

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank Drs. Kathleen Jones, Beverly Bunch-Lyons and Crandall Shifflett for their enthusiasm for my topic, for their encouragement and for their suggestions for revisions. This thesis is relatively coherent because of them. Dr. Jones has been an ideal advisor. In the midst of completing her own book she took the time to give me pep talks and read several drafts of this thesis. She has encouraged and inspired me throughout my time at Tech and convinced me that my switch from anthropology to history was a good one. It was Dr. Shifflett who piqued my interest in southern history when I first came to Virginia Tech and in whose class I decided to pursue this topic. Dr. Shifflett is also to be thanked for encouraging me to go ahead and set a defense date when I attempted to procrastinate.

I thank my fellow graduate students for making the whole graduate experience - dare I call it - fun. I especially thank Chris Curtis and Rand Dotson for their friendship and many conversations over countless cups of coffee, not to mention beers at the Cellar. I enjoyed and benefited from our research and conference trips as well. Rand also read drafts of this thesis and offered many good suggestions for their improvement.

My parents, Emily and James Mitchell, and my husband John deserve recognition for supporting me throughout this endeavor. Without John I would probably never have even visited Blacksburg, let alone lived here and attended Virginia Tech. My mom and John also deserve thanks for taking on additional childcare responsibilities during my last few weeks of writing. I don't know quite what to thank Nathan for, but I would like him to be able to see his name in print when he's old enough to read, so thank you Nathan Mitchell Cotton for being a sweet little boy who always cheered me up when I got stressed out about school.