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Flora: Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart

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Flora: Mrs. J.E.B. Stuart

Yes, yes, sir, I am so very proud of my husband, my dear Jeb. And yes indeed, I am so grateful that the city of Richmond has erected this monument to my darling husband. He was fatally wounded at the Battle of Yellow Tavern on May 11, 1864. It took 10,000 Yankee cavalry to do it though. Their mission at that time was to destroy General Lee's supply lines; invade Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy; and most pressing of all, to kill or capture my Jeb.¹ That was forty-three years ago. Yes, monuments are coming late to commemorate our honored dead, for money has been so tight in the South for ever so long. It is taking us a mighty effort to recover from the War.

The sculptor's name was Frederick Moynihan. I believe he was from England and studied at the Royal Academy. He made a lot of Civil War monuments, for the North as well, but we must not hold that against him. After all, although my husband more than once said that he hated the Yankees,² he did respect nobility and honor, regardless of uniform. Mr. Moynihan did excellent work, did he not? I am glad that he portrayed Jeb as the excellent horseman that he was. Did you know that Jeb graduated first in his class at West Point for horsemanship? He used to say that except for being on a dance floor, nothing felt more natural than being in the saddle.

Yes, Jeb was right fond of horses, and he liked to tell everyone who would listen that the reason he was attracted to me was because I could ride a horse better than most men.³

What was his favorite horse? I know that everyone can name Lee's favorite (Traveller). Little Sorrel, General Jackson's beloved horse, became quite the celebrity after the war and was displayed at fairs, even the World's Fair in New Orleans in 1885. Little Sorrel has been preserved, to put it delicately, and you can find her at the Virginia Military Institute. She was a short, dumpy horse, but General Jackson preferred her above all. That was just like the general.

One time my husband paid a tailor here in Richmond to make the general a brand new wool coat with gilt buttons and lace, because it bothered Jeb that his friend always wore a beat-up old coat. I am sure you have heard how attentive to dress my Jeb was. It was enough that the general's coat looked like the moths had taken to it, but it was also missing most of the buttons because the general kept giving them away to the ladies who wanted them as mementoes. General Jackson was very appreciative of the new suit; was coerced into wearing it once at a Thanksgiving dinner that caused quite a stir as men came to stare at it, which embarrassed him exceedingly; so he packed it away in his portmanteau.⁴ General Jackson was riding Little Sorrel when he was shot in May 1863.

But as for my Jeb having a favorite horse, I think more to the point, Jeb was no favorite to his horses because unfortunately they did not live long under him. I do not mean to imply that he abused them. To the contrary, he held them in highest regard. No finer beast did God make, no more noble beast, as the horse who fearlessly went into battle and suffered the slings and arrows right along with the soldiers.

I remember early in the war, there was a Maryland-bred sorrel horse that he called Skylark.⁵ She and Lady Margrave were stolen at Chambersburg. They were in the charge of our slave, Bob, who was awakened from a drunken slumber by a bunch of Yankees who appropriated them.⁶ There was a Josh he rode at Chancellorsville, after his own was shot out from under him.⁷ The most heroic one was Virginia,⁸ a bay who saved him from capture in Hanover, Pennsylvania, when the Yankees were chasing him. Virginia jumped a fifteen-foot wide gully that was four feet deep.⁹ The Yankees stopped short of the gully and did not pursue him. Virginia, and another of his mounts, Star of the West, died of distemper.¹⁰ I recall his writing about his horse Maryland as being a favorite that got sick, and even though he found a

horse doctor, Maryland could not be saved.¹¹ Distemper killed another one of his horses, as it did so many of the cavalry mounts. I know that two horses were killed under him at Gettysburg.¹² They say that when Jeb took the fatal bullet at Yellow Tavern, he was seated on his horse, and the horse became uncontrollable. I think that must have been General.¹³

One horse he wrote most passionately about was Lucy Long, a small sorrel that he gave to General Robert E. Lee. She was a beauty: blaze forehead and white hindlegs, sweet, easy.¹⁴ But Jeb's own Highfly suited well to lead an entire army. The thunderous sounds of war did not scare this horse. Instead they seemed to galvanize him and Jeb into some kind of glorious, frenzied zeal as they rode "into the jaws of Death, into the mouth of hell" (Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade").

