Julia Gardiner Tyler: A President's Bride and Plantation Mistress in the Age of Domesticity

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JULIA GARDINER TYLER A PRESIDENT'S BRIDE AND PLANTATION MISTRESS IN THE AGE OF DOMESTICITY

A Thesis

Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of American Studies
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by
Elizabeth Singleton
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER of ARTS

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DEDICATION

To Dwight Lee Madison
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Rest assure that my family and close friends know more about Julia Tyler's life than I am sure they care to. For editing assistance I would like to thank Britt McCarley and Joe Burns. For her assistance with the architectural study of the plantation and as a sounding board for ideas I would like to thank Jennifer Haynes. To my family who offered moral support and gracious understanding of my absence in lieu of time to research and write -- thank you.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to define the role of Julia Gardiner Tyler, wife of President John Tyler, as a plantation mistress and to explain the significance of her role at their plantation, Sherwood Forest, in Charles City County, Virginia.

Correspondence between Julia Tyler and her family in New York describe her life at Sherwood Forest. The surviving plantation house and many original furnishings provided additional evidence on which the conclusions of this thesis were based. John Tyler's role at Sherwood Forest was researched through both primary and secondary sources to avoid exploring the role of this plantation mistress in a vacuum.

Past scholarship has interpreted Julia Tyler's life as a mere adjunct to that of her husband. This thesis interprets her life in relationship to recent studies in women's history which explore the concept of domesticity and develop the idea of the companionate marriage. Here the focus is on Julia, her house and its furnishings, and her roles as wife, mother, daughter, hostess, and domestic manager. The objective is to better understand home life on a southern plantation in the age of domesticity.
JULIA GARDINER TYLER: A PRESIDENT'S BRIDE AND PLANTATION MISTRESS IN THE AGE OF DOMESTICITY
INTRODUCTION

Julia Gardiner Tyler was the second wife of President John Tyler. Her status as a President's wife is the predominate theme in the published studies of her life. In 1963, Robert Seager authored *And Tyler Too, A Biography of John and Julia Gardiner Tyler*. Although Seager provides the only complete biographical account of Julia's life, his interpretation is skewed by traditional male-oriented historical study. His biography concentrates on John Tyler and the life and family he shared with his wife. A brief sketch of Julia appeared in both Laura H. Langford's *The Ladies of the White House* and Mary O. Whitton's *First, First Ladies 1789-1865*. Both sketches are purely biographical. The only magazine article about her, "A President's Bride at Sherwood Forest," appeared in a 1958 issue of *Virginia Cavalcade*. In addition, *A President Takes a Wife* by Joseph Perling is the only fictional account of her life. Oliver Perry Chitwood's biography of the President, *John Tyler Champion of the Old South*, is considered the definitive study of his life. Chitwood's examination of Tyler's political career is thorough. However, he virtually ignores the
domestic aspect of Tyler's life. This study abruptly ends with the President's death in 1862 without further mention of Tyler's widow. It is time to expand the interpretation of John Tyler's life beyond the confines of her role as a President's wife.

This study begins by exploring the relationship between John and Julia Tyler and it departs from past scholarship by examining the role Julia Gardiner Tyler played at Sherwood Forest as a plantation mistress from 1844 to 1860. During their honeymoon, in 1844 Tyler introduced his bride to their Virginia plantation. His death and the effects of Civil War forced her to abandon this role in 1862. A mere glance at Julia's life at Sherwood Forest fuels the stereotype of the plantation mistress who was dependent upon her husband socially, economically, and politically. This view overlooks the extent of her responsibilities, for John Tyler, the patriarch of Sherwood Forest, did not organize and control the domestic area of the plantation. Julia did, contrary to the interpretation offered by traditional historians. In addition, Julia was not economically or socially dependent on her husband. The purpose of this thesis is to explain the significance of Julia Tyler's role as a plantation mistress and to detail the characteristics of her role.

Frequent correspondence to and from her family in New
York provides ample detailed evidence of Julia Tyler's life as a plantation mistress. Many of these letters are located in the archives at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. Her correspondence discloses in detail the decisions she made concerning remodeling, furnishing and decorating the plantation, the role material comforts and entertainment played in the Tyler's lives, and visitors to the plantation. Julia also comments on but rarely elaborates on the presence and work of white and black servants and the daily routine at Sherwood Forest.

Material evidence, thus far ignored by historians, also provides significant information about Julia Tyler's life as a plantation mistress. The plantation house, dependencies, and a portion of the Tylers' original furnishings and gardens have been preserved or restored by the Tyler descendants. The formal gardens, architectural features, and furnishings directed the pattern of movement in and around the main house. The social hierarchy of Sherwood Forest can be interpreted from these details. Rooms and dependencies established for the daily management of the plantation further the interpretation of Julia's relationship to both her servants and her domestic responsibilities.

Julia's attention was focused on two realms -- one of leisure and pleasure for family and friends and one of work and management for herself and servants. An examin-
ation of her role as plantation mistress with consideration to both the written and physical evidence reveals both the public and private realms at Sherwood Forest. Where these two realms diverged and coexisted depended as much on the mistress's management as on tradition.

The heart of Sherwood Forest was organized and furnished to facilitate the mistress's domestic responsibilities as a wife, mother, hostess, and manager. Therefore, it is necessary to detail Julia's relationship to her husband, children, step-children, servants, and guests. Her control and influence of the domestic sphere at the plantation can be assessed by the decisions she made regarding these individuals and her social interaction with them.

Julia Tyler's response to her role and responsibilities as a woman must be considered with respect to the era in which she lived, 1820-1889. Women's status changed as the nation grew. The inferior political, economic, and social status of women in pre-revolutionary America sprang from European tradition. After the revolution the social significance of women's status in society was reconsidered. Although men politically and economically continued to dominate society, the social status of women changed. The evolving cultural norm proposed that women uniquely benefitted society in ways which could not be compared with the
contributions of men. Women as wives and mothers played an important role in society by complementing the roles men played as husbands and fathers. It was, therefore, the duty of post-revolutionary war women to create a pleasing home for children and their husbands. Thus women were publicly entrusted with the responsibilities of the home. Men and women were encouraged to view marriage as an equal partnership based on mutual love. Society promoted the recognition of separate spheres of responsibility for husband and wife by the 1820s. Women assumed the responsibility for the domestic sphere and men the public sphere.

The preeminence of domestic themes in recent scholarship is evident in published studies in women's history. A brief discussion of pertinent works on this topic will set the stage for a broader examination of Julia Tyler's role as a plantation mistress. Their discussion at this point provides an important perspective from which this thesis will unfold.

Mary Beth Norton's Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women 1750-1800 traces the origins of nineteenth-century domesticity. Norton describes the post-revolutionary war status and opportunity for women. This was the world into which Julia Gardiner Tyler was born. Norton investigates the effect of the revolution
with regards to how it changed women's perceptions of themselves and society's perceptions of women. Norton concludes that, "In the pre-revolutionary world, no one had bothered to define domesticity: the private realm seemed unimportant . . . In the post-revolutionary world the social significance of household and family was recognized . . . As a direct result, a definition of domesticity [for women and society] was at last required." The war broke down the barriers which seemed to insulate women from the public realm as they took over the operation of family businesses and in some cases directly participated in the war. After the revolution educational opportunities increased for women. A new curriculum was proposed that included logic, rhetoric, history, and geography that would enable women to better manage the responsibilities of raising "republican sons."

Mary P. Ryan's *The Empire of the Mother: American Writing About Domesticity 1830-1860*, explores the changing relationship between husband and wife, mother and child, and household and society during the period that Julia Tyler became a wife, mother, and homemaker. Based on manuscript collections and the published prescriptive literature of the period, Ryan's study reveals society's new expectations for women. Ryan declares that the cult of domesticity which began in the 1830s, marked the end of
the old patriarchal family system. The cult of domesticity granted women the responsibility for creating, circulating, and transferring the social values of society. Wives were instructed to manage domestic affairs and provide a pleasant retreat for their husbands. Children were to be viewed as a precious resource of the new republic. Mothers were told to devote more attention to amusement and moral lessons when raising their children. In addition, women were advised to reorganize their domestic space with an emphasis on their responsibilities to their children and husbands rather than simple domestic management. Ryan's study adequately explains the expectations associated with the cult of domesticity but she does not detail how women responded to these new demands.

Barbara Welter in "The Cult of True Womanhood 1820-1860" further defines society's expectations regarding the preferred character of women in this period. Based on prescriptive literature found in magazines, gift books, religious tracts, and cookbooks. Welter discusses the philosophy which fostered the cult of true womanhood. Women were judged by what Welter named the four cardinal virtues: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. A woman's place was at home as daughter, sister, wife, and mother. The domestic sphere assigned to women was
heralded by scripture and social pressure. In addition to prompting the moral elevation of the family and promoting happiness, women were to be proficient at housekeeping, needlework, planting flower gardens, letter writing, and the arts of drawing, singing, or playing a musical instrument. The prescriptive literature of the period tried to convince women they had the best of both worlds -- power and virtue -- and that a stable order of society depended upon their maintaining a traditional place in it." Welter suggests that future studies of the period examine how women reacted to these new standards.

Suzanne Lebsock's The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town 1784-1860 explores the changing economic and social status of women in this period. For the purpose of this thesis Lebsock discusses two significant points related to marriage which are worthy of consideration. Lebsock defined the companionate marriage which evolved in this period. The companionate marriage emphasized marriage for love as opposed to marriages arranged for political or economic gain. Once married, separate spheres and joint decision making replaced male domination. Lebsock also discusses how loopholes in the laws of equity circumvented the common law which politically and economically defined a woman's status in the
period. A family's concern for their daughter's inheritance was expressed by the increase in marriage contracts, separation agreements, and the utilization of estate administrators to properly manage a woman's inheritance. These points will be discussed in chapter one at length with respect to the marriage of John and Julia Tyler and Julia's inheritance from her father.

Catherine Clinton's *The Plantation Mistress: Women's World in the Old South* examines the reality as opposed to the myth of the plantation mistress to render an accurate description of her life. Clinton's contempt for the scholarly neglect of the plantation mistress directed and influenced her research. She makes a distinction between northern and southern women by noting that the behavior of southern women was restricted to their domestic sphere not only by their husbands but by rural living. Clinton observed that women's lives revolved around their home and children but does not refer to the philosophy of the cult of domesticity. Refuting the stereotype that the plantation mistress was a lady of leisure, Clinton details her responsibilities within the domestic sphere. However, Clinton states that the mistress was always subject to her husband's inclinations. Women's lives revolved around childbirth.
and the seasons of the year. According to Clinton, travel for women was rare and most mistresses felt isolated from family and friends. Clinton concentrates more on the burdens of these women rather than on explaining how they satisfactorily managed their responsibilities. She successfully refutes the mythical stereotype of the plantation mistress. However, her defensive style creates an image of a plantation mistress who is over burdened, oppressed, and isolated.

Anne Firor Scott's *The Southern Lady From Pedestal to Politics 1830-1930* traces the progression of southern women as they moved from the private sphere to the public sphere. Her examination of the antebellum plantation mistress is similar to that offered by Catherine Clinton. The antebellum lady was assigned her role, status, and character by society. The image facing her was that of a perfect woman. She was expected to be a devoted wife, mother, and Christian. In addition, she was restricted to the domestic sphere by her husband. Furthermore, Scott states that she was to be obedient to the male patriarch. Scott contrasts this image of perfection with a description of the plantation mistress who exhausts her energies by tending to the needs of family and slaves. Marriage, she notes, was seeded not by romance but by practicality.
Scott concludes that women recognized the incompatibility of these two images. Society demanded their perfection one hand and their inferiority on the other hand. This recognition manifested itself in private correspondence between women and in diaries, but was rarely publicly expressed. Like Clinton, Scott stresses the harsh realities of plantation life by detailing the complaints and responsibilities of the plantation mistress.

It must be noted that Julia Tyler was not a typical plantation mistress. She was born and raised in New York and had access to a source of income independent of the plantation and her husband. However, she was not the only northern-born plantation mistress and her approach to this role does not appear to conflict with the practices of the neighboring James River plantation mistresses.

Recent research regarding nineteenth-century domesticity can shed new light on the interpretation of the plantation mistress in this period. The philosophy of domesticity and the cult of true womanhood as discussed by Ryan and Welter, while not explicitly stated by the Tylers, quite obviously influenced Julia's perceptions of herself and her responsibilities. Norton's description of women's changing status after the revolution provides an excellent context for understanding the importance of Julia's education and her role as
a homemaker. Likewise Lebsock's study is worthy of considera-
tion with regards to Julia's marriage and economic status. Scott's and Clinton's interpretation of plantation mistresses will be modified by exploring the influence of this philos-
ophy on Julia Tyler's role at Sherwood Forest. Contrary to the description offered by these two historians, the mistress of Sherwood Forest, controlled the domestic sphere of the plantation, without expressing any feeling that her role as plantation mistress was restrictive of her responsibilities burdensome. Julia accepted both views of her status and separated the image of the perfect wife, mother, and hostess from the image of the domestic manager of servants. Julia created a public and private realm to facilitate each role. She moved back and forth between the two. In addition Julia was not isolated from family and friends at Sherwood Forest. The plantation was frequented by family and friends and the Tyler family vacationed annually at resorts. To fully understand Julia Tyler's role as a plantation mistress it is necessary to move beyond the traditional and regional interpre-
tation and explore her life in the context of these current interpretations of the changing status and respon-
sibilities of women in nineteenth-century America.
CHAPTER ONE

THE UNION OF JOHN AND JULIA TYLER

"Does John Tyler possess that ancient relic of fairyland, that such a spirit of youth, and poetry, and love, tenderness, and richer, and celebrity and modesty and everything that is charming should come forth, as at his wish and stand by his side."

New York Herald 1844

Born in New York at Gardiner's Island on May 4, 1820, Julia Gardiner thrived on the opportunities offered to her by her family's prestigious position. These opportunities included education, travel, and material comforts. At fifteen, Julia attended Madame N. D. Chargaray's Institute for young ladies on Houston Street in New York City. Her curriculum included music, French, literature, ancient history, arithmetic, and composition. This curriculum was the result of the changing attitudes towards the education of young ladies. Thus it was considered essential for the daughter of one of New York's most prominent families. The year after Julia completed her formal education, she and her younger sister Margaret traveled through Europe with their parents. This European tour included England, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Amsterdam, Scotland, and Ireland. While in France, the Gardiner family was presented at the
court of Louis-Phillippe. The French court particularly impressed the twenty-year old Julia, whose eyes feasted on the regal setting. The details of the court were not wasted on a young girl soon to be America's first lady.

In 1841, the Gardiners returned from their year long European tour. Julia's parents, having introduced their daughters to the capitals of Europe, now planned to travel to Washington, D.C. for the fashionable season.

Each winter Washington's political season spread beyond the halls of the Capitol and the executive offices of the White House into private dining rooms and public ballrooms. Annually, families of wealth, social standing, and political power flocked to the nation's capital. In 1842 State Senator David Gardiner escorted his family to the capital. His daughters, Julia and Margaret, caused quite a sensation during the social season. A long line of distinguished suitors attempted to attract their attention. Julia's age, appearance, dress, and beauty, combined with her family's wealth and social background, made her the marriage catch of the season. Judges, congressmen, diplomats, and Army and Navy officers vied for the opportunity to escort Miss Gardiner to public receptions. Forty-five years later, she recalled for the newspapers her first impression of the man she chose to marry:

When I look back at this day and see him as
he stood in the Green Room, [of the White House] he welcomed us with an urbanity which made the deepest impression upon my father and we could not help commenting, after we left the room, upon the silvery sweetness of his voice,' that seemed in just attune with the incomparable grace of his bearing, and the elegant ease of his conversation . . . 5

The man which attracted her attention was President John Tyler.

