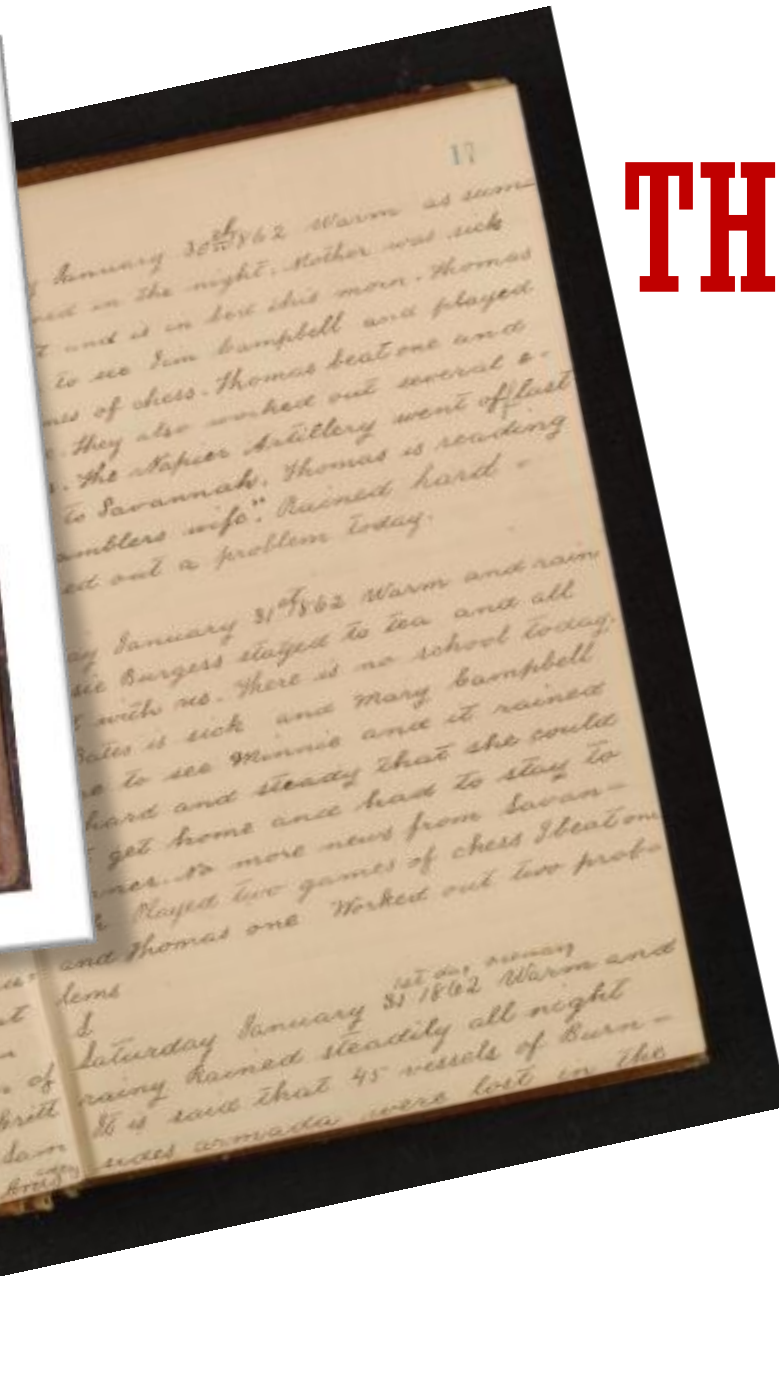


THE WAR OUTSIDE MY WINDOW

*The Civil War Diary
of LeRoy Wiley
Gresham, 1860-1865*

Janet E. Croon, editor
(Savas Beatie, 2018)



Wednesday January 29th 1862 Warm
clear day. I slept very bad. Gen Beauregard
has accepted the command at
Columbus Ky and is second only to
Johnson. It is said that the reason of
the defeat in Ky was that Gen Breckinridge
was drunk as a bear. Sam
Virginia but me the crusader with his
Saturday January 31st 1862 Warm and
raining. Rained steadily all night.
It is said that 45 vessels of Burn-
side's armada were lost in the