Right before the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863, Jeb confiscated horses and supplies throughout York County in Pennsylvania. He collected over a thousand horses.¹⁵ I'm sure that was not very pleasant for the farmers in Pennsylvania, but my husband was only following orders from General Lee, and the Lord only knows, our troops desperately needed horses and food for the horses and for themselves. Those horses would become even more necessary because over 1,500 Confederate horses would be killed at Gettysburg.¹⁶ Nevertheless, I must recount that a certain Mrs. Dubs begged my husband to leave her three horses, for she was dependent upon them for her living, and he did show her mercy.¹⁷ However, he could not show mercy to too many Yankees, for his own men and horses were starving. Over seven hundred claims for damages were filed in York County from my husband's seizure of corn, oats, wheat, rye, and horses, but he did pay for any food he himself consumed.¹⁸ Jeb wrote that his men also helped themselves to calico, muslin, boots, and five pounds of tobacco and 200 cigars at a store in Dover,¹⁹ but for himself, Jeb said he would not have any tobacco not grown in Virginia. Jeb

wrote me that Dover is seven miles east of York, and Jeb was intending to go from there to York where he thought Jubal Early was, but Early had already left.²⁰ General Early's division was a part of General Ewell's brigade. Jeb was under orders to report activities to General Ewell, so that is why he tried to catch up to General Early. He was redirected to Carlisle, which was a town of mighty stubborn people who refused to surrender. My husband did not like to do it, but he had to shell the town. No civilian was killed, but about a dozen were wounded. I imagine they were terrified right out of their spunk and learned a hard lesson that we Virginians had learned and learned and learned again and again: War is not something that is just printed in the papers; it has to be fought somewhere and it is not restricted to fields and seas. There was not a town or city in Virginia which has not been caught in crossfire, occupied, and plundered, over and over again and again.

In exchange for goods, although the storeowner in Carlisle seemed none too pleased, Jeb paroled the 400 prisoners he had.²¹

See, my Jeb is right behind General Robert E. Lee's monument. My husband's monument is the second statue on this avenue. General Lee's was finished seventeen years ago. I understand that they are going to dedicate a monument to President Jeff Davis in a few days and then begin working on General Jackson's statue.²²

As I mentioned before, my husband was fatally wounded with a bullet at the Battle of Yellow Tavern, just a few blocks from here, on May 12, 1864. Cousin John said that the bullet grazed a small Bible that Jeb carried, which was a gift from his mother.²³ Maria—my sister who tended to him when he was brought to her house here in Richmond—told me that he asked to see me before he died. His words were "I am resigned, if it be God's will, but I should like to see my

wife. But God's will be done."²⁴ I was staying with my second cousin, Colonel Edmund Fontaine, at his home, Beaver Dam. I arrived just a few minutes too late.

I heard tell that President Davis had come to his bedside and asked him how he felt, and he said that he was "willing to die, if God and my country think I have fulfilled my destiny and duty."²⁵

"Destiny and duty"—these were what drove my husband.

The Richmond *Whig* eulogized him: "Never, before, nor certainly since the death of Stonewall Jackson, had the demise of any Southern leader produced so profound a sensation among all classes of our community. They seem reluctant to realize the painful truth that the gallant and dashing cavalier ... had at last fallen."²⁶ A paper in North Carolina had this to say: "The death of such a man as General Stuart would be a great loss to any country at any time. What a great calamity then, it might be to our young Confederacy, in the midst of its desperate struggle for freedom, to have the 'Giant in arms' forever lost to his comrades."²⁷

Forty-three years ago I received this letter from the Richmond City Council, "in behalf of the Citizens thereof," about their intention to erect a monument in gratitude to my husband. I sent my reply:

I beg you to communicate to the council of the City of Richmond the earnest assurance that I most gratefully appreciate the kindness and sympathy expressed in their resolutions [...]. To my children and myself the knowledge that such sentiments are entertained by the people of Richmond, constitute a precious inheritance! I acknowledge the claim of the Capital of Va to retain the remains of one who freely gave his life as an offering of affection and devotion to his native state.²⁸

On May 20, Robert E. Lee issued General Orders No. 44, which read:

Among the gallant soldiers who fallen in this war, General Stuart was second to none in valor, zeal, and unfaltering devotion to his country. His achievements form a conspicuous part of this history of this army, with which his name and services will be forever associated [...]. To his comrades in arms he has left the proud recollection of his deeds, and the inspiring influence of his example.²⁹

I was told that the general could "scarcely think of him without weeping."

