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“Whatever is un-Virginian is Wrong!”: The Loyal Slave Trope in Civil War Richmond and the Origins of the Lost Cause

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Fig. 1. William Washington, *The Burial of Latané*, 1864. Oil on canvas, 38 x 48 in. The Johnson Collection, Spartanburg, South Carolina

When Virginia artist William D. Washington (1833–1870) began work on his iconic Confederate painting *The Burial of Latané* (fig. 1) in Richmond in the summer of 1864, he selected as his models “prominent beauties” from among the elite Richmond circles in which he operated.¹ It is not a coincidence that among the women, one was the sister-in-law of Washington’s friend, noted Richmond sculptor Edward Valentine (1838–1930); she is the young girl in pink.² In the years leading up to and throughout the Civil War, several proslavery Confederate artists were collaborating in Richmond, Virginia, a bastion of pro-South sentiment and a slave trading capital, to create work that sympathized with slave ownership while contradicting abolitionist aims. Working in close association, these white male artists developed a close and self-righteous community and targeted their work in direct support of the maintenance of slavery. After Virginia seceded, many of these artists, including Washington, left the North—where they were studying and practicing—and returned to their home state, as a testament to their devotion. Most of them also went on to serve in the Confederate army. William Ludwell Sheppard (1833–1912), Washington,

Valentine, and others produced a range of work that collectively created a visual plantation ideal. Applying a series of common tropes, most notably that of the loyal slave, these artists worked to portray the Southern way of life in a positive light. In the postwar period, the Lost Cause mythology—an ideology that supported the Confederate cause as just and heroic—developed directly out of this prewar visual lexicon. This essay highlights the work of these Confederate-leaning Virginia artists, focusing on their depictions of enslaved people as loyal. Culminating in Washington’s *The Burial of Latané*, their art implicates this subset of art history in propagating white supremacy and reveals that the roots of Lost Cause ideology derived from this prewar and wartime practice of visualization.

Before, during, and after the Civil War, this united group of Virginia artists worked together to promote the Confederacy and to define a visual legacy for the South; their lives, ideologies, and art were intertwined. The powerful impact of artwork was well understood by pro-South supporters, and such artists repeatedly used their work in fundraising for the Confederacy or in garnering public support for the cause. For example, Sheppard marketed a set of chromolithographs of Confederate soldiers, including an infantryman, an artillery captain, and a cavalryman (fig. 2a, b, c), in a three-piece set based on his wartime watercolor sketches; he advertised them for one dollar apiece to raise money for the Jefferson Davis monument in Richmond, which was conceived of decades after the end of the war.³ The collective trajectory of these artists’ output included romanticized pre-Civil War and wartime scenes of Virginia life (including satisfied, loyal slaves), war-period support for slavery via the Confederacy and its leaders (whose portraits they produced by the score), and nostalgic postwar scenes. The strikingly similar way each of these Virginia artists followed such pictorial trends reveals how closely united they were in social ideology.



Figs. 2.a–c. William Ludwell Sheppard, left: *Untitled (A Confederate Infantryman)*, undated, watercolor on paper, 17 x 10 in.; center: *Untitled (A Confederate Cavalryman)*, undated, watercolor on paper, 16 ¾ x 10 in; right: *Untitled (A Confederate Artilleryman)*, undated. Watercolor on paper, 17 x 10 in. The American Civil War Museum, Richmond, Virginia

Although a great deal has been written about slavery justification, the Civil War, and the Old South, including scholarship by historian Drew Gilpin Faust and art historian Eleanor Harvey, among many others, a critical reading of the work of these Virginia artists has yet to be produced.⁴ To be sure, their ideology is problematic and at odds with twenty-first century values and important national initiatives toward greater political, social, and cultural equity and inclusion. Frankly, their work reflects and supports racism, white nationalism, and white supremacy, while belittling and dehumanizing African Americans. Despite this, I believe it is important to learn about these artists and their works from both a sociological perspective and within the discipline of art history. Indeed, how can we learn from these works if we do not know about them? Similarly, these works offer a tangible example of artwork being applied directly to a national cause and therefore offer a unique case study that can be mapped onto other equally problematic kinds of histories.