President Tyler's ailing wife, Letitia Christian Tyler, left him a widower in September of 1842. After her death, the President began making preparations for life as a Virginia planter. He planned to pursue this lifestyle when his term in office expired. The young Miss Gardiner immediately warmed the heart and awakened the romantic spirit of the grief stricken fifty-three year old President. John Tyler professed his love to her in February of 1843 and sixteen months later she became his wife. The social, political, and economic position of the Gardiner family qualified Julia as a socially suitable match for the President. John Tyler's political position and reputation made him an acceptable suitor. Since Julia's father, David Gardiner was killed in the Princeton gunboat explosion, John Tyler's request for Julia's hand in marriage was addressed to her mother Julianna. In a letter dated April 20, 1844, he wrote:

I have the permission of your daughter, Miss Julia
Gardiner, to ask your approbation of my address to her, dear Madam, and to obtain your consent to our marriage . . . my position in society will I trust serve as a guarantee for the appearance which I give that it will be the study of my life to advance her happiness by all and every means in my power.9

On April 22, two days later, Julianna Gardiner consented to the marriage by writing:

Your high political position, eminent public service and above all unsullied private character command the highest respect of myself and family and lead me to acquiesce in what appears to be the impulse of my daughter's heart and the dictates of her judgement.10

Mrs. Gardiner's consent, however, was contingent on John Tyler's ability to provide for his bride as she explained:

In cases of this kind I think the utmost candor should prevail and I hope you will not deem the suggestions I consider my duty as a mother to urge otherwise than proper. Her comfortable settlement in life, a subject often disregarded in youth . . . Julia in her taste and inclinations is neither extravagant nor unreasonable tho' she has been accustomed to all the necessary comforts and elegancies of life. I have no reason to suppose but you will have it in your power to extend to her the enjoyments by which she has been surrounded . . . 11

Two months later the couple took their vows.

On her wedding day, Julia Gardiner's light complexion and gown contrasted strikingly with her raven hair and ebony eyes. She wore a simple white dress of lisse "with a gauze veil descending from a circle of white flowers wreathed in her hair." Gathered at the Church of Ascension in New York at two o'clock on the afternoon of June 26, 1844, a small wedding party witnessed the marriage of Julia Gardiner to
President John Tyler. Her mother, sister, and two brothers looked on approvingly. One of Tyler's sons and seven friends completed the wedding party. At the conclusion of the ceremony, five carriages conveyed the party to the bride's home. After a brief stop in the nation's capital, The Tylers cruised to Old Point Comfort to honeymoon in Virginia, the President's home state. As summer drew to an end the responsibilities of the presidency drew him and his bride back to Washington D.C. Even though Tyler was the first President to wed while in office, the ceremony was kept a secret because the Gardiner family was still in mourning for Julia's father.

The President resumed his duties as chief executive and Julia began her reign as first lady. For the next eight months, she lived a fairy tale life and received the admiration and praise of Washington society. The New York Herald described the first lady as:

Beautiful, winning, as rosy as a summer's morning on the mountains of Mexico, as admirable as Victoria, but far more beautiful, and younger, and more intelligent, and more Republican, and quite as popular with the people . . . does John Tyler possess that ancient relic of fairyland, that such a spirit of youth, and poetry, and love, tenderness, and riches, and celebrity and modesty, and everything that is charming should come forth, as at his wish and stand at his side, the guardian angel of the evening of his days . . . John Tyler is no fool, and his selection of a bride clinches our assertions. 14

Her beauty, charm, and social position sustained public
opinion while she was first lady. While enjoying her courtly role as the President's bride and White House hostess, Julia Tyler began preparing for her role as a plantation mistress.

In 1842, John Tyler purchased Sherwood Forest, known then as Walnut Grove from Collier Minge for $12,000. The house stood in an oak grove of about twenty-five acres of shrubs, gardens, and outbuildings with a view the James River. It was surrounded by 1600 acres of plantation land in Charles City County, Virginia. John Tyler renamed their home Sherwood Forest when his term in office expired.

In some respects Julia's transition to plantation life was eased by the Gardiner family lifestyle. Like John Tyler, she boasted of her ancestry. Both the Tylers and Gardiner families traced their ancestry to the seventeenth-century settlement of America. The Gardiners and Tylers prided themselves on family reputation and heritage. They shared this in common with the James River planter aristocracy. Although the Gardiner family resided in New York City, they inherited Gardiner's Island, a plantation estate in New York harbor. Julia spent her youthful summers at the estate and was familiar with a planter's way of life.

Yet the first lady was also accustomed to the social seasons in Washington D.C. and New York City. John Tyler expressed a concern that plantation life would seem dull to Julia. However, his bride would charm Virginia's aristoc-
racy. The Tyler plantation was soon included among the list of sites for dinner parties and balls during the planters' social season. Annually the Tyler family joined other plantation families at White Springs and Virginia Springs or joined the Gardiner family in New York. With the addition of the Tyler children, these trips became too cumbersome. Julia Tyler then purchased Villa Margaret for $10,000 from her inheritance. The villa was a resort cottage in Hampton, Virginia. The family spent summer seasons at the beach and frequently the Gardinners joined them there.

Julia made an attempt to adjust to the plantation way of life. The homes and furnishings of Virginia's aristocracy were carefully selected to reflect their elevated status. Julia Tyler responded eagerly and competently to this aspect of plantation life. She desired not only to meet the expectations of Virginia society but to create a model home. Supported by financial independence, close family ties, and her husband, she turned Sherwood Forest into a fashionable residence befitting both the Tyler and Gardiner social class.

Julia's relationship with her family played a significant role in her life as a plantation mistress. Her mother, Julianna, sister Margaret, and brother Alexander, assisted her by purchasing household furnishings from New York and making arrangements to have goods sent to
Virginia. Julia was genuinely close to her brother, Alexander. Fortunately, her father entrusted him with Julia's inheritance. On Alexander, Margaret, and her mother, Julia could depend. Julia's cordial relationship with her brother, David was limited to their sibling connection and was strained to the breaking point after their mother's death in 1864.

Margaret and Alexander visited the Tylers annually and carried on lengthy correspondences with them. John Tyler chose Alexander as his biographer and financial confidant. Taking Julia's interest to heart, both her mother and brother assisted the former President with his financial endeavors. Alexander and her husband also joined forces to speculate in land in Kentucky. Tyler was genuinely fond of his sister-in-law, Margaret and christened their summer home with her name. Unmarried sisters were often incorporated into the home of married sisters in the nineteenth century. John Tyler respected Julianna's concern for her daughter's well-being and extended to her the hospitality that tradition afforded. While most historians have pointed out that many plantation mistresses were cut off from their families and isolated by plantation life this was not the case with Julia Tyler.

The Tyler's marriage was based on a mutual desire
The marriage between John and Julia Tyler took the form of what historians have labeled as a "companionate marriage." Historian Suzanne Lebsock explains the concept:

Companionate marriage is a term used by some historians of the family to describe a new marriage pattern that allegedly took hold in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, primarily in the middle class. Marriage partners were traditionally chosen by parents, whose main consideration was wealth, prestige, and political power. Companionate marriage, however, was for love, and decided on by the couple. With the companionate marriage, emotion moved to the center; mutual affection and respect replaced the call of duty and pressure. In companionate marriage, the old habit of male command was replaced by shared activities and joint decision making. The result for women was enhanced status -- greater power, greater autonomy, and a strong even equal voice in the family.

This adequately describes the relationship between John and Julia Tyler. That romance and love was at the center of their relationship is obvious from the flowery poetry they wrote each other, public boasts of their love for each other, and playful behavior described by friends and family. The Tylers also shared the decisions concerning their family. Julia's decision-making authority made her responsible for the domestic sphere of their home. Beyond love and respect, John Tyler may have been encouraged to accept his wife as an equal in their marriage partnership because she was independently wealthy.
Although John Tyler promised to assume the financial responsibility for and provide his wife with "all the necessary comforts and elegancies of life," the financial responsibility for Julia Gardiner's future was not left entirely to him. David Gardiner, Julia's father, provided her with a handsome inheritance. A provision in his will stated that the inheritance be administered by Alexander her brother. This insured that Julia Gardiner would continue to receive the benefits from her inheritance regardless of the man she married. This pattern of inheritance is referred to as a separate estate. While separate estates protected a wife's inheritance from the hands of her husband's carelessness or his creditors it was usually not intended to give women real economic power. As historian Lebsock explains:

While some separate estates were unequivocal instruments of power, in the majority of cases empowering the woman was not the intention. Instead, the main object was to keep property in the family -- to achieve some measure of economic security. . . . Under these circumstances, the woman was not likely to be given active power over her separate estate.

The concept of the separate estate was derived from legal loopholes in the laws of equity. According to the English common law as soon as a woman married her legal existence was suspended or incorporated into that of her husband, who
was regarded as her representative. As a rule married women could not make a valid contract, bring suit or be sued in court, execute a deed, administer an estate, or make a will. In addition common law granted a husband absolute possession of his wife's personal property and any other income that might be hers. The loopholes in equity which legally supported separate estate arrangements while not common were utilized in the eighteenth century as well as the nineteenth century.

Although Alexander legally controlled his sister's inheritance he chose not to restrict her access. She used part of her inheritance to enhance the domestic sphere at the plantation, to purchase Villa Margaret, and to buy clothing. John Tyler was not threatened by his wife's financial status. On the contrary, he asked the Gardiner family on several occasions to act as guarantors of his bank notes.

Julia's financial status played an important role in the lives of the Tylers. Even though they were materially wealthy and socially elevated, they were not economically rich. Tyler was a politician and a planter. As a public servant his income was modest and easily consumed by his large family. As a planter he was dependent on the weather and the boom and bust cycles of crop prices. Historian Robert Seager concludes that "like most Virginia planters" the former
President was always cash poor between harvests, and there were few years at Sherwood Forest when he was not forced to borrow from his wife's family or borrow from one bank to pay a note due at another. Furthermore Seager notes that, "He never missed an interest payment or defaulted on an obligation." Despite a variety of attempts to improve crop yields on the plantation and make it more profitable, Tyler died in debt. His credit and Julia's financial holdings enabled them to maintain a high standard of living.

Most of John Tyler's seven children resented their father's marriage. By the time of Tyler's marriage to Julia only his two youngest children lived with him. His three oldest daughters were married. One of his sons was married and one lived the bachelor's life. Their attitude toward Julia remained cool despite her and their father's efforts to bring the family together. His fifteen-year old daughter, Alice, refused to accept Julia's position in the family. After a brief stay at Sherwood Forest, she moved to Williamsburg to live with her sister, Elizabeth Tyler Waller, until she wed. The only success Julia enjoyed with her step-children was with Tazewell, John's youngest son. At age thirteen, he held no ill-feelings toward his young and beautiful step-mother and accepted the children that she bore.
The seven children of John and Julia Tyler gave Julia the opportunity to fulfill her role as a mother. David Gardiner Tyler was born on July 12, 1846. He was followed by John Alexander in April, 1848; Julie in December, 1849; Lachlan in December, 1851; Lyon Gardiner in August, 1853; Robert Fitzwalter in March, 1856; and Pearl in June, 1860. While John's life revolved around the agricultural seasons, Julia's life revolved around childbirth. This cyclic measure of time was interrupted twice each year with the family vacation and the social season of Virginia's planters.

John and Julia's roles at Sherwood Forest complemented each other. John Tyler as a gentleman planter participated in politics at a local and regional level and personally attended to the operation of their plantation. In his hours of leisure, he devoted his attention to his wife, children, and guest. Julia Tyler as plantation mistress managed the domestic sphere of their plantation by carefully manipulating the public appearance of the estate and quietly instructing the household staff on routine tasks. Likewise, her hours of leisure were devoted to her husband, children, family, and guests.
CHAPTER TWO
BUILDING A NEST

"I wish I had a magic wand, I would make this place the most beautiful you ever saw."

Julia Gardiner Tyler
1845

Detailed information about the common man, minorities, women, and children is rarely found in traditional sources used by historians. However, the examination of probate inventories, church records, catalogs, diaries, and the letters of women have encouraged modern historians to take into account a wider variety of written evidence. In addition modern historians have looked beyond written sources to concentrate on material evidence. Recent studies about women and family life which are based on furnishings, photographs or paintings, and architecture offer an interpretation of the past thus far overlooked. Since Julia Tyler controlled the domestic sphere at Sherwood Forest, influenced the remodeling, determined room use, and selected the furnishings for the main house it is necessary to examine this physical evidence and interpret its meaning to better understand her
role as a plantation mistress.

Sherwood Forest was the product of four periods of construction. The central portion of the house was built in the eighteenth century and bears the mark of the Georgian tradition. The main house was a single room deep. Beneath the main floor was a brick basement which runs the length of the hall and parlor. On the first floor a central hall separated the dining room and parlor. The original structure then as now, was two and a half stories tall. The elevation revealed a five over five pattern of bays. The first floor was balanced by a central door and flanked by two windows on each side. The windows were the same width as the door opening. The second floor has five windows corresponding to those on the first floor. However, the windows are smaller. The third floor has five dormer windows corresponding to the first and second floors. The gable roof is balanced by chimneys on both the east and west sides of the house.

The interior of the house is reflected in the facade; on each floor the central hall is flanked by a room. The stairways are located in the center halls. The rooms on each side of the hall are the same dimensions. (This is true of all three floors.) The house is symmetrical both visually and mathematically. The traditional date
given to his portion of the house is 1730. The symmetry, two and a half stories, dormer windows, central stairway, high ceilings, interior panelings, and large windows on the first floor suggests a more probable date of 1750-65.

This central portion was expanded in two stages by wings which about 1780 extended to the east and about half a century later to the west. The east wing was a story and a half tall with a chimney located on the east wall. Carpenters adapted the east wing to the existing fireplace of the main portion of the house. On the first floor, located on the south side of this fireplace, a hall three feet long and two feet wide formed a passage from the dining room to the master bedroom. On the North side of the fireplace, a stairway was built to the second floor. The stairway led from the master bedroom to a guest room and a servant's quarters. These stairs were designed to give access to the master bedroom from the servant's room. To enter the second floor guest room an irregular step was installed on the stairway. This presented a problem. On the second floor, the passage between the servant's quarters and guest room is three feet long and two feet wide and composed of two uneven steps. A handrail, therefore, placed over the stairway to steady the movement from one room to the other on
these uneven steps.

The west wing was probably planned by John Tyler, shortly after he acquired the house in 1842. John Tyler's letters to Julia Gardiner in 1843 included plans, drawings, and suggestions on the house construction which included details as the "location of rooms" the pitch of the stairs, and the construction of chimneys." A year later John gave Julia the opportunity to instruct the carpenters herself and to modify his plans for the home they would share. In a letter to her mother she wrote that, "The President felt anxious I should visit my future home in order to make any alterations I please ere it was too late . . . Time will make it a very handsome residence." 5

The west wing like the east wing was a story and a half tall. It corresponded to the east wing in both room dimensions, windows, fireplaces, and interior design. It is obvious, however, that a lesson was learned by the east wing construction. A closet was built on the north side of the fireplace. The stairway to the second floor was constructed on the south side of the fireplace. The stairway can be reached by either the parlor or the sitting room and does not intrude into the sitting room like the stairs in the master bedroom. The stairway in this wing is enclosed and not visible from the sitting room. A chimney
was constructed on the west end of the west wing to heat this portion of the house and its placement balanced the east wing chimney.

The President's son-in-law, Henry Lightfoot James, and his daughter, Mary Tyler James, was managing the estate and supervising the construction work of slave gangs while the Tyler's lived in the White House. The basic work was not scheduled for completion until December 1844 and it would be a full year after that before all the detailed work was finished. Julia began planning the remodeling of their home during her honeymoon in 1844:

Tomorrow [July 23, 1844] we take a run up to the President's seat from Hampton Roads to direct the carpenters a little, and we shall take the painter with us in order that he may have an idea what part he is to perform. I am at a loss to know whether to paper the new hard wall or to paint it the colour of our parlors in Lafayette Place [the Gardiner family home in New York]. The paper which could be got for it is very delicate and beautiful of an entire new fashion, and without I have it painted just as ours is, I think it would be better taste. 6

While at Sherwood Forest in July, Julia described the remodeling effort to her mother:

. . .directing the carpenters and mechanics where to make this change and where this addition. The head carpenter was amazed at my science and the President's acknowledged I understood more about carpentry and architecture than he did, and he would leave all the arrangements that were to be made entirely to my taste. I intend to make it as pleasant as I can under the circumstances. A new house I would have arranged and built differ-
ently of course. It will be the handsomest place in the country and I assure you mother there are some very fine ones in it. 7

John Tyler wanted his bride to feel at home in Virginia:

The President says when we walk about the house "this is for your mother to occupy, this for Margaret, and that for David and Alexander . . .'. How I wish I had you here to talk over my arrangements for I am sure I don't know what to propose and in everything the President appeals to me. In the world, as here, where ever he goes and what ever is done it is me in all situations he seems only to consider. 8

The Tylers moved into Sherwood Forest before the construction work was completed. The last phase of construction began in 1845. Julia explained to her mother the work in progress:

Carpenters are here at work and we are about having an addition made to the building -- you know the kitchen and laundry are buildings separated from the house on a level and by a space of twenty seven feet we intend to have them connected to the house by a long passage eight feet high and nine feet wide -- a narrow entry running down on one side and the rest partitioned off into small rooms and closets for stores. 9

The east wing was extended to connect the main house to the laundry and kitchen. The west wing connected the sitting room to the office with a narrow ballroom. The ballroom, unlike the east wing, had a slightly vaulted ceiling to resonate the sound of music. To extend the Georgian influence of the exterior, both wings contained five openings; doors and windows. The size and placement of the windows was dictated, however, by the room's use
and not mathematical precision of the Georgian principle. The windows in the west wing are larger than the windows of the east wing to facilitate the circulation of air in the ballroom. Neither the east wing hall nor the west wing ballroom was heated. The long halls are only one story tall and the pitch of the roof is lower than either roof on the main house or kitchen, laundry, and office dependencies. Thus Sherwood Forest reached its present length of 291 and a half feet.