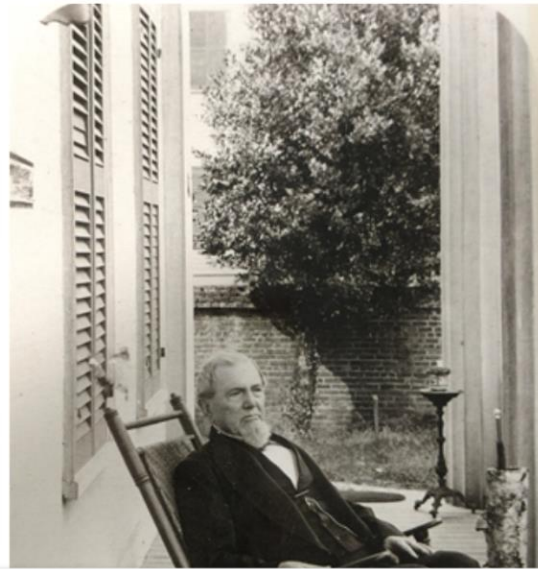
THE GRESHAM FAMILY

- His diary was featured in *Washington Post* and a Library of Congress prized possession—a “Jewel” in their collection.
- LeRoy was born in 1847 into a prominent slave-holding family in Macon, Georgia.
- He kept a diary from 1860 to 1865 (ages 12-17) and wrote in it nearly every day.
- He was an invalid and sickly, but also wickedly smart, educated, kind, curious, opinionated.





**Mary Eliza
(1822-1889)**



THE GRESHAM FAMILY

- These images were taken on the front porch of the home John Gresham built in 1842 on College Street.
- Gresham owned about 100 slaves on two plantations 30 miles south and east of Macon in Houston County called Oakwood and Pineland.
- This is a rare hand-colored daguerreotype image of Mary Gresham taken in the late 1840s. The woman next to her is likely her mother, Mary Ann Baxter (1798-1869).
- LeRoy was their favorite child in a very close family.



