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NANCY HYNES DUVAL:
FLORIDA'S FIRST LADY, 1822-1834

by FRANK L. SNYDER

THE contributions of women to Florida history, and the details of their lives, have been sadly neglected by the state's historians. Unfortunately, that fact particularly is applicable to the nineteenth century, when Florida developed political, social, and religious institutions and patterns that have continued to influence the state and its residents. Unless the individual left reminiscences, such as was the case with Ellen Call Long and Susan Bradford Eppes, or else attained national prominence, as did Rachel Jackson and Peggy Timberlake Eaton, the likelihood of our familiarity with them— despite their lifetime prominence and importance—is slim at best. One such almost-forgotten person is Nancy Hynes DuVal, wife of Governor William Pope DuVal.¹

Nancy DuVal was born in 1784 at Fort Hynes, Kentucky, the daughter of Colonel Andrew Hynes and Elizabeth Wardford Hynes. Her father had served as an officer of a Maryland regiment in the American colonial army and, thereafter, with his brother Thomas migrated down the Monongahela River. The party arrived in 1779 at General George Rogers Clark's fort at the Falls of the Ohio near present-day Louisville. Pushing

Frank L. Snyder is associate professor of history, Clearwater Christian College. He expresses appreciation for the assistance and encouragement of Helen-Louise Snyder, James M. Denham, and Canter Brown, Jr.

1. Ellen Call Long, *Florida Breezes; or, Florida, New and Old* (Jacksonville, 1882; reprint ed., Gainesville, 1962); Susan Bradford Eppes, *Through Some Eventful Years* (Macon, GA, 1926); Marquis James, *Andrew Jackson: Portrait of a President* (New York, 1937); Peggy Eaton, *The Autobiography of Peggy Eaton, With a Preface by Charles F. Deems* (New York, 1932). One exception to the general paucity of information about nineteenth-century Florida women is found in Sarah Whitmer Foster and John T. Foster, Jr., "Chloe Merrick Reed: Freedom's First Lady," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 71 (January 1993), 279-99.

deeper into the wilderness, its members had wintered near Shepherdsville. The following spring, together with Captain Thomas Helm and Samuel Haycraft, they built three stockades within a mile of each other— the Helm, Haycraft, and Hynes forts from which originated Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Nancy was the fourth of what, eventually, would be seven children born to the Hynes family. Her brothers and sisters included Sarah, Elizabeth, Polly, Thomas, Abner, and Alfred.²

The Cherokee and Chickamauga Indian tribes posed a continuing threat to settlers on the Kentucky frontier, and, for several years after Nancy was born, fears persisted that the Indians would overrun outlying settlements and force abandonment of the area by whites. In these circumstances, the Hynes family in 1788 relocated to the present site of Bardstown, Kentucky. There Nancy matured. In the absence of appropriate schools, she and the other Hynes children were educated at home where, reportedly, Nancy developed a keen interest in reading history and literature. The family's roots were sunk deeper into Bardstown soil in 1797 when Andrew Hynes opened a general store at the settlement. It prospered and remained in operation until his death in 1800.³

Nancy's Bardstown courtship with young William Pope DuVal was dramatically related by Washington Irving, who claimed that he wrote the account in the exact words conveyed to him by DuVal. As the story ran, one day DuVal was finishing his breakfast and waiting for his horse at a tavern on the public square. While there he noticed a beautiful young woman seated in a nearby house looking out a window at people passing by. Her auburn hair framed azure blue eyes and fair skin. That appearance, coupled with a dainty white dress, struck DuVal with an uncontrollable urge. Foregoing consideration of the consequences, he silently entered the house, slipped into a side

2. J. H. McCord, *The McCords of Kentucky and Some Related Families* (Louisville, 1941), 22-25.

3. Tallahassee *Star of Florida*, August 18, 1841; McCord, *McCords of Kentucky*, 23-29; Agreement between Andrew Hynes and William Rose Hynes, September 15, 1797, in file *Heirs of Andrew Hynes v. William Rose Hynes, Executor*, Nelson County Clerk's office, Bardstown, KY.

