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Joshua and Dulcinea: A Conflict Between Country and Family

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Joshua and Dulcinea: A Conflict Between Country and Family

Abstract

This research paper analyzes the struggle that Confederate soldier Joshua Callaway had in balancing his loyalty to his state and to his family in the context of what was expected of Southern men both before and during the Civil War.

Keywords

Civil War, Family, War on the Homefront, War and Family, Confederate Nationalism

Disciplines

Military History | Social History | United States History

Joshua and Dulcinea

A Conflict Between Country and Family

Tim Koenig

12/2/2012

I affirm that I have upheld the highest principles of academic integrity and have not witnessed a violation of the honor code.

On November 19, 1863, just six days before he would die, Confederate Lieutenant Joshua Callaway wrote to his wife Dulcinea about an epiphany that he had the evening before. While hiking with some comrades to the top of Lookout Mountain, which towered above the besieged Union forces in Chattanooga, Joshua was overcome by the magnificent beauty of the city nestled among the surrounding mountains. Through taking in the landscape his self-understanding was transformed in an instant. “I could not help feeling a spark of ambition, a desire to make my name as immortal in future history and as classic as that of Lookout Mountain,” he wrote, “But, just at this point in my reverie, I saw a man step out of a house that stood at the foot of the mountain. I suppose he was a general...but he looked so small, a mere speck, that I could not tell he was there at all if he had not moved. And when I compared him to the mountain and then to the universe, and thought of his pride and ambition, I could not help smiling at his impetuosity and sighing at his insignificance.”¹ Joshua then looked to himself and recorded that “my ambition cooled off and I would be perfectly content to be at home with my wife and never be thought of after I die.”²

Although this is the last letter Joshua would ever write to his wife, and his sentiments seem to be neatly summarized for us to analyze, this passage is just a small representation of the inner struggles which Callaway went through during his time as a Confederate soldier. Joshua was beholden to the ideals of honor, duty, and respectability. He was also a devoted husband and father of two young children. As a Southern man, he understood that it was his responsibility to be the protector, provider, and director of his family, a task which he undertook with great care. The coming of war pitted these two obligations against each other. Now, in order to fulfill his patriotic duty, defend his honor, uphold his manhood, and protect his family, he had to leave his

¹ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, November 19, 1863, in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1997) 161.

² *Ibid.*, 162.

home and force his family to care for themselves. As he was taken farther away from his home, and the privations which his family suffered by his absence became more apparent, Callaway tried to reconcile himself with his status as a soldier of the Confederacy *and* a dutiful husband who took care of those entrusted to him. As can be seen from Callaway's reflection on top of Lookout Mountain, the draws of reputation and distinction became unimportant when compared to living in peace with his family. While personal ambition might have spurred Callaway and men like him to enlist and try to enshrine themselves in glory on the battlefield, the actualities of army life soon made this concept less appealing. However, the reality was that Joshua could not simply leave the army on his own inclination. He was still bound by the obligations of his military service and the commitment he had made to defend his state, his family, and his reputation. Even though Callaway tried in his letters to justify his departure from home and taking up of arms, we are still able to see that he could never really come to terms with the untenable position that he was put in.

Joshua Callaway was born in Georgia in 1834 but spent most of his life in Alabama, and it was here that he met and married his wife, Dulcinea. As a man living in Southern society, and a man committed to the institution of slavery, Joshua's was instilled with certain values which defined what his responsibilities were as a man, a husband, and a father. All of this was focused around the fact that family was the center of Victorian life.³ Chief among the responsibilities of a good husband was his ability to act as a provider for his family, either through goods produced himself or through earned income. Before a man could even begin to court a woman, it was assumed that he had become financially independent.⁴ Women also recognized that in accepting

³ Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1970 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957) 341.

⁴ Anne C. Rose, Victorian America and the Civil War (New York; Cambridge University Press, 1992) 149.

a suitor, they needed to look to the future and if they would be provided for. Consequently, “Young women understood that their future status in southern society and the ease of their adult life would depend on the wealth of their husbands...[they] sought out suitors who would love them, ably provide for them, and promote family stability.”⁵ By acting as a provider, Southern men were also entrenching their position as the head of the household. The result of this was that “men were expected to provide...an array of goods and services. To the degree that a man could convince himself that he was providing these things, he became (in his own mind) provider, lawgiver, governor, and autocrat.”⁶

An essential part of this economic dependence on men was the underlying belief that in all areas of life women were dependent.⁷ This dependency came not only from the authority of husbands, but also from the natural subordinate state of woman. “She feels herself weak and timid,” George Burnap would write of proper women in 1854, “She needs a protector...She is in a measure dependent.”⁸ This protector, of course, came in the form of a husband. Men of the South like Joshua understood that by marrying a woman, it became their responsibility to protect them, as they were unable to defend themselves. As the patriarch of the household, husbands understood that their responsibilities went beyond just the economic, but when need arose they must also be prepared to physically watch over their wives and children.

Keeping in mind the traditional roles of men and women within Victorian society, it would not be giving Joshua due justice in describing his commitment to his wife and children without recognizing that this was also a time in which couples began to court and marry out of

⁵ Lorri Glover, Southern Sons: Becoming Men in the New Nation (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007) 125.

⁶ Stephen W. Berry II, All That Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) 19.