The practice of connecting the main house to dependencies was popularized in the late Georgian period. The Palladio Roman style was popular in Virginia. George Washington built an open colonnade to connect Mount Vernon to its dependencies after he served as President. It was an easy transition from open colonnade to enclosed passage by the time John Tyler retired from the same office. When John and Julia’s first child was born, Walnut Grove had been transformed into Sherwood Forest.

Although John Tyler shared the financial burden for the purchase of furnishings of their home, Julia used her inheritance and assumed some of the financial obligation. John Tyler acted in accordance with the strong cultural tide which placed in the hands of women the responsibility for the final appearance of the home. The nineteenth-century home was
physically the woman's sphere. Wives were advised of their
domestic responsibilities by the prescriptive literature of
the period. Mrs. Hale was the author of a variety of books
and articles on the subject of women's responsibilities. Her
works are representative of the prescriptive literature in
this period. In Manners: Happy Homes and Good Society All
the Year Round, Mrs. Sarah Hale wrote:

What composes our country and makes its true life?
Not its wide prairies, with their billows of undulating green; not its lofty mountains, with their hidden and inexhaustible treasures of ore; not our vast oceans, rolling rivers, not swelling streams. Grand as each and all of these may be, they are not the country's life... not the country's power... its true life and power must reside in the home; for it is the aggregate of homes which make up the country; and it is from them all the good must flow which governs and regulates the nation... First in the destiny of the home circle, we would place the mother; for this is her rightful domain... It will not do to cultivate the acres alone: home pleasures, home enjoyments, and home recreations must come in for their share. We must sow the seed of innocent amusement and plough the mental field with care if we would have a harvest of health and happiness in the homes of our agriculturists.

That Julia understood the importance of these responsibilities is apparent from her attention to the domestic sphere of Sherwood Forest.

While living in Washington, D.C., the first lady began to plan for the furnishings of their Virginia plantation. She wanted to create a fashionable and pleasant home in
Virginia. After her honeymoon, she began ordering furnishings for Sherwood Forest. Familiar with the shopkeepers and craftsmen in New York, she asked her family living in the city for help. Her mother and sister were instructed to concentrate their energies on a list of interior furnishings sent from Washington, while her brother, Alexander, was asked to acquire statuary for the garden, a carriage, and a saddle. Quality and fashion dictated the number of suitable shops visited by the Gardiner family on Julia's behalf. Margaret and Julianna selected furniture from Boudouine and Tiffany and Young of New York. The pianos were made by Chickering of Boston. Tapestries were ordered from Sloans. Elaborate gilt cornices were found at a good price at Solomon and Harts and parlor ornaments were purchased at Wornam and Marguants. Statuary was bought at Basham's by Alexander.

Julia personally considered the effect each article of her new home would have. Although she was advised by her family, she made all the final decisions concerning maker, material, color, and price. Carpets, curtains, furniture, and lamps were perhaps the most notable furnishings but she considered every detail. In one letter to her sister, her instructions were to, "Have the bedroom curtains lined with pink muslin so that [she could] take out the lining easily in the summer." This comment is one of many that
indicated the degree of attention she paid to her future home. No object was too ordinary to escape her concern.

In December she wrote her brother:

I have only time to acknowledge the receipt of your letter this morning. It appears to me that only andirons have been got for one room. It had almost escaped me. There are four rooms to be thus--fitted --parlor, sitting room, dining room, and my bedroom all on one floor and all with marble mantel fire-places; bedroom and sitting room of plain black marble--parlor and dining room are Egyptian marble. Cornices with cupid heads, chairs stuffed with feathers, and curtains of satin and worsted damask were selected with such attention to detail that Julia could easily envision the final appearance of her permanent home.

The remodeled plantation house and its location also influenced the selection of furnishings. Julia's family bore this in mind, as noted by her sister in the autumn of 1844:

Mama has gone out today to look at carpets for you--and decided before going that none but le plus elegant will answer for your parlor to correspond with the rest of the furniture and then the satisfaction of looking at a handsome thing is ten times greater in the country even than in the city. 17

Julia appealed to her mother to "attend to all these things as expeditiously as possible for I shall not feel able to entertain people at dinner until I am entirely settled. 18

Arriving at Sherwood Forest in the spring of 1845, the mistress of the plantation wrote to New York:
The house... is neat and beautiful and in all the arrangements I am very much gratified. The house when we arrived was vacated and open to us by the servants. Some bedrooms were in order, but I went immediately into the preparation of my own... I assure you Mama my house outside and in is very elegant and quite becoming a President's lady. You will think it a sweet and lovely spot, and I am quite anxious to have you see it with your critical eyes.

Having received both the furnishings from New York and the White House, she added in March of 1845 that, "There are two large bedrooms and two smaller ones unoccupied—and pray some of you visit us before July."

A more extensive discussion of the interior and exterior architectural detail of the house will set the stage for future discussion of John and Julia Tyler's life at the plantation. Sherwood Forest is a 291-1/2 foot dinosaur of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The central portion of the house, additions of a story and a half, additions of long passages, and connected dependencies are distinguishable from an exterior view on each side of the house. The unity of the house is brought about by its Georgian symmetry, white paint and green trim. The exterior is plain, no bead work exists on any of the planks. While the north and south piazzas differ in detail, their standard form of size, use of doric columns, and aesthetic lattice work reveals that the house was formally entered by river traffic on the south side and by carriage traffic...
Sherwood Forest: North Exterior from Carriage Drive
"It is clean and sweet, cheerful and lovely here, and you don’t know how greatful the repose is to me."

Julia Tyler March 9, 1845
To Julianna Gardiner
"I wish I had a magic wand
I would make this place the
most beautiful you ever saw."

Julia Tyler March 9, 1845
To Julianna Gardiner
"The forest trees are in full foliage, and our place really presents a fine appearance. . ."

Julia Tyler May 1848
To Alexander Gardiner

"Whenever it is convenient for you I wish you would stop in a shop and enquire the prices of out of door statuary."

Julia Tyler Spring 1845
To Alexander Gardiner
"The President fiddles away in the evening for the little children black and white to dance on the piazza and seems to enjoy it as much as the child.

Julia Tyler 1846
To Margaret Gardiner

Formal Garden

"I have been planting seeds this morning and this afternoon I feel fatigued."

Julia Tyler April 3, 1845
To Julianna Gardiner
"Do you know, Julia, I like Sherwood alone, much the best—'Forest' seems associated with everything that is wild and uncultivated and remote."

Margaret Gardiner April 1845
To Julia Gardiner
the satisfaction of looking at a handsome thing is ten times greater in the country even, than in the city.

Margaret Gardiner Fall 1844
To Julia Tyler

Hall: Empire Style Table
"In less than no time the drawing room was in order, carpet, and all the furniture with the mantel ornaments in proper places. The looking glasses are standing against the wall but tomorrow they and the curtains will be hung."

Julia Tyler March 9, 1845
Note the attention to architectural detail.

Dining Room:

"Attend to all these things as expeditiously as possible for I shall not feel able to entertain people at dinner until I am entirely settled."
Julia Tyler 1845
To Julianna Gardiner
"The cornices you selected while here, Mr. Hart says, and are the same you wrote about with a cupid center-piece."

Margaret Gardiner Fall 1844
To Julia Tyler

Egyptian marble Fireplace
"My house is settling by degrees. Since I last wrote the sitting room has been put in order and looks very nice — why should it not? It contains a beautiful carpet, richly embroidered furniture of two large chairs, a dozen of the same size, sofa and footstools, fire screen, a piano of Chickering's, a mahogany centre table with white marble top, three portraits of females—the marble ornaments you know of and the astral lamp."

Julia Tyler March 18, 1845
To Margaret Gardiner
Ballroom: West Wing

"The young folks had a regular frolic last night . . . with Waller and P on the violin and the rest danced away in the gallery room quadrilles, reels, perpetual motion and I know not what else. I took part for a while but became tired of 'so much fun'."

Julia Tyler 1848
To Margaret Gardiner
When Mary and her husband arrive - new claims on my time . . . Carrie Phillips to arrive tomorrow and Uncle Nathanial arrived.

Julia Tyler February 1852
To Julianna Gardiner

"Six at once when I had to provide rooms and entertainment for, I had, however, all the rooms in order and the house bore a greatly improved aspect from what it presented when you left."

Julia Tyler February 1852
To Julianna Gardiner
on the north side. The house sits on a brick foundation that slopes down from the central portion of the house to both the east and west wings. The long halls on each wing tend to deemphasize the chimneys. Had the original plan included the story and a half additions, the fireplaces would have been built according to tradition, back to back, to service both rooms on either side of the hall. The extension of the house to the dependencies tends to emphasize the jutting roof line instead of the chimneys.

The continuity of the house was maintained when dormer windows were incorporated into the story and a half east and west wing expansions. Likewise, the attempt was made on the first floor throughout the expansion to balance the house with an equal number of door openings and window openings. The continuity of the house is also carried through by the gable roof built on each section, although the angle of the roof increases as the height of the house decreases. This, however, corresponds visually to a smooth rhythm throughout. The green shutters on the second and first floors emphasize the geometric pattern of the windows.

Both the north and south doors in the center of the house are emphasized by an identical frame of doric columns and a rectangular entablature. The other entrances into the house are located in the east and west long
passages. Here the doors are simply framed by wooden posts and are smaller in height and width in comparison to the center doors. The interior division of the house is reflected in the exterior features of the house.

The interior architectural features vary in degree of intensity. Inside the house, the architectural features form a hierarchy of room use. The hall, dining room, and parlor contain the highest degree of detail. The first floor bedroom and sitting room received the second level of architectural detail. The guest room on the second floor show a marked difference from the half story bedrooms on the second or third floors. The ballroom and the piazzas were designed for dancing and relaxing. The servant's room, basement, kitchen, and laundry received a basic level of architectural detail. Tyler's office, however, even though it was a dependency shows a greater consideration for detail.

The hall has a nine inch wide baseboard. Resting on the baseboard is three foot high block paneling. A chair rail rests on top of the paneling. A curved stairway with carved balusters leads to the second floor. The stairway consumes only a quarter of the hall. Ten inches of grooved molding frame the ceiling. Both doors leading to the piazzas and the interior doorways leading to the parlor and the dining room, are framed by doric columns and surmounted
Section of Sherwood Forest
Showing Two and a Half and Story and a Half Portion

Charles City County, Virginia
Portion of First Floor Plan
Sherwood Forest
Charles City County, Virginia

Basement Plan
Sherwood Forest
Charles City County, Virginia
First Floor Plan
Sherwood Forest
Charles City County, Virginia

East Wing

West Wing
Plan
Sherwood Forest
Charles City County, Virginia

Second Floor Plan

Third Floor Plan
by layered entablatures with curved "s" scrolls and shell motifs. A strip of wallpaper, twelve inches wide, accents the ceiling molding. A strip of wallpaper, two inches wide, accents the chair rail. The paneling on the doors, door frames, and wall was painted two-tone white and tan to emphasize the molding. A small oval window on the river side of the hall was added during the Tyler's remodeling project.

Both the parlor and the dining room are emphasized by the carved frames around the doorways which have the same pattern as in the hall. Both rooms have a twelve inch wide baseboard. Both rooms have four windows. Each window frame is composed of doric columns and a rectangular entablature. The windows extend from the baseboard to the ceiling molding. Both rooms have polished black marble fireplace mantels which are the same size. The ceiling molding in the parlor is ten inches wide and grooved with more lines than that in the hall. The ceiling molding in the dining room is simple, with only two grooves and six inches wide. The parlor was not wallpapered by Julia but painted light brown with tan paint accenting the doors, baseboard, door frames and windows. The dining room was papered from baseboard to ceiling molding. The dining room wallpaper was white with a small floral design. The dining
room trim was painted white. Gilted cornices found in New York with cherub heads carved in the center and corners frame the top of the windows.

Both the sitting room and the first floor bedroom have a ten inch baseboard. The bedroom is paneled three foot high around the base of the room. A chair rail joins the paneling to the window frames. The windows in both the sitting room and the bedroom are half the size of the parlor and dining room windows. The bedroom paneling, baseboard, doors, and window frames were painted pink. The bedroom was wallpapered from the chair rail to the ceiling. The wallpaper was pink with a white print design. Neither the bedroom nor the sitting room contain ceiling moldings. The sitting room was wallpapered from the baseboard to the ceiling. The wallpaper was orange with a gold geometric design print. The baseboard, window frames, and doorways in the sitting room were painted tan. The bedroom and sitting room have identical fireplace mantels of plain black marble. The first floor bedroom contains an exposed stairway to a door which leads to the second floor. The balusters on the stairs were simple, straight and flat, 2" x 2"s, painted white. The doors and frames in the bedroom and sitting room are less elaborate than those in the hall, dining room, or parlor. The frame of the bedroom door consists of grooved columns and that of the sitting room has
paneled columns above which is an entablature composed of three panels. The three panels in the bedroom are wooden while the three panels in the sitting room are glass.

From the sitting room, the ballroom is entered by a door and two descending steps. The vaulted ceiling of the ballroom was accented by a twelve inch wide strip of wallpaper of green and white. The walls of the ballroom were painted white. The window frames in the ballroom are similar in style to those in the parlor and the dining room.

The piazzas, like the ballroom, were a place of leisure. Both piazzas are reached by ascending four stairs located in the center. The south piazza and frame the entrance of it. There is also a porch rail which extends three feet high around the porch and rests on square, flat 2" x 2", balusters. The cast iron statues of reclining dogs flank the stairs to the north piazza or carriage entrance. It, too, is ornamented with doric columns on the corners and at the entrance to the piazza.

The second floor contains two large guest rooms a story tall, a hall, and two half story rooms in the wings which were added later. The hall provides an entrance to the guest rooms and a stairway to the third floor. The balusters which run the length of the hall are carved like the balusters leading from the first floor to the
second floor. The exposed second to third floor balusters are plain, 2" x 2"s, painted white. The two windows in the hall are smaller than those on the first floor.

The guest rooms are distinguished by their size, the same as dining room and parlor, their decoration, and their private entrance from the hall. The bedroom to the right of the stairs is paneled three foot high around the base of the room and topped by a chair rail. The bedroom to the left of the top of the stairs is not paneled but contains a nine inch baseboard. The fireplace mantels are wooden with a carved shell in the center. The windows in the guest rooms are identical in size to the windows on the second floor hall.

A white woman servant occupied the half story room above the master bedroom. The stairway, leading from the master bedroom to this room, is of the irregular construction mentioned earlier. No molding or paneling exist in this room. The fireplace mantel is plain wood. The dormer windows are smaller than those in the guest rooms and reduce the view and the admission of both light and air. In contrast the half story room over the sitting room has a private and wider stairway which begins from the hall that separates the parlor and sitting room and rises to the second floor. A chair rail at window level accents this room. The fireplace has a carved wooden mantel. The Tyler
children and not a servant slept here.