One significant limitation of this study is the fact that enslaved African Americans were mostly omitted from nineteenth-century Virginia paintings, and their voices are virtually absent from the historical record.⁵ The history of African American slavery was intentionally buried, and instead a Eurocentric Virginia history was promoted at the state and federal levels. Therefore, this cover up, which sought to silence the voices and obscure the humanity of enslaved people, is a major theme in my discussion of these artworks. While the artists and artworks under consideration intentionally attempted to deny the humanity of enslaved Virginians—rendering them invisible or, perhaps worse, complicit or loyal to their enslavement—the value of each of the four million enslaved people in the United States, against which all odds were stacked, is indisputable.



Fig. 3. Artist unknown, *Belmont Mansion Estate Portrait*, 1860–61. Oil on canvas, 53 1/2 x 39 1/2 in. Belmont Mansion, Nashville, Tennessee, received by transfer of ownership from Cheekwood Estate & Gardens

Plantations scenes often celebrated the splendid nature of the planter’s home and grounds and ignored the root of that physical beauty.⁶ Nell Painter urges us to “look beneath the gorgeous surface” of the world that slave defenders created and to “pursue the hidden truths of slavery.”⁷ The “gorgeous surface” extends to painted representations that idealize Southern slavery. For example, the magisterial painting of Adelia and Joseph Acklen’s Belmont Estate in Nashville by an unidentified artist offers a prototypical example (fig. 3).

Little is known about this painting, but it was clearly intended as a celebratory view of the city residence of one of the wealthiest families in the South. As of 1860, the Acklens enslaved 691 people. While most of them worked on their Louisiana plantations, thirty-two of them lived and labored on the represented site. An enslaved man is pictured in the foreground bearing grapes; however, he is represented contained within surrounding foliage, implying that he is a natural extension of the plantation lifestyle.⁸ When slavery is referenced in works like this, such visual cues illustrate the institution as a natural aspect of Southern living and even a mutually beneficial enterprise. In line with proslavery rhetoric, enslaved people appear in plantation scenes as happy family members, loyal attendants, or healthy field hands.



Fig. 4. Attributed to William Ludwell Sheppard, *A Consultation: Lee and Jackson on the Potomac*, 1862. Oil on paper, 7 1/2 x 9 in. The American Civil War Museum, Richmond, Virginia

The concept of the loyal slave began in the rhetoric of proslavery justification. Arguing on behalf of the benefits of slavery, for example, Virginian George Fitzhugh stated in 1854 that slavery “begets domestic affection on one side, and loyalty and respect on the other.” Fitzhugh became a vocal supporter of enslavement before and during the war, first publishing a pamphlet titled *Slavery Justified* in 1849.⁹ The concept of the loyal slave had major traction during the decades-long battle to preserve slavery, and visual culture undergirded this. For example, happy enslaved assistants are seen alongside their owners, engaged in their role as body servant or as dutiful retainers on the home front while the master is elsewhere. The small oil sketch *A Consultation: Lee and Jackson on the Potomac* features a fictionalized wartime discussion between Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson under the cover of the forest (fig. 4). The only other figure present is an approaching enslaved man, seen carrying a large object, possibly a watermelon. As a trusted assistant whom owners considered to be ignorant, the enslaved man could be present at a private meeting, represented here as an innocent inclusion; the watermelon he carries is a stereotypical signifier of his race.¹⁰ This work is attributed to Richmond artist William Ludwell Sheppard, a one-time slave owner whose apologist visual material gained



