



**A Diary From Dixie (1905): as Written by Mary
Boykin Chesnut, Wife of James Chesnut, Jr.,
United States Senator from South Carolina, 1859-
1861**

Mary Boykin Chesnut

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Mary Boykin Chesnut, born Mary Boykin Miller (March 31, 1823 – November 22, 1886), was a South Carolina author noted for a book published as her Civil War diary, a "vivid picture of a society in the throes of its life-and-death struggle." She described the war from within her upper-class circles of Southern planter society, but encompassed all classes in her book. In Mrs. Chesnut's diary, which was written from day to day as occasion prompted her to do so, are clear pictures of the social life carried on without interruption in the South during the war; the spirits of the people when victorious or beaten; and of the principal happenings in Charleston, Montgomery and Richmond. The diary covers the period of the between November 8, 1860, and August 2, 1865.

She was married to a lawyer who served as a United States senator and Confederate officer. Mary was a secret abolitionist. Her husband was very pro-slavery but she thought very poorly of slavery.

Chesnut worked toward a final form of her book in 1881-1884, based on her extensive diary written during the war years. It was published after her death in 1905.

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