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War, Reformation, and Antebellum Ink: Southern Authorship and Eliza Frances Andrews

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As the stage was being slowly set for a civil war, Eliza Frances Andrews came into the world screaming: a metaphor that would characterize her personality throughout her life. She could never seem to shut up. “Strong-willed, determined, and sophisticated, Andrews possessed a freedom and self-assuredness unusual for a woman of her time and social station.”¹ The nation was experiencing change in more than one way. This did not stop Eliza from experiencing the last breath of traditionalistic values that were respired by the American South in the years before the Civil War. With only one other sister to keep her company, she was plunged into a male dominated family. This would not be the last time she would find herself thrust into such a situation. No, in fact, for most of her life, Eliza struggled between experiencing misogyny and not supporting the suffragette movement. Additionally, because of her family’s history of slave-ownership, she eventually became a powerful mouth piece against the integration of African-Americans into society in the South proceeding the Civil War. As southern distinctiveness began to slowly spiral into oblivion, Eliza found herself fighting to forge her own identity. Her self-assuredness, determination, and refusal to abandon tradition wove itself into her very being and became her greatest ally when she placed pen to paper.

Because of her outstanding work in both the literary and social sphere, she is remembered as an anomaly today. Her impact is evident whenever modern female authors are discussed. Her opinions on both African-Americans and women were challenged at times, but because of her outstanding achievements and publications, she was the only American woman to ever be invited to become a member of the International Academy of Literature and Science: an achievement that was uncommon for a woman during the early part of the twentieth century.² Eliza Frances

¹S. K. Rushing, "Andrews Frances Andrews (1840-1931)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*. (10 January 2014). Web, accessed 22 February 2017.

²Ibid.

Andrews was forged in the fires of the American Civil War, pressed into an author's mold, and became an emerging author during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Her colorful writing on both the role of women and African-Americans, alongside her dark past, are blended into what is seen in history today. Because of her contribution on both social and historical issues, historians can grasp a better understanding of what the South looked like before and during the final years of the Civil War, the shift that American literature and southern authorship experienced as a result of the war, and how that translated into the acceptance/rejection of various social issues such as women's suffrage and the integration of African-Americans into society.

Eliza often reflected back to her childhood and drew on inspiration from the past to explain her reality. A relic of the Confederate South, Andrews looked into the past to the days of Andrew Johnson, the family's plantation, and her brothers. Dr. S. K. Rushing makes the comment that, "Andrews was a product of the Old South but a woman who became self-sufficient and independent as her world changed."³ As the antebellum South found itself torn apart during the Civil War, many social issues experienced a similar phenomenon. One of these prominent issues was the role of women in education. This changing paradigm was just one of the pillars of the "Old South" that transformed as a result of the Civil War and Eliza witnessed this first-hand.

Before the days of the Civil War, the Andrews family lived on a plantation in Washington, Georgia named Haywood. Judge Andrews had inherited some land and continued to invest throughout various counties in Georgia and at Ross's Landing, which would become the future sight of Chattanooga, Tennessee.⁴ Haywood became a place for intellectual discussion

³Charlotte A. Ford, "Andrews Frances Andrews: A Fruitful Life of Toil," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 89, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 25-56. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO host, accessed January 31, 2017, 1.

⁴Ibid.

and communion among the judge's counterparts and friends. For Eliza, this exposure to intellectual life and discussion stimulated her interest for education. Because her family was fairly affluent, attaining an education was not difficult. However, education for women, apart from primary education, was experiencing rapid change in the southern United States. With the onset of the Civil War, the South experienced an evolving idea of women's place in society and education.

Southern womanhood before the Civil War was generally a reflection of what had always been since the colonies. In terms of education reform, there were not any major movements calling for more opportunities for women. Education for women were limited to primary school training with no real collegiate training available.⁵ It was not until Georgia Female College, now known as Wesleyan College, was opened in 1839 in Macon, Georgia that more women in the South had the opportunity to receive higher education. Additionally, few universities in the North offered degrees for women in the early nineteenth century. Before the establishment of historically female universities, most of the education that women received was under the guidance of private tutors at either independent or denominational institutions.⁶ However, even as the South progressively offered women more opportunities to receive higher education, these institutions were focused solely on turning young girls into ladies of society.⁷ However, education in the South during the years leading up to and during the Civil War did indeed

⁵John Carl Ruoff, "Southern Womanhood, 1865-1920: An Intellectual and Cultural Study," (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1976). *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*, accessed January 31, 2017, 28-29.