Fig. 5. William Ludwell Sheppard, *I Carried Him Home, Marse Charlie*, undated. Wash drawing on paper, 13 1/2 x 14 1/4 in. The Valentine, Richmond, Virginia

widespread exposure after the war. Indeed, Sheppard’s undated wash drawing *I Carried Him Home Marse Charlie* represents the romantic, fictionalized loyal slave (fig. 5). The painting shows the mortally wounded son of “Marse,” or “Master,” Charlie—his knapsack, canteen, and weapon abandoned on the ground behind him—carried home for the last time by his loyal, strapping enslaved man. With the enslaved man’s head bowed in grief and combat raging in the background, Sheppard represents him as complete in his loyalty. In representing enslaved men as willing to serve their owners in a war fought to maintain the institution, and even to risk life and limb, Sheppard’s paintings underscored the paternalistic ideal of the loyal slave that proslavery supporters touted in justification of their cause.¹¹ In the decades following the war, these calls materialized further in the form of plaques and monuments dedicated to the idea of the loyal slave throughout the United States. For example, by the late nineteenth century, the United Daughters of the Confederacy had proposed a series of monuments dedicated to “loyal slaves” and even formed a “Faithful Slave Memorial Committee.”¹²

Perhaps the most significant painting to celebrate the concept of the loyal slave, and one that became a Confederate icon, was William D. Washington’s *The Burial of Latané*.¹³ The painting itself, and the lore that grew around it, touch upon many facets of Confederate ideology and practice, down to the rumor that the blue shawl worn by the model in the foreground was brought to Richmond from England by a blockade runner.¹⁴ It was painted on a piece of lightweight material woven in Richmond during the war, and it promotes the idea that enslaved people were content in their situation, willing to assist when needed, loyal to the cause, and part of the family unit. According to Eleanor Harvey, the painting “created an ennobled Confederate martyr narrative that reinforced the stereotypes of loyalty to the cause and loyalty of slave to master.”¹⁵

Painted in Richmond in summer of 1864, it illustrates the burial service of the young cavalryman Captain William Latané. Captain Latané was the only Confederate soldier killed during James Ewell Brown “Jeb” Stuart’s famous ride around McClellan in Richmond in the Peninsula Campaign of June 1862. Latané’s brother John, a lieutenant in the same Ninth Virginia Cavalry company, mourned over his body, and when a slave-driven cart operated by a man known as “Uncle Aaron” passed by from the nearby Westwood Plantation, Latané commandeered the cart to carry his brother’s body to the property for burial.¹⁶ With the white men of the house away at war, mistress Catherine Brockenbrough promised to provide a Christian burial for the dead soldier. According to the first published account of the event, recorded at the time in the diary of Brockenbrough’s sister Judith W. Brockbrough McGuire, so-called loyal slaves cleaned the body, prepared it for burial, built the casket, and stood watch over it through the night.¹⁷ “Uncle Aaron” sent for a trained minister, who was detained across Union lines, forcing the women of the plantation to take matters into their own hands. Mary Page Newton, from the adjoining plantation of Summer

Hill, performed the service.¹⁸ Latané’s body was buried beside a member of the Brockenbrough family who had also died in battle, named W. B. “Willie” Phelps. In her eulogy, according to McGuire, Newton remembered them both as “martyrs to a holy cause.”¹⁹

That “holy cause” was the defense of slavery. The Latané family was one of the oldest and most elite in Virginia, owners of more than two hundred enslaved people by the start of the war.²⁰ The deceased twenty-nine year old Captain Latané was a planter and medical doctor, “ardent secessionist,” and “thoroughly Virginian in all his feelings.”²¹ His death and its circumstances were quickly reported in the Richmond press and inspired first a poetic eulogy written by John Reuben Thompson, and then Washington’s large painting. The poem was published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, which Thompson owned. Thompson was an ardent supporter of the South, and he used his magazine as “a guardian of Southern rights and interests . . . to defend those rights and interests when they are made the objects of ruthless assault.”²² Thompson thus intended his publication to serve in defense and celebration of the South with its accompanying protection of the institution of slavery. His poem has been referred to as the “chief classic among the War Poems of the South”²³ and became so popular that it appeared in broadside on the streets of Richmond.²⁴ In the poem, Thompson refers to the fallen soldier as “glory-crowned” and the women as composed with “Mary’s love,” always attended by the “faithful slave.”²⁵ The poem clearly inspired Washington’s painting and set the stage for the popularity of both works as celebrations of Southern devotion.