⁷ Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Part 1 (Summer, 1966) 158.

⁸ George Burnap, Spheres and Duties of Woman, 5th ed (Baltimore, 1854) 47.

love, and not just for social or economic reasons. Daniel Wise, who published manuals of advice for young women in the 1850s, told his readers that “Marriage, properly viewed, is a union of kindred minds, -a blending of two souls in mutual, holy affection,-and not merely or chiefly a union of persons.”⁹ Many of these women’s manuals also began to instruct their readers on the art of writing love letters. One such manual, titled How to Write: A Pocket Manual of Composition and Letterwriting, told its readers “Permit Love to use the pen, and he will find his own words and form...Let the heart speak! Be sure that it is the *heart* and not a mere fancy of the head.”¹⁰ It is easy to pigeonhole the Victorian Era of America as an age of cold formality but the powerful emotional connection that many husbands and wives had with each other must not be overlooked. It is true that Joshua must have been an appealing bachelor based on his education and economic potential, and that very well might have factored into his marriage with Dulcinea, but the overall impression gleaned from Joshua’s wartime letters is that the two were very much in love. Consequently, even though Joshua and Dulcinea were influenced by the expectations of the society they lived in and for the most part tried to live up to these values, they were still individuals who made decisions based on their own personal preferences and emotions.

With the coming of war, many of these notions which defined the relationship of husband and wife were used to support the South’s call to arms. For one, the concept of the husband as a protector was used to encourage men to enlist. Even though it may seem contradictory to leave your family in order to protect them, many Confederates insisted that fighting for their country was an extension of their duty for the defense of the security and liberty of their families.¹¹ Duty to the nation and the propriety of military service became framed within familial and patriarchal

⁹ Daniel Wise, The Young Lady’s Counsellor (New York, 1852) 234-235.

¹⁰ Daniel Harrison Jacques, How to Write: A Pocket Manual of Composition and Letterwriting (New York: Fowler and Wells, 1857) 106.

¹¹ James M. McPherson, For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) 135.

language. Even before Callaway's home state of Alabama voted to secede from the Union, the state's representatives wanted to make sure that the course of action they took would provide protection for those at home. The Honorable John Potter reflected this concern for safety on the home front in his address at the state's convention on secession when he stated that "It is very desirable to have security at home. Will secession give us this? It may, or it may not. And it really appears to me, sir, that in this respect we are about to make a very doubtful experiment, which may lead to a most disastrous result."¹²

This belief that enlistment was essential to protection at home in many parts came from the conceptualization of Union soldiers as vandals who came South to rape, pillage, and destroy all that was dear to the Confederates. One Confederate soldier aptly represented this mindset when he described military service as "a glorious mission...to defend our homes from the spoiler," from "hordes of Northern Hessians," to fight "in defense of innocent girls and women from the fangs of lecherous Northern hirelings," or in "defiance to the Vandal hordes, who would desecrate and pollute our southern soil."¹³ Ideally, Southern men were not abandoning their homes when they were leaving them. They were upholding the central tenet of patriarchy: protection of family and friends. "The man who loves his family the best now," wrote a lieutenant in the 3rd Virginia Cavalry to his wife in 1862, "is he who is the most anxious and will risk the most and suffer the most to repel the invader."¹⁴ This concept can be clearly seen in Adalbert Volck's etching *Tracks of the Armies*, which was printed in 1863 and widely circulated amongst Southern newspapers. In this print, a haggard Confederate soldier has returned to his

¹² William Russell Smith, The History and the Debates of the Convention of the People of Alabama, Begun and Held in the City of Montgomery, on the Seventh Day of January, 1861; In Which is Preserved the Speeches of the Secret Sessions, and Many Valuable State Papers (Montgomery, Alabama: White Pfister & Co, 1861) 107.

¹³ James M. McPherson, What They Fought For 1861-1865 (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1994) 19-20.

¹⁴ James M. McPherson, For Cause and Commrades, 135.

home only to find his house destroyed, his wife raped and murdered, and his livestock killed.¹⁵

To highlight the complete devastation that the Union army supposedly brought with it, Volck even included a slain mouse in the front yard. The message was clear that if the men of the South did not leave to fight the invaders, their families would suffer the consequences.

For many Confederates, the obligation to defend their home and keep their loved ones from harm fell under the broader concept of duty. Victorian Americans understood this duty to be a moral obligation which they needed to fulfill as a result of the protection granted to them by their governments.¹⁶ Additionally, this sense of duty went beyond just the social and political and came to be reflected in the religious dialogue of the time. One popular pamphlet, *The Confederate Soldier's Pocket Manual of Devotions*, reminded its readers that "O God, who hast commanded that no man should be idle, but that we should all work with our hands the thing that is good, grant that I may diligently do my duty in that station of life to which Thou hast been pleased to call me."¹⁷ An important part of this consciousness of duty was the realization of the repercussions of shirking that duty. To reap the benefits of the state you lived in without answering its call to arms would be a violation of one's honor, more specifically a violation of "one's public reputation, one's image in the eyes of his peers. To shirk duty is a violation of conscience; to suffer dishonor is to be disgraced by public shame."¹⁸ This public shame reflected upon not just the individual man, but on his entire family, and this was something no Southerner wanted to bring upon those he loved.