room, and from behind surprised her with a kiss. Quickly he retreated to his horse and left town with his "ears tingling."⁴

The relationship did not end with the stolen kiss. About one year later DuVal was walking in Bardstown when he met two girls on the street. One was Nancy, and, upon seeing DuVal, she blushed. She had locked the secret of their earlier encounter in her heart for fear that her male kinfolk would challenge the bold young man to a life-threatening duel; still, she well remembered his kiss. Shortly thereafter William formally met her at a party and later at a local dance. Their romance blossomed, and, even though he still was in his teens, DuVal proposed. Nancy accepted, but her mother placed a damper on the engagement. While she was delighted with the respectability of DuVal's aristocratic Virginia family, Elizabeth insisted that the presumptive groom have the means for making a living before marrying her daughter.⁵

At the time of the proposal DuVal was reading law at Bardstown under Judge Henry P. Broadnax, a former Virginian and friend of his father. "I read and read for sixteen hours out of the four and twenty," William recalled, "but the more I read the more I became aware of my deficiencies. It seemed as if the wilderness of knowledge expanded and grew more perplexing as I advanced. Every height gained only revealed a wider region to be traversed, and nearly filled me with despair. I grew moody, silent, and unsocial, but studied doggedly and incessantly."⁶ Given the problems, DuVal's father advised the young man to return to Virginia and to continue his law education, probably under George Wythe who also was a DuVal friend and former neighbor. Nancy's mother died suddenly, however, and William remained in Kentucky where he could be near his fiancée. In Bardstown on September 27, 1804, he was

4. Washington Irving, *The Complete Tales of Washington Irving*, ed. Charles Neider (New York, 1975), 732, 749.

5. *Ibid.*, 753.

6. Thomas D. Clark, *Footloose in Jacksonian America: Robert W. Scott and His Agrarian World* (Frankfort, KY, 1989), 214; Lucius P. Little, *Ben Hardin, His Times and Contemporaries* (Louisville, 1887), 25.

admitted to the Nelson County bar. He and Nancy subsequently married on October 3.⁷

Financial problems beset the first few years of Nancy's married life, but living with relatives relieved some of the couple's distress. DuVal frequently was absent for long periods, as he traveled the court circuit. Nancy had a serene nature not easily disturbed by adversity or petty annoyances, and despite her loneliness she persevered. According to surviving accounts she was a good household manager. She also assisted her husband's emerging prospects, as she later would do again in Florida, by easing his path through local society. She participated in social affairs related to the local militia, of which DuVal had been made a lieutenant in 1806, and served as social hostess of the Pleiades Club, a Bardstown debating society originally composed of six lawyers. During the period Nancy's faith grew stronger and sustained her. "Her religion was a deep and abiding principle," declared a friend. "She was not a member of any organized church; her bible was her creed, her closet her altar."⁸

In those first years of marriage Nancy and William enjoyed the hospitality of her older sister, Elizabeth, and Elizabeth's husband, Dr. Burr Harrison. Probably after the birth of their son Burr Harrison DuVal in 1809, they moved into a two-room log cabin. Its only furnishings were "a bed, a table, a half-dozen chairs, a half-dozen knives, and forks, a half-dozen spoons; everything by half-dozens; a little Delft ware; everything in a small way." Their relationship did not suffer from the modest circumstances. "We were so poor," DuVal recalled, "but then so happy."⁹

The onset of the War of 1812 soon changed the family's quiet life. William, who with Nancy's help had emerged as a

7. Little, *Ben Hardin*, 25; Nelson County Order Book, 1804-1808, September 27, 1804, Nelson County Clerk's office; marriage bond, October 3, 1804, in Mary Harrel Stancliff, comp., *Marriage Bonds of Nelson County, Kentucky, 1785-1832* (Bardstown, KY, n.d.), n.p.; Daniel E. McClure, Jr., *Two Centuries in Elizabethtown and Hardin County, Kentucky* (Elizabethtown, KY, 1979), 80, 94.

8. Tallahassee *Star of Florida*, August 18, 1841; G. Glenn Clift, *The "Corn Stalk" Militia of Kentucky, 1792-1811* (Frankfort, KY, 1957), 171; Mattingly Spaulding, *Biography of a Kentucky Town* (Baltimore, 1942), 42.

9. Irving, *Tales of Washington Irving*, 754.

community leader, was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1812. Prior to taking his seat, however, he was commissioned a captain in the Kentucky Mounted Volunteers. An anxious Nancy, then pregnant with son Thomas Howard, remained behind in Bardstown with son Harrison Burr and one-year-old daughter Marcia. Her prayers were answered when DuVal emerged unscathed, but the couple remained apart as he assumed his congressional seat.¹⁰

William's frequent and sometimes prolonged absences placed substantial responsibilities on Nancy for managing their household, maintaining local social relationships important to her husband's career, and caring for a growing family. Added to the burdens were chronic financial strains. Fortunately for Nancy, William realized during his single congressional term that he could not remain in Washington— even for a short time— and also support his family in Bardstown. When the House of Representatives adjourned, he accordingly returned to Kentucky. To bolster his prospects he and Nancy moved to Elizabethtown where William resumed his law practice and served until 1822 as Hardin County attorney. While at Elizabethtown, Nancy presented him with additional children through the birth of daughter Elizabeth in 1815, son John Crittenden in 1816, daughter Mary in 1819, and daughter Laura Harrison in 1820.¹¹

As their family grew, William and Nancy found it increasingly difficult to meet the financial demands placed upon them. In 1821 William determined to make a change. He wrote Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, with whom he had become friendly while serving in Congress, and asked for a federal appointment. Calhoun agreed to help, and DuVal gathered letters of support from other political associates. The efforts soon paid dividends when President James Monroe offered a federal judgeship in newly acquired East Florida. In the absence of

10. *Niles' Weekly Register*, October 17, 1812, 108; DuVal family genealogical information, collection of the author (hereinafter, DuVal family genealogical materials).

11. R. Gerald McMurty, *Elizabethtown, Kentucky, 1779-1879, The First Century of Its Existence* (Louisville, 1938), 10; Samuel Haycraft, *A History of Elizabethtown, Kentucky and Its Surroundings* (Elizabethtown, 1921), 185; DuVal family genealogical materials.

more-lucrative possibilities, the Kentucky lawyer accepted. For the time being, Nancy and the children again were to remain behind.¹²

DuVal's move to Florida proved far more propitious than he might have expected. In November 1821, as the judge arrived in the territory, Provisional Governor Andrew Jackson resigned his office. Sensing the possibilities, DuVal hurried himself to Washington where he lobbied for appointment as Jackson's successor. His desires were brought to fruition on May 8, 1822, when the governorship was offered to him. Before assuming the enhanced position, however, he traveled home to Nancy and family. After almost a year's separation, they shared a mere ten days together before he reluctantly set out once more without her.¹³

DuVal's governorship was troubled from its onset. After traveling alone down the Mississippi River by way of New Orleans, he arrived at Pensacola in mid June 1822. George Walton and William Worthington, the two secretaries who had continued to act after Jackson's departure, turned over the government to him, but DuVal's hopes for a quick meeting of the territorial council were dashed when he was unable to obtain a quorum. Travel through the long distances within Florida was risky at best and always slow. Roads barely existed, mainly made up of faintly distinct Indian trails. As East Florida's capital of St. Augustine lay almost 400 miles from Pensacola, its three council members chose the sea route to Pensacola and the council meeting. They embarked, along with Nancy's brother Alfred, aboard the sloop *Lady Washington*. A violent storm prevented the ship from docking at the West Florida capital, and DuVal was compelled to inform Washington that the sloop had sunk with total loss of life. Fortunately the ship reappeared, and all aboard landed safely.¹⁴

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12. Charles Francis Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams Comprising Portions of His Diary From 1795 to 1848*, 12 vols. (Freeport, NY, 1969), VIII, 173; Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, 28 vols. (Washington, DC, 1934-1969), *Florida Territory*, XXII, 3, 42, 51, 55 (hereinafter, *Territorial Papers*).
 13. *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 469; Sidney Walter Martin, *Florida During the Territorial Days* (Athens, GA, 1944), 30, 53.
 14. *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 469, 490n; Martin, *Florida During the Territorial*

The near-tragedy of the *Lady Washington* presaged other dilemmas for DuVal. His administration was overwhelmed with the challenges it faced, and the problems soon were compounded with charges of favoritism. The governor's temper, far from his wife's soothing graces, further riled many influential citizens. Nature took a hand, as well, as yellow fever ravaged Pensacola. DuVal shared a room in George Walton's home with council president John C. Bronough. All but two members of the Walton family were stricken, and Bronough succumbed. DuVal moved the seat of government to a farm on the city's outskirts, but he soon sought the safety and comfort of Bardstown. He left Florida in November 1822 and remained away until March of the following year.¹⁵

Florida problems, the comforts of home, and Nancy's distance prompted the governor to consider resigning, although Nancy suggested that the entire family move to Pensacola. Official complaints about DuVal's administration arrived from Washington, and Secretary of State John Quincy Adams advised him to return to the territory as soon as possible. Still William delayed his departure. Once back in Florida in March 1823 he continued to meet with disappointments and frustrations. By November his resignation seemed likely. Only a decision that his continued service could assist his friend Andrew Jackson's political ambitions forestalled the move. Instead, he determinedly pursued his gubernatorial responsibilities.¹⁶

Days, 53-54; *Boston Patriot and Daily Merchantile Advertiser*, August 15, 1822. Alfred Warford Hynes, Nancy's younger brother, born 1790-died 1870, went to Florida with DuVal in 1821. He was appointed secretary to the acting governor of East Florida, W. G. D. Worthington, on February 1, 1822. Hynes returned to Bardstown by 1825, enrolled in Transylvania University, married the daughter of the university's president, became a medical doctor, and served as surgeon with the Twenty-eighth Kentucky Regiment (Union) during the Civil War. See DuVal family genealogical materials.

15. *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 531-32, 649; Martin, *Florida During the Territorial Days*, 53-55.
16. Martin, *Florida During the Territorial Days*, 55-56; *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 599, 649, 652, 675. A strong reason for DuVal's absence from Florida during November 1822-March 1823 was his involvement at Bardstown in four lawsuits which affected him financially. See case files *Campbell v. Andrew Hynes Heirs*, *Robert Todd v. Samuel P. DuVal*, *William P. DuVal v. Felix Grundy*, and *Hynes Heirs v. William Rose Hynes*, Chancery Court files, Nelson County Courthouse.

One of the urgent questions that faced territorial government was the permanent location of its capital. Both Pensacola and St. Augustine laid claim to the honor, but DuVal favored a site approximately equidistant between the two. For the governor the issue carried personal implications, as the capital's foundation likely was a prerequisite in his mind to bringing Nancy and the family to Florida. In 1823 the council, meeting in St. Augustine, agreed with DuVal's plan and authorized him to appoint commissioners to determine a site. Dr. William H. Simmons of St. Augustine and John Lee Williams of Pensacola subsequently selected a spot about one mile from deserted Indian fields at the village of Old Tallahassee. It lay close to a beautiful waterfall called the Cascades near the Oclockney and Tallahassee trail, about eighteen miles north of the port of St. Marks. DuVal ordered the council to meet there in November 1824.¹⁷

Once Tallahassee was designated the territory's seat of government, DuVal undertook several steps leading to his family's relocation to the site. First, he built a log cabin inside the foundations of an old Spanish fort above the Cascades on Houston Hill. The house was situated in a beautiful grove of oaks, hickory, and magnolias. DuVal then traveled to Washington where he achieved a measure of security by arranging for his reappointment as governor. That accomplished, he ventured back to Bardstown in the spring of 1825 to visit friends, settle affairs, and arrange for the move. That fall, William, Nancy, their seven children, and Nancy's younger sister Mary "Polly" Hynes set out on the long journey to Florida. The party accepted Andrew Jackson's hospitality and stopped at the Hermitage in Nashville on their way south. Nancy may have been pregnant at the time, for her eighth and last child, a daughter, was born at Tallahassee in 1826. They named her Florida.¹⁸

17. Mary Louise Ellis and William Warren Rogers, *Tallahassee & Leon County: A History and Bibliography* (Tallahassee, 1986), 5-6; Martin, *Florida During the Territorial Days*, 60-62; Edwin L. Green, "Florida Historical Documents," *Gulf States Historical Magazine* 1 (November 1902), 198.

18. *Territorial Papers*, XXIII, 211; Bertram H. Groene, *Ante-Bellum Tallahassee* (Tallahassee, 1971), 8n; Ellen Call Long, ed., "Journal of Governor Richard Keith Call," mss. in Richard Keith Call Papers, Florida Historical Society Collection, University of South Florida, Tampa (hereinafter, Call Papers); *Pensacola Gazette*, April 2, 1825; John Lee Williams, *A View of West*

The territory's capital, set amidst a vast wilderness, barely comprised a small village when Nancy arrived. "Tallahassee, when first I was there," remembered her son John, "consisted of three rows of frame shanties, built on three sides of the public square." He continued, "On the south side there were no houses. Between town and my father's old place to the eastward, there was but one house."¹⁹ Fewer than twenty families resided in the vicinity, and the wilderness was penetrated by "only three dimly blazed roads, connecting the city with the outside world—one going east to St. Augustine, one west to Pensacola, and one to St. Marks on the gulf." According to one onlooker, "Deer, panther, and other wild animals were not infrequently killed within the 'corporate bounds.'"²⁰

While Tallahassee contained few white settlers during its early years, some Indians remained in the vicinity, and others visited on a seasonal basis to sell and trade venison and other game. The Old Tallahassee council house still stood nearby, and the sight of a half-dozen Indians seated around a settler's table enjoying food served by the hostess of the house was not unusual. Absent local schools of note, many white children gained an "old field" education from the natives. "'Tiger Tail,' a Seminole sub-chief, was the 'professor' who taught me 'wood craft,'" recalled John C. DuVal. "Before the [Second] Seminole war he used to come to Tallahassee every winter."²¹

During a good part of his gubernatorial tenure, DuVal's responsibilities included those of superintendent of Indian affairs. One Florida historian has lauded his "record of twelve years . . . of unselfish devotion to the interest of the people he was chosen to care for."²² Some, if not most, of the credit for this reputation is due to Nancy. Just as she aided his professional and political

Florida (Philadelphia, 1837; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1976), 34; Francis Elizabeth Brown Douglas, "Memoirs," 37, 41, mss., Florida Historical Society Collection; DuVal family genealogical materials. The site of the original DuVal log cabin in Tallahassee presently is a children's playground.

19. Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, September 3, 1892.

20. Addenda, 349, box 4 (1801-1911), Call Papers.

21. Douglas, "Memoirs," 45; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, September 3, 1892.

22. Rowland W. Rerick, *Memoirs of Florida*, 2 vols. (Atlanta, 1902), I, 148. See also Frank L. Snyder, "William Pope DuVal: An Extraordinary Folklorist," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 69 (October 1990), 207-10.

careers in Kentucky, her efforts eased the path of his Indian work. Her ability to get along with the natives was well known. She treated them kindly, and they often provided her with wild game. As noted by her son John with respect to Tiger Tail, she allowed— and perhaps encouraged— her children to play with the Indians and join them in their hunts. Because the chiefs held the DuVals in such respect, the family was protected from harm during the Second Seminole War.²³

William's and Nancy's leadership in Indian affairs was paralleled by their place in Tallahassee society. The DuVal home became a center of community social affairs. In the early years that accomplishment was not so difficult. Ralph Waldo Emerson, visiting the town in 1827, noted that Tallahassee could boast only eight women. As the capital city grew, though, Nancy's personality and her kind heart sustained her reputation as the "mother of Tallahassee's society."²⁴ Her friends described her as "kind, sincere and charitable."²⁵ The daughter of future Governor Thomas Brown, who lived nearby, reminisced about Nancy and her sister Mary. "One of the most charming middle aged ladies I every met with – Mrs. DuVal [–] and Miss Mary Hynes were loved by every one old and young," she recorded. "I remember well, how kind and good they were to me as a child and afterwards as a young lady."²⁶ A Tallahassee editor concluded that Nancy "was an example for all society and helped to characterize it."²⁷

The society over which Nancy presided evolved as a more-and-more sophisticated one during the late 1820s and 1830s. Sometimes the effects and implications of social relationships and institutions required great sensitivity and, occasionally, restraint on her part as hostess and mother. The actions of her children reflect her success in that regard. For example, the "bouquet" ball became a favorite event. At the end of the last dance the queen of the ball would hand her bouquet to a gen-

23. Tallahassee *Star of Florida*, August 18, 1841.

24. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson with Annotations*, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes, 10 vols. (Boston, 1909-1914), II, 161; Tallahassee *Star of Florida*, August 18, 1841.

25. Tallahassee *Star of Florida*, August 18, 1841.

26. Douglas, "Memoirs," 41.

27. Tallahassee *Star of Florida*, August 18, 1841.

tleman chosen by her, and he then would be the sponsor of the next “bouquet” ball. The sponsoring man was financially responsible for all expenses— musicians, decorations, flowers, supper, and champagne. When Elizabeth DuVal was queen she recognized the enormity of the financial obligation on the community’s young men and expressed a reluctance to choose the next sponsor. Her point well taken, Governor DuVal and future governors Richard Keith Call and Thomas Brown volunteered to sponsor the balls in the future.²⁸

The charm and sensitivity suggested by Elizabeth’s behavior was common to all of Nancy’s daughters. Sometimes, however, their allure provoked trouble. Elizabeth, it was believed, was the cause of a duel between William A. McRae of Key West and Algernon S. Thurston of Washington, D.C. The duelists met in the Capitol Square in Tallahassee. A few evenings later at a social gathering McRae displayed the flesh wound in his leg. Thurston was unhurt. Lizzie Brown, Elizabeth’s friend, claimed that Miss DuVal did not have the slightest interest in either suitor.²⁹

The McRae-Thurston duel illustrates the violent nature of community life in Tallahassee during the territorial era. Many confrontations resulted in loss of life, and, at times, Nancy was called upon to contribute the strength of her character to support local residents affected by the violence. One duel involved the promising young attorney John K. Campbell— the husband of a DuVal cousin— who had been appointed federal district attorney for Middle Florida. One evening the couple went to see a play called *The Dead Shot* performed by Martin’s Strolling Company of Actors. In one scene an actor fell from a shot, and blood appeared to be flowing from his forehead. Mrs. Campbell became ill, and the couple left the theater. The next day, on the pretext that he had business to attend to, Campbell took his wife to Nancy’s home. Some time later news was brought to her that Campbell had been killed falling off his horse. Not until nearly one year later did Mrs. Campbell learn that he had been killed

28. Douglas, “Memoirs,” 63.

29. *Ibid.*, 93; Groene, *Ante-Bellum Tallahassee*, 106.

in a duel. By coincidence, Campbell had been shot in the forehead like the actor on the stage.³⁰

While Nancy encountered her share of tragedy at Tallahassee, she also enjoyed many happy surprises which, nonetheless, may have demanded their share of her patience and forbearance. An interesting incident involved her oldest daughter Marcia. One morning Marcia's cousin, William D. Price II from Richmond, Virginia, arrived at the DuVal home along with a magistrate. Marcia was in the yard milking a goat. Dr. Price informed Governor DuVal that he wanted to marry Marcia immediately if the bride-to-be were willing. Marcia happily obliged. She washed her hands, took off her apron, and, without further ado, the couple was married. Marcia, who was about sixteen at the time, later was described as "one of the most admired married belles ever in Florida."³¹

The talents Nancy displayed in meeting the challenges of rough frontier living, Indian relations, primitive social customs, arbitrary violence, and surprise weddings applied equally as well to the demands of an affluent, aristocratic planter society in the 1830s. As the "mother of Tallahassee's society" she presided over an ever-more sophisticated and complex social scene which was founded upon Middle Florida's prosperous slave-based plantation economy.³²