The painting is visually divided by the bier containing Latané’s body, which points toward Newton in the center, performing the service, gazing heavenward, and holding open the Episcopal burial rite. The right side of the work features four white women and a young girl. Four African American enslaved people are present on the left (two men and two women), and a white girl stands between them and Newton. With flowers in her hand, the girl illustrates the line of Thompson’s poem: “a little child strewed roses on his bier.” The enslaved man in the left foreground represents “Uncle Aaron.” He removes his hat and rests his arm on a shovel, with which he has presumably just finished digging the burial hole.²⁶ His prominent inclusion in the painting—as well as in the dramatic narrative—casts Aaron as a hero. He drove the cart that carried the body back to Westwood, tried to retain the minister, and dug the grave. Therefore, the painting clearly represents the idea of the loyal slave, specifically symbolizing the supposed deep devotion of men like Aaron toward their owners.²⁷ The inclusion of Aaron and the other enslaved people in the image was critical, as it visualized the white Southern justification of the “family white and black,” a phrase commonly seen in slave owners’ correspondence from the period.²⁸ Collectively, the concept of the loyal slave, the argument for the familial nature of slavery, and its perceived basis in Christianity are central to *The Burial of Latané*.

Washington may have been inspired to include a black enslaved man leaning on the painting’s left side by *Negro Life at the South* (1859, fig. 6), a painting by his former colleague Eastman Johnson (1824–1906).²⁹ Both have prominent figures on the left side of the canvas that strike identical poses and wear similar clothing. While Aaron wears a vest and leans on a shovel rather than a table, the arrangement of their legs is nearly identical. Further compositional similarities abound. In each, a group of men, women, and children gather throughout the foreground. However, Washington contrasts the claustrophobic, dilapidated conditions of Johnson’s painting with a lush, inviting green setting, unmarred by concerns greater than the dedication and burial of Latané, who comes to represent all

fallen Confederate soldiers. Although separated behind the coffin, the enslaved people are represented as a significant inclusion within the broader scope of plantation life. The entire “family” mourns together, united in sympathy over this soldier who was brought to them as a stranger and whom the enslaved people loyally grieve. In contrast, in Johnson’s work, African Americans are collectively cast as separate, confined within a walled-off space behind the house of their owners. In Washington’s painting, the sun pokes through clouds in the background, casting an ethereal glow over the scene. The compositional void of the fireplace in Johnson’s work is replaced by Washington’s burial hole, and both paintings feature disparate groupings of men, women, and children. Washington also replaced Johnson’s mossy roofline with a lush green tree line. Finally, the two paintings are nearly identical in size: *Latané* is 38 x 48 inches and *Negro Life* is 37 x 46 inches. These compositional parallels are too close to be accidental; I believe that Washington intended *The Burial of Latané* to be a Southern response to Johnson’s painting and, by extension, his anti-slavery views and abolitionism more generally. It thus functions alongside other sympathetic slavery works that respond in direct ways to specific works of abolitionist art by presenting a rosy view of slavery.³⁰



Fig. 6. Eastman Johnson, *Negro Life at the South*, 1859. Oil on linen, 37 x 46 in. The Robert L. Stuart Collection, the gift of his widow Mrs. Mary Stuart, Object S-225, New-York Historical Society

Washington certainly knew Johnson’s painting and may have seen it in Johnson’s Washington, DC, studio.³¹ The two artists were at least acquaintances and perhaps friends before the war. Johnson had studied under Emmanuel Leutze in Düsseldorf, Germany, in 1849–51. Shortly thereafter, Leutze visited the District of Columbia, where he met Washington and encouraged him to pursue history painting.³² Washington subsequently traveled to Düsseldorf to study under Leutze, arriving in 1853.³³ Back in the United States, Johnson spent time in the District of Columbia between 1855 and 1859, where both his father and Washington’s held midlevel political posts. Washington returned to the District of Columbia in 1856, and thereafter both he and Johnson became founding members of the Washington Art Association, exhibiting in the group’s first exhibition in 1857. Both artists

served on the Association’s Board of Managers in 1857–58, and Johnson painted *Negro Life at the South* in 1859.³⁴