¹⁵ Adalbert Volck, *Tracks of the Armies*, 1863, GettDigital: Civil War Era Collection, Special Collections/Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 27OCT2012, <http://gettysburg.cdmhost.com/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4016coll2/id/386/rec/17>

¹⁶ James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Commrades*, 22.

¹⁷ Reverend Charles Todd Qintard, *The Confederate Soldier's Pocket Manuel of Devotions* (Charleston, South Carolina: Evans and Cogswell, 1863) 34.

¹⁸ James. M. McPherson, *For Cause and Commrades*, 23.

But it is also important to recognize that Southern men must have been conscious of both their public *and* private reputations, meaning that the opinion of their neighbor was no more important than the opinion of their immediate family members. As the center of the household, a man could not show himself to be cowardly or selfish. Therefore, the honorable man of the South acted in a way that would not only show to the current generation that he was brave and manly, but also would ensure his legacy to those of the future.¹⁹ In order to maintain the patriarchal order of the family, the man of the household was required every once in a while to prove himself. War was the ultimate test of manliness for Southerners, so to ignore the opportunity to prove oneself in this struggle would be ignoring a chance to reaffirm your status to those around you. Because Southern men were beholden to this sense of honor, they became entrapped by the rhetoric used to support the Confederacy's call to arms. In the public eye, the war was not just about states' rights, tariffs, or slavery, it was about the men of the South responding to the call that they were almost destined to answer as the men their society had built them up to be.

The influence of reputation, honor, and duty can also be seen specifically in how women influenced men to join the Confederate Army. While a man might enlist to prove his character in the eyes of future generations, he might also enlist to prove his manhood to the women of his community. In the beginning of the war, Southern white women publicly pressured their men to enlist and fulfill their duty as protectors of the hearth and home, which became a powerful motivator to young men who wished to prove themselves to those of the fairer sex.²⁰ Historian Gerald Linderman goes as far as to call this type of provocation "sexual intimidation,"

¹⁹ Kenneth W. Noe, Reluctant Rebels: The Confederates Who Joined the Army After 1861 (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2010) 38.

²⁰ Kenneth W. Noe, Reluctant Rebels, 66.

and argues that women were a driving force in promoting courageous behavior and shunning cowardice.²¹

Ladies Relief Societies throughout the South typified this form of intimidation when addressing the men in their communities who were set to go off to battle. These groups not only wove socks and sewed uniforms, but they also openly called the men of their areas to show their patriotism and prove their manhood. The Ladies Relief Society of Monroe County, Georgia took out a column in the *Macon Daily Telegraph* and stated that “The soil of the Empire State of the South is desecrated and polluted by the tread of an insolent and dastardly foe...your wives and children all beseech you to run to your country’s standard. We know you will do it.”²² The article concludes by reminding the men of the community about their responsibility to protect their women’s honor, saying “If these lovely plains are to be enslaved by your neglect or timidity, and we are subjected to the bloody reign of the modern Nero, we will never survive the ignominy.”²³ These women who called the men of their community to take up arms also made sure to have their presence noted when it came time for the local regiments to leave for war. Many times this would consist of a presentation of colors to the men, the distribution of Bibles, and possibly some sort of speech.²⁴ In 1861, as the DeSoto Rifles of Louisiana were about to go off to war, the local Relief Society gave the regiment its new colors and told them “let it not only inspire you with the brave and patriotic ambition of a soldier aspiring to his own and his country’s honor and glory, but also may it be a sign that cherished ones appeal to you to save them from a fanatical

²¹ Gerald F. Linderman, Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War (New York: The Free Press, 1987) 87.

²² “To the Freeman of Monroe,” *Macon Daily Telegraph*, Issue 644, page 2, March 3, 1862.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Gerald F. Linderman, Embattled Courage, 83.

and heartless foe.”²⁵ It would be clear from these events that the women of the community used gendered rhetoric as their own form of conscription. No honorable man, they knew, could resist their appeal without risking the loss of female love and respect. It seems doubtful that Joshua was subject to this kind of pressure directly for Dulcinea, for his letters seem to indicate that she was equally unhappy with his absence, but the women of his community very well might have been a factor in intimidating Joshua into enlistment. The unit he joined up with was composed of his friends and neighbors, so the prospect of staying home and being subjected to the scornful looks of war widows and soldiers’ wives must have been influential in Joshua’s decision to take up arms.

Despite the overwhelming pressures which called the South’s young men to fight during the war fervor of 1861, many were still reluctant to leave home in the service of the new Confederacy. For men with established positions within the community, families that were dependent upon them, and homes which were far away from the brunt of the fighting, the needs of the state and the draw of military service wasn’t enough to encourage them to leave and take up arms.²⁶ Joshua Callaway was one of these men. At this point in the war, any fighting or hardships occurred far away from his home in Dallas County, Alabama. Additionally, Dulcinea was pregnant with their second child and was not due to give birth until 1862. It is easy to understand why Joshua would be hesitant to leave his family when his presence there was desperately needed. This predicament laid at the heart of the later enlistees’ situation, the fact that choosing between family and country was almost impossible. To neglect one for the other was beyond reason because one would be nothing without the other. Their country provided the

²⁵ New Orleans *Daily Crescent*, April 29, 1861 as found in Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1943) 21.