His good friend, Fitz Lee (nephew to General Lee; and he was the governor of Virginia in 1886) paid this tribute to my husband:

Great, glorious and good—his loss to his country—to our army—Especially to his troopers is inconsolable. Whilst his bright, glancing Eye can no longer see—his clear, ringing voice no longer be heard by his mourning followers—may the principles he has taught us—the Example he has shown us not be lost. Stuart had no superior as a soldier.³⁰

Even the Yankees had some good things to say about him, Major General Howard wrote this in his autobiography that came out just a few years ago:

J. E. B. Stuart was cut out for a cavalry leader. In perfect health, but thirty-two years of age, full of vigor and enterprise, with the usual ideas imbibed in Virginia concerning state supremacy, Christian in thought and temperate by habit, no man could ride faster, endure more hardships, make a livelier charge or be more hearty and cheerful while so engaged. A touch of vanity, which invited the smiles and applause of the fair maidens of Virginia, but added to the zest and ardor of Stuart's parades and achievements.³¹

I have been accorded so many, many kind and generous letters overflowing for love and condolences for my husband.

One, I am sorry to say, was received with little pleasure. My father begged me to bring my dear husband's children to him across enemy lines, there to be raised as Yankees. Well, I am too much a lady to tell you how I felt about that.³²

I will never forget when I opened Jeb's instructions in the event of his death. We both knew our time together on this earth was to be short. His wish was that I bring up his children in the South. No doubt he wished it to be in Virginia.³³ You know he was a career soldier, graduated from West Point, as were so many of our gallant men. And he took an oath to protect the United States of America. I can still hear him say—when was it that North Carolina seceded from the Union? Upon my word, it was so very, very long ago. Yes, it was around Christmas of 1860, and shortly after that six states followed, and they met in Montgomery and formed the Confederate States of America. They elected Mr. Jefferson Davis to be president and Alexander Stephens, vice president. I remember Jeb saying that it was a matter of constitutional rights and I recollect his words exactly, "For my part, I have no hesitancy from the first that, right or wrong, *alone* or otherwise, I *go with Virginia* ."³⁴ Then in April, the war began at Fort Sumter, and just five days later, Virginia seceded.

And forgive me, I begged my husband not to go. I said, "You love your country more than your wife."³⁵ You see, I knew that I would lose him. I knew he would give all of his life to the war. There was only one thing he loved even more than Virginia, and that was God. He believed that it "was such a time as this"³⁶ that he had been created, gifted with talents, and trained in order to serve God as a commander in His army.

I don't know about all of that anymore. If the Confederacy was God's army, why did He not give us the victory? My father—who was a Yankee—believed that God was on the Union side. It could not be both ways, could it?

No doubt about it, though, my Jeb was the eyes and the ears and the heart of Lee's army. There have been those, I am sorry to say, who have thought my Jeb, well, how do I put this? Less than humble. There were so many others who regarded him highly. It is true that my brother, John Easten Cooke, who worshipped his brother-in-law, felt led to be Jeb's unofficial publicity agent. He wrote a column for the Charleston *Daily Courier*, called "Our Virginia Correspondent." One time he printed this: "probably no man in the south is more hated and feared by the Yankees."³⁷ And it was so. To me Jeb bore his heart and his hopes with absolute confidence in himself and faith in the Almighty to promote him. He lived by this proverb:

Let love and faithfulness never leave you;

bind them around your neck,

write them on the tablet of your heart.

Then you will win favor and a good name

in the sight of God and man.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart

and lean not on your own understanding.³⁸

So when in his letters to me like this one, when he asserted that he would "win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man,"³⁹ he was not haughty; he was a man of faith. I recall his brother William telling me how frequently Jeb asked him to stop whatever they were doing to pray together. Jeb said, "With me, no moment of the battle has ever been too momentous for prayer."⁴⁰ I would think every soldier on the battlefield turned into a praying man, even if he

wasn't one elsewhere. When death comes a-knocking, you best be hearing Christ knocking as well and open the door to Him.⁴¹ Jeb put his trust not only in the abilities God gave him, but most assuredly in God Himself, as he declared in this letter to me:

I go forth into the uncertain future. My saber will not leave my hand for months. I am sustained in the hour of peril by the consciousness of right, and upheld by the same Almighty hand, which has thus far covered my head in the day of battle, & in whom I put my trust.⁴²

He had his detractors who accused him of being cocky and vain, but it was because of the blessed assurance he had in God and that he was in the center of God's will that he spoke and acted with absolute confidence and boldness. Shortly after the first battle of Manassas in the summer of 1861, he wrote me:

I am your own Darling husband whose thoughts and affection are centered in his own Dear Flora—and even in the fiercest fire of the battle field I thought of her and how proud she would be to see the conduct of her husband [...]. The papers have said very little about my Regt, but the Generals have said a great deal. You need not be surprised to see your hubbie a Brigadier. I have been in one real battle now and feel sure I can command better than many I saw.⁴³

If you think he and I were the only two who thought so highly of him, listen to what General Johnston wrote to our dear President Jefferson Davis on that same subject:

He is a rare man, wonderfully endowed by nature with the qualities necessary for an officer of light cavalry. Calm, firm, acute, active, and enterprising. I know of no one more competent than he to estimate the occurrences before him at their

true value. If you add a real brigade of cavalry to this army, you can find no better brigadier-general to command it.⁴⁴

I am sure historians will write that he was overly ambitious, and indeed, he did rise through the ranks to become the sole general over the entire Confederate cavalry, but only because he believed that God had created him to be that leader.