If we assume that Washington saw Johnson’s painting during this period, it is plausible to see Latané’s death scene as a painted response. At some point in 1860 or 1861, Washington left the District of Columbia for Virginia, where he spent the war years among the “best Richmond society.”³⁵ Sectional tension intensified in the capital after John Brown’s raid in October 1859, and Washington’s views fell out of line with those of his Washington Art Association colleagues. Washington quit the group, perhaps in response to their 1860 statement regarding “the purpose of promoting the improvement of the fine arts and their application to patriotic purposes.”³⁶ Indeed the Washington Art Association’s focus was on “National Art”—meaning pro-Union—and it came to be known as the National Art Association.³⁷ As his pro-South beliefs conflicted with his Unionist colleagues, Washington turned south and began using his art to promote the Confederacy.

The Burial of Latané became a popular Richmond showpiece and was exhibited for months in the Virginia State House (then the Confederate Capitol building), where a bucket was placed below it to raise money for the Confederate war effort.³⁸ Southerners celebrated Washington’s painting as a poignant reminder of Southern chivalry, sacrifice, and unity during the Civil War. It took on additional significance after the war when Washington commissioned New York printmaker A. G. Campbell to produce a large and fine steel engraving of the painting in 1866 (fig. 7).³⁹ Half of the proceeds from the sale of the engravings were donated to wounded Confederate veterans.⁴⁰



Fig. 7. A. Gilchrist Campbell, *Burial of Latané / . . . by W.D. Washington*, 1868. Engraving, 25 1/2 x 31 1/2 in. Library of Congress

As Mark Neely, Harold Holzer, and Gabor Boritt describe in *The Confederate Image*, these artworks reveal “an ideology of the Lost Cause based on Southern rights, honor, white supremacy, and—rather than a full admission of defeat—the assertion that the Confederacy was overpowered by a flood of Yankee men and material.”⁴¹ In print form, *Latané* became a signifier and celebration of the Lost Cause, and it hung in many late nineteenth-century

white Southern homes. According to Virginia Judge John DeHardit, who purchased the original painting in 1963, “I really believe that these engravings helped hold the Southern people together as one after the war.”⁴² Author Virginius Dabney reported in 1976 that the print “still hangs in Richmond homes,”⁴³ while Drew Gilpin Faust describes it as “an icon of Confederate nationalism.”⁴⁴

In line with the rapidly developed Lost Cause mythology, artists continued idealizing slavery after the Civil War, including remembrances of loyalty by enslaved people. Washington’s close friend, the sculptor Edward Virginius Valentine—another member of an elite Richmond family, who had once proclaimed “whatever is un-Virginian is wrong!”—created sculptures in full support and celebration of the lost Confederate cause.⁴⁵ In addition to dozens of sculpted portrayals of Confederate generals, including his most well-known work, the recumbent statue of Robert E. Lee (Lee Chapel, Washington and Lee University, 1875), Valentine made a series of racist sculptures of former slaves. For example, *Uncle Henry* (subtitled *Ancien Régime*) depicts Henry Page, a formerly enslaved coachman of the Valentine family who served Valentine’s grandfather and father as “a faithful servant” (fig. 8).⁴⁶ As a well-known figure in the Richmond community, whom Valentine represented as well-groomed and satisfied, Page became celebrated for his supposed loyalty even after emancipation. Created in 1873–74, Page became a symbol of the happy, bygone era of slavery in the former capital of the Confederacy; however, Valentine created a number of stereotypical views of African Americans before, during, and after the war, including his very first attempt at sculpture in 1857, which was said to represent a “bust of a negro boy.”⁴⁷ Valentine’s sculptures of African Americans participated in the justification for slavery pre-emancipation and nostalgia for it afterward, just like *The Burial of Latané*.