²⁶ Aaron Sheehan-Dean, *Why Confederates Fought: Family and Nation in Civil War Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007) 134.

resources, administration, and security needed to raise and support a family, while at the same time supporting their country was meaningless if the family suffered as a result.²⁷ If Joshua were to leave his home in defense of his country, his family would inevitably suffer from his absence. At the same time, if his country were to fall while he stayed home and did nothing, his entire way of life would turn upside down at the hands of Northern rule.

These men who resisted early enlistment could only hold out for so long. At the end of 1861, the South's leaders began to realize that their war would not be a short one and that more troops would be needed. The result of this realization was an aggressive recruiting campaign. One of the main objectives of this campaign was to avoid the institution of a draft. In the eyes of many Confederates, the need for a draft would be a sign of their new nation's lack of commitment and an embarrassment to those who claimed to be men of honor and bravery. Governor John Shorter of Alabama used this type language when he called for the remaining men of his state to join the cause in early 1862. In his address to his state, Governor Shorter asked his constituents, "With a true appreciation of the danger which surround us, and of our duty to God and our country, let us all live and labor, and if need be die for the advancement of the glorious cause for which we are contending."²⁸ Driving his point home, he would add that "No man of true patriotism, or of a proper degree of personal or State pride, will stand still in such an hour of danger, and suffer himself forced into the defense of his country, his property, and his family."²⁹

A combination of the governor's call, the humiliating prospect of being drafted, and the formation of a local unit did eventually convince Joshua Callaway that it was his duty to enlist,

²⁷ Stephen W. Berry II, All That Makes a Man, 183.

²⁸ Proclamation of Governor John Gill Shorter, March 1, 1862, as found in Malcom C. McMillan's The Alabama Confederate Reader (Tuscalosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1992) 108.

²⁹ Judith Lee Hallock, ed. The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, xiii.

and by the end of March he did just that. There is no doubt that neither Joshua nor Dulcinea were excited about the prospect of their separation, but if either of them shirked from what was expected of their behavior the result could be a disgrace to the family. While Joshua was pressured to enlist, Dulcinea was pressured to support his decision and dutifully accept the consequences of his departure.³⁰ Within the first couple of weeks of Joshua's departure, he began to show the naivety with which he entered his service. In one letter, just two months after he left home, he told Dulcinea he expected to be home by August, and not long after that he wrote that "the impression seems to be very prevalent in camp that peace is at hand. God grant it may be so!"³¹ Although Joshua's words here were certainly the result of camp rumors, it is also reflective of his wishful thinking. Even after only a short time away, Joshua's anxiety about his separation from his family became apparent.

Confederate soldiers quickly came to realize that their absence from home prevented them from running their households the way they had before. Joshua's inability to accept the lack of presence and authority which he had before the war can be seen in the way he still tried to manage the day to day affairs of his family even though he was hundreds of miles away, in essence becoming an absent patriarch. "Later enlisting Confederates," such as Joshua, "more reluctant to leave home in the first place when compared to the soldiers of 1861, initially responded by not letting go entirely, trying to maintain their patriarchal power over the household through the mails."³² For instance, in July of 1862 Joshua became quite adamant that Dulcinea should order a subscription to the *Daily Reporter*, instructing her to "Take it for six months, commence immediately," and he repeated the request when he said "Commence

³⁰ George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1991) 54.

³¹ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, May 24, 1862 and Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, July 13, 1862 in *The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway*, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 19 and 42.

³² Kenneth W. Noe, *Reluctant Rebels*, 82.

tomorrow. Wes will attend to it for you.”³³ Again in June of 1863, over a year since he had left home, Joshua asked his wife “When will your subscription for the paper be out? You renew it,” and “When you buy flour buy enough to do you the balance of the year.”³⁴ A few months later, just weeks before Joshua’s life comes to an end, he still attempted to run his household from afar. “My dear,” he asked her, “have you made any arrangements for meat and bread for next year?”³⁵

Throughout his entire correspondence with Dulcinea, Joshua begged her to write about the mundane tasks which she has to deal with every day. No doubt this was partially to maintain a connection with her, but by gaining access to her specific actions he was reinserting himself into his former position in the household and trying to hold on to the authority which he had before he left. For Joshua, it must have felt like his entire world was changing around him and that he was helpless to do anything about it. This was particularly troubling in regards to the changes happening at home, because Joshua seemed to have looked to his civilian life as a reprieve from the unpredictable world of soldiering. This was representative of the radical change which were happening in Southern society, in which the South’s paternalistic social order was turned upside down by the necessary departure of its men.³⁶

Joshua’s struggle with the losing control over his household was compounded by the fact that he was a slaveholder and a man who was used to having complete mastery over his domain. As was true with familial relations, Southern men viewed the relationship between master and slave as a responsibility ordained by biblical references and required to be carried out with

³³ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, July 13, 1862 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 41.

³⁴ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, June 8, 1863 in *Ibid.*, 95.

³⁵ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, October 11, 1863 in *Ibid.*, 146.