He had tireless energy and unflagging courage, and incomparable ability to prod men to do the impossible. On top of that, he always had a song in his heart and was hardly ever without a grin on his handsome face and a flower in his buttonhole. And with his soft felt hat, that was pinned up on one side with a gold clasp and topped with a black ostrich feather; he cut such a dashing figure.

I did suggest several times that perhaps he would have been better off without that hat because it did make him a target. I read in the papers how the Yankees could pick him out of an army of thousands because of that black ostrich feather. But he said that that hat helped his men always see him on the battlefield so that they would rally around him. That was more important.

There was a time—maybe even several times—when the Yankees captured his hat. He wrote about it to me in a letter: "I intend to make the Yankees pay dearly for hat."⁴⁵

I never knew where he got more ostrich feathers.

Many people have asked me if I had ever been jealous of my husband. None dared to ask me to my face if I thought my husband was ever unfaithful to me. The answer to both is a resounding no. I realized how handsome and charismatic my husband was. My cousin John understood how romantic, how gallant was my Jeb. He asserted: "Never have I seen a purer, more knightly, or more charming gallantry than his." Jeb was—naturally—charming, charming in the purest sense without guile. John wrote:

He was here, as in all his life, the Christian gentleman, the loyal and consistent professor of religion; but with his delicacy of the chevalier was mingled the gait of the boy. He was charmed, and charmed in return. Ladies were his warmest admirers—for they saw that under his laughing exterior was an earnest nature and a warm heart. The romance of his hard career, the adventurous character of the man, his mirth, wit, gallantry, enthusiasm, and the unconcealed pleasure which he showed in their society, made him their prime favorite. They flocked around him, gave him flowers [...].⁴⁶

The same could be said about General Robert E. Lee. You see, these men were ready to die in defense of Southern womanhood, which they saw was in danger if the Yankees were to win and change our lifestyle, because we all know that Yankees do not know how to treat women like ladies, and we know that Yankee women, let us just say that they are not like the godly woman described in Proverbs 31, which you find throughout the South. Instead, they are bellowing for the vote, wearing pants like men, and smoking cigars.⁴⁷

Regardless, my Jeb treated all women like saints, including the ones in the North. They would bring Jeb flowers and strawberries,⁴⁸ and make him capes, and girdles. One woman in Warrenton made him a gold sash, and someone else, his gold general shoulder straps.⁴⁹ He was just naturally chivalrous. In fact, he often put "KGS" after his signature, which stands for "Knight of the Golden Spur."⁵⁰ But it was I he loved. Let me share one of my favorite letters. It is rather personal, but I think you will find proof positive that he loved only me and found no substitute for me while he was on the field: "I would like to be with you Dearest this dreary winter's night, Do you think of your old stove these cold nights?"

Yes, I must admit I heard rumors. You know how people do talk about good people, as if they just can't stand it that they're so good, and my Jeb was good; he loved the Lord with all of his heart, his soul, and his mind.⁵¹ I am ashamed to admit to you and even more ashamed that I troubled my darling about those rumors. He wrote: "My darling if you could know—(and I think you ought) how true I am to you & how centered in you is my every hope & dream of earthly bliss, you would never listen to the idle twaddle." Then he said that he wished he could "kiss away the petty troubles."⁵² Can you imagine? With all of the worries and responsibilities on his shoulders, he had to be bothered by my petty fears and people's vicious gossip.

He did like being around pretty ladies. And why not? He was so full of life. He loved to laugh and tease and dance. If I could not be there for him, I was thankful that other ladies could, to help him take his mind off the war. He made friends with two young women who became particular friends of his. Laura Ratcliff was at Camp Qui Vive with her mother and two sisters, tending to the sick. He was so grateful for her service, he gave her a leather-bound album inscribed, "Presented to Laura Ratcliff by her soldier-friend as a token of his high appreciation of her patriotism, admiration of her virtues & pledge of his lasting esteem."⁵³ I saw it, met her, and highly approved of both.