Fig. 8. Edward Valentine, *Uncle Henry: Ancien Régime*, 1879. Painted plaster, 23 x 18 in. approx. The Valentine, Richmond, Virginia

Valentine and Washington were part of a network of elite Richmond artists who directed the city’s artistic output in direct opposition to abolitionist aims. Their racist work should be considered within the context of proslavery rhetoric and postwar nostalgia. As I have noted, their art erases the humanity of the enslaved and formerly enslaved. Numerous contemporary artists have turned their practice towards rectifying and acknowledging this past, including Titus Kaphar, Kara Walker, Carrie Mae Weems, Whitfield Lovell, Faith Ringgold, and Cedric Smith. Such artists use their work to highlight these nineteenth-century erasures and give voice to the enslaved. In so doing, they reshape the long-standing narratives of white supremacy created by artists such as the Richmond Civil War cohort and offer a powerful antidote to the problematic Confederate artworks discussed here.

Notes

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- ¹ Gilberta S. Whittle, “Burial of Latané,” *Baltimore Sun*, December 4, 1904.
- ² “Story of a Picture: ‘The Burial of Latané’ has Strange History,” *Washington Post*, December 4, 1904, 9.
- ³ “Other Southern Subjects: The Artwork of William Ludwell Sheppard,” *Virginia Cavalcade* 42, no. 1 (Summer 1992): 23
- ⁴ Faust has published prolifically on the Old South; see Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981). See also Eleanor Jones Harvey, *The Civil War and American Art*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012). The most extensive work on Civil War-era artists in Virginia has been done by William Rasmussen and Robert Tilton, *Old Virginia: The Pursuit of a Pastoral Idea* (Charlottesville, VA: Howell Press, 2003); Gregg D. Kimball, *American City, Southern Place: A Culture History of Antebellum Richmond* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000); and Mark E. Neely Jr., Harold Holzer, and Gabor S. Borritt, *The Confederate Image: Prints of the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1987).
- ⁵ For commentary on this idea, see Stephen Best, “Neither Lost nor Found: Slavery and the Visual Archive,” *Representations* 113, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 150–63.
- ⁶ For more on this idea, see Angela D. Mack and Stephen G. Hoffius, eds., *Landscape of Slavery: The Plantation in American Art* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007) and John Michael Vlach, *The Planter’s Prospect: Privilege and Slavery in Plantation Paintings* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
- ⁷ Nell Irvin Painter, *Southern History Across the Color Line* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 16.
- ⁸ For more on this painting, see Judy Bullington, “Grounds of ‘Improvement’: The Belmont Mansion Garden,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 76, no 1, (Spring 2017): 102–26.
- ⁹ George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South, or, The Failure of Free Society* (Richmond: A. Morris, 1854), 43. George Fitzhugh first published *Slavery Justified* as a pamphlet in 1849, and it reappeared as an appendix to his 1854 book.
- ¹⁰ For more on the racist history of the watermelon, see William R. Black, “How Watermelons Became Black: Emancipation and the Origins of a Racist Trope,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 8 (March 2018): 64–86; and Shana Klein, *The Fruits of Empire: Art, Food, and the Politics of Race in the Age of American Expansion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020).
- ¹¹ For more on Sheppard, see Marena R. Grant, *William Ludwell Sheppard: A Retrospective Exhibition of his Works*, exh. cat. (Richmond, VA: Valentine Museum, 1969).
- ¹² Jaime Amanda Martinez, “Black Confederates,” *Encyclopedia Virginia* 22 (February 2018), accessed December 30, 2019. https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/black_confederates.
- ¹³ According to Martha Wreen Briggs, the painting is “perhaps the most popular picture and print done in the South during the War Between the States.” Briggs, “Four Professional Artists of the Confederacy,” *The United Daughters of the Confederacy Magazine* 60, no. 11 (December 1992): 16. Much has been written about *The Burial of Latané* over the generations, much of it in the popular Virginia press. The most extensive factual coverage was offered by Ethelbert Ott, “William D. Washington (1833–1870): Artist of the South,” (MA thesis, University of Delaware, 1968). See also Drew Gilpin Faust, “Race, Gender, and Confederate Nationalism: William D. Washington’s *Burial of Latané*,” in *Southern Stories: Slaveholders in Peace and War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), and Emily J. Salmon, “The Burial of Latané: Symbol of the Lost Cause,” *Virginia Cavalcade* 29 (Winter 1979): 118–29. There

is a host of conflicting facts floating around about this painting and the circumstances of Latané’s death and burial; the narrative seems to have often been exaggerated from the beginning.