³⁶ Drew Gilpin Faust, Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996) 35.

diligence and benevolence.³⁷ This concept gave men a sense of control over those around them, with the caveat that they were not tyrants, but rather endowed rulers whose direction provided the best possible lives for those under their care. Military life provided a stark contrast to this type of mastery. Joshua, previously the master of his surroundings, was now subject to the orders of volunteers just like himself. Only two months into his service, Joshua would write to Dulcinea that “I am quite well and enjoying myself finely, except that it grinds me to think that I am *compelled* to stay here. I’ve got a dozen masters, who order me about like a negro.”³⁸ Joshua would echo this complaint later on in his letters, for it seemed that whenever he would sit down to write a letter someone would call on him to perform one of his functions as First Sergeant.

While Joshua tried to turn to his letters to home as a way to regain the mastery he had previously enjoyed, this was not always able to provide him with satisfaction. The stark reality of the situation at home was, with or without Joshua, there was still work that needed to be done, accounts that needed to be managed, and kids that needed to be raised. By default, Dulcinea was the new master of this household. She now had responsibilities which she never had before and in order to feed her family she needed to do the work which Joshua previously would have done. Although Joshua still had a fair amount to keep him busy as a soldier, it seems that a disconnect developed between himself and Dulcinea in that Joshua felt his wife wasn’t as diligent in her correspondence as he was.

There is no way to judge the nature of their marriage based on anything other than Joshua’s letters, so Dulcinea’s true feelings towards her husband can’t really be known, but it appears that Joshua felt he was being put out of mind by his wife. Over the nineteen months in

³⁷ Stephanie McCurry, Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 208.

³⁸ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, May 15, 1862 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 16.

which Joshua was away from home, during which he wrote an average of two to three letters a week, there were only but a few letters in which he *didn't* plead her to write more often and with greater detail. "I can't stand such treatment as this, my darling," he wrote in March of 1863, "I must have a letter from you or some-one."³⁹ At one point he came to the point of frustration and wrote that "My patience is becoming thread bare. I have not had a letter from you since the one you wrote on Sunday after I left. Of course I conclude that you are too sick to write. I am very uneasy about you dear."⁴⁰ These letters were Joshua's lifeline, in all probability just as therapeutic to write as to receive. Mail became the only source of intimacy that soldiers on the front lines could have, and its messages could either provide immeasurable joy or send the recipients into despair and demoralization.⁴¹ Week after week, either as the result of an ineffective mail system or Dulcinea's inattentiveness, Joshua felt more and more disconnected from his family and those for whom he fought.

Not knowing Dulcinea's side of the story, or exactly what she was dealing with at home, it is easy to assume that she was neglectful to the needs of a desperate husband. However, there is no doubt that she had more than enough to keep her occupied. Even though Joshua was deeply concerned with trying to maintain the pre-war household which he was accustomed too, Dulcinea in all likelihood had more to deal with than simply accommodating his prerogatives.⁴² Joshua might have been in her every thought and prayer, but she might not have had time to post a letter if one of their children was sick and they were short on food. Whatever the case was, Joshua saw her lack of correspondence as a sign that she did not think about him as much, or even worse, that he was not needed within the family anymore. This was particularly troubling

³⁹ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, March 27th 1863 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 77.

⁴⁰ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, September 6, 1863 in *Ibid.*, 131.

⁴¹ George C. Rable, Civil Wars, 55.

⁴² George C. Rable, Civil Wars, 56.

because antebellum men looked to their women in order to validate their efforts, and as a result they allowed men to see their own actions of self-love and self-promotion as acts of selflessness and patriarchy.⁴³ Without validation from his wife, Joshua was unsure of his place within the family. For a man who had left his home in order to protect his family and way of life, this possibility was devastating. If his family did not need him, did not rely on him, or came to accept the absence caused by his military service, then his defense of the Confederacy would be all in vain.

It is hard to gauge just how Dulcinea received these letters from Joshua which pleaded for her to be more diligent in her correspondence. Joshua rarely mentioned the content of her correspondence, and when he did it would only be to acknowledge the receipt of a letter. There are a few times in which we gain some insight into Dulcinea's feelings, but it is hardly explicit. In August of 1862 Joshua wrote to Dulcinea that he was sorry he had made her cry as a result of a letter he had sent from Corinth.⁴⁴ He did not mention which letter this was specifically, nor did he mark any of his letters to her as being from Corinth, but something he wrote was not well received. Perhaps it was something he had written about going off to battle, or the prospect of his death, but by this point in time he had already begun to chide her about her diligence in writing, and that very well may have made her feel underappreciated. Oddly enough, there is also a letter from Joshua in which he expresses disbelief that *she* was complaining about the inadequate amount of letters she received. Overall Joshua tended to write as a way to express his own feelings and observations, and not as a response to the letters of Dulcinea, so there is no way to know if these letters caused Dulcinea to feel pressured or stressed by his correspondence.

⁴³ Stephen W. Berry II, All That Makes a Man, 191.

⁴⁴ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, August 13 1862 as found in in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 49.

In trying to maintain his position as the patriarch of his family, Joshua was also acting on the fear that he had that his young children would not remember who he was and thus he would have no legacy. Understandably, fathers who were drawn away from home by the Civil War feared that their young children would forget them, even if their letters home showed just how much these children were in their thoughts and prayers.⁴⁵ At the same time, however, having children was a motivator to enlist in military service because in the minds of southern men, national service became an extension of being a good father.⁴⁶ Joshua often displayed the fear of being forgotten when closing his letters, pleading with his wife things such as “don’t let T. forget me,” and “tell T. who wrote this letter.”⁴⁷ Similar to the seemingly contradictory act of leaving your loved ones in order to protect them, Joshua was troubled by the fact that in going off to war to ensure his family’s honor and show himself as a brave and dutiful man, his children might very well forget who he was.