His other good friend, whom I also met, was Antonia Ford, who was one of the most courageous women I ever heard of. She was a spy, and was so good at it and valuable to our side that Jeb made her an honorary aide-de-camp.⁵⁴

Jeb's chief of staff, Harry McClellan, understood him. After the war he wrote about Jeb's "devotion to the society of ladies" and described it as "one of the noblest and purest instincts of his nature. Towards them he was as naïve and unsuspecting as a child, as pure in thought & action."⁵⁵

Jeb loved people—well, except for most Yankees—and was never guarded about showing his love, and that was not just to women.

Probably the man Jeb loved the most was General Stonewall Jackson. One time Jeb came into the camp quite late at night and crawled into bed with the general. I can just see him doing this too. The next day, Jeb was up for a while, when the general came to get his coffee and said, "General Stuart, I'm always glad to see you. You might select better hours sometimes, but I'm always glad to have you," this from a man who rarely cracked a smile. He was so serious, except when Jeb was around. The next thing he said became a joke that spread throughout the camps: "But, General, you must not get into my bed with your boots and spurs on & ride me around like a cavalry horse all night."⁵⁶

How Jeb loved to tell that story, and how he cried when the general died. Jeb said his death was a "national calamity."⁵⁷ I cannot get over it that the general was shot by his own men. Yes, it was an accident. They could not see how it was in the dark. Eight days later as he lay dying, he told his wife, Anna, "It is the Lord's Day; my wish is fulfilled. I have always desired to die on Sunday." His last words were "Let us cross over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees."⁵⁸

Oh, did you know that General Jackson's people came from Londonderry, Ireland, same as Jeb's?⁵⁹ How sad it is that so many Irish came to this country, "the land of the free," to escape persecution only to lose their lives in this war. How sad it is too that Jeb's great-grandfather, like many others', fought for America's independence from Britain, only for the South to have to fight another war for its independence.⁶⁰

Jeb also loved deeply John Pelham from Alexandria, Alabama. He cried at his death and wrote that he wanted our Jimmie "to be just like Pelham." That was when I was pregnant again,

and Jeb said that if we had a boy, we would name him John Pelham Stuart. If we had a girl, she would be Maria Pelham Stuart.⁶¹ He wrote John's parents to say that he loved John like a brother.⁶²

His dear parents had gotten Jeb new sleeve buttons and studs for his uniform, but he died before he could receive them.

He was just full of life and joy. Some said that he was never quiet, never depressed, but always singing or whistling and laughing.⁶³ He would be the first to tell you that it was because of Jesus that he had such abundant life. His favorite hymn was *Rock of Ages*,⁶⁴ However, I understand he was quite partial to "The Dew Is on the Blossom" and several others with titles that I cannot mention in mixed company. If you are interested in what they were, please see me later.⁶⁵

I do regret that I did write him another time, complaining about missing him so much and did he have to take so many risks and expose himself to so much danger. Had he not done enough? He patiently wrote back: "How much better to have your husband in the grave after a career true to every duty and ever responsibility to you, his country, and his God, than inglorious existence—a living shame to you & his children."⁶⁶ He also denied that he was ever rash in battle as to put himself needlessly as an opened target (although I heard often otherwise), but he assured me that he was doing "his duty with a firm reliance on Divine Aid to uphold me."⁶⁷ What could I do but put him into God's hands and trust in Him?

How did we meet? After graduating from West Point, Jeb was appointed brevet second lieutenant in the Regular Army, and was sent to Ft. Leavenworth. That's about when he became called Jeb, for his full name was James Ewell Brown, named for a judge who was the husband of Jeb's father's sister, Anne Dabney Stuart Brown.⁶⁸ My father was stationed there too. He was Lt.

Col. Philip St. George Cooke of the Second dragoons. Like the Stuarts, we hailed from a well-established family in Virginia. I guess you know that Jeb grew up mostly in Laurel Hill in Patrick County, not far from Lynchburg. The family lived here in Lynchburg for a short time as well. In fact, Jeb's father practiced law in Campbell County.⁶⁹

Jeb graduated from Emory and Henry College in Washington College before going to West Point. My family expected me to grow up to be a proper, accomplished young lady, so they sent me to finishing school. I don't know how finished or accomplished I was by the time I was done, but I do know that I could outride and outshoot most any boy or man I met, and this impressed Jeb a bunch—except I called him Jimmy when we first met.

My parents wanted me to make my debut in Philadelphia. Their plans were to introduce me to good society, let the men of good families have a good look-over, and eventually for me to marry well. But I insisted on coming out to Ft. Leavenworth. Had it been up to my mother, a Hertzog of Philadelphia, I would never have been indulged, but when I told my papa I just had to be with him, "Posey," he called me that instead of 'Flora,' Posey, your papa just cannot share you with high society in Philadelphia. They are just going to have to get along without one less flower in their garden." So I came.