The third floor contains a hall and two bedrooms. It is only a half story tall. Two dormer windows are located in the hall opposite each other. The hall contains a chair rail on the north wall and plain, 2" x 2", balusters running the length of the hall. The bedroom have four dormer windows each and simple wooden fireplace mantels. These rooms were used by the children and guests who were family.

The kitchen and laundry dependency is partially divided into two rooms by a chimney with fireplaces that serviced both. Stairs lead from both the kitchen and laundry to lofts which are a half story tall. The lofts above the kitchen and laundry provided sleeping quarters for the house slaves. The stairs in the dependency were constructed of rough wooden planks and did not have hand rails.

John Tyler's office dependency is also divided into two rooms on the first floor. Unlike the kitchen's partial division, the office has a distinct wall which separates the first floor rooms with a door connecting them. Both of these rooms contain stairways which lead to a half story loft.

The basement contains a brick floor and a foot thick brick wall which partially divides the space in two. The basement wall division runs beneath the first floor wall that separates the hall from the parlor. The basement
contains a doorway which leads directly to the grounds on the north side of the house. It was ventilated by four small windows constructed of wooden slats. It was probably used as a wine or food storage cellar.

Julia's influence of the domestic sphere extended beyond the main house of the plantation. When she arrived at Sherwood Forest the main house stood in an oak grove and was flanked by typical plantation dependencies. Near the house stood a dairy, a smokehouse, a tobacco barn, stables, the overseer's house, and a privy. The tobacco barn was used as a tack room by the Tylers to store saddles and horse related gear. Julia integrated these dependencies into a landscape of pathways and gardens. She requested Andrew Jackson Downing's book, *A Treatise on The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America*, from Alexander Gardiner. With this work as a guide she planned gardens, pathways, and the position of statuary that extended to the fences and carriage drive. Alexander encouraged this pursuit and enclosed sketches of possible gateways for Julia's consideration. He wrote, "Nothing would delight me more than laying out the grounds of a country seat and I envy you their enjoyment which this employment will doubtlessly afford the President and you during a portion of the year." The landscape of the grounds detracted attention from the dependencies and plain
Plat Map

Sherwood Forest
Charles City County, Virginia
exterior of the main house. The grace of the grounds complemented the elegance of the parlor, dining room, hall, and ballroom.

The mistress's influence on the final appearance of Sherwood Forest should not be underestimated. Taking control of her domestic sphere Julia chose first to define, arrange, and decorate it. She selected the furnishings, carpets, curtains, wallpaper, and plants. She determined the function and social use of the rooms. She advised the carpenters and instructed the gardeners. The design of the home carefully integrated the public and private aspects of plantation life in one structure. The selection of furnishings and attention to architectural detail in each room was meant to either welcome guests, comfort family, or separate the worlds of work and leisure. Each room invites or excludes specific forms of acceptable behavior. Specific areas of the house were gender bound such as the office or laundry, others race bound such as the kitchen, and still others class bound such as the parlor or dining room.

Julia Tyler explained that, "It [was] the province of the women of the southern states to preside over the domestic economy of the estate and plantations of their husbands." At Sherwood Forest her first concern was the organization of the estate as it related to her domestic responsibilities. She set the boundaries of her sphere and
determined the pattern and tone of life at the plantation through her physical manipulation of the domestic sphere. Having built her nest, she was prepared then to start a family and to entertain guests.
"The reapers have come to their labors in the fields about 500 yards from us and their loud merry songs almost drown the President's voice as he talks with me."

Julia Gardiner Tyler
1845

The plantation mistress was expected to be devoted wife, mother, Christian, and homemaker. She was to radiate poise and beauty, while she was caring for the sick, preparing for a dinner party, or overseeing the slaughtering of the hogs. She was responsible for managing the domestic sphere. Few women came close to executing these duties in a manner that met the ideal as expressed in the prescriptive literature of the period but all were encouraged to try.

Julia Tyler performed two roles as mistress of Sherwood Forest plantation. She was a domestic manager: supervising the work of servants, nursing the sick, and establishing the routine of daily work essential to the successful operation of the plantation's main house. She was also the
hostess of the plantation: planning dinner parties and balls for the Virginia's gentry, playing and instructing her children with toys and books, and choosing the furniture for the parlor. Each of these roles was performed in the domestic sphere. Thus the domestic sphere was divided into two realms: one of leisure and pleasure for family and friends and one of work and management for herself and servants. Julia maintained a careful balance of these responsibilities by distinguishing between these two roles, exhibiting one to the public and keeping the other private. In a personal letter she explained to her sister, Margaret, the finer points of giving a dinner party and the role she played as a domestic manager:

I received your letters on the 27th and 30th on Tuesday and I regretted very much that you should have met with so much annoyance. As you have new servants you will be obliged to attend to instructing them. The silver should be carefully attended to in washing and rubbing and also it should be put in the closet so that one article will not press against another -- and then the washing of the dinner service and tea ought to be carefully done; very few understand this and must be taught. The gilt will all be rubbed off your plates and cups unless looked to. They should be lightly wiped and lightly washed and not nicked. Do not let the candles burn down in the sockets of the candlesticks--it destroys the . . . . You must quietly show yourself careful by looking to things in general. It is quite a little business to keep all things in nice order if you do nothing yourself. I know it kept me constantly alert. 1
This glimpse of plantation mistress as manager illustrates how Julia balanced her domestic duties with her responsibility of maintaining an air of delicacy. As the hostess, she was responsible for the appearance of her home, the preparation of meals, the behavior of servants, and the entertainment of guests. As she points out, the supervision of work was a task in and of itself.

The operation of the domestic sphere at Sherwood Forest was a considerable task. Chief among Julia's duties was the supervision of the household staff. Her staff consisted primarily of slave labor which included at a minimum a housekeeper, cook, cleaning woman, coachmen, and gardeners. Her responsibilities, however, extended beyond the household staff as she noted in 1845, "Next Sunday I am going to have all my servants paraded before me -- numbering some 60 or 70. Three are sewing for me now upstairs -- one upon an under shirt, another upon a pair of white sleeves, and the other is hemming a cup towel." Although she directed only the household staff she was partially responsible for the physical well-being of all the plantation's slaves.

Julia's mother was concerned about the selection of her daughter's staff and asked, "Do inform me if you have any white people about you, or are all your servants colored?" Julia's response obviously displeased her mother, for within
a month Catherine Wing, an Irish immigrant, arrived from New York to serve as a housekeeper. From Norfolk, Virginia, Julia hired Harriet Nelson a white woman, to serve as a seamstress and nurse after her first child was born in 1846.

The Gardiner family was not unaccustomed to the use of slave labor. In 1820, the year Julia was born, New York's gradual emancipation law freed the state's few remaining slaves. Among those who waited to release their slaves until this appointed time was Julia's grandfather. To the Gardiner family servants were a necessity. Servants, however, were not necessarily a mere luxury. At times they were a burden for they required constant supervision. Julia was raised to understand her station in society and the place of servants.

Her attitude toward her servants was influenced by both her mother and husband. Her mother taught her that servants were incapable of managing the simplest of household tasks without instruction. Once she trained them, Julia expected complete loyalty and respect from them. She determined their pattern of movement in and around the domestic sphere, assigned their duties, and inspected their work. Soon after the Tylers settled at the plantation, her mother advised her to be vigilant with her staff. Thereafter, Julia took precautions against servants who might be
tempted to steal and kept most of the supplies and valuables under lock and key. In addition to sending Catherine Wing to Sherwood Forest, Julia's mother sent her an Italian greyhound named, Le Beau. Concerning the dog, Julianna Gardiner advised, "You must assign the task of watching and taking care of him to some of your little negroes otherwise he will ruin your furniture and carpets." At first, Julia influenced by her mother depended upon white servants to care for the family and assigned slaves more menial tasks. After three years of plantation life, Julia's attitude toward servants changed. For example, without explanation or apology she noted in her letters to New York that Aunt Betsy, a slave, nursed John Tyler through an illness, and slave children in addition to a white nurse constantly watched over her children.

John Tyler's attitude toward servants was guided by benevolence. Unlike other slave owners, Tyler did not whip his slaves into obedience, nor did he break up families, or sell slaves south. He provided for his slaves what he felt was adequate food, clothing, and shelter and encouraged their religious education. Julia explained to her mother a privilege her husband allowed the slaves at Sherwood Forest:

[the slaves had] a party in return for so many they had been to in the neighborhood and as they had gathered a sufficient store in money (you must know they are privileged to raise
chickens and eggs for sale and anything else they can raise in the hours their labor is not required by the plantation, which by the way, as they are found in every comfort, makes their condition far easier and better than free blacks). I provided them with some sugar and tea and coffee and sat until very late in the evening to have a peep at the fun. . . But they are a strange people and never begin their merriment till midnight. . . . the ball was held in the laundry near the house [before the addition was built]. The next morning singing and the dancing of feet could still be heard. 12

John Tyler's paternalism was often matched by his wife's maternalism. She shared the responsibility with her husband to see that their servants were well clothed and fed. She and her housekeeper assumed the role of nurse and provided necessary medicine and care for sick servants.

In 1853, she wrote a widely publicized letter to the Duchess of Sutherland and the Ladies of England to provide a view of slavery as it existed at Sherwood Forest. This letter was prompted by the reaction to Harriet Beecher Stowe's widely read Uncle Tom's Cabin. Julia compared the plight of slaves in the United States to Russian serfs and England's poor. In her essay, the slaves at Sherwood Forest not only had a better standard of living but a master and mistress who cared about their well-being. She succinctly and tactfully requested that the English ladies refrain from meddling in the affairs of the United States. Although, John and Julia Tyler never defended slavery as a "positive
good" they, like Thomas Jefferson, reasoned that Afro-Americans had a better life as servants/slaves on their plantation than cast out as free men or women in a white dominated society.

The household servants, white and black, worked together under Julia's supervision without one conflict recorded by the plantation mistress. By hiring white servants, however, she expressed her level of acceptance for the place of black servants in her domestic sphere. In addition, white household servants supervised the work of black servants. After the first housekeeper, Catherine Wing, left the plantation, Julia described to her mother the qualifications she required for the housekeeper:

Are you looking for my housekeeper. I should like and decidedly prefer a French one. [she wanted the children to learn French.] It is especially necessary that she should be a good cook -- it is more important than a seamstress [however] she should understand something of cutting and sewing and must know how to practice economy in housekeeping and understand general supervision. Catherine was no cook.

A month later Julia wrote her mother that the new housekeeper went, "forward without [her] having to dictate constantly." Unfortunately the new housekeeper did not speak French.

A similar arrangement of supervision was present in the fields of the plantation. A white overseer, following Tyler's instructions, supervised the work of blacks.
During spring planting or at harvest the overseer, free blacks, hired slaves, and Sherwood Forest slaves worked side by side without incident.

The mistress and her household staff were responsible for the daily functioning of the plantation's domestic economy. Meals were planned by Julia and prepared by both the servants and the plantation mistress. While she chose carpets her servants were left the task of stitching them together. She described the work of her staff to her brother soon after she settled in Virginia:

The women, not at present engaged in the culture of the farm, are knitting, spinning, and pulling cotton and thus you see, excepting a few very small children between 50 and 60 are fully occupied in the business of the plantation, and yet there is so much to do, that I almost despair of ever seeing order prevail. 20

The mistress purchased the seeds and the statuary for the grounds and the gardeners completed the majority of the planting following her instructions. Julia ordered and accounted for supplies at the plantation and dispensed them as needed to the staff. Changing the linen, laundering the clothes, stacking the firewood, feeding the pets, weeding the flower garden, cleaning the house, and similar duties were attended to daily as part of the routine Julia established for the staff. She did not only supervise servants but took many tasks upon herself such as sewing, cooking, and flower planting. Proud of her duties she often made
special note of them to her family, writing for example, "I can boast at this time of my butter and first rate lard."

Julia often received advice from her mother regarding her household responsibilities. As a newlywed Julia often sought and followed her mother's recommendations but once settled at Sherwood Forest into her role as wife and mistress her confidence grew. After this her mother's ideas often arrived unsolicited and not always heeded. Concerned about cleanliness, Julianna wrote:

Did you return from your visits well satisfied with your furniture--well do not allow it to be abused. You should keep sheets over your easy chair in your bedroom and lounge. Everyone does so in the North who expects to keep a good thing clean and pray keep all your frames secure from files--also your handsome lamps. [Presumably to protect the gilt from peeling].

Although it was acceptable to cover furniture in the bedroom the furniture in the formal rooms of the house always stood ready for the unexpected visitor.

Julia Tyler's efforts expended in domestic management enabled family and friends to enjoy the leisurely life offered at the plantation. Amusements included dancing, riding, hunting, fishing, reading, eating, drinking, backgammon, listening to music, playing an instrument, and singing. The Tylers were surrounded by Virginia's first families. The Harrisons lived at Berkeley, Lower Brandon,
and Upper Brandon. The Seldens resided at Westover plantation and the Carters at Shirley. At first Julia was very critical of Virginia's gentry. After a dinner party at Mr. and Mrs. Harrison's she wrote to her mother:

I laid off my hat and scarf in Mrs. H's bedroom which though very well furnished was not so tasteful and new as mine certainly. The furniture of the parlor, tho' the best in its day does not compare of course with that at Sherwood Forest . . . Four waiters were in attendance. People can afford as many waiters as one fancies in the South. The table was set with old fashion blue china and what I was somewhat surprised to see [was the type of utensils] to a Northernor this appears like a monstrous breach of refinement. However, to make up for such spectres there was an original Van Dyke hanging in the room. 24

However, within a few months of life as a James River plantation mistress Julia became less critical of her neighbors:

Yesterday I had a call from Mr. and Mrs. William Harrison of Lower Brandon across the river. They are of the first aristocracy of Virginia and amply did they meet my views of it. Her manner is very cultivated--great response and finish. Her effect is that born a lady . . . I was pleased with our interview and her soft manners. . . I do not know any in New York society that would appear so elegant. I know she would feel herself far before the fashionable society there. I think there is every prospect of my being surrounded by an agreeable society and carry out your idea of exclusiveness in every particular. I think that society in the state of New York is sadly declining. 25

The elite of Virginia did not readily accept John Tyler's New York bride. They kept the couple at arms length for about a year. In their view Julia was raised in New
York and not born into their social circle. In addition, Tyler's political views annoyed the James River Whigs. Determined to gain acceptance into Virginia's elite social clique, John and Julia accepted each invitation to dinner. In return they hosted elegant parties at Sherwood Forest. The Tylers won their place into the planter's social circuit. Although John Tyler encouraged his wife's intentions, the social circle of planters was of more interest to her than him.

Julia's self imposed role as family matchmaker is one of the reasons why she was interested in Virginia's elite families. She never missed the opportunity to subtly interview a perspective match for either Margaret or Alexander Gardiner. Despite Julia's best efforts and encouragement, Alexander never married. Margaret became quite a favorite among the Tylers' circle of friends in Virginia. Her sister, however, married a man whom she met in New York. When Margaret Gardiner Beeckman was left a young widow, Julia and John Tyler joined forces to find an appropriate match. While Margaret enjoyed the round of parties thrown in her honor, she chose not to remarry. Tragically she died several years after her husband from a sudden illness while on vacation at Sherwood Forest.

Julia made a distinction between the intimacy which the
Gardiner family enjoyed at Sherwood Forest and that allowed to Virginia's plantation families. The Gardiner family was familiar with both the public and private spheres of life at Sherwood Forest. Other guests, however, were restricted to the public sphere. Dinner guests enjoyed social activities which were prearranged. The length of stay at Sherwood Forest was determined by the guest's relationship to the Tylers and the isolation of the plantation. The Gardiner family visited for months at a time. Friends who came from a distance stayed overnight and in some instances for several weeks. Local planters visited for an evening. On one occasion Julia noted that she was indisposed, when guests arrived:

Today three gentlemen called, but as I could not make my appearance, they declined staying to dinner. They walked up from the landing and were Mr. Harrison of Brandon, Col. Armistead and Dr. Shippen of Philadelphia. We sent them back in the coach. 29

When gentlemen came to discuss business or politics with John Tyler, Julia's presence was not necessary. However, when visitors came to pay their respects to the family and expected dinner, it was essential that the mistress of the plantation be able to receive them.

