

*Winnie Davis: Daughter of the Lost Cause.* By Heath Hardage Lee. Foreword by J. E. B. Stuart IV. (Lincoln, Neb.: Potomac Books, 2014. Pp. [xvi], 214. \$29.95, ISBN 978-1-61234-637-3.)

While biographies of Varina Howell Davis have appeared every few decades, a full-length scholarly study of her daughter, Varina Anne “Winnie” Davis, has been missing. That void has now been filled by Heath Hardage Lee’s *Winnie Davis: Daughter of the Lost Cause*. Professing a longtime personal interest in Winnie Davis, Lee has analyzed a wealth of correspondence, memoirs, and published biographies and skillfully separates mother and daughter. The result reveals a daughter who was never able to successfully create an identity not linked in some way to her famous father, Confederate president Jefferson Davis. What emerges is a sad story of a woman whose victimization was predestined by time, place, and family. Lee’s focus on the tragic aspect of the Davis family is by no means original, but her recurring use of loss as a unifying theme effectively engages the reader and places Winnie Davis firmly within the context of both her family and the Lost Cause.

When Winnie was born on June 27, 1864, Jefferson and Varina Davis were mourning not only their beloved youngest son, Joe, who had fallen to his death from a balcony of the executive mansion, but also Confederate hero and family friend J. E. B. Stuart, who had died one month earlier. Lee painstakingly explains how the Confederacy doomed Winnie to a tragic life. The first seven chapters chronicle loss after loss suffered by the Davis family, including Joe’s death, Confederate defeat, family separation, loss of home and fortune, and the deaths of son Billy to diphtheria and Jeff Jr. to yellow fever. Winnie witnessed firsthand much of the pain and loss suffered by her parents, even sharing the experience of her father’s imprisonment after the war.

Sent to boarding school in Germany at age thirteen, Winnie missed much of the drama of her parents’ marriage. At age eighteen, she returned a well-educated and serious-minded young woman. Due perhaps to her European education or to her friendships with northerners such as Kate and Joseph Pulitzer, Winnie developed over the next few years what Lee describes as an “otherness” that separated her from her southern peers (p. 55). That gap widened in 1886 when Winnie, accompanying her father on a Civil War reunion tour, was declared the official “Daughter of the Confederacy” by Georgia governor (and former Confederate general) John B. Gordon. In spite of her melancholy beauty and lack of fashion savvy, Winnie became what Lee describes as “the Confederate ‘It Girl’” (p. 89).

However, being “Confederate royalty” came at a high price (p. 86). In 1886 Winnie met and fell in love with Alfred “Fred” Wilkinson, a patent lawyer from Syracuse, New York, who shared many of her interests and seemed a good match in all respects except one. Wilkinson was the grandson of a prominent abolitionist. Like historians before her, Lee focuses heavily on this sad and still puzzling aspect of Winnie’s life. Unfortunately, no letters between the couple exist to explain with certainty why Winnie ended her engagement to Wilkinson in 1890. Lee surmises that, in the end, Winnie was bound more tightly by “duty, honor [and] family ties” than by “true love” (p. 128).

Lee offers a brief glimpse of who Winnie Davis could have been, had she not been buried alive by the Confederate past. Winnie and Varina left the

Mississippi family home, Beauvoir, in 1890, relocated to New York City, and, with the support of Joseph Pulitzer, became professional writers. This interesting period of Winnie's life needs more scrutiny than one chapter allows. Lee writes that Winnie seemed to have "blossomed into the New Woman she wrote about in her novels" (p. 151). Yet Lee concludes that Winnie did not "tak[e] advantage" of her freedom (p. 152). Ultimately, Lee argues, Winnie was held captive by her "desire to please authority figures," particularly her parents (p. 152). According to Lee, it was this desire to please that indirectly led to Winnie's early death at age thirty-three, when she fell ill during a Confederate veterans' reunion that she had reluctantly attended at Varina's insistence. Ironically, that reunion was in Georgia, the state where Winnie had twelve years earlier received the ill-fated title "Daughter of the Confederacy" that sealed her fate as "The Last Casualty of the Lost Cause" (p. 152).

Georgia Gwinnett College

CAREY O. SHELLMAN

*Shrill Hurrahs: Women, Gender, and Racial Violence in South Carolina, 1865–1900.* By Kate Côté Gillin. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2013. Pp. x, 170. \$39.95, ISBN 978-1-61117-291-1.)

Scholars have long acknowledged that ex-Confederates launched sustained terrorist campaigns against former slaves and the Reconstruction governments that protected them. This age of terror did not end in 1877 but continued unabated throughout the post-Civil War era. Kate Côté Gillin's study examines this racial violence in South Carolina through the lens of gender and provides a narrative history of "the rise of violent assaults on southern women of both races, the gendered reasons behind postwar violence, and women's own participation in acts of violence against others in the decades following the Civil War" (p. 2).

Violence was a part of the "gendered social code" of honor in the South, and both violence and gender became "long-standing companions by the end of the war" (pp. 12, 13). "White men . . . were at a loss to find their place in [postwar] society" as "South Carolina's . . . sons had failed to defend both their state and their women" (p. 13). It is in this context, according to Gillin, that "[l]abor issues had emerged as the first truly contentious issue to plague blacks and whites in South Carolina. . . . White men and women had always defined themselves against the limitations imposed on slaves. Without those limitations former slaves could claim access to identities that whites were unwilling to share" (p. 30).

In another important realm, black politics, Gillin argues that "[t]he confluence of black politics, the gradual liberation of southern women, and changes in gender definitions . . . inspir[ed] periods of racial violence from Reconstruction into the new century" (p. 31). Gillin purports that "[b]ecause of their activism, black women were targeted by white vigilantes in the 1860s" (p. 47). Black women guarded weapons, went to the polls to ensure their "men voted right," "incited violence . . . against those whites who stood in their way," and attempted to vote themselves (p. 46). One observer gave testimony at a congressional hearing, saying, "Women gave votes for their husbands, or their brothers, who they said were sick" (p. 47). They "embraced politics as