But he was not as thrilled about my forming an attachment—and a quick one at that—with Brevet Second Lieutenant Jeb Stuart. Even though my daddy and his family were from Virginia, he was troubled about the talk of secession, and it did turn out, to my husband's and my shame, that he, and my brother, did join Lincoln's army.⁷⁰

I heard some people say that I was not handsome. I guess they were comparing me to my beautiful husband and wondered why he did not marry someone equally beautiful, but I thought I was beautiful. At least, Jeb made me feel as though I was the most beautiful woman in the world.

After a two-month whirlwind romance, we were married in my parents' Episcopal church, just a simple affair with intimate family and friends. Jeb converted from Methodism. The date was November 14, 1855.

We were so happy. Just a few weeks after our wedding, Jeb was promoted to second lieutenant, and we were allowed a three-month furlough, which we took in Virginia so that we could meet each other's families.

In the early fall of 1857, I gave birth to a little girl, but she did not survive her first day on this earth. I was inconsolable. I not only loved my little daughter, I was terrified that I would never be able to have another baby or give birth to healthy children, and we both wanted so very much to have children. Jeb tried to comfort me, but he said, "[I]t is better to lose it thus than in mature years."⁷¹ I didn't realize it at the time, but he was actually prophetic, for we did have another little girl, and we called her Little Flora, except that Jeb called her mostly "La Pet," and no man could have loved a daughter as much as did Jeb. But when she was almost five years old, we were visiting my sister, Maria, and her husband Dr. Brewer. They were living in Lynchburg at the time. My darling child came down with typhoid fever and Jesus took her.⁷² Jeb tried to console me in his letters by saying that she was better off in heaven, and that up in heaven, she could pray for her papa. "Oh, if I could see her again," he said, and I could see where tears had fallen onto the letter. "[N]o child could ever have such a hold on my affections as she had. She was not of earth, however"⁷³

I know he remembered the last time he saw her, and when he tried to leave, we could hardly disengage her arms from around his neck and stop her kisses. He wrote me much later to say that he thought he would never see her again,⁷⁴ but then it was because he thought he would

be killed in battle, you see. He—we—never thought we would lose another child, but we did not eat well during the war. Times were hard. The war took its toll on the children in the South.

Little Flora died on November 3, 1863. She was buried in the Lynchburg city cemetery on Fifth Street, but later, we had her moved here to Richmond, to the Hollywood Cemetery where she lies beside my husband.⁷⁵

My Jeb wrote me nearly every week, starting his letters with "My Darling Wife, or "Darling One." Here's one: "I think of you Dear one every day & hour [...] I want to see you, to hold you in my arms with your head resting on this breast as I always hold it but duty & fate has otherwise ordered it."

He often told me to "[k]iss our dear ones a thousand times & keep them in mind of their Pa."⁷⁶ We did have a little boy. Jeb named him Philip St. George Cooke Stuart, after my father, but then when my father joined Lincoln's army, Jeb renamed him James Ewell Brown Stuart, Jr., and called him Jimmie. And then later we had another little girl and named her Virginia Pelham Stuart. But we never forgot our little Flora. Jeb never got over losing his little girl.

I sent him this daguerreotype once. He wrote back: "Your picture is a great comfort to me as *lip salve*. I carry it next to my heart, but do not need it my love, to keep you vividly before me."⁷⁷

Not long before Yellow Tavern, he wrote that he longed for days when he could rump with his two setters, "Nip" and "Tuck."⁷⁸ He wrote that he had found a "nice quiet little house & farm for sale" just as we always imagined. His brother William bought it for us.⁷⁹

As for Jeb, Jr., Virginia, and I, we did live on that property in Saltville. I taught children in a school there for fifteen years. Then the Virginia Female Institute in Staunton most graciously offered me a position as principal, which I accepted. My students called me Mrs. General

Stuart.⁸⁰ "It is not indelicate of me to say, that I have great satisfaction in seeing my children—well educated and established in life—and much of it owing, or due to my efforts. They are 'poor' as the world knows them—but with a *noble* inheritance."⁸¹

The Lord put it on my heart to become reconciled with my parents. It was one of the hardest things I ever had to do, what with their choosing to be the very enemy that slew my husband and caused all this misery to us Southerners. Are you familiar with the scripture in the fifth chapter of Matthew: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (25-26)?