John and Julia Tyler spent the majority of time at Sherwood Forest with each other. Julia discussed the rhythm
of their lifestyle on a summer's evening in a letter to her sister:

I am writing to you seated in the door of the south piazza with my paper and ink stand resting of a book in my lap. The President in a large arm chair, near me on the piazza, with feet raised up on the railing is enjoying The Wandering Jew received last night with your two letters and papers. The reapers have come to their labors in the fields about 500 yards from us, and their loud merry songs almost drown the President's voice as he talks with me. Once in a while a scream from all hands, dogs, and servants causes us to raise our eyes to see full chase after a poor little hare. We are removed about a mile in a direct line, from the river, that is to say the mansion—the estate runs down to it—and the trees on the bank that intercept the view have already been nearly cut away, since I have been seated here, I have noticed some five or six vessels pass up and down. 30

The piazza remained the growing family's leisurely retreat as Julia noted in 1855, "He [John Tyler] fiddles away every evening for the little children black and white to dance on the piazza and seems to enjoy it as much as the children. I never saw a happier temperament than he possesses." 31

John Tyler was not alone in his desire to amuse their children. Julia faithfully recorded the antics and development of their children in letters to the family in New York:

Tell Alexander to send Gardie [her first born] some children's picture books with a variety of showy pretty prints in them. It is his delight to examine every picture he can find in a book and
trace all the parts with his finger and try earnestly, but in vain to tell what he thinks of them. I sent to Norfolk for a doll. It affords him amusement by way of variety, but it is already without legs below the knees and arms below the elbows. I wish I could get him one of those small but substantial and firm wooden horses. He would very soon cross its back, as he is, I perceive for straddling everything.

The Tyler children were offered all the outdoor amusements that plantation life afforded: fishing, riding, and a variety of outdoor games. The plantation offered Julia's children a life of outdoor fun which her nephew, Harry Beeckman, rarely had the opportunity to enjoy. In 1854 Julia wrote, "The children all perfectly well, Harry found a large snake for Gardie to chase and kill today. Harry flew from it and Gardie flew after it. Which was the wisest? I think it is well to shun danger when you can and face it boldly if you must." The dangers of snake bite aside, the outdoor play of the Tyler children was defended by Julia's son, Gardie:

I told Gardie what you had to say about Harry's wear and tear. He looked very wise [at age eight] and said "A very good reason why I wear out more things MaMa--Aunt M won't let Harry go out in wet weather as she ought to and then I go all over the fields and barns and Harry has only a little place to play in."

His mother, however, amused by his answer did not appreciate Gardie's continued search for snakes and wrote, "I expect I shall be obliged to punish him with a whipping before he will let them alone." She came to this conclusion only after
first trying to talk her son out of this dangerous pursuit.

Although Julia did not avoid her role as a disciplinarian, she focused her attention on her children's amusement, education, religious instruction, and economic future. Pets, toys, books, and music engaged the children on winter's harsh days. The children were always taken to the Springs or Villa Margaret for summer vacation and often visited near by plantations with their mother to play with neighboring children. A French nurse arrived at the plantation in the 1850s and instructed the children in French. Julia taught the children to read. In the fall of 1854 her oldest son began formal instruction. The oldest children attended a private school in Charles City County, Virginia known as Ferguson's. In addition all the children were baptized and with the help of a nurse, Julia frequently took the children to church. Julia also made financial provisions for her children as noted in a postscript in a letter to her brother, "How do you propose to invest my funds. A family of young negroes can be bought here for $1,000, which would be worth to Gardiner at age 21 -- $4,000." While Julia concentrated on these significant aspects of her children's well-being she left the more routine care of the children such as bathing and dressing to the servants.
As a mother, wife, hostess, and domestic manager, Julia defined her role as mistress of Sherwood Forest. Unlike the plantation mistress described in recent women's studies, Julia Tyler appeared to enjoy her role. Even in the private letters to her mother and sister, she never expressed a dissatisfaction for her life as a plantation mistress. On the contrary she repeatedly described her life as cheerful and fulfilling. It should be noted that unlike most women who lived in the south, Julia was able to vacation, entertain, and furnish her home with amusements because of her inheritance and investments. In addition, she had servants to manage and perform the most unpleasant and physically exhausting tasks of domestic economy. She was not cut off from her family either like the majority of women who lived on plantations. The Gardiners visited Sherwood Forest often and Julia and her family traveled to New York. While she does not live the typical life of a southern plantation mistress, according to her letters her life was much like that of Mrs. Selden and Mrs. Douthat close friends of hers that lived on neighboring plantations.

Although Julia never explicitly stated that her priorities and responsibilities were directed by the cult of domesticity, the evidence strongly suggest that this philosophy influenced her. She and not her husband was
responsible for the appearance and management of the domestic sphere. She created a pleasant retreat for her husband and focused her attention on education, amusement, and moral instruction when it came to her children.
"As we are so subject to visits which have to be received, from a distance it is necessary that I have a suitable dress."

Julia Gardiner Tyler
February 1, 1851

The isolation of Sherwood Forest, like other southern plantations prompted John Tyler to consider the effects plantation life would have on his wife. The pattern of visitation at Sherwood Forest, however, reveals that visitors arrived from near and far. During spring planting and fall harvests the women of neighboring plantations visited Julia once or twice a week and she returned their visits. From November to January the Tylers received not only family from New York and Philadelphia but hosted dinner parties for the James River planter society. The only quiet times at the plantation fell in February when bad weather hindered travel and in summer when the Tylers took their vacation from August through September. Occasionally admirers of the President stopped to meet him and ask for his autograph. The tradition
of southern hospitality and the location of Sherwood Forest on the James River between Richmond and Williamsburg brought no less than eight unexpected visitors to the plantation each year. Beyond family, neighbors, and unexpected visitors, Julia noted all their distinguished guests which included Governor Floyd of Virginia and his wife, Mr. Caleb Cushion, John Tyler's commissioner to China and President Franklin Pierce's attorney general, Supreme Court Justice James M. Wayne and his wife, Mr. Boulware, the United States minister to Naples, Italy, and Judge Richard Parker and his wife. Judge Parker was received at Sherwood Forest after he presided over John Brown's trial and sentenced him to death by hanging. All these honored guests stayed at least two weeks at what Mr. Boulware referred to as a "tusculan retreat."

Ample material exists to describe both the hospitality which the Tylers offered guests and their quiet life at home with family. Julia described life at Sherwood Forest in detail for her family in New York so that they could visualize it. As she arranged and decorated each room the family received an account of its appearance. Details not revealed in her letters were quietly noted by the Gardiners during their visits. After she settled, it was no longer necessary to describe the setting to her family. Therefore
in this chapter, I have combined the physical and written evidence of the landscape with Julia's written record of the people and activities there. This will present a fuller illustration of life at Sherwood Forest. The sequence of events is organized to progress in a logical manner. The time frame of two days illustrates how Julia integrated her two roles as hostess and domestic manager. The characters were chosen based upon their repeated mention by Julia in her correspondence. All quoted material was obtained from letters and a diary written between 1845-1860.

Although the plot is contrived, the benefit of presenting the material in this manner will allow the reader an opportunity to take all of Julia's roles into account instead of examining each separately as in the case of chapters two and three. The reasons for presenting the material in this manner are threefold. The effect of the social hierarchy on the pattern of movement throughout Sherwood Forest is explained. The interpretation of public and private realms as mediated by Julia Tyler is explored. This method also provides an opportunity to discuss the daily routine of life at Sherwood Forest and the attention the Tylers paid to detail.

Sherwood Forest is a plantation. The first clue providing insight into the Tyler's lives is given as a
visitor approaches the house from the carriage drive or the James River. The long framed house painted white with green trim is clearly visible as the home of a prominent family. Reached easily by the river or a landscaped carriage drive, a visitor is drawn to the main house. Glancing about the estate, typical plantation dependencies stand beyond the flanks of the house. Simple dairy, tobacco barn, smokehouse, stables, privy, and overseer's house appear insignificant when compared to the main house. The dependencies do not detract from the view of the main structure but are still under the watchful eyes of the plantation master and mistress.

The gardens planned by Julia add a touch of splendor to the estate. Both fruit trees and exotic plants line the paths. Roses, hyacinths, tulips, violets, and cowslips surround benches and statuary, all of which grace the grounds. The north piazza, reached by the carriage drive, is a formal place for receiving visitors. Two cast iron reclining dogs greet visitors at the steps. Doric columns support the piazza's roof. The south piazza, reached by the river side, is less formidable and provides a more inviting setting for relaxation. The piazza is partially enclosed by lattice work and hand rails. Here Julia's pet bird sings sweetly in warm weather. John and Julia often sit on this
piazza with a view of the James River, he frequently playing a tune on his violin and she strumming her guitar.

Having reached the house, visitors such as Mr. and Mrs. Harrison from Berkeley plantation enter into the hall. The hall's main function is that of a reception room. Since the house is only one room deep, both doors of the north and south piazzas open into it. The doorways to the piazzas, parlor, and dining room direct the movement of guests. The stairway to the second floor welcomes only those guests who are planning to spend the night. Architectural detail draws attention away from the stairway and places it on the hall itself. The walls are painted white and tan and highlighted by gold strips of wallpaper. Marble top tables in the empire style complete the room. The high degree of architectural detail in the hall reflects the social status of the Tylers.

Moving into the parlor, guests are surrounded by the elegance of the Tyler home. The most intricate architectural features, doric columns and ceiling molding, retain the air of formality. Light streaming in from windows, which reach from the baseboard to the ceiling molding, bounces off the polished Egyptian marble mantel, silver giradoles, brass andirons, and two seven foot tall gilt framed mirrors. The Tyler's furniture and a carpet of the latest fashion and highest quality complete the setting. Curtains of satin and
worsted damask complement the stylish Louis Quatorze 7 furniture and rosewood chickering piano. Here the circle of elite Virginia planters, friends, and family are entertained by conversation and piano music. Servants are at hand to attend to the needs of guests and the children. The door which leads to the sitting room remains closed. At the appropriate time, the plantation mistress will announce dinner. Guests easily move through the hall's open doorway into the dining room.

The architectural detail and decor in the dining room perpetuates the formal atmosphere. A long Hepplewhite table invites guests to dinner. Here light floods through the large windows and dances off the marble fireplace mantel, gilded cornices, brass andirons, silver serving platters, and expensive china. A dark, thick-pile carpet contrasts with the delicate floral design of the white wallpaper in the room. Bronze giradoles grace the marble mantel. A life-size portrait of Joan Calhoun is reputed by Edmund Ruffin to be the most conspicuous object in the room. The door to the first floor bedroom is ajar so that food can be carried through the house from the kitchen to dining room.

Crystal decanters offer a variety of drink to correspond with each course. John Tyler's hunting ability regularly contributes to the bill of fair. "An elegant dinner I am
sure of," notes Julia, "for it consists of macaroni soup, roast turkey, stew venison, bacon, and cold roast beef, celery, parsnips, sweet and Irish potatoes--for desert transparent pudding, mince pie, apple tarts, damson tart, soft custard and preserves." Julia plans the menu, oversees its preparation, and now seemingly without effort offers a feast to her guests.

Guests, however, are to remain ignorant of both the inner workings of the house and the preparations expended on their behalf. After dinner the group returns to the parlor. As dinner settles and apricot brandy and fine wine take effect the guests are ushered through the sitting room to the ballroom. The ballroom is fifty-six feet long and fourteen feet wide. The walls are painted white and the vaulted ceiling is accented by a band of green wallpaper. Gilded cornices top each window. The long room provides ample space for Julia's favorite dances, quadrilles and reels. Some guests use the doors in the ballroom to take a stroll through the gardens or to reach the south piazza. Describing the romantic setting of the plantation Julia writes that, "Sherwood Forest has now a most charming affect -- such a luxuriance of roses, and the tall oaks in such full leaf and casting such deep shadows." Here, there is a natural beauty which complements the interior decor of the main house, with
the evening drawing to an end, guests are invited to stay the night, a common practice at Sherwood Forest. Guests who decline the offer will be escorted to the hall from which they will depart.

Guests accepting the offer will be escorted from the hall to the second floor, where doors lead to the guest rooms. Julia's visiting brother, Alexander will be asked to accept a third floor bedroom, so that the formal rooms can be made ready for friends who are not family. Thus Julia can keep portions of the house private. The guests rooms are less formal than those on the first floor yet project the appearance of being guest rooms first and foremost. The guest rooms are distinguished from other bedrooms by their size, which is the same as the dining room or parlor, their decoration, and their private entrance from the main hall. Although the fireplace mantels are wood they are carved with pillars and shells. Each of the third floor bedrooms is only half a story with dormer windows limiting both light and fresh air. On the second floor the stairway balusters change from decoratively turned to straight pieces as the stairway extends to the third floor. The balusters are a subtle hint that guests are not welcome into this area. Guests know that they are receiving special treatment not paid to servants or children, but there are limits to hospitality.
Having performed the duties of a good host and hostess the Tylers retire to their first floor bedroom for a good night's sleep. Curtains of crimson and white printed muslin complement both the upholstery of crimson and white damask and wallpaper of plumb with a white floral design. After some difficulty Julia has managed to affix the bed curtains to the canopy and hang the pendulum in a clock which will soon strike the midnight hour.

John rises early the next morning to go for a ride during which he will conduct plantation business. By the time he returns, Julia has been awakened by her housekeeper, Catherine Wing, who has lost her footing on the irregular stairway leading from her bedroom to the Tyler's first floor bedroom and caused quite a stir. Catherine Wing's second floor bedroom is an addition to the original Georgian style house. It is a half story tall, reached by a narrow dark stairway and simply furnished and decorated. Dormer windows and a plain wooden mantel on the fireplace distinguish this bedroom from the guest rooms. Once dressed Julia quickly responds to her duties, overseeing the preparation of breakfast which includes a trip to the dairy and smokehouse. Julia carries the keys which unlocks the pantry so that flour can be brought to the kitchen. Breakfast is served for the family and guests in the dining room.

After breakfast guests are invited to go for a stroll of
the grounds or horse back riding. John Tyler and Mr. Selden of Shirley plantation excuse themselves to discuss plantation business in the sitting room. Mrs. Selden wishes to return to Shirley to prepare for guests of her own. Julia offers Mrs. Selden a choice of elegant transportation; either a carriage or a boat will be put at her disposal.

As a wedding present the Tylers were given a vessel which they christened the Pocahontas. "Julia had the little craft painted blue and she lined its seats with thwarts with damask satin cushions richly trimmed in matching blue. She had the oarsmen dressed in bright blue and white calico shirts—white linen pants—black patent leather belts—straw hats painted blue with Pocahontas upon them in white—and in one corner of the shirt collar was worked with a braid and a bow and arrow to signify the forest and in the other corner the President's and Julia's initials. Julia ordered a carriage from New York because she considered it a "necessary luxury" and "liked the conspicuousness of the coachman's seat." To enhance the appearance of the carriage, she purchased uniforms for her coachmen. She described the uniforms as "handsome light grey dress coats (livery cut) with black covered buttons (made in uniform style) white pantaloons and black hats."

Mrs. Selden leaves by carriage and it may return empty
or with unannounced visitors. Julia on her mare, Emily Brook, joins the rest of the guests for a ride through the estate. Before leaving the house, the plantation mistress directs the household staff toward their tasks: guest rooms must be cleaned, preparations made for the noon meal, and fresh flowers brought in from the garden and arranged. She leaves her white servant, Catherine Wing in charge of the staff and Harriet Nelson to care for the children.

After the ride, guests excuse themselves to change for the mid-day meal. Julia asks Harriet to prepare the children for dinner. She then stops at the laundry to see that the wine stains on last night's linen napkins are rinsed out. In the kitchen she attends to the preparation of the meal. Mr. Tyler and Mr. Selden join the group for dinner, after which guests express their gratitude and depart from the hall.

Julia returns to her bedroom to box a slip for shipping and to pen this letter:

Dear Mother,

I have sent you for your admiration a slip that I have just finished after much labour. It is of course for ordinary occasions, but I think I have made it remarkably genteel and neat, don't you? You must examine it thoroughly—all the herring bone stitch is special. I first intended it for a night gown, but I think it has a right to greater pretension. What is your opinion? The style is altogether out of my head and I hope you and Margaret will have a few of my ecstasies over it. . . 20

While Julia is preoccupied with letter writing, her brother
and husband retire to the sitting room. After several games of backgammon, the President excuses himself and returns to his office.

