bled, and died during the long-ago conflict. By expanding into the twentieth century, further change over time could be explored and clarified, especially if the study more narrowly considered one state institution from its establishment through its first century of use. The Georgia Lunatic Asylum would be ideal in such an investigation as the institution became so unfortunately overcrowded as to be considered the world's largest asylum by the mid-twentieth century. The lived patient experience would have differed dramatically between 1842 – the asylum's founding – to the twentieth century.

Furthermore, a much larger engagement with patients through the early twentieth century could elaborate on the initial discoveries of subtle and explicit discrimination against people of color. Through the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, Georgia increasingly committed to warehousing excessive numbers of mentally ill and disabled people instead of working to restore them to sanity and their families. As

many U.S. state lunatic asylums turned into sanitariums and hospitals, medical authorities forced sterilizations and lobotomies on patients so as to remove them from the institution and return them to society as neutralized problems. For example, Adam Cohen recently demonstrated many U.S. states turned to scientific racism and eugenics to solve its overcrowding and underfunding problem at its state institutions for the mentally ill and disabled. Cohen and other scholars understandably positioned *Buck v. Bell* within the 1920s mania “to use newly discovered scientific laws of heredity to prefect humanity.”⁷¹⁴ Virginia’s own state lunatic asylums would not sterilize its patients until the United States Supreme Court approved “a test legal case.” It was “Carrie Buck’s misfortune to be at the wrong place at the wrong time” as a young unmarried rape victim sent to Virginia’s Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-Minded. Carrie was not “feeble-minded”: she was actually “of perfectly normal intelligence.” Cohen asserts that society failed her in both her rape and sterilization, as the nation’s “most respected professions... medicine, academia, law, and the judiciary,” did not “check... the popular mania over eugenics” nor “protect the people who were wrongly being branded a threat.”⁷¹⁵ If a project such as *If He Should Die* continued into the twentieth century, the work could engage with such disturbing issues as eugenics and scientific racism, as well as the Deep U.S. South’s tendency to warehouse rather than use scientific and medical intervention on its patients.

Recalling these fragments of stories required care and delicacy that may have been occasionally insensitive or incomplete. Unfortunately, any investigation into mental illness and disability in the American past will be fraught with such difficulties, and scholars must always maintain vigilance against accidental discrimination and woefully

⁷¹⁴ Adam Cohen, *Imbeciles: The Supreme Court, American Eugenics, and the Sterilization of Carrie Buck* (New York: Penguin, 2016), 2.

⁷¹⁵ Cohen, *Imbeciles*, 6-7.

abstract storytelling. As this particular study concludes, we must recognize that the suffering of patients and their families filled this project's pages, and the stories of loss, love, life, and death are all human, personal, and poorly told by scholars a hundred plus years later. However, we must strive to do our best to recreate what we can from what we still have from this time period and from these neglected people. Even symbolic iron markers placed by activists give some meaning to abandoned asylum cemeteries, and guardian statues of bronze angels do some protection for those anonymously buried beneath the soil. In our textual examination, we must leave symbolic markers, too, of lives lived and deaths at home and in the asylum. We must act ourselves as guardians against those who would malign and forget those who suffered in the past. And we must do both with extreme care and the constant knowledge that these patients and their families did not suffer for us: they suffered, and we suffer. All in all, we are not so distant from the dead.

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