Additionally, Joshua feared that this separation from his children meant that he would have no say in how they were being raised. Although the early years of the Victorian Era may have been marked by a distance between father and children, by the time of the Civil War fathers had begun to have a more substantial part in the raising of their offspring. As a result, “later enlisting Confederate soldier were more likely to lecture their wives on what they wanted done with their children, while subtly implying that mothers were not up to the task.”⁴⁸ Joshua was not typical of this in that he rarely told Dulcinea exactly how to raise their two children, but he definitely had an active interest in how his children were developing and the state of their

⁴⁵ James Marten, “Fatherhood in the Confederacy: Southern Soldiers and Their Children,” *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (May, 1997) 276.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 280.

⁴⁷ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, July 13, 1862 and Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway August 24, 1862 in *The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway*, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 42 and 54.

⁴⁸ Kenneth W. Noe, *Reluctant Rebels*, 79.

wellbeing. As a man of education, he wanted to make sure his children were well read. In this regard he instructed Dulcinea “I hope you will push [T.] along.”⁴⁹ Overall Joshua recognized that one of the important responsibilities of being a father, and being the head of the household, was being active in the development of his children. By removing himself from their presence, he was no longer able to perform the duties which were expected of him.

Wherever Joshua turned in camp he longed for a womanly presence, believing that the influence of the other gender would soften the sinful behavior of his comrades. For Southern men, including Joshua, the home came to represent a sanctuary of purity and decency. Inside the home, women became a source of virtue, and the cult of domesticity formed these women as motherly nurturers that provided a safe haven to men amongst the harsh realities of the world around them.⁵⁰ Additionally, the family “became a haven from stress, a conduit of moral values, and a prominent component of what their descendants would call ‘quality of life,’ and its disruption was to be avoided.”⁵¹ One popular women’s manual of the time reflected this in characterizing wives as “a companion who will raise the tone of her husband’s mind from low anxieties and vulgar cares and will lead his thoughts to expatiate or repose those subjects.”⁵² In May of 1863 Joshua wrote to Dulcinea saying “There are some fool soldiers who have their wives with them here and although I would not have you here for any amount, (that is here in camp) yet I can’t help envying those poor fellows in their happiness.”⁵³ After their months of separation, Joshua had idealized Dulcinea and in his mind saw her as a beacon of hope amidst

⁴⁹ Joshua Callaway and Dulcinea Callaway, June 16, 1862 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 27.

⁵⁰ Reid Mitchell, The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 74.

⁵¹ James Marten, “Fatherhood in the Confederacy: Southern Soldiers and Their Children,” 272.

⁵² Sara Ellis, The Wives of England: Their Relative Duties, Domestic Influence, and Social Obligations (London, 1843) 99.

⁵³ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, May 9, 1863 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 88.

the harsh reality which he lived in. He desired to be with her desperately and grew envious of the men who had somehow managed to bring their wives to camp. At the same time he preferred that she remained outside of the military realm which he was forced to live with. To bring her in to camp would be to taint her with the vileness associated with military life. Thus, to protect his wife from the indecency he must suffer, he preferred to have her back in the refuge of home.

The unfortunate reality for Joshua was that the more time he spent away from home, the greater the privations were for his family and there was less he could do about it. By 1863 “men saw clearly that they would be compelled to sacrifice at least their own sense of security about their family’s safety, and perhaps that safety itself, as long as their presence in the army was required.”⁵⁴ The torment which Joshua felt because of his absence became heightened when Dulcinea wrote of the hardships she had to endure. Undoubtedly, Joshua felt that Dulcinea’s predicaments, which mostly had to do with money, food, or illness, would have been a non-issue if he was simply at home to help her. A great deal of this hardship came from the fact that Joshua was the primary breadwinner of the family, as most men were in the ante-bellum South, and his pay from the Confederate government was wildly inconsistent. Even after only a few weeks in the army Joshua reported that “We have not been paid off yet, nor do we have any idea when we will be. I wish you would let me know what disposition you have made with what money I have sent home.”⁵⁵ Later that year he gloomily wrote “I suppose you are out of provisions and I am sure I can’t tell you what to do. I learn that we are to be paid off in a day or two and if we are I can send you some money, but to send the money is all I can do. I hope some friend will invest in you.”⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Aaron Sheehan-Dean, Why Confederates Fought, 133.

⁵⁵ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, July 16, 1862 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 43-44.

⁵⁶ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, October 29, 1862 in *Ibid.*, 63.

This particular passage is highlighted by the context of its writing, which was right after Joshua had returned back to Tennessee after the Perryville Campaign. The months before the Army of the Tennessee invaded Kentucky were full of preparation, planning, and optimism. Joshua had seen little fighting and was still somewhat content with the life of a soldier, especially since the Confederacy's prospects seemed like they were on the upswing. Right before he set out on the long train ride which would take the army down to Mobile and then back up to Chattanooga, he wrote to Dulcinea that he would be out of touch for a while but that "the troops all seem to be anxious to overtake the Yankees; I think the old 28th would make their sign now in battle."⁵⁷ A month later, after the army had traveled almost as far as the Ohio River only to be defeated, Joshua wrote to Dulcinea full of despair and disillusionment. Not only was his army repelled from its grand invasion, but he also had no idea how he could feed his family back home.