⁶Michael David Cohen, "Reconstructing the Campus: Higher Education and the American Civil War" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2008.) *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*, accessed February 26, 2017, 2.

⁷John Carle Ruoff, "Southern Womanhood, 1865-1920: An Intellectual and Cultural Study", 29.

change. It was during this time of change that Andrews found herself when she eventually pursued higher education.

Despite this focus, education in the antebellum and post-war South was determined by social class and whether one was black or white. Before the Civil War, both men and women attended college in the South. However, these were more along the lines of social reasons instead of guided professional training.⁸ Colleges in the South mainly catered to those belonging to the upper and middle classes. On occasion, planters who sought to change occupations also attained higher education.⁹ Although the South was dominated with race and gender-laden requirements in the years preceding the Civil War, higher education across the nation experienced reform beginning in the 1830s with the opening of Georgia Female College and again in 1858 with the opening of the nation's first black college, Wilberforce University, in Ohio.¹⁰ With the opening of these universities, alongside other phenomenon that were taking place in the early nineteenth century, the social dogma in the South became threatened and began adding fuel to a wildfire that would burn through the United States during the 1860s. Today, it is no surprise that few historians draw clear similarities in education between the pre- and post-war South.¹¹ The contrast between education in the South before and after the Civil War are like night and day when examined in totality. However, a clear contrast between education before and after the Civil War was not the only element that changed during these years. The war itself changed core ideology, tradition, and even the landscape.

⁸Michael David Cohen, "Reconstructing the Campus: Higher Education and the American Civil War", 9.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid, 16-17.

The greatest event that forged Eliza Frances Andrews into a writer was the American Civil War. There was no question that her life, as well as the lives of countless other women, changed drastically between the years of 1861-1865. Author Christopher Olsen makes the comment that, “The history of Georgia’s women in the nineteenth century was dominated by the Civil War and Reconstruction.”¹² It was during Sherman’s March to the Sea that Andrews chronicled the story of her and her sister retreating from Haywood to one of their relative’s plantations in southwest Georgia. The horrors that she described in her war-time journal are still some of the best accounts of this event that exist today. At one point, Andrews describes what the countryside near Sparta, Georgia looked like after the Union army had made its appearance: “The dwellings that were standing all showed signs of pillage, and on every plantation we saw the charred remains of the gin-house and packing-screw, while here and there, lone chimney-stacks, ‘Sherman’s Sentinels,’ told of homes laid in ashes.”¹³ This dark imagery and bleak scenery blanketed the majority of their journey. It is no wonder that after the war, Eliza, alongside other numerous authors, experienced a dramatic shift in literature and writing from romanticism to realism.

War-time literature was initially laden with romanticized ideas. Dr. Aaron Shackelford argues that, “If Americans did not create literature that directly depicted the violence of the war, they nonetheless developed a corpus that employed romanticism as a method for representing traumatic experiences.”¹⁴ The romantic ideas of the common man as a hero, nature as refuge, and

¹²Ann Short Chirhart and Kathleen Ann. Clark, *Georgia Women: Their Lives and Times* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2014), 149.

¹³Eliza F. Andrews, *The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl 1864-1865: The Electronic Edition*, (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997), 32.

¹⁴Aaron Shackelford, "Unfamiliar War: Literature & Trauma in the American Civil War," (PhD diss., The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2013.) *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*, accessed March 19, 2017, 8.

emotional intensity quickly bled dry as the cruel, harsh reality of what war truly was set in. No longer were authors mimicking the romantic styles of Thoreau, Emerson, and Whitman by the end of the American Civil War. New authors such as Mark Twain and Sarah Orne Jewett emerged and ushered realism into American literature. The works of these new authors directly went against romanticism and pushed for empirical validity over the romantic ideals of the mysterious and supernatural.¹⁵ However, the Civil War had a more direct impact on southern authors who now had to struggle in developing a new identity beyond adopting realism.

At the end of the Civil War, the South had been completely ravished not only physically, but politically, culturally, and symbolically. This had an immediate effect on the literature and art that emerged after 1865. As Abraham Lincoln called for a new beginning, apart from pre-war themes, in his Gettysburg address, poets and authors found themselves adopting a similar theme.¹⁶ For southern authors, this meant abandoning the fundamental ideologies of slave ownership, white superiority, and state sovereignty that propelled the South into the Civil War in the first place. In addition to this, the male-dominated writing sphere was challenged as new female authors began pushing their way against the social norms of the post-war South. As echoes of reformation and new beginnings drifted through the air, Eliza also found herself struggling to establish a unique identity as a writer.

Women's authorship in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century, was struggling to emerge in a male-dominated society. Dr. Debra Pena makes the argument that feminine literature was sidelined and minimalized in the years after the Civil War. Although her research focuses

¹⁵ Carol Scheidenhelm, "Romanticism, Realism and Naturalism," Romanticism, Realism and Naturalism, August 14, 2007, accessed March 19, 2017, <http://www.luc.edu/faculty/cschei1/teach/rn2.html>.

¹⁶Aaron Shackelford, "Unfamiliar War: Literature & Trauma in the American Civil War.", 9.

mainly on the works and life of Caroline Pafford Miller, she makes the compelling argument that Miller's work, alongside other works by prominent female authors, did not reach their full potential because of the inherently male-dominated society of the South.¹⁷ This trend can be seen in the literary life of Eliza Frances Andrews. Although Eliza attended a reputable university and eventually published several notable articles and publications such as *New York World* and *Godey's Lady's Book*, she was still overshadowed by her male counterparts. At one point, Eliza accepted a job as an editor and was paid twenty dollars a month—half of what a male editor with the same experience made.¹⁸ She refused to utilize her own name and went under the guise of Elzey Hay. In addition to this, men often felt duty-bound to instruct women on just what and how to write.¹⁹ The greatest example of a response from women about this injustice can be seen in the suffragette movement that dominated the early part of the twentieth century.

The suffrage movement was one of the greatest reform movements in American history. The push for women's rights was a radical push against the outdated idea that a woman's sole purpose was in domestic affairs. However, when examined in totality, the momentum for women's suffrage was not championed by every woman. In fact, Eliza pushed against the suffragette movement and believed that a woman's only calling was to be a mother and a wife.²⁰ Author Katrina Rolley expounds on the fact that prior to World War I, women's domestic roles

¹⁷Debra D. Pena, "Interrupting the Silences in Twentieth Century Southern Women's Literature: Recovering and Re-Visioning the Life and Literary Work of Caroline Pafford Miller," (PhD diss., The University of Texas at San Antonio, 2015.) *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*, accessed March 19, 2017, 58.

¹⁸Charlotte A. Ford, "Eliza Frances Andrews: A Fruitful Life of Toil," 3.

¹⁹*Ibid*, 4.

²⁰*Ibid*, 5.

were being reinforced through motherhood.²¹ Not only did Eliza not fulfill any of the roles she so strongly believed in, many women refused to speak out because of personal traditional values. This is significant because as the most of the United States witnessed a revolution, there were women who pushed against the idea of women having the right to vote, equal pay, and mutual equality with men. Most of the women who championed against the idea of women's suffrage came from affluent, conservative, Protestant backgrounds.²² Eliza had those exact attributes. When asked about the overall importance of women's support on suffrage, Susan B. Anthony asserted that suffrage laws "probably never would have passed if it had been up to women to vote on them."²³ In the South, the push back created by anti-suffragettes was actually a response to the changing schemata of the South after the Civil War. As the old antebellum South faded into the past, female traditionalists held onto the ideals that had triumphed before the Confederacy had failed. However, women's status was not the only ideal that traditionalists like Eliza held onto; another one was the racism against former slaves which was still prominent in the South.

Eliza was born and raised in a slave-owning family. Because of this, her perception of African-Americans was overshadowed with racism. With the Yankees winning the war, emancipation, and the passage of the fifteenth amendment, Eliza's hate towards both the North and former slaves only subdued slightly with age.²⁴ She argued that with the passage of the

²¹Rolley, Katrina, "Fashion, Femininity, and the Fight for the Vote." *Art History* 13, no. 1 (March 1990): 47. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCO host, accessed April 27, 2017, 49.

²²Barbara A. Arrighi, *Understanding Inequality: The Intersection of Race/Ethnicity, Class, and Gender* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 207.

²³Joe C. Miller, "Never A Fight of Woman Against Man: What Textbooks Don't Say about Women's Suffrage." *History Teacher* 48, no. 3 (May 2015): 437.

²⁴Ann Short Chirhart and Kathleen Ann. Clark, *Georgia Women: Their Lives and Times*, 147.

fifteenth amendment, a race problem was injected into society.²⁵ In a correspondence with the editor of *The Century* magazine in December of 1906, Eliza submitted a proposal about an article entitled “Where the Race Problem Has Solved Itself.” She mentioned that the race problem was “a scientific one, not a political one.”²⁶ Lingering feelings of white superiority still drifted in the southern air after the Civil War. As anti-suffragettes pushed back against women’s suffrage, many in the South pushed back against the new status of former slaves. To many, the idea of slaves possessing equal status to a slave owner fueled deep rooted hate. To admit to sharing the same biology as a slave was essentially turning against what the South had fought for during the Civil War. In Eliza’s article, she even discussed this anomaly by asserting that “the Negro is psychologically and biologically inferior and not merely a black-skinned Caucasian.”²⁷ This type of racism pulsed through the South in the years following the Civil War up until the mid-twentieth century. It eventually led to segregation and Jim Crow laws that defined the South in the years after Reconstruction. However, Eliza’s racism did not prevent her from being published.

Eliza’s success as an author was part of a reflection of how southern authors emerged after the Civil War. When new, realistic authors such as Mark Twain began to emerge, Eliza’s career took flight with the publication of her book *A Family’s Secret*. As aforementioned, she served as an editor and published several works in different newspapers. Her noted article about “the race problem” was published by *The Century* magazine which ran its first publication in

²⁵Ann Short Chirhart and Kathleen Ann. Clark, *Georgia Women: Their Lives and Times*, 147.

²⁶Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. "Andrews, Eliza Frances" *New York Public Library Digital Collections*. Accessed April 2, 2017. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/bf4017a0-edf6-0133-f048-00505686a51c>

²⁷Eliza F. Andrews, “Where the Race Problem Has Solved Itself,” *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine* 73 (1905): 962.

1881. It quickly became popular and was noted by one author that it “made New-York, instead of London, the centre of the illustrated periodicals published in the English language.”²⁸

Additionally, she published an article entitled "Socialism in the Plant World" in the *International Socialist Review* in 1916 wherein she made correlations between plant life and the nature of socialism therein. However, above all, her crowning jewel was *The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl 1864-1865*. The detailed analysis and first-hand account of what it was like to be living in the South at the time of the Civil War is unique and important in its own way. Because of her outstanding ability to chronicle what exactly happened during those bloody years, “Eliza Frances Andrews certainly ranks as one of the most articulate and perhaps underappreciated of Civil War-era diarists.”²⁹ With the publication of her personal journal, Eliza stepped across the threshold of amateur into professional and solidified her career as a writer. Today, her publications serve as an immortal glimpse into the South before and after the years of Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg, and Confederate surrender.

The life and events surrounding Eliza Frances Andrews shaped her into a notable female author of the late nineteenth, early twentieth century. With the onset of the Civil War, not only did the nation brace itself for a political war between the North and the South, education and the role of women in society began to also change. After the war, it is no surprise that revolutions of all sorts began to formulate; one of these being in literature. As the country began to sew itself back together, authors and poets alike began to realize a dramatic shift away from romanticism to realism. This revolution ultimately gave birth to writers like Eliza who realized that the world they had grown up in was not the same one they were living in. Additionally, the ideals and beliefs that had rooted the South during the antebellum years were under threat as Reconstruction and women’s suffrage dominated the schemata of the country. That is why traditionalists like Eliza challenged the roles that society had outlined for women and people of color. In all, the time in which Eliza lived in was one that witnessed an immense change in American

²⁸"An English View of Roswell Smith," *New York Times* 5. (June 12, 1892).

²⁹Ann Short Chirhart and Kathleen Ann. Clark, *Georgia Women: Their Lives and Times*, 151.

history. To fully understand her writing and position, alongside the evolution of similar authors, one must analyze the conditions under which she evolved. What history attests to today was not a simple individual who enjoyed to the art of writing; no, Eliza Frances Andrews was born out of strife, conflict, and a restructuring of society. Because her veins flowed with antebellum ink, she never apologized and published the one thing that she held close to her heart throughout her career: the South and all its traditional values.

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