As dusk falls on Sherwood Forest, John Tyler is in his office discussing the field hands with his overseer. The overseer exits the office the way he entered, through the west door leading directly to the grounds. The planter of Sherwood Forest locks the office door and walks through the ballroom to the sitting room. Here he finds his brother-in-law reading *The Democratic Review*.

The two men talk as Julia attends to the children. From their bedroom doorway, Julia looks in on her children playing. A scene created on Christmas Day and described by the President in a letter to his mother-in-law is recreated throughout the year. "Gardiner is carrying on the siege of Sebastopol; Alex is busily engaged with Whittington and his cat, Julie arranges her furniture [in a doll house]. Lachlan spurs his hobby horse, and Lionel calls for his drummer." Fitzie and Pearl share a "child's picture book with a variety of showy pretty prints in it." Their mother and nurse put them to bed. Then she joins her husband and brother in the sitting room by using a back stairway. Here the three sit and gossip about the previous night's activities.

The room is dimly lit as the sun sets. The doors to the
ballroom and parlor are closed. The solar lamp on the center table casts a rosy glow about the room. The sitting room is smaller and less formal than the parlor. A lightly faded embroidered settee and chairs from the White House, a piano, a marble top mahogany table, and secretaries furnish the room. Portraits of John Tyler and his family and friends decorate the walls. Edmund Riffin, struck by the effect of the portraits described the room in his diary:

John Tyler had formerly told me that he had the engraving of my portrait framed and hung as a companion to that of Webster—"That one," he said, "the first among American statesmen and the other the first of American agriculturalists." The two portraits, are of like size and were framed alike in neat embroidered frames, designed and worked by Margaret Gardiner. Each portrait stands within the circumference of a shield. "as represented in a coat of arms" of which Webster's is surmounted by stars and mine by a plough. These hang on the opposite sides over the fireplace of the sitting room, which is in ordinary use. Between them and higher, is a much larger oil painting of Patrick Henry. The other pictures which are around on the walls of this apartment [besides those of family] are engraved portraits of Mr. Tyler's most valued personal friends and members of his cabinet, Upshur and Gilmer, and his supporter and friend Henry A. Wise. The only other likeness is of Curvier. 26

As astral lamp in the sitting room provides enough light for reading which is one of Tyler's favorite pastimes. John is reading Charles Dicken's Dombey. Alexander teases Julia of her reaction to Lucretia. Julia remarks that, "it is certainly a remarkable history of wickedness. I feel that I
have literally supped on horrors. It is fascinating in its hatefulness and when I was fairly launched in the story I could hardly spare time to rest or eat until I had finished."

Julia enjoys reading novels and among her favorites are Sofia, Pride and Prejudice, Ivanhoe, and Againcourt.

She draws her brother's attention toward her husband and their pet greyhound, Le Beau. Laughingly Julia says that:

Monsieur Le Beau is the greatest pet that ever was. The President is more attached to its whims and caprices. It is his great amusement to put it to bed. He'll roll it all up in the blanket and lay it upon the sofa, and there it will become perfectly cultivated by the attentions paid to it and will submit to be set up in a corner of the sofa for an hour at a time with a shawl wrapped around it and a night cap on. Did you ever know such nonsense as we practice? 30

Fatigued, Julia retires to her bedroom. John withdraws to join his wife. Alexander taking advantage of the stairway next to the sitting room, ventures up the back stairs. He checks on his nephews and niece, and then proceeds into the guest room from which he had been ejected the night before. Catherine and Harriet retire in the servant's quarters located above the master bedroom while black servants sleep in the loft above the kitchen and laundry.
CONCLUSION

Julia Tyler played a significant role at Sherwood Forest plantation. She determined the physical appearance of the plantation's main house and grounds. She chose the furnishings, decor, and architectural detail. She managed the domestic economy of the plantation's main house. She supervised the household staff. As the plantation mistress she organized and presided over the social sphere of life at the plantation in two ways. With her inheritance she purchased furnishings for the house, clothing for the family, and their summer cottage, while her family assisted John Tyler during periods of financial difficulty. She defended John Tyler's political career, acting on genuine admiration for her husband and a desire to protect the family's reputation. She publicly and privately supported John Tyler's political positions at the national, state, and local level. Socially, economically, politically, and domestically Julia Gardiner Tyler played an important role in John Tyler's life. The written and physical evidence presented in this thesis defines Julia Tyler's roles and responsibilities at Sherwood Forest and the importance of her position as it
related to both the plantation community and her husband.

Recent studies in women's history have focused on the ideology of domesticity and the domestic sphere of women in nineteenth-century America. This case study contributes to this scholarship in five ways. The physical characteristics of the domestic sphere as it existed on a southern plantation are detailed. The domestic sphere physically consisted on the main house, its dependencies, and immediate grounds. In my reading of domesticity and the domestic sphere the physical aspects of the sphere have not been described or significance noted. The responsibilities of a plantation mistress in her domestic sphere are defined. Julia's responsibilities are connected to her roles as wife, mother, daughter, hostess, and domestic manager. This study is unique in that these roles are not only defined but their integration is explored. In addition, I believe this is the first study which explores the affect of domesticity on a southern plantation. The relationship of individuals in the domestic sphere to the plantation mistress is examined. While most domesticity studies explore the relationship between women and the nuclear family or society at large, this study thoroughly examines the role of extended family, friends, and servants. Family, friends, and servants were assigned a status by Julia Tyler in her domestic sphere. The
relationship between changing laws of equity producing separate financial estates and the establishment of a female dominated sphere is defined. Julia's financial status enabled her to gain and maintain control of the domestic sphere. To my knowledge other studies of domesticity have not even hinted at the connection between financial independence and the cult of domesticity. Finally, this thesis supports the theory that domesticity increased rather than restricted the role of women in society. The debate on the affect of domesticity continues among women's historians. However, the most recent studies support the idea that during this period the social significance of women was defined and recognized and women gained.

The southern plantation embodied the ideals of southern culture. Allowing the plantation mistress to manage the public image of the plantation and its domestic economy is worthy of further investigation. While the importance of nineteenth-century domesticity has been applied to studies of women living in the northern part of the United States, it has not yet been applied to women in the South. As this case study shows, this should not be overlooked.

Southern culture was shaped by the social, political, and economic influence of the antebellum plantation. For this reason plantation life has been the subject of scholarly
interest. The interpretation of traditional historians has focused on the patriarchal dominance of the plantation community. Recent studies in Afro-American history have expanded this interpretation. These revisionists works note that plantation masters yielded to the slave community a varying degree of autonomy which allowed slaves to establish their own sphere within the plantation. Furthermore these studies indicate that the relationship between the master and slave was based on a mutual regard for the responsibilities of each party. While furthering the interpretation of the southern plantation, both approaches virtually ignore the role played by the plantation mistress. Traditional historians often overlook the significance of the role the plantation mistress played. The plantation mistress is depicted by traditionalists as either an acquisition to the estate by the patriarch or cited for her role as an acting plantation master in the event of his absence or death. Afro-American studies exhibit similar shortcomings by lumping together both the plantation mistress and master. The singular role of the plantation mistress is discussed by these revisionist only when her actions or beliefs interfered with the relationship of the master and slave. Given that the United States is a male dominated society it is not surprising that historians have overlooked the significance
of the role women played in history. Recent scholarship in women's history encourages yet another revision in the interpretation of plantation life. In this case, the role Julia Gardiner Tyler played as a plantation mistress illustrates how deceptive male oriented history can be. Julia was more than a supportive wife, she shaped the lives of those at the plantation including that of her husband, President John Tyler.
EPILOGUE

Julia Gardiner Tyler's life was not without conflict or hardship. This thesis focuses on her life from 1844, the year she married President Tyler to 1860, the year she gave birth to her last child. Julia Tyler's life drastically changed after this period. She endured a number of personal tragedies which altered her status and responsibilities. Nevertheless, her responsibility as a mother and widowed President's wife gave Julia Tyler the fortitude to meet the challenges which lay ahead.

Julia was close to all the members of her family but one: David Gardiner, her oldest brother. Her father died before her marriage in 1843. In 1851, her favorite brother Alexander Gardiner died in New York and President Tyler comforted his wife in her grief. In 1857, her sister Margaret Gardiner Beeckman died suddenly while visiting Sherwood Forest. This loss devastated Mrs. Tyler and thereafter she refused to visit New York or frequent the Springs in Virginia. On January 18, 1862 John Tyler died in Richmond, Virginia. He left his forty-one year old widow with seven children, debts totaling c.$2,000.00, and residing state was prepared to that seceded from the Union. Two years later the mother to whom Julia turned to in a crisis, died in New York. David Gardiner did not comfort or assist his sister.
In fact, he challenged her in court and contested their mother's will. Julia endured yet another loss in 1872 when her daughter Julia Tyler Spencer died in childbirth and left her with an infant daughter to raise. Bells continued to toll in 1875 when Julia's nephew died and in 1883 when her son John Alexander Tyler died.

Financial problems would further burden the President's widow. Shortly after John Tyler's death, Union soldiers seized Villa Margaret, the Hampton Roads cottage of the Tylers. During Reconstruction, the ravaged structure sold for one third of its original value. In 1864, Sherwood Forest was sacked by Union troops and former slaves. Ten years later the plantation was saved at the last minute from a sheriff's sale. National panic and depression in 1873 forced Julia to sell Castleton, a tenantless property that she had inherited in New York. Credit and social status kept Julia from financial bankruptcy. After the deaths of her husband and brother it is not clear in the records if a new executor was appointed to assist her.

Reeling against adversity, Julia ran the southern blockade to Bermuda twice and safely conducted her children out of Virginia. After the war, she sent her sons, Gardiner and Alexander, and her nephew, Harry Beeckman, to school in Karlsruhe, Germany. A year later she sent her daughter Julie
to a Catholic school in Nova Scotia. Moving to Washington, D.C. in 1872, she sent Fitzwalter to Georgetown College, Pearl to Georgetown Academy, and Lyon to the University of Virginia. Her son, Lachlan, at this time attended New York Surgeons School.

In addition to focusing on her children's education, Julia attempted to recover the financial losses caused by the Union Army. She waged a second paper war and increased her federal pension as a President's widow from $1,000 a year to $5,000. With slavery abolished, she attempted to operate Sherwood Forest plantation with Swedish immigrants as tenant farmers. This experiment ended in failure. Her oldest son, Gardiner assumed the responsibility for the plantation. The aging Mrs. Tyler spent her last seven years in Richmond, Virginia. At the Exchange Hotel, where John Tyler died in 1862, Julia Gardiner Tyler suffered a stroke and died on July 10, 1889 at the age of sixty-nine. She was buried at Hollywood cemetery in the city next to her husband.
APPENDIX A

Julia Gardiner Tyler 1820-1889

1790-John Tyler Born in Virginia
1820-Julia Gardiner Born in New York
1835-Julia enters Madame Chargaray's School in New York
1840-The Gardiner Family Tour the Capitals of Europe for a year
1842-John Tyler Purchase Sherwood Forest Plantation
1843-Courtship of John Tyler and Julia Gardiner Begins
     Princeton Gunboat Explosion Kills Julia's Father, David Gardiner
1844-June 22, Marriage of Julia Gardiner and John Tyler
     The Tylers visit Sherwood Forest
1845-The Tylers leave Washington, D.C. for Charles City County, Virginia
1846-July, David Gardiner Tyler born in New York, (d.1927)
1848-April, John Alexander Tyler born in Virginia, (d.1883)
1849-December, Julie Gardiner Tyler born in Virginia, (d.1871)
1851-December, Lachlan Tyler born in Virginia, (d.1902)
     January, Julia's brother Alexander Gardiner dies in New York
1853-August, Lyon Gardiner Tyler born in Virginia (d. 1953)
     Julia's letter to the Duchess of Sutherland is published
1856-March, Robert Fitzwalter Tyler born (d. 1927)
1857- Julia's sister Margaret Gardiner Beeckman dies while visiting Sherwood Forest
     Julia Tyler purchases Villa Margaret, the summer cottage
1860, June, Pearl Tyler born in Virginia (d. )

1862-John Tyler Died in Richmond, Virginia
     Villa Margaret was seized by Union troops
1863-Julia Tyler ran the southern blockade
     Julia Tyler's mother dies in New York
1864-Sherwood Foest is sacked by Union troops
1865-Gardiner and Alexander Tyler and their cousin Harry Beeckman are sent to school in Germany by Julia Tyler
1866-Julie Tyler is sent to school in Nova Scotia by Julia Tyler
1871-Julie Tyler Spencer died leaving a daughter for Julia Tyler to raise
1872-Julia Tyler converts to Catholicism
1873-Julia Tyler sells Castleton In New York and Villa Margaret in Virginia.
1874-Sherwood Forest is saved from a sheriff's sale
1882—Julia Tyler moves to Richmond, Virginia with her granddaughter
1883—Julia's son, John Alexander dies
July 10, 1889, Julia Gardiner Tyler dies of a stroke her last word was "tea"

"Beautiful, winning, as rosy as a summer's morning on the mountains of Mexico as admirable as Victoria. . . ."

New York Herald 1844
APPENDIX B

Children of John and Julia (Gardiner) Tyler.

1. David Gardiner (July 12, 1846—September 5, 1927) was a member of the United States House of Representatives (1893–97); judge of the fourteenth judicial circuit of Virginia (1904–20); married Mary Morris Jones, June 6, 1894.


4. Lachlan (December 2, 1851—January 26, 1902), a physician, married Georgia Powell.

5. Lyon Gardiner (August, 1853–February 12, 1935), educator and author; was president of William and Mary College (1888–1919); editor of the William and Mary Quarterly Historical Magazine and Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine; author of a number of historical works, among them the Letters and Times of the Tylers, 3 vols.; married first, November 14, 1878, Annie Baker Tucker, daughter of St. George Tucker, of Albemarle County, Virginia; second, September 12, 1923, Sue Ruffin, granddaughter of Edmund Ruffin, noted as a writer on agricultural subjects and as a leader in the secession movement.


7. Pearl (June 20, 1860— ) married Major William Munford Ellis, a farmer, who was for a time a member of the Virginia Senate. Mrs. Ellis is now living near Shawsville, Virginia.

Children of John and Letitia (Christian) Tyler.

1. **Mary** (April 15, 1815–June 17, 1848) married December 14, 1835, Henry L. Jones, a farmer.

2. **Robert** (September 9, 1816–December 3, 1877) held position in the Land Office at Washington during a part of his father's term as President; in 1844 went to Philadelphia to practice law; later took a prominent part in Pennsylvania politics; was register of the Confederate Treasury; editor of the Montgomery (Ala.) Mail and Advertiser; married September 12, 1839, Elizabeth Priscilla Cooper (1819–1896), daughter of Thomas A. Cooper, the tragedian.

3. **John** (April 29, 1819–January 26, 1896) was private secretary to his father while the latter was President; succeeded Robert in the Land Office; served as assistant Secretary of War of the Southern Confederacy; married December, 1838, Martha Rochelle, of Southampton County, Virginia.

4. **Letitia** (May 11, 1821–December 28, 1907) married February 21, 1839, James A. Semple, who served as paymaster in the United States and Confederate navies.

5. **Elizabeth** (July 11, 1823–June 1, 1850) married January 31, 1842, William Waller.

6. **Anne Contesse** (b. April, 1825; lived three months). There was another child that died in infancy.


8. **Tazewell** (December 6, 1830–January 8, 1874), a physician, married Nannie Bridges, December, 1857.

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1 For the data on which Appendix D and Appendix E are based I am indebted to Mrs. Lyon G. Tyler, of "Lion's Den," Charles City County, Virginia. A brief statement regarding the children of President Tyler can also be found in L. G. Tyler's Letters and Times of the Tylers, III, 216–217.
APPENDIX C

In *And Tyler Too: A Biography of John and Julia Gardiner* Tyler, Robert Seager explains the significance of Julia's letter to the Duchess of Sutherland. His discussion of the topic is worthy to note:

With Pierce in the White House and the Compromise of 1850 on the books, the whole question of slavery in the territories, thought Tyler, had become an academic abstraction. "I do not see to what Free-soilism can now attach itself, or upon what food it can linger live. It is at this moment but a mere abstraction."

In the midst of this emerging euphoria over the Pierce administration the slavery controversy struck Sherwood Forest with full force. As might have been expected, the storm center of the excitement was Julia. In February 1853 the issue of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, a Richmond monthly of broad circulation, appeared Julia's letter defending slavery. First printed in the New York *Herald* and the Richmond *Enquirer* in January, the article was a spirited rebuttal to an open letter from the Duchess of Sutherland, the Countess of Derby, the Vicountess Palmerston, the Countess of Carlisle, and Lady John Russell urging Southern ladies of quality and moral sensitivity to take the lead in demanding an end to the immoral slave institution. Although Tyler's thought on the subject ran prominently through the piece, Julia actually wrote it. Indeed, she labored over it for a full week until she was exhausted by the close concentration and attention it demanded. "Authorship does not agree with her," Margaret reported, "and what with intense thinking and excitement on the subject it has quite upset her usual current of health.

The slave system Julia knew intimately at Sherwood Forest and saw functioning among the James River wheat plantations bore little resemblance to the view of slavery the English ladies had evidently derived from reading Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* when it first appeared in March 1852. Juli's response to the Duchess was thus an attack on the Stowe image of the Southern plantation slave as well as a restatement of the positive paternalism features of the system. She knew perfectly well that the Sherwood Forest slaves were well treated and that they had a deep emotional attachment to their master. She had witnessed to many evidences of this to permit the Sutherland charges to go unanswered...

In her lecture to "The Duchess of Sutherland and the Ladies of England" Julia did not attempt to defend slavery as a positive moral good. She admitted too that it had grave political disadvantages and was the "one subject
on which there is a possibility of wrecking the bark of
this Union" But she denied that the slave system was
by definition a form of bestiality run amuck and she
questioned the right of British critics, male or female,
to intervene in what was essentially an American domestic
problem. Warming to her task, Julia pointed out that--
compared to the depressed white laborers of London--
the Southern Negro "lives sumptuously," enjoying warm
clothing, plenty of bread, and meat twice a day. . .

By 1853, these arguments were standard, mechanical
defenses of the slave institution. The main force of
Julia's article rested in her well mounted attack on British
abolitionist interference in American internal affairs. . .

Within a fortnight of Julia's appearance in print, Sherwood
Forest was showered with congratulations and letters of
support from all over the country. For a brief moment Julia
Gardiner Tyler became a national figure and a Southern her­
one. Sarah Polk sent congratulations. Resolutions of thanks
were received from various women's organizations all over the
South. More than fifty newspapers, North and South, were
received at Sherwood Forest containing favorable notice of
the article. The Boston Times pronounced it "powerful," as
did the New York Journal of commerce. The Philadelphia
Pennsylvanian praised it, and such Whig papers as the
Petersburg (va.) Gazatte crowed that Julia's effort had
"knocked the Duchess's document into the middle of the next
week." Robert Tyler and John Tyler Jr., wrote that it had
"created an immense sensation in Philadelphia circles and
added greatly to her fame." Washington was "loud in commenda­
tion," reported Colonel John S. Cunningham from the capital.
Some argued that Julia had squashed Harriet Beecher Stowe
in one blow, but Margaret demanded better and more tangible
evidence for this broad claim. "I think the good people of
our Union had better unite in subscribing a sum at least equal
to the amount of Mrs. Stowe's publication. This would be a
substantial evidence of the favor with which it has been
received." Still, Tyler opined that "there was never a public
document in the annals of our history which has received such
universal approval and admiration." As Julia happily dispatched
reprints of her effort to old Washington friends and aquaint­
ances--Mesdames Polk, Webster, Calhoun, Wickliffe, and
Wilkins--the music halls in Richmond began enjoying the fun
and excitement. When Tyler took Gardie to town in September
to hear the Kimble Band he learned that the organization was
preparing a new song titled "The Duchess," the refrain for
each verse ending with the sassy lines:

Oh, Lady Sutherland,
To comfort you I'll try.
Mrs. Tyler gave you what was right,
But Duchess don't you cry,
the site. It is known that after he had gained fame and fortune, Shakespeare returned and died in his native town. This showed the susceptibility of his nature to the common love of home. Except for a tie of this sort, one with fine poetic sensibility would have found but little attractive in this common place town. But to him, it was the scene of the sports of childhood and the love of youth, and he whose imagination could draw pictures that ravished others with delight, doubtless could add for his own illusion, imaginary beauties to a spot that his heart was clinging to. I was disappointed in the appearance here of the Avon. It is a dark-coloured, slow-moving stream, without the picturesque beauty, which we always fancy belongs to it. However, some distance above Stratford, it becomes limpid and more romantic, and we saw several fishermen, with their rods, strolling along its banks, and at one spot the scene was presented of at least a hundred gleaners, women, lads, and children, going forth to gather up something from the reaped fields. As we were riding on the top of the coach, soon after leaving Stratford, a gentleman pointed out to us Charlecote House, where, according to tradition, Shakespeare was tried for shooting a deer, and he marked a clump of trees, as if to be the identical spot where the young unlicensed forester stood when the quarry fell by his arrow. This property is still in the Lucy family. How sturdily England's old feudal tenures resist innovation! As the coach stopped for a few moments at a little town, there came out a most respectable looking farmer, who, upon being addressed by my companion on the coach, took off his hat in the most deferential manner, and continued to hold it in his hand during the long conversation. The gentleman on the coach, who was going to an archery meeting, was a landed proprietor in the neighbourhood, and, I supposed, a nobleman.

How resplendent are the glories, literary, martial, and historic, that adorn old England's brow, and how surpassingly beautiful are her green vales and swelling hills. But give me my own broad, rich, free and new land, where there are no entailed estates, and no gleaners, no noblemen, and no cap-in-hand farmers.

S. L. C.

To the Duchess of Sutherland and Ladies of England.

We exclude other matter designed for the present number of the Messenger, in order that we may lay before our readers the following admirable letter of Mrs. Julia Gardiner Tyler, to the Duchess of Sutherland, which we take from a late number of the Richmond Enquirer. The letter deserves the widest possible circulation, and we, in our own small circle, can effect this result by sending it into foreign lands under the cover of a magazine, it shall have it. The novel weight of Mrs. Tyler's communication is greatly enhanced by the fact that she is herself a Northern lady, who came to the Southern home which she adorns, the bride of an eminent Southern Statesman, an ex-President of the United States. Her view of the institution of slavery is not therefore affected by early prejudices, while her social position, it must be admitted, is as high as that of the proud mistress of Stafford House or any other titled lady of Great Britain.


Your address to your sisters, the women of the United States, on the subject of domestic slavery, as it exists among us, which has appeared in our public journals, should be acknowledged by some one of the vast number of those to whom it is addressed without awaiting the publication of the more formal communication. There are some of the concerns of life in which conventionalities are properly to be disregarded, and that is one of them. A reply to your address must necessarily be the work of some one individual among us, or must go altogether unperformed. Woman, in the United States, with but few exceptions, confines herself within that sphere for which the God who created her seems to have designed her. Her circle is, literally and emphatically, that of her family; and such she is content that it shall be. Within that circle her influence is felt over the relations of life, as wife, mother, mistress—and as she discharges the duty of one or all of these relations, so is she respected or otherwise. To cast a doubt upon her fidelity in any one of them, is to excite against her the odium of the community, and, in a great measure, to dethrone her from her high position. She knows nothing of political conventions, or conventions of any other sort than such as are held under suitable pastors of the Church, and are wholly directed to the advancement of the Christian religion. Such is emphatically the case with...
the women of the Southern States. Do you
wish to see them, you must visit their homes.
Do you desire to ascertain the nature of their
employments, you must enter their family
circles, and, believe me, good sisters of Eng-
land, you would find in their Christian de-
portment, and perfect amiability of manners,
ough, at once, to inspire you with the most
exalted respect and esteem. You might find
in splendid vestments of dress, no glittering
diamonds, no aristocratic displays. No, the
vestments they wear are those of meekness
and charity, their diamonds are gems of the
heart, and their splendor the neatness
and order and contentment which everywhere
graces the eye; and that neatness, that order,
and that contentment is in nothing more ob-
serveable than in the well-clothed and happy
domestics who welcome your arrival, and
brap upon you every comfort during your
sojourn under the roofs of their masters.
You will see then how utterly impossible it
would be to expect the women of the United
States to assemble in convention, either in
person or by proxy, in order to frame an
swer to your address. Nay, I must, more-
ever, in all frankness, declare to you, that
the women of the South, especially, have
cot received your address in the kindest
spirit. They regard it as entirely incompatible
with all confidence in, or consideration
for them, to invoke the interposition of the
women of what are called the free States, in a
matter with which they have no more to do than
have yourselves, and whose interference in
the question can produce no other effect than
to excite disturbance and agitation and ill-
will, and possibly, in the end, a total anni-
hilation of kind feeling between geographical
sections. It is the province of the women
of the Southern States to preside over the
domestic economy of the estates and planta-
tions of their husbands—it is emphatically
their province to visit the sick, and attend to
the comfort of all the laborers upon such es-
tates; and it is felt to be but a poor compli-
ment to the women of the South, to suppose
it necessary to introduce other superinten-
dence than their own over the condition of
their dependants and servants. They see,
too, or fancy they see, in the fact that the ad-
dress which you have made them, was hand-
ed to you already prepared for signature, by
the editors of the newspaper press of England,
and that, according to the admission of the
Duchess of Sutherland in her opening address
to your Convention, your Convention, itself,
is but the offspring of the same political news-
paper press—I say, they see enough in all
this to excite not their sympathies, but their
apprehensions. They also see, or fancy that
they see, in your movement, the fingers of
your greatest statesmen. The Countess of
Derby, the Viscountess Palmerston, the Coun-
tess of Carlisle, Lady John Russell, not to
mention others of distinction and notoriety,
would scarcely be complimented by a supposi-
tion that they had signed or openly approved
such an address without the concurrence of
their husbands. The women of the Southern
States are, for the most part, well educated;
indeed they yield not in this respect to any
females on earth, and they have peculiar op-
portunities of acquiring knowledge in regard
to the public concerns of the world. Politics
is almost universally the theme of conversa-
tion among the men, in all their coteries and
social gatherings, and the women would bestu-
pid indeed, if they did not gather much in-
formation from this abundant source. Hence
they are not ignorant of the rapid growth of
their beloved country, or of the promises of
its early future. Their mothers knew this
land when it contained but three millions of
inhabitants, and numbered but thirteen States.
Their children know it now, as the great con-
 federated republic, whose population already
equals 26,000,000, and whose dominions are
washed by the waters of two oceans. Be-
lieve me, that its magnitude now, and impor-
tance in the future, is as fully known to the
women of the United States, as it is to your
husbands, and editors, and statesmen. Our
census tables show a duplication of our po-

dulation in every cycle of twenty-three years;
so that by the time the infant, now in the cra-
dle, shall have attained the age of manhood,
that population will have increased to 50,-
000,000; and by the time that same infant
attains to middle age, it will have swollen
into 100,000,000. We need go no farther in
the estimate, in order to unveil that immense
future which lies before us—a future, unrivalled
in point of power, by any thing the
world has heretofore seen—a future, which
already fixes upon it the intense and stead-
fast gaze of the statesmen of other countries—a future, which unfolds a new destiny, a happier and brighter one, I trust, for the human family—a future, to be regarded with rapture by the lover of man, and which may cause privilege to shiver and tremble with fear in all its fibres and arteries. I allude not to any power of the sword. No, I allude to a power more resistless, and more certain in its results—the power of example—the example of a free, prosperous and great people, among whom all artificial distinctions of society are unknown; where preferment is equally open to all, and man's capacity for self-government is recognized and conclusively established. The women of the United States foresee all this, and they also thoroughly comprehend the fact, that all confederacies have heretofore, in the history of the world, been broken up and destroyed by the machinations of foreign governments; and if such has been the fate of other confederacies, how much more vigilant ought we to be to guard against the fatal results which have attended on others, and to look with suspicion, come from what quarter it may, on all interference in our domestic concerns! If the Achaians and other leagues could not withstand the machinations of the powers of their day, how truly sensitive ought we to be on a point which proved so fatal to them; and if the foreign States, by whom such confederacies were surrounded, felt it to be due to their own safety to destroy them by their machinations, have we not reason to suppose that a ten-fold interest is found in our case, in view of the rapid growth of the United States, and in the early development of that future which will clothe this country with all the elements of control in the affairs of the world? Governments and countries which are now looked upon as stars of the first magnitude, will ere long, if the United States roll on in their present orbit, be secondary and tertiary in the political hemisphere.—This is quite as thoroughly known by us as by you, women of England, and therefore you should not be in the slightest degree surprised at the suspicion with which your address is regarded by all the thinking women, not only of the South, but of the whole Union. We know that there is but one subject on which there is a possibility of wreck-

ing the bark of this Union—a possibility, however, which, I trust, is very remote—and to that very subject you have given your attention; and not only so, but have subscribed an address, not prepared by yourselves, as the emanation of your own susceptible hearts, but the admitted production of the newspaper press of England, which effects a mawing sensibility on a subject with which it has nothing properly to do—and all for end which every reflecting person cannot fail to understand.

Nor is this suspicion in any degree removed by the fact on which you predicate your address, viz: the fact that your country inflicted on her then colonies the "curse" of slavery in opposition to their frequent and solemn protests. In the historical fact you are certainly correct. The colony of Virginia, and I believe, most of the other colonies, were constant and earnest in their remonstrances and one of the causes set forth in the Declaration of Independence, as prepared and written by a son of Virginia, was a continuation of the slave trade by the mother country despite of all remonstrances on the part of the colonies. Thus, then, England not only permitted but encouraged the slave trade for a period of a century and a half, as a means of swelling her coffers; and the infamous traffic could only be expelled from this country by the force and power of the sword. Your Kings and Queens, sustained by your Parliament and people, entered into treaties and formed contracts, for the purpose of reaping a rich harvest of profit from the trade—and the voice of the slave-dealer on the shores of Africa was perfect music in their ears, because it was the music of gold into the treasury, and all merry England danced with joy at the pleasant sound. Yet have we been well informed, doubtless, of the treaties made by your Queen Anne, "blessed memory," and the crown of Spain which stipulated a monopoly of the trade a close partnership between those royal personages, to the exclusion of all the world beside. Yes, you are altogether correct in describing whatever there is of immorality of crime, in the present condition of the Southern States, to your own England. The colonies remonstrated, and remonstrated in vain until, driven to desperation by her persever-
To the Duchess of Sutherland and Ladies of England.

Once, they severed the bonds that bound them to England, and established their independence, and abolished the slave trade by their only resource—the power of the sword. The great slave market in which England had enjoyed a monopoly, was thus lost to her; and from that moment she began to discover that there was something rather immoral in the traffic. Before, the slave ship was a statelyargos laden with treasury. The groans of its unhappy victims could not be heard above the surges of the ocean. Soon after, a faint cry could be heard, borne on the winds from Africa's coast; and now, the Parliament House resounds with the clanking of the chains and the cries of the victims. Such the mighty influence of the American Revolution, and such the power of the sword wielded in that ever-glorious struggle. I desire to tell you, women of England, plainly, that your address, prepared not by yourselves, but by others, comes, therefore, to us, laden with suspicions, when you advert, as the groundwork of your interference with our domestic institutions, to the fact of the former criminality of England. Would England, with a continuance of a monopoly of the trade over our broad acres up to the present day, have clothed herself in sackcloth and ashes, as she now has done? Where was her humanity and her Christian philanthropy for the long period of 150 years? Our ancestors on this side of the Atlantic thundered, through their remonstrances, at the doors of her Parliament House, and at the gates of her Royal Palaces; and yet, for all that long period, she had no ears to hear, no heart to understand. No sympathy, and no philanthropy, such as now exists, found place in the stately palace. How has happened all this? It would be well for you to enquire. Doubtless some of your distinguished husbands can give you plausible explanations—at least such as will content politicians on your side of the water. The editors of the newspaper press can come again to your aid; but will it be an easy task to convince us, that the people of the present generation are better, more moral and more Christian, than all who have gone before them—that your right reverend Bishops and Prelates are more pure and orthodox than all their predecessors—that your Kings and Queens, your nobles and gentry, are influenced by a higher spirit of Christianity than all who have preceded them—that your statesmen of the present day, are superior, in moral excellence, to those illustrious men, who shaped the destinies of England in past times, and left to history undying names? It will be a very, very difficult matter to furnish us with satisfactory reasons for this great and sudden conversion of a whole people, after losing the American market, on the subject of the slave-trade—and we, women of the United States, must ever receive with suspicion, all interference in our domestic affairs on the part of the noble ladies of England, or any portion of her inhabitants. Such interference implies either a want of proper and becoming conduct on our part, in the management of our negroes, or it seeks to enlist the sympathies of the world against us. Your own address, (I have the charity to suppose that it was written in ignorance of the fact, as it is,) represents the Southern States as denying to their slaves all religious instruction—a calumny more false was never uttered. So far from it, no Sabbath goes by that the places of worship are not numerous attended by the black population—edifying discourses are delivered to them, and often by colored pastors, and large numbers of them are in communion with the churches. And yet your tears are made to flow freely over the sad and melancholy privations of the children of Africa, to whom the bread of life is represented as denied. Your assertion could only have been derived from some dealer in, and retailer of, fiction. It is known how readily woman's heart responds to either real or imaginary distress; and when woman joins in the concerns of the busy world, how readily her sympathies become excited by an artificial, as well as a real picture of human suffering. This sympathy, which makes her the gem of creation, rather disqualifies her as a legislator, and subjects her to be made the instrument of the designing. One fact is incontrovertible, and I recommend it to the consideration of the Dukes of Sutherland and her conpeers of high and low degree: that England, when she had the power to prevent the introduction of negroes into the United States, most obstinately refused to do it; but now that she is deprived of her authority, either
To advise or dictate, she sighs and sheds tears, and complains over the injustice and the wrong. The crocodile, good sisters of England, is said to cry; most piteously, but woe to the unhappy traveller who is beguiled by its tears.

I have thus attempted to deal candidly with you in disclosing some of the grounds of the suspicions, which, in the estimation of many, attach to your proceedings. I will go farther, and inform you that it is better for both you and us, that we abstain in future, from all possible interference with each other, in the domestic concerns of our respective countries. In the first place, such interference comes with ill grace from either of us, and can be received with no favor. In morals, we believe ourselves quite your equals, and, therefore, it sounds harshly in our ears to be admonished by you of our sins, real or imaginary. There is a proud heart in the American breast, which rebels against all assumption on the part of others, although they may wear ducal coronets, or be considered the stars of fashion in foreign courts. Manage your own affairs as best you may, and leave us to manage ours as we may think proper. Each of us will find abundant employment in the performance of our respective duties. If you wish a suggestion as to the suitable occupation of your idle hours, I will point you to the true field for your philanthropy; the unsupplied wants of your own people of England. In view of your palaces, there is misery and suffering enough to excite your most active sympathies. I remember to have seen lately, that there were in the city of London alone, 100,000 persons who rose in the morning without knowing where or how they were to obtain their daily bread; and I remember, also, somewhere to have seen, that the Eleemosynary establishment of England, costs annually £10,000,000 sterling—a sum greater than that expended by this frugal and economical government of ours, with its army and navy, and civil and diplomatic list. Surely, surely, here is a field large enough for the exercise of the most generous sympathy, the most unbounded charity. Go, my good Duchesses of Sutherland, on an embassy of mercy to the poor, the stricken, the hungry and the naked of your own land—cast in their laps the superflux of your enormous wealth; a single jewel from your hair, a single gem from your dress would relieve many a poor female of England, who is now cold, and shivering, and destitute. Enter the abode of desolation and want, and cause squall wretchedness to put on one smile of comfort, perhaps the first one which has lighted up its face for a life-time. Leave it to the women of the South to alleviate the sufferings of their dependants, while you take care of your own. The negro of the South lives sumptuously in comparison with the 100,000 of the white population of London. He is clothed warmly in winter, and has his meat twice daily, without stint of bread. Have your working men, women and children, as well clothed and as well fed, and then go to the serfs of Russia and the negroes of America. No, I recant the advice. To the serfs of Russia you will not go... That is an European affair—the affair of a high and imperial monarch, and of a rich and powerful aristocracy. The poor serf may toil and labor, and stretch his heart strings until they crack in agony, and yet the noble ladies of England will express no sympathy for him, and present no address to their sisters of Russia upon the subject of serfdom. You will, in no event, disturb yourselves with the past, present or future condition of the serf. The newspaper press would admonish you of the danger of interfering in that quarter, and the Emperor Nicholas will go unquestioned as to the manner and extent of his royal sway. But, I return to your subject—the State of slavery in our Southern States—and I tell you that you are mistaken in supposing that the Southern heart is different from your own in its sympathies and emotions. Believe me, that the human heart is quite as susceptible with us, as with you. Moralists, and dealers in fiction, may artfully overdraw and give false coloring, so they are licensed to do; but be not deceived into the belief that the heart of man or woman, on this side of the Atlantic, is either more obdurate or cruel, than on yours. There is no reason, then, why you should leave your fellow subjects in misery at home, in order to take your seat by the side of the black man on the plantations of America. Eves if you are horror-stricken at the highly colored picture of human distress, incident to the separation of husband and wife, and
I take Dukeett to task for endangering Ireland, land of poetry and song, noble feeling and generous emotions—birthplace of the warrior, the statesman, the orator—there is no room for you in the sympathizing hearts of the women of England.

Let the Celtic race be driven, by starvation, from the land of their fathers, and its exodus would be regarded not with sorrow, but with joy and gladness by the secret heart of England. "Religious toleration" is but an unmeaning phrase with the people of Great Britain—it extends not beyond the lips. A difference in creed has been the death-blow to Ireland.

I reason not with you on the subject of our domestic institutions. Such as they are, they are ours. "We fear the Greeks though bearing presents." Never was an adage more applicable—although professing friendship and sympathy, we cannot consent that England shall mix herself up with our concerns. We prefer to work out our own destiny. When she might have done so, she gave not relief. We asked her for bread, and she gave us a stone. The African, under her policy and practice, became property. That property has descended from father to son, and constitutes a large part of Southern wealth. We desire no intrusion of advice as to our individual property rights, at home or abroad. We meddle not with your laws of primogeniture and entail, although they are obnoxious to all our notions of justice, and are in violation of the laws of nature. Would the noble ladies of England feel no resentment, if we should address them upon those subjects? And yet is there a certainty that our voice would not be heard by the toiling and landless millions, in favor of a system which we consider more wise, more just, and more consistent with the holy word of God? We, however, preach no crusades against aristocratic establishments. It is enough that we do not allow them to exist among ourselves. We are content to leave England in the enjoyment of her peculiar institutions; and we insist upon the right to
To the Duchess of Sutherland and Ladies of England.

[February, 1853]

JULIA GARDINER TYLER.

SHERWOOD FOREST, VIRGINIA, JAN. 24, 1853.

regulate ours without her aid. I pray you to bear in mind, that the golden rule of life is for each to attend to his own business, and let his neighbor's alone! This means peace, love, friendship. The opposite means hatred, ill-will, contention—it destroys the peace of neighborhoods, and is the fruitful cause of discord among nations. I must also say to you frankly, that we regard England as an indifferent adviser on the subject of negro slavery. Her statesmanship, if it be judged by her course of policy in regard to the West India Islands, would give her no exalted position, unless, indeed, fanaticism be a good adviser, and ruin and desolation, evidences of a wise and sound policy. No, we prefer to follow our own conception of what it is proper for us to do. Our eyes are turned across the ocean; not in the direction of England, but to Africa. The footprints of our policy are seen in the colonies—the ex-slave establishment, already become independent States—in the voluntary emancipation of slaves by our citizens as preparatory for emigration to Africa—a course of emancipation which from 1790 to 1850, has increased our table in Virginia, of free negroes, in the ratio of 301 per cent, while the white population has only increased 1024 per cent, and the slaves but 64 per cent. These interesting statistics, I extract from a memorial recently presented to the Legislature of Virginia, asking additional aid to further the colonization of freed negroes in Liberia. Thus we seek to retribute the wrongs done by England to Africa, by returning civilization for barbarism—Christianity for idolatry. We desire no such boon as England bestowed on her Islands—no blight so abiding, no mildew so destructive—no ultimate war between the races, bloody, desolating, and finally annihilating. Steam is conquering distance, and Africa will be brought nearer and nearer to our shores with each revolving year—and the results of a policy, at once wise and discreet, commencing with slaveholding Virginia, and extensively adopted by the people of the United States, will claim, sooner or later, the admiration of mankind.

America might love England if England would permit her. A common descent, a common language, mutual interests, and to a great extent a common-heritage of freedom, should draw the two nations together. The disposition of the Southern mind (I speak what I do know) is to cultivate the closest friendship with England. Nearly all of the Southern people are the descendants of the first settlers. They have kindred blood, almost unmixt by emigration, flowing in their veins. Their interests lead them to cherish the principles of free trade. Their cotton, their rice, and other productions of the soil, find extensive markets in Great Britain. They would have them still more free—still more widely open. For myself, when I have visited England, it has been with emotions of reverence growing out of the recollections of the historic page. Westminster Abbey, with its undying memorials—the noble monuments of the past scattered over the face of the country—the very ruins spoke of an ancestry alike dear to the American and Englishman. My intermixture of Scotch blood, derived from a leader of two Scottish clans, who lost life, castle, and estate in the wars of King Charlie, with the pure Anglo-Saxon, in no degree abated my ardor and enthusiasm, when I looked upon these memories of the mighty past, in which so many of us here claim a common interest with you. But, if England will sever these ties: if, instead of cultivating good feeling with us, she chooses rather to subject us to taunt, ridicule, to insult in its grossest form, and, above all, improperly to interfere in our domestic affairs;—if she scatters her emissaries, in the persons of members of Parliament, to stir up our people to mutiny and revolt;—if, what is still worse, she sends her emissaries, in the persons of our women, to incite her women, and the more illustrious for birth the worse it makes the matter, to address us bonmilies on justice, humanity, and philanthropy, as if we had not, like themselves, the advantage of civilization, and the lights of Christianity; with all the desire to cultivate relation of undying amity, the men of the United States, deriving their spirit from their mothers and their wives, may be forced into the adoption of a very different feeling with regard to Great Britain.
NOTES

Introduction


6 The current owners of Sherwood Forest, Mr. Mrs. Harrison Tyler restored a portion of the structure to its 1840-60 appearance. In the hall, parlor, dining room, ballroom, sitting room and master bedroom the wallpaper, paint, and wood was restored. Throughout the structure decaying wood and broken windows restored and hardware preserved. Outside a portion of thr gardens was restored and statuary preserved. In addition the surviving furnishings were restored.


9 Norton, Liberty's Daughters.

10 Norton, Liberty's Daughters, p.298.

11 Ryan, The Empire of the Mother.

Chapter One

1 Gardiner's Island was granted to Lion Gardiner in 1639 by the King of England. It was the first English settlement in what is now New York state and remained in the Gardiner family longer than any other seventeenth-century estate.

2 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.29.

3 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.38.

4 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.181.

5 Julia Gardiner Tyler, "Reminiscenses of Mrs. Julia G Tyler," Richmond Virginia, (July 21, 1889).

6 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.200.

7 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.195.

8 The Princeton was an experimental gunboat. In February 1843 an explosion on the main deck killed David Gardiner, several members of President Tyler's cabinet, and other guests aboard for a review.
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9 John Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 20 April, 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

10 Julianna Gardiner to John Tyler, 22 April, 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

11 Ibid.

12 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 4.

13 New York Herald, 28 June, 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

14 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 258.

15 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 179-180.

16 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 18.

17 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 293.

18 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 359.

19 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 352.

20 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, March, 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

21 Ibid.

22 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 549.

23 Chitwood, John Tyler Champion, p. 412.

24 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 359.

25 Lebsock, Free Women of Petersburg, p. 17.
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26 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.195.

27 Julianna Gardiner to John Tyler, 22 April, 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

28 Julia Tyler to Alexander Gardiner, April, 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

29 Ibid.

30 Lebsock, Free Women of Petersburg, p.56-57.

31 Ibid.

32 It is obvious from Julia Tyler's statements in letters to both Alexander Gardiner and Julianna Gardiner from 1845-1850 that she determined the spending of her inheritance. This correspondence is located at the College Of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.


34 Ibid.

35 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.296.

36 Ibid.

37 Seager, Appendix E, p.479.

Chapter Two

*Excellent examples of these studies appear in Thomas J. Schlereth, Material Culture Studies in America, (Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History,1982).*
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Chapter Two

2 Sherwood Forest, Privately Published Pamphlet, 1970.


4 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.179-180.

5 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 11 July 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

6 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 22 July 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

7 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, July 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

8 Ibid.

9 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, April 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

10 Julia Tyler to Alexander Gardiner, April 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

11 Sarah Josepha Buell Hale, Manners or Happy Homes and Good Society: All The Year Round, (Boston: J.E. Tilton Co., 1868), p.115-116. Mrs. Hale began publishing articles such as this in the 1840s.

12 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, Margaret Gardiner, and Alexander Gardiner, October 1844-December 1846, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.
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13 Ibid. Julia Tyler specifically stated which shops the furnishings should be acquired from in her correspondence to her family.

14 Ibid.

15 Julia Tyler to Margaret Gardiner, 13 November 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

16 Julia Tyler to Alexander Gardiner, 11 December 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

17 Margaret Gardiner to Julia Tyler, 14 November 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

18 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 10 April 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

19 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, March 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

20 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 9 March 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

21 The following description of architectural detail is the product of fieldwork completed by the author for this thesis, summer 1985.

22 Julia Tyler to Alexander Gardiner, April 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

23 Julia Gardiner Tyler, "Duchess of Sutherland and Ladies of England," Southern Literary Messenger, (February, 1853), p.120-126.
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24 Alexander Gardiner to Julia Tyler, March 27, 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

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1 Julia Tyler to Margaret Gardiner, April 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

2 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 300.

3 Julia Tyler to Alexander Gardiner, March 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

4 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 301.

5 Ibid.

6 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 302.

7 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 21.

8 Julianna Gardiner to Julia Tyler, November 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

9 Julianna Gardiner to Julia Tyler, March 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

10 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 24 April 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

11 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 302.

12 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.
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14 See APPENDIX C.

15 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 302.

16 Ibid.

17 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, March 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

18 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, October 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

19 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, November 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

20 Julia Tyler to Alexander Gardiner, 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

21 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

22 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, October 1846, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

23 Julianna Gardiner to Julia Tyler, September 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

24 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

25 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 297-298.

26 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 298.

27 Ibid.
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28 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.340.

29 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, March 1846, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

30 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.300.

31 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, April 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

32 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 21 February 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

33 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 24 August 1854, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

34 Julia Tyler to Margaret Gardiner, 22 April 1854, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

35 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, October 1854, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

36 Julia Tyler to Alexander Gardiner, 20 January 1847, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Chapter Four

1 The pattern of visitation was determined by recording guests mentioned in Julia Tyler's letters to her family in New York, written at Sherwood Forest from 1845 to 1860. Note that this did not provide a complete record of guests but did show significant patterns of visitation.

2 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 1850, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.
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3 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, May 1846, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

4 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 9 March 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

5 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, October 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

6 Margaret Gardiner to Julia Tyler, November 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

7 Margaret Gardiner to Julia Tyler, October 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

8 Margaret Gardiner to Julia Tyler, 31 October 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

9 Margaret Gardiner to Julia Tyler, November 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.


12 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, December 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

13 Julia Tyler to Margaret Gardiner, 22 May 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

14 Julianna Gardiner to Julia Tyler, 31 October 1844, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.
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15 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 9 March 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

16 Julia Tyler to Margaret Gardiner, February 1847, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

17 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.295.

18 Julia Tyler to Alexander Gardiner, 23 October 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

19 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.294.

20 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 1846, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

21 Julia Tyler to Margaret Gardiner, 29 January 1846, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

22 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, March 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

23 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.422.

24 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 21 February 1848, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

25 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, April 1845, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.


27 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 25 May 1847, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.
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28 Julia Tyler to Alexander Gardiner, 20 January 1847, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

29 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 3 February 1846, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

30 Julia Tyler to Julianna Gardiner, 10 February 1846, Tyler Family Papers, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.

Conclusion

1 Ryan, Empie of Mother. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood."


Epilogue

1 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.423.

2 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.771.

3 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.537.

4 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.515.

5 Seager, And Tyler Too, p.543.
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Epilogue

6 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 524.

7 Seager, And Tyler Too, p. 528.
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The Tylers


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General Studies


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