I see that my time is nearly up. Thank you so much for letting me talk with you about my husband, but before we part company, please allow me to clear up the controversy that has clouded my husband's reputation. Newspapers were very unkind to Jeb, blaming him for the disaster at Gettysburg.⁸² This cut him to the quick. He received orders from General Lee saying that he was supposed to scout out the enemies strength in Pennsylvania and Maryland without being too close to Lee's army, lest he give away the position of our army. He was to protect General Ewell's flank and send his reports to this general, who would then send them to General Lee. He was also supposed to confiscate as many supplies as he could because our boys were in bad shape for food.

This is exactly what Jeb and 6,000 of his men did. They covered 250 miles in eight days.⁸³ From the Union army, they seized 125 cars of food, horse grain, and other supplies, plus 400 teamsters and 900 mules and 100 horses.⁸⁴ The train stretched out for eight miles. And then he took every horse he could find in Southern Pennsylvania, a total of 1,000,⁸⁵ which would be invaluable at Gettysburg to replace the 1,500 that were killed. Deep in enemy territory, he had

his hands full, what with 41,000 Union troops between him and Lee and 41,000 more behind him.⁸⁶ But he destroyed railroads and telegraph lines and engaged in the enemy wherever he went. He did not know where General Lee's army was. He sent scouts and dispatches in every direction trying to find him.⁸⁷ He did not know until July 2 what was going on in Gettysburg.⁸⁸ Once he and his men arrived, they were exhausted but they protected the rear of Pickett's charge and after Gettysburg, had to fight for ten more days without rest,⁸⁹ protecting the army as it retreated from Pennsylvania. Without the additional supplies that Jeb was able to get before coming to Gettysburg, the war would have ended for the Confederacy at Gettysburg.

I just do not understand how so many people can be so cruel as to blame what happened at Gettysburg on Jeb.

I am glad, yes, I am terribly glad that he did not live to see the defeat of the South. His heart just would not have been able to take it. As for me and mine, we are so grateful to the City of Richmond for honoring my dear husband with this beautiful monument. And I thank you all for doing me this honor to allow me to talk about my chevalier general. Thank you kindly and God bless you.

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Notes

1. Edward G. Longacre, *Lincoln's Cavalrymen: A History of the Mounted Forces of the Army of the Potomac* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2000) 256.
2. Jeffry Wert, *Cavalryman of the Lost Cause: A Biography of J.E.B. Stuart* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008) 78.
3. Wert, 26.
4. Wert, 164.
5. Wert 50.
6. McClelland 161.
7. Wert 228.
8. Wert 264.
9. Emory M. Thomas, *Bold Dragoon: The Life of Jeb Stuart* (New York: Harper, 1986) 244. Also Eric J. Wittenberg and J. David Petruzzi, *Plenty of Blame to Go Around: Jeb Stuart's Controversial Ride to Gettysburg* (New York: Savas Meatie, 2006) 97.
10. Thomas 271.
11. Thomas 271.
12. Wert 298.
13. I am thankful to Bill Frueh, a Jeb Stuart impersonator, who supplied the name of the horse. See <http://www.leeslieutenants.com>.
14. Wert 167.
15. Wittenberg and Petruzzi 132.
16. Thom Hutch, *Clashes of Calvary: The Civil War Careers of George Armstrong Custer and Jeb Stuart* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2001) 162.
17. The story is in Wittenberg and Petruzzi 122-3.
18. Wittenberg and Petruzzi 123, 125-6, and 127.
19. Wittenberg and Petruzzi 124. The store was William T. Crist on the square in Dover.
20. Wittenberg and Petruzzi 182.
21. Wittenberg and Petruzzi 127. Of course the real reason for the parole was because the brigades were bogged down as it was with the confiscated property and did not care to guard and feed such a number of prisoners.
22. Stuart's monument, at Lombardy and Monument, was dedicated on May 30, 1907. Jeff Davis's monument, at Davis and Monument, was dedicated on June 3, 1907. Stonewall Jackson's monument was erected in 1919 at the intersection of North and Monument between Robert E. Lee and Jeb Stuart.
23. John Easten Cooke, *Mohun, or, The Last Days of Lee and His Paladins, Final Memoirs of a Staff Officer Serving in Virginia* (New York: Dillingham, 1868) 213.
24. Wert 361 and Hutch 197.
25. Wert 360-1 and Hutch 200.
26. Wert 365.
27. Qtd. in Wert 365.
28. Qtd. in Wert 364-5.
29. Qtd. in Wert 365 and Hutch 201.
30. Qtd. in Wert 366.
31. Oliver Otis Howard, *Autobiography of Oliver Otis Howard, Major General United States Army*, 2 vols. (New York: Baker & Taylor, 1901) 1: 380.
32. Wert 367.
33. In a letter of spring, 1863, he expressed his wishes that "you will make the land for which I have given my life your home, and keep my offspring on southern soil" (qtd. in Wert 367-8). His will read, "I desire my children to be educated South of the Mason and Dixon Line, and always to retain the right of domicile in the Confederate States" (qtd. in Davis 416).