- ¹⁴ “Story of a Picture,” 9. The model was named Mattie Waller. Ott, “William D. Washington (1833–1870),” 86.
- ¹⁵ Harvey, *The Civil War and American Art*, 15.
- ¹⁶ Ott identifies the enslaved man as Uncle Aaron, the same man who appears in the foreground of the painting. See Ott, “William D. Washington (1833–1870),” 93.
- ¹⁷ Judith W. Brockenbrough McGuire, *Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War*, 3rd ed. (Richmond: J. W. Randolph & English, 1889), 144. See Salmon, “The Burial of Latané,” 122, which provides the fullest account of the details of Latané’s death and burial.
- ¹⁸ Conflicting stories have emerged. One has Mrs. Brockenbrough later revealing that the minister actually arrived just in the nick of time. The *Baltimore Sun* reported in 1902 that Brockenbrough, at age ninety-four, conceded that she was not actually present at the service, as she was sick, and that it was in fact performed by an old man in the neighborhood who was a member of the Methodist church. But she noted: “Had I known how much attention this matter would have attracted, I should certainly have been present.” See “The Burial of Latané: Mrs. Brockenbrough, Central Figure in the Picture, Still Alive,” *Baltimore Sun*, January 18, 1902, 9.
- ¹⁹ McGuire, *Diary of a Southern Refugee during the War*, 144.
- ²⁰ Ryan N. Danker, “The Propaganda of Martyrdom: The Latané’s and Confederate Nationalism,” *Essex County Museum and Historical Society Bulletin* 53 (September 2009): 2.
- ²¹ John Lipscomb Johnson, *The University Memorial: Biographical Sketches of Alumni of the University of Virginia Who Fell in the Confederate War* (Baltimore: Turnbull Brothers, 1871), 142, cited in Estill Curtis Pennington, *Romantic Spirits: Nineteenth-Century Paintings of the South* (Paris, KY: Cane Ridge Publishing House, 2012), 82.
- ²² John R. Thompson and William R. Manierre, “A Southern Response to Mrs. Stowe: Two Letters of John R. Thompson,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 69, no. 1, part 1 (January 1961): 84, cited in Neely, Holzer, and Borritt, *The Confederate Image*, 208.
- ²³ Extract of letter from Dr. Mason Graham Ellzey (Virginia Military Institute class of 1860) to an unidentified recipient, August 2, 1906, Virginia Military Institute Archives, Lexington, Virginia, cited in Ott, “William D. Washington (1833–1870),” 97.
- ²⁴ Salmon, “The Burial of Latané,” 122 and 124.
- ²⁵ The poem was published in Thompson’s journal in the July/August 1862 issue. See John R. Thompson, “The Burial of Latane,” *Southern Literary Messenger* 34 (July/August 1862): 475.
- ²⁶ See account by Thomas Cooper DeLeon (a Richmonder and friend of Washington’s) from 1907 in *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the 60’s* (New York: G. W. Dillingham, 1907), published in Salmon, “The Burial of Latané,” 121. Salmon also includes a diagram identifying several of the figures and their models. The enslaved man is identified as “Uncle Aaron” in multiple places, including in “Story of a Picture,” 9. The actual identities of those present at the burial, as well as those who posed for the painting, is very confusing. As Ott related, “Recollections [by people who had been involved] were not always reliable; in fact, the same sources sometimes changed the names of those present at the burial. The artist himself appears to have intended his picture to be a historical symbol, and, as such, would have paid little attention to the exact identity of the actual participants. This has resulted in historical confusion.” See Ott, “William D. Washington (1833–1870),” 92.
- ²⁷ Although Aaron’s identity has not yet been traced, in the postwar period emancipated slaves formed the nearby free black neighborhood of Westwood, which survives today.
- ²⁸ For example, slave owner Sarah Yandell of Lexington, Kentucky, received a letter from her son reporting that he had “found all our family white and black very much rejoiced to see us.” Lunsford Yandell, Lexington, KY, to Mrs. Sarah Yandell, Murfreesboro, TN, August 16, 1834, Yandell family papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, KY.

