

The 7th Annual Conference on Women and the Civil War 2005 Conference June 3 – 5 Blacksburg, VA

Friday June 3

Using Special Collections - Joyce Nester, Special Collections Librarian, Virginia Tech
There are libraries everywhere and at every level that contain wonderful, and often undiscovered, resources that are sometimes referred to as "special collections." Using the University Libraries Special Collections department as a model, we will explore techniques to find and use unique collections of books, manuscripts, and objects where ever they may exist.

Copyrights, Copywrongs - Susan Anthony, a copyright and trademark attorney
Using copyright dilemmas from her own work as an historian in mid-19th century American weddings, Susan's workshops is a must for anyone who is a researcher, writer or presenter of Civil War history.

Using "Special" Collections:

Repeat of Session 1.

Writing Women's Biographies - A panel discussion by Bill Christen, Sara Bartlett, Virginia Mescher and moderated by Meg Galante-DeAngelis.

Each panel member will briefly describe a different method of writing about women. Bill Christen will speak about writing a biography of a woman such as Pauline Cushman; Sara Bartlett will argue the pros and cons of using fiction and facts in writing a script for a screen play; and Virginia Mescher will discuss the importance of researching material culture for background details in writing. After the panel member discussion, the floor will be opened to questions.

Society for Women and the Civil War Annual Meeting

A time for society members to hear the state of the society and "Meet the Board" social.

Welcome Reception with opening remarks by Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr.

Saturday, June 4

"Confederate Women and the Cult of Sacrifice" by noted author William Davis.
Women in the South during the Civil War faced special hardships, usually with courage and determination. This contributed to an emerging "cult of sacrifice" in which women took great pride in surviving tremendous hardships and almost revelled in the sacrifice they made for the Southern Cause. Those hardships became the foundation for the postwar glorification of

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Southern womanhood.

"Patriotism and Practicality Civil War Era Homespun Dresses" by Vicki Betts.

Although "Hurrah for the Homespun Dress" became a popular rallying cry for young Southern women during the Civil War, the actual prevalence of hand loomed garments remains controversial. This talk utilizes period quotes, statistics, and slides of surviving dresses to examine what prompted new or continued reliance upon what was an old-fashioned source of textiles.

"Elizabeth Phelps's Gothic Civil War: A Northern Writer Communing with the Spirits of the Dead." by [Monika Elbert](#).

New England writer, Elizabeth Phelps Ward (1844 - 1911) overcame personal sorrow and communal grief, wrought by the Civil War by tapping into the spirit world. By encountering the ghosts of the departed, she discovered a spiritual and feminist philosophy that brought solace.

"Mary Martha Reid and the Florida Hospital in Richmond" by [David Coles](#).

Reid, the widow of a former Florida governor, served as matron of the Florida Hospital in Richmond for much of the Civil War. Her dedication led to her being referred to as the "mother" of the Florida soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia and contributed to the Florida Hospital having one of the best survival rates among the Confederate medical facilities in the capital city.

"The Union Army vs. Mary Jane Green: The rebel who would not be tamed." by Wendy King

Mary Jane Green started her career carrying Confederate mail through Union lines, progressed to being a spy, and then became an expert at destroying the Union telegraph lines. Although arrested several times, there was nothing that the Provost Marshal could do that would break this woman's spirit. Wendy King.

"Maria Lewis, Black Female Trooper of the 8th NY Cavalry: A Methodology". by [Dr. Anita Henderson](#).

In her diary, Julia Wilbur, a Quaker abolitionist, recorded meeting Maria Lewis, a black woman in uniform, at the end of the war. This presentation will focus on the research techniques utilized in tracking and analyzing the clues and information needed to identify her as a trooper in the 8th NY Cavalry. These methods are useful in the analysis and verification in incomplete information in any historical context

"Calling on the Female Prisoners: Maintaining Gender Relationships in Alton Military Prison During the Civil War" by Thomas Curran.

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While Alton Military Prison in Illinois held primarily Confederate soldiers captured in the field, it also housed a considerable number of civilian prisoners, including several dozen women. This presentation explores the interaction between Confederate officers and the southern-sympathizing women imprisoned at Alton, with attention given to the ways in which these rebels behind bars tried to maintain the normal rituals that were commonplace between men and women during peaceful times.

"Wee the People: The Patriotic Work of Children During the Civil War" by [Meg Galante-DeAngelis](#).

Are you ever too young to be a patriot? The story of the patriotic work of children during the Civil War breaks all our preconceived notions that children should be seen and not heard.

"Mary Todd Lincoln Remembers" by reenactor Sandra Jordan.

After doing extensive research on Mary Lincoln, Sandra Jordan has discovered a side of this remarkable woman that many people never knew. In her first-person presentation, Sandra brings to life, Mary Lincoln, a compassionate, loving wife and mother who lost three of her four children and her beloved husband, which left her grief-stricken until the day she died.

Sunday, June 5

Special Tour of Smithfield Plantation.

Special Tour of Smithfield Plantation Bus transportation provided This is a special combination of tours offered by Smithfield Plantation just for conference attendees.

House Tour.

Come tour Historic Smithfield Plantation, the 1774 home of Colonel William Preston. Costumed interpreters will guide you through seven rooms of this beautiful home. The interpretation covers three generations of the Preston family, and for our conference attendees, will include information about the women of the household and information about the Preston family's involvement in the Civil War.

Cemetery Tour

Visit the Preston family cemetery located near Historic Smithfield. This cemetery is private and is not normally open to the public. The earliest known grave is 1780. Tour guides from Smithfield will explain recent archaeological work done at the site and will share stories of those buried at the site.