34. Wert 42-3.
35. Wert 46.
36. Reference to the Bible: "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:13-14).
37. Hatch 36 and Thomas 87. He had told Flora several times in his letter that the Northerners were gunning specifically for him (239).
38. KJV, Prov. 3.3-5.
39. Reference to the Bible: "So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (Prov. 3.4).
40. Qtd. in Wert 215.
41. A reference to Rev. 3. 20: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."
42. Qtd. in Wert 215 from a letter from Jeb to Flora on 19 Apr. 1863 (415 n.16)
43. Qtd. in Hutch 34. Battle of First Manassas.
44. Qtd. in Hutch 35.
45. Qtd. in Wert 55.
46. John Easten Cooke, *Wearing the Gray, Being Portraits, Scenes and Adventures of the War* (New York: Treat, 1867) 26.
47. Many writers were concerned about the lack of morality in the North, especially represented by women as they were perceived in the South. See Chapter 2 of Drew Gilpin Faust's *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina, 2004).
48. Wert 52.
49. Wert 77.
50. Warren C. Robinson, *Jeb Stuart & the Confederate Defeat at Gettysburg* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2007) 42.
51. Reference to the Bible when Jesus says that the greatest commandment is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22.37, Mark 12.30, and Luke 10.27).
52. Wert 75.
53. Wert 78.
54. Wert 79.
55. Wert 79.
56. Wert 164.
57. Qtd. in Wert 233. Stonewall Jackson was killed after the South's greatest victory at Chancellorsville. He was riding back to camp at night and was shot by a Confederate guard who did not give the general time enough to identify himself. He died eight days later on May 10, 1863, in the arms of his beloved wife, Anna.
58. John Easten Cooke, *Stonewall Jackson, A Military Biography* (New York: Appleton, 1876) 484-5.
59. Jeb's great, great grandfather, Archibald Stewart, was Presbyterian Scotch-Irish, who, after suffering persecution for his faith, led a revolt, was tried for treason, and then escaped to America, settling in Pennsylvania in 1726. After the arrival of his wife and two children in 1738, they moved to Augusta County in Virginia and had two more sons (Wert 3). Mary Anna Jackson relates that her husband's people were also Presbyterian Scotch-Irish emigrating from Londonderry (*Memoirs of Stonewall Jackson by His Widow* [Louisville, KY: Prentice P, 1895] 2. For more info, see Steven Jackson, *The Irish Ancestry of Stonewall Jackson* (Durban: Just Done Productions, 2008).
60. Wert 3. Alexander Stewart was a major in the American Revolution (Wert 3). The Stewarts changed the spelling of their name to Stuart in 1770 (Wert 3).
61. Wert 210.
62. Wert 210.
63. Wert 163.
64. McClelland 417.
65. Davis 88. Some of the more bawdy songs were "Hell Broke Loose in Georgia," "Billy in the Low Grounds," "Oh Lord, Gals, One Friady," "Gal on the Log." But there were sweeter ballads like "Sweet Evelina" and "Evelyn." On the more melancholy order was "The Bugle Sang Truce, for the Night Cloud Had Lowered."

66. Qtd. in Wert 169. He wrote something similar to this earlier in 1862 in a letter to his brother: "I have told her that if I neglect the higher duties of the patriot to be a daily companion to her, I would make a husband to be ashamed of hereafter" (qtd. in Thomason 128).
67. Qtd. in Wert 76.
68. Wert 2.
69. Wert 4.
70. Wert 76.
71. Qtd. in Wert 31.
72. Wert 181.
73. Qtd. in Wert 183.
74. Wert 142.
75. According to Marvin Keene , curator of Jeb Stuart Birthplace, Laurel Hill, Va., email of 11-2-10.
76. Wert 52.
77. Wert 312.
78. Davis 88.
79. Wert 312.
80. Wert 368.
81. Qtd. in Wert 368.
82. Thomas 252.
83. Wert 282.
84. Hatch 98, 102.
85. Wittenberg and Petruzzi 132.
86. Thomas 238-47.
87. David P. Bridges, *Fighting with JEB Stuart: Major James Breathed & the Confederate Horse Artillery* (Arlington, VA: Breathed Bridges Best, 2006) 173.
88. Wittenberg and Petruzzi 149, Hatch 105, Wert 292.
89. Stuart's engagement at Gettysburg is relayed in Thomas 246- 55.