In addition to monetary problems, hearing of illness was also particularly troublesome for Joshua. After a long spell without a letter from his wife, Joshua asked "Why in the world don't you write, my dear? Are you sick?"⁵⁸ When he finally received a letter from her confirming this fear, he wrote to her that "I have suffered the most *intense* anxiety ever since the receipt, last Friday, of your letter of the 19th which brought the intelligence of your sickness... which itself is enough to kill me."⁵⁹ For many Confederate and Union soldiers alike, the death of a family member back home brought about not only grief, but also guilt at not being there to help. One Confederate soldier, whose son died during his time away, wrote to his wife that he wished he

⁵⁷ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, September 1, 1862 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 55.

⁵⁸ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, July 23, 1863 in *Ibid.*, 115.

⁵⁹ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, July 29, 1863 in *Ibid.*, 118.

could “have been at home to see him die.”⁶⁰ He went on to say that “I cannot stand it here-I shall desert or do something worse-I cannot stand it. I cannot write-My heart is broken-I don’t deserve or crave to live-Oh Mother what shall I do...My heart is bursting, my brain on fire.”⁶¹ This sort of emotional breakdown was devastating to the overall moral of the Confederate army.

Intentional or not, letters from home were able to play with the heart strings of Confederate men and put them in an emotional position which they had not been used to. Just like every other aspect of their peacetime lives, men were used to having emotional control over their homes and utilizing this power to mitigate negative situations. At war, these men were almost helpless and relied on the diligence of their wives to fulfill their emotional needs. When a family member was sick, or unresponsive, or vague in their correspondence, these men suffered yet another blow in trying to conceptualized the world that the war created.

Joshua’s first reaction to his wife’s illness was that he must go home to take care of her. The official channel for doing this was to apply for a furlough, which if approved would authorize a short leave of absence. For many Confederates, especially those of the Army of Northern Virginia who were relatively close to their homes for the majority of the war, the sickness of a loved one back home or other hardships within the family was enough to warrant desertion. These soldiers made an active decision that their family was more important than their military service and that the health of those they loved trumped any stigma of cowardice or dishonor. Although Joshua was in the same position that many of these men were, i.e. a wife and kids sick at home with little food and money, he never broke outside of what was expected of him as a Confederate soldier. “I made my application [for a furlough] as strong as I could,” he wrote to Dulcinea, “and yesterday it came back ‘*Disapproved by Command of Gen Bragg*’ and

⁶⁰ James Marten, “Fatherhood in the Confederacy: Southern Soldiers and Their Children,” 275.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

this morning I went to see Gen. Bragg myself but he was not there and I only saw his Adjutant General who told me that personal applications are not allowed.”⁶²

Joshua was willing to take his request to the very top of his chain of command, General Braxton Bragg himself, but once that official path had been denied he seemed to have reserved himself to the fact that he could not go home. This is not to claim that Joshua was wholly content with this decision, nor that he was simply a pawn of the army that was happy with whatever orders came down from his superiors. As much as he would have liked to go home, it seems that he didn't have the connections nor the creativity to do it without deserting. By this point Joshua had been promoted to Lieutenant and he felt that the officers were treated unfairly in comparison to enlisted men when it came to furloughs. As an officer, Joshua had to take on more responsibility within the army and once again found that his military duty was preventing him from taking proper care of his family.

Interestingly enough, in the entirety of his correspondence with his wife, Joshua only mentioned desertion once, and that was to say “I am as sick of the war as any man who ever deserted. But do not you think I have any notion of a similar course. No, never.”⁶³ If Joshua would have survived the Battle of Chattanooga and retreated in defeat yet again with the Army of the Tennessee, there is no way to know what course of action he would have taken. The army's southward movement would have taken him closer and closer to home, and in turn brought the Union Army with it. The days before his death reveal that desertion was in fact on Joshua's mind, and this very well might have developed over time to a point where he was comfortable with running away.

⁶² Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, July 29, 1863 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 118.

⁶³ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, November 1, 1863 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 157.

By the time of the Battle of Chattanooga, the culmination of all of these factors relating to Joshua's absence from home and his service in the military came down to a conflict of interests in which Joshua could not choose one without neglecting the other. Joshua entered the war hoping that it would be a short one. Early on he put his hopes on rumors that talks of peace and foreign recognition were true, but this did not unfold. Even as the Army of the Tennessee prepared to invade Kentucky, Joshua was still hopeful that the war would end soon with Southern honor intact and his life back home still in order. Unfortunately, as the Southern defeats at Perryville, Gettysburg, and Vicksburg began to add up, Joshua optimism about the future waned. The cost of his absence and a Confederate defeat began to weigh hard on him, especially when he realized what this meant for the prospects of his family.