Ellen Call Long delighted in memories of the social occasions around which her young world swirled in the 1830s—the same events through which Nancy DuVal continued to aid her husband's career and her family's prospects. Of one reception she recalled, "There was a restless moving to and fro, combined with an air of expectancy, while men and servants opened doors mysteriously and closed them emphatically." The goal of those

30. Douglas, "Memoirs," 112; Groene, *Ante-Bellum Tallahassee*, 106; Long, *Florida Breezes*, 160-61. On Middle Florida dueling see also James M. Denham, "Dueling in Territorial Middle Florida" (master's thesis, Florida State University, 1983), and Denham, "An Upper Class Institution: Dueling in Territorial Middle Florida During the Early 1830s," *Apalachee* 9 (1980-1983), 29-40.

31. Douglas, "Memoirs," 47.

32. For more on the Middle Florida planter economy, see Julia Floyd Smith, *Slavery and Plantation Growth in Antebellum Florida, 1821-1860* (Gainesville, 1973).

present was access through those actual and figurative closed doors to the inner circle of powerful individuals whom Ellen described as “men that had and would grace any circle, by their intelligence and dignity of bearing.” Among them, of course, was “William P. Duval.” She noted, “Judging from the conversation of this assembled company, generally, there seemed to be but two places of interest in all the habitable world, and these were ‘Washington City’ and this Territory.” Proximity to the powerful boosted the pride of many present, in turn bolstering the power of the men they sought to emulate. “Manner was restrained for awhile,” Long concluded, “but with more frequent trips to the sideboard, conversation lost its formality, humor was free, and amidst the rising smoke from cigars, munching of apples, sucking of oranges, and the cracking of nuts, the scene became merry and noisy, and these republican sovereigns, in their republican detached shirt bosoms of linen, were at least real monarchs for the time.”³³

William required all of Nancy's social and political skills, for he often was the target of criticism and attacks by his political opponents. He was accused of mishandling public funds, embezzling government monies, and improperly administering the governorship. Many charges were instigated by William Wyatt, a former tavern owner and the proprietor of Tallahassee's planter hotel. Wyatt enlisted the aid of Florida's congressional delegate Joseph M. White. Their assault grew in intensity, particularly when President Jackson appointed DuVal to his fourth term as territorial governor. White demanded a Senate investigation of the allegations against DuVal. The Senate Judiciary Committee exonerated him and confirmed the appointment, but DuVal's critics were not silenced. Even after he left the governor's office the attacks were pursued. In 1836 the federal government sued him for an alleged \$2,581 discrepancy in his records of disbursements over his twelve years in office. After a two-day trial DuVal again was exonerated. The verdict also

33. Ellen Call Long, “Social Life Among Slaveholders or Tallahassee in the Early Thirties,” *Florida Times-Union and Citizen*, March 6, 1898.

granted him \$18,200 for food and supplies he had provided to Seminole Indians.³⁴

Coupled with the governor's problems were family tragedies. The most important one involved the DuVal's oldest son, Burr Harrison. In November 1835 he raised in Kentucky a company of men to fight for the Texas Republic. After a trip down the Mississippi River to New Orleans the outfit, known as "The Mustangs," joined Colonel J. W. Fannin's Georgia Battalion of the Texas Republican Army at Goliad. "I have never seen such men as this army is composed of," he informed his parents. "No man ever thinks of retreat, or surrender." He added, "We are frequently for days without anything but Bull beef to eat, and after working hard all day could you at night hear the boys crowing, gobling, barking, and bellowing, laughing and singing, you would think them the happiest and best fed men in the world."³⁵ Both Burr Harrison and his brother John were reported killed at the Goliad Massacre. At least some measure of comfort for Nancy came when it was later learned that John had escaped.³⁶

Nancy's responsibilities as a mother sometimes conflicted with those of wife and friend to William, and as a result she could not always come to his immediate support. Son John had found when the family arrived in Tallahassee that "there was no school in the place, and my time was occupied principally in hunting and fishing."³⁷ By 1831 the children's educational needs compelled Nancy to return to Bardstown where she enrolled the boys in St. Joseph's College and her daughters in Nazareth Academy. Elizabeth married Samuel Buell there, but all the children remained close to their mother. A man who knew Nancy

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34. *Territorial Patiers*, XXIV, 508-13, 525, 629-30, 652-53; Groene, *Ante-Bellum Tallahassee*, 28; Tallahassee *Florida Courier*, April 21, 1831; *Pensacola Gazette*, January 11, 1831; *Journal of the Senate of the United States*, 22nd Cong., 1st sess., December 7, 12, 1831, April 26, 30, 1832; Tallahassee *Floridian*, May 22, 1832; St. Joseph Times, May 5, 1840; *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States*, 17th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, 1855), 925.
35. William Corner, "John Crittenden DuVal: The Last Survivor of the Goliad Massacre," *Texas State Historical Association Quarterly* 1 (1897-1898), 47-67; James E. Winston, "Kentucky and the Independence of Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 6 (1912-1913), 27-62; Burr Harrison DuVal to William P. DuVal, March 9, 1836, transcription in collection of the author.
36. Bardstown [KY] *Herald*, June 15, 1836.
37. Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, September 3, 1892.

remarked on her ability to relate to the young people of her day, and they, "often forgetting the distance which age had placed between them, sought her as a friend and confident."³⁸

Not until 1836 did Nancy return to Florida. The following years, marked throughout the territory by Indian war, were relatively peaceful ones for Nancy. Her daughters Mary and Laura married, and she continued to assist William in his social and business affairs. In early summer 1841 she visited daughter Marcia Price at St. Joseph on the Gulf of Mexico to "take the cure" of salt-water baths and cool sea breezes. In June three ships arrived from Havana. Aboard one was a patient suffering from yellow fever, and within three days a devastating epidemic struck the community. Nearly 75 percent of the town's population died. Among them was Nancy DuVal, who passed away July 14, 1841.³⁹

Nancy DuVal's death at age fifty-seven shocked and saddened not only her family but also her countless friends and admirers in Florida and Kentucky. An obituary observed of her: "Doing good for all, speaking evil of none, and with a contented and well-disciplined mind . . . she has gone to the society of Angels in Heaven whilst on earth a large circle of friends will long mourn her loss."⁴⁰ One year after her death her still-grieving husband wrote, "The hours of gloom and melancholy often deeply shaddow [sic] my mind and thoughts." He continued: "When I look to Tallahassee and think of the days of life and joy that once shed there [sic] happy influences around me, it is only by contrast with the present that gives a darker view of my condition. When I said to myself, go home, return to your

38. John Q. Anderson, *John C. DuVal, First Texas Man of Letters* (Austin, TX, 1967), 4-5; *Biographical Encyclopedia of Texas* (New York, 1880), 52; marriage bond of Elizabeth DuVal and Samuel Buell, October 1, 1833, Marriage Bonds, 1832-1842, Nelson County Clerk's office; Tallahassee *Star of Florida*, August 18, 1841.

39. W. Stanley Hoole, ed., *Florida Territory in 1844: The Diary of Master Edward C&ford Anderson*, USN (Tuscaloosa, 1977), 33; V. M. Sherlock, *The Fever Man: A Biography of Dr. John Gorrie* (n.p., n.d.), 72; Tallahassee *Florida Sentinel*, July 23, 1841; *Pensacola Gazette*, August 7, 1841; Tallahassee *Star of Florida*, August 18, 1841. Mary DuVal married Dr. James R. Robinson, and Laura was wed to Dr. Arthur Moray Randolph. DuVal family genealogical materials.

40. Tallahassee *Star of Florida*, August 18, 1841.

former haunts and seek friendship and affection where you once found it. Alas, for what to find, the voices I used to love silent; the faces that gave light to it gone; to see in my chamber; in its ornaments and shrubery that flourish around and grace my house, at every turn some memorial of the dead while each well known object is a new source of grief, this may be a mingled feeling of the pure, good, and dead, all combined, with every scene and object. The fairy spell is broken; and the rich sunshine of the heart is changed to cold and starless night."⁴¹

41. William P. DuVal to Richard Keith Call, September 5, 1842, Call Papers.