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- ²⁹ This idea has been briefly suggested before, in Andrew J. Cosentino and Henry H. Glassie, *The Capital Image: Painters in Washington, 1800–1915* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983), 82, and Ott, “William D. Washington (1833–1870),” 90.
- ³⁰ I explore these works in greater depth in my book manuscript tentatively titled *Hidden in Plain Sight: Slavery and Concealment in Antebellum American Art*, forthcoming from the University of Arkansas Press.
- ³¹ According to John Davis, Johnson probably painted *Negro Life at the South* in late 1858 in Washington, DC, ultimately sending it for exhibition at the National Academy of Design in New York in April 1859. John Davis, “Eastman Johnson’s *Negro Life at the South* and Urban Slavery in Washington, D.C.,” *The Art Bulletin* 80, no. 1 (March 1998): 69.
- ³² Leutze was in Washington from 1851 to 1852; Cosentino and Glassie, *The Capital Image*, 80–81.
- ³³ Marchel E. Landgren, *American Pupils of Couture* (College Park: University of Maryland Department of Art, 1970), 43.
- ³⁴ For more on Johnson’s time in Washington, see Davis, “Eastman Johnson’s *Negro Life at the South*.”
- ³⁵ Thomas C. DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux, and Brains of the 60’s* (New York: G. W. Dillingham, 1907), 285–86.
- ³⁶ Charles E. Fairman, *Art and Artists of the Capitol of the United States of America* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1927), 204.
- ³⁷ Josephine Cobb, “The Washington Art Association: An Exhibition Record, 1856–1860,” *Records of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, DC* 63-65 (1966): 122, cited in Cosentino and Glassie, *The Capital Image*, 78.
- ³⁸ There are conflicting accounts as to the painting’s early exhibition history. One account has it being shown initially in the Minnis and Cowell photography studio in Richmond; see Holzer, Neely, and Boritt, *The Confederate Image*, xi.
- ³⁹ See the advertisement, for example, in the *Staunton Spectator*, March 16, 1869, 4.
- ⁴⁰ Ott, “William D. Washington (1833–1870),” 103.
- ⁴¹ Holzer, Neely, and Boritt, *The Confederate Image*, 208.
- ⁴² Salmon, “The Burial of Latané,” 128. The provenance of the painting is not intact, but for some information on this, see “Noted Civil War Painting Finally Returned to State,” *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 24, 1963, 7. The painting is now owned by The Johnson Collection, Spartanburg, SC.
- ⁴³ Virginius Dabney, *Richmond: The Story of a City* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1990), 175, cited in Holzer, Neely, and Boritt, *The Confederate Image*, ix.
- ⁴⁴ Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), 149.
- ⁴⁵ Edward Valentine, “My Recollections,” December 14, 1923, unpublished manuscript, The Valentine, Richmond, VA, cited in James M. Lindgren, *Preserving the Old Dominion: Historic Preservation and Virginia Traditionalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 34. Most of Valentine’s archives are held at The Valentine, the oldest museum in Richmond, founded by his brother Mann S. Valentine II in 1898.
- ⁴⁶ He was characterized as “a faithful servant, a good old man,” in an unidentified news clipping in the Edward Virginius Valentine papers, The Valentine, Richmond, VA.
- ⁴⁷ E. G. Valentine, *Dawn to Twilight, Work of Edward V. Valentine* (Richmond, 1929), 28.