Sometime between the Summer of 1863 and the Battle of Chattanooga, Joshua began to transform what it meant for him to be a Southern man. In effect, he was reexamining the concepts which had encouraged him to enlist in the first place and challenging what he originally thought was important to him. At the beginning of the war, Joshua was conflicted by a sense of responsibility to his family and a sense of duty as an able-bodied citizen of his besieged country, neither of which he was able to support without neglecting the other.⁶⁴ Although none of Joshua's pre-war writings are available, we know that he was reluctant to enlist with the Confederate army in the first place. He and his wife had a young child with another on the way. He earned a comfortable living and his home was far away from where any of the real fighting was occurring. As pressures mounted and the intensity of the war picked up, Joshua did eventually come to realize that he must answer the South's call to arms. However, the more that Joshua heard of the situation back home, of the illness, monetary problems, and dramatic

⁶⁴ James. M. McPherson, For Cause and Comrades, 134.

changes to the way of life he had left behind, the more he began to reevaluate what his priorities were.

While originally Joshua thought that honor and reputation were tied to military service and patriotism, as the war progressed he began to place greater value on his role as a loving husband and dutiful father. Perhaps the phrase “Distance makes the heart grow fonder” is best in describing how Joshua’s feelings developed over time and why he began to place more value on his family than he previously realized. “I didn’t know how I did love my D. till I was separated from her,” he wrote to Dulcinea, adding “I find that the longer I stay away the worse I want to see you, worse if possible, as you say, than ever.”⁶⁵

It is also worth noting that Joshua hardly ever expressed any sort of patriotic or political viewpoints to his wife. In the handful of occasions when he does mention something about the outlook of the war, it is only brief and in passing. This seems to be consistent in cases like that of Joshua’s, for “If brief statements scattered through diaries and letters about ‘my country’ do indicate real nationalism, one must conclude nonetheless that nationalism was a relatively minor motivator of the men who joined the gray-clad army beginning in 1862.”⁶⁶ Very early on during his enlistment, when one would assume that Joshua’s patriotic fervor would be at its peak, he only wrote that he would be happy with peace “if it is on *honorable terms*.”⁶⁷ A few months later again we see a small glimpse of nationalism when he says “Our cause is just.”⁶⁸ One explanation for this could be that Joshua was surrounded by politics and Confederate bravado throughout his

⁶⁵ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, June 21, 1863 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 98.

⁶⁶ Kenneth W. Noe, Reluctant Rebels, 30.

⁶⁷ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, July 13, 1862 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 42.

⁶⁸ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, July 11, 1863 in *Ibid.*, 111.

entire day as a member of the army, and he simply didn't feel the need to express these types of sentiments in his letters home.

What is far more prevalent in Joshua's writings are professions of his devotions to his wife and family, and beyond anything else the hope that he will one day be reunited with them to live out the rest of his life. In one particularly poignant letter to Dulcinea, Joshua wrote that he has enclosed all of the money that he could spare and he then gave her instructions on how to best utilize it. It was his hope, he wrote, that his actions would provide for them, because "That is what, and *all*, I live for, i.e. to feed and clothe you and the children, and make *you* happy."⁶⁹ One of Joshua's fellow soldiers put it a little more bluntly when he said "A man's family is dearer to him than anything in the world, at least mine is and 40 confederates may go to the devil if I am to be kept away from all I hold dear during the rest of my life"⁷⁰

Additionally, it might not have only been Joshua's sentiments which were conflicted by his devotion to his family compared to that of his country, but also the way that he conducted himself in battle. Many soldiers felt that those who had wives or sweethearts back home would be more likely to hold back or shirk in battle. One southern artilleryman mused that "all the married men down here seem to take wonderful care of their lives."⁷¹ Another soldier went as far to say that "No soldier ought to be married. It helps to make him a coward."⁷² In his letters to Dulcinea, Joshua rarely describes his actions in battle, and when he does he refers to what the company did in general and not his own specific deeds. Perhaps he did not want to worry his wife or have her feel that he was being reckless with his life, but it also shows that Joshua was

⁶⁹ Joshua Callaway to Dulcinea Callaway, June 1, 1863 in The Civil War Letters of Joshua K. Callaway, ed. Judith Lee Hallock, 92.

⁷⁰ Stephen W. Berry II, All That Makes a Man, 183.

⁷¹ James. M. McPherson, For Cause and Comrades, 140.

⁷² *Ibid.*

not overly concerned with glory on the battlefield. More important to him was the prospect of being reunited with those who he loved.

We can never know what path Joshua's military service would have taken had he not been killed on Missionary Ridge. Although he wrote to his wife that he would not desert, his admittance to her that he understands why men leave the army indicates that he himself had thought about it. However, his attempt to get a furlough to take care of Dulcinea also shows that he was still confined by the authority of military regulations and felt compelled to try and act within them. This exemplifies the tension which Joshua felt as he tried to navigate the two separate realms which he was part of. He was a loyal husband, but he had to leave his wife in the service of his country. He was a caring father, but circumstances beyond his control meant that he was unable to raise his children. He was compelled to answer the call of his country in order to meet the expectations of being a Southern man, and for a large part he did this in the name of his family's safety. But his family's wellbeing declined exponentially the longer he was gone. As an honorable man of the South, Joshua had responsibilities as a citizen and as a father and husband. War complicated these responsibilities beyond easy comprehension. The result was that men like Joshua were caught in the middle of a dialogic entrapment which limited their ability to choose their own courses of action, and they would never truly be able to come to terms with these circumstances.

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