THE GRESHAM FAMILY



**Mary "Minnie" Gresham
(1849-1931)**

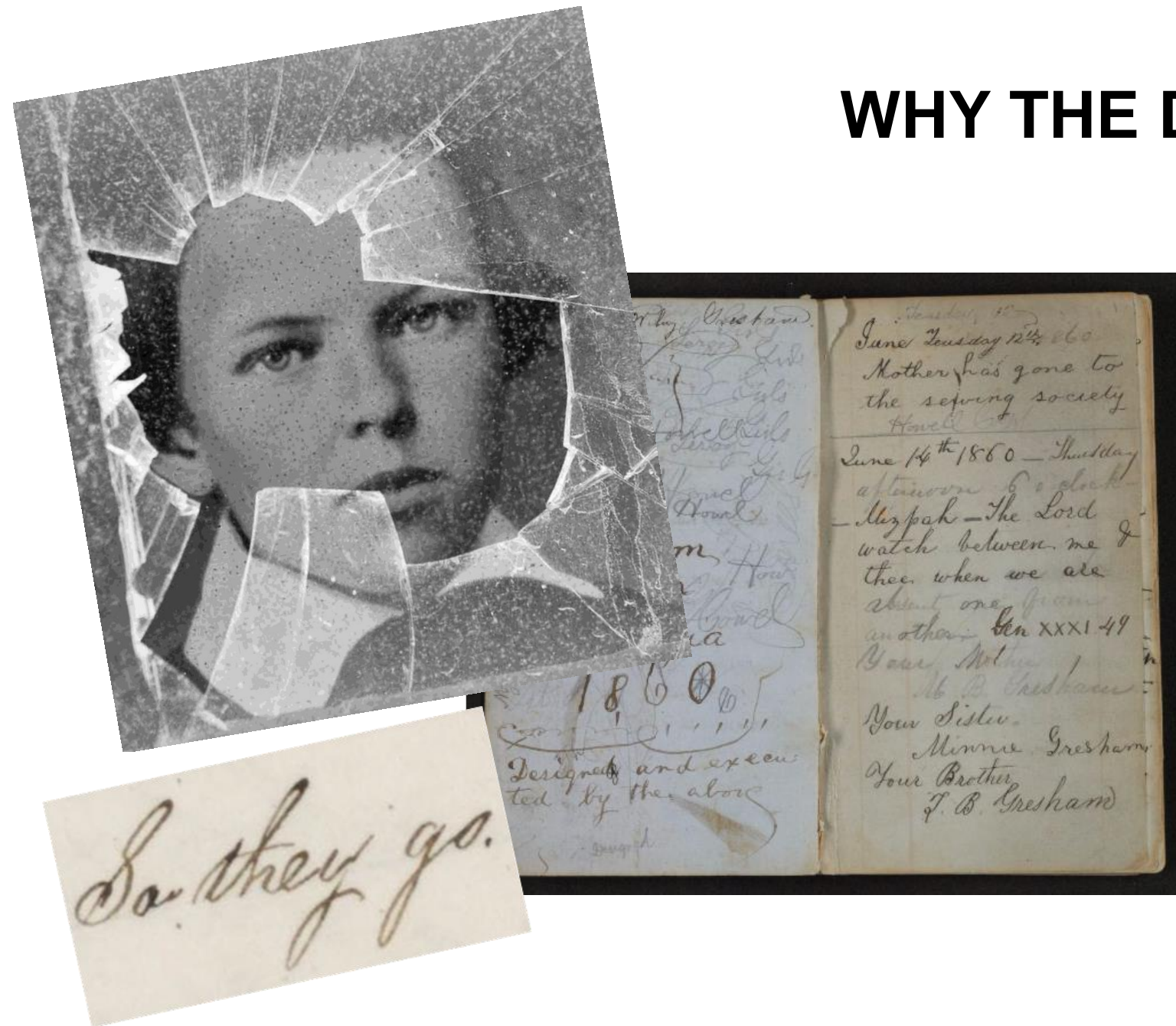


**Thomas Baxter Gresham
(1844-1933)**

- Thomas was the first of the Gresham children, born in 1844.
- Thomas and LeRoy loved one another. They even had their own language no one else could understand.
- Minnie, the only daughter, was well educated, and attended the first accredited all-girls college in the US: Wesleyan Female College.
- Two younger siblings died very young:
 - Edmund (1845-46)
 - Edward (1851-53)

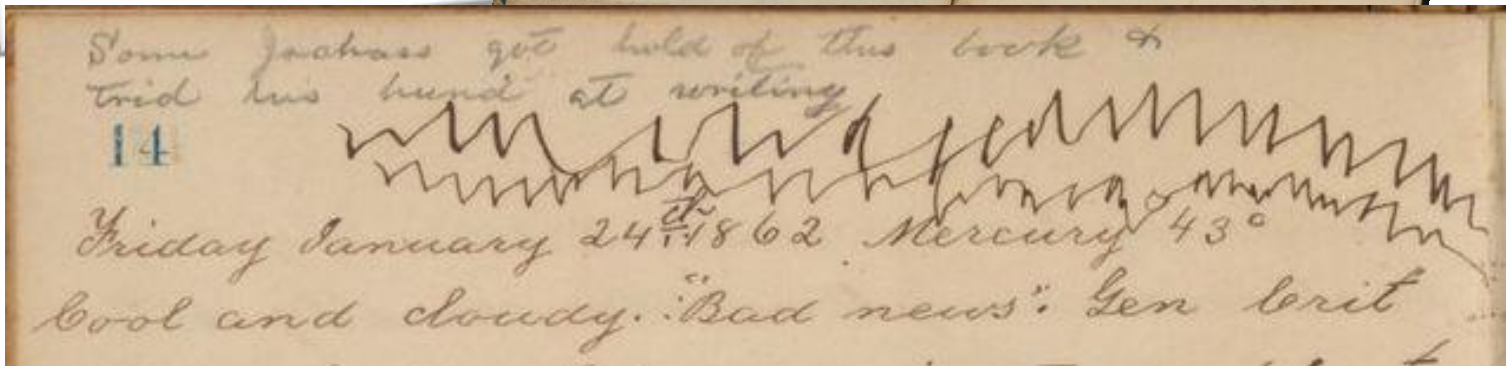
WHY THE DIARY?

- A falling chimney crushed LeRoy's leg in 1856. He was often pulled in a wagon by a slave, a friend, or his brother.
- He developed a cough in 1857, and back abscesses by 1860.
- He traveled to Philadelphia with his father to see Dr. Joseph Pancoast in 1860.
- The diary a gift from his mother.

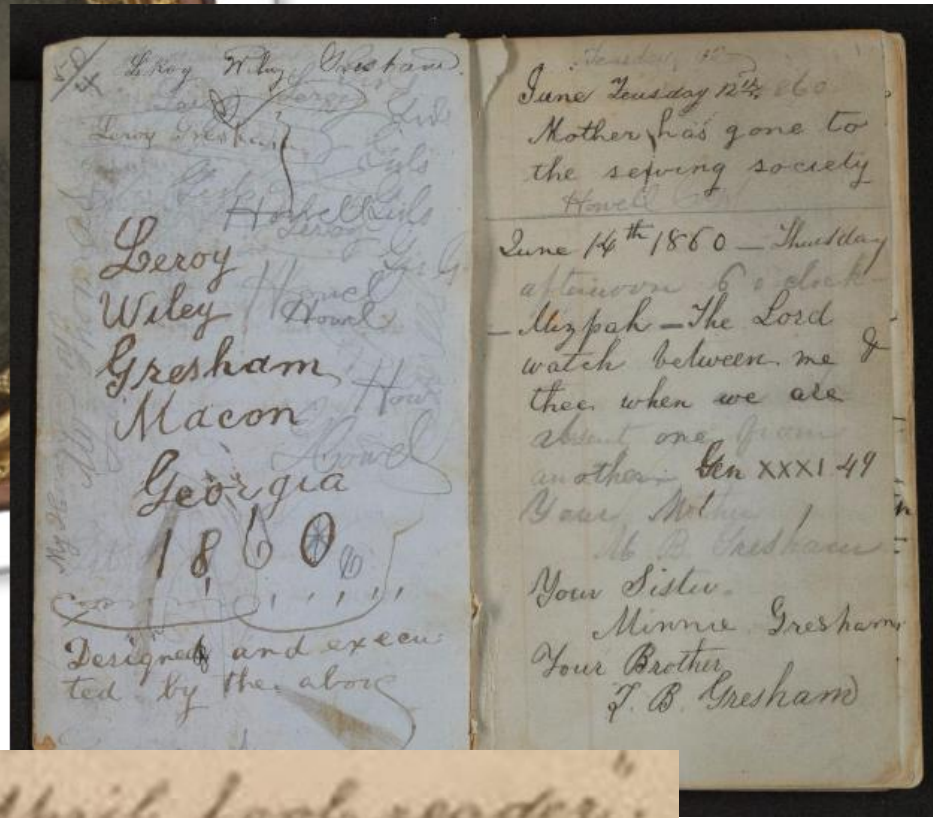


LeROY'S PERSONALITY

- LeRoy was educated, read everything, loved math, chess, and science.
- He was inquisitive, talkative, sweet, funny, and kind.
- LeRoy loved pets, and seemed to have had a good relationship with everyone.
- He was opinionated—He had an opinion about pretty much everything, including Thomas' photo, which he did not like!
- The entries include some Mark Twain-like witty phrases.



GRESHAM FAMILY SOCIAL LIFE



"You're an April fool reader."

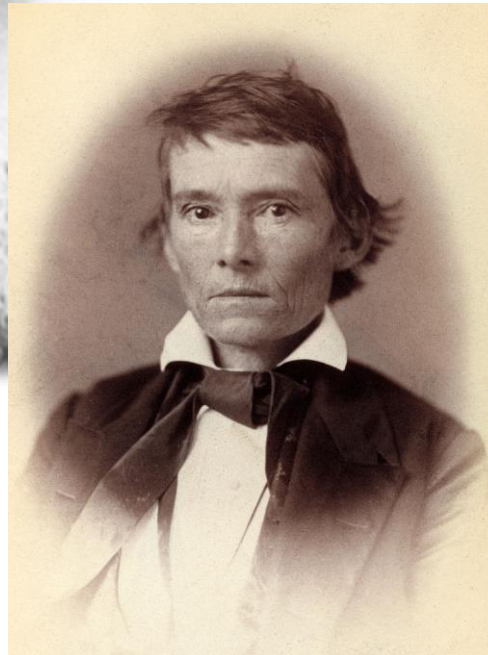
- The diary provides a unique insider view of Southern family life in mid-19th century.
- He describes the food, clothing, conversations, interactions, and stream of visitors.
- Gresham family is followed from their peak of influence through the impact that defeat in war had on them.
- The book includes a list/biographies of major individuals in LeRoy's life.

POLITICS

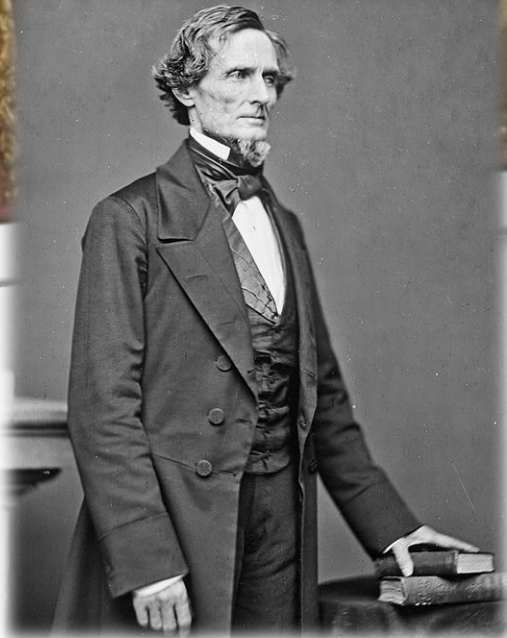
- In 1860-1861, LeRoy's entries followed politics and secession.
- He loved Jefferson Davis, although his support waned by the end of the war; he despised Georgia governor Joe Brown.
- LeRoy was young, so likely his father's views emerged in the first year; happy about secession.
- LeRoy mocked Lincoln and Northern soldiers, which was common.



Georgia Governor
Joe Brown

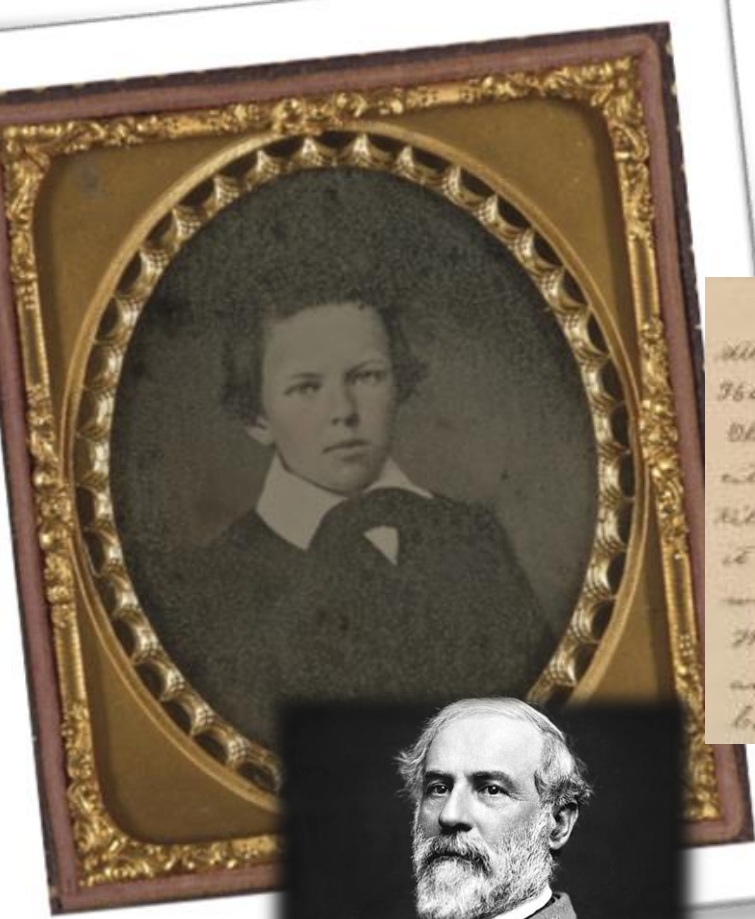


Confederate Vice President
Alexander Stephens



Confederate President
Jefferson Davis

THE CIVIL WAR



*The Battle of Richmond!
After discomfiture of Milledans army -
3600 prisoners. 3 Generals captured.
Old Stonewall in his rear! Great ex-
citement in Richmond! Major Wheat
killed. The battle is not decided but
it is thought will be renewed
with greater fury than ever.
The 7th and 8th are charged a battery
and captured it with heavy loss
but Lane*



General Robert E. Lee




General Joseph E. Johnston

- LeRoy spent four years recording the course of the entire war.
- Footnotes help readers follow it.
- He got news from his father, newspapers, magazines, and other adults.
- He was very interested in how Georgia troops were doing at the front, or “seat of war.”
- There are perceptible mood swings as South wins and loses battles.
- Sherman and the Georgia campaign are well covered; LeRoy saw some of the war from his roof.

PROCESSING THE NEWS

- LeRoy quickly learns not everything he reads is true.
- His hopes get high and are often dashed.
- He learns news is often “fake” or wrong and learns to question it.
- His diary allows us to see how civilians processed slow and often incorrect news.



GRANT'S LOSSES.—The New York *Herald* of the 13th has the following list of Grant's losses in generals since the recent battles commenced :

Killed : Major Gen. James E. Wadsworth, Major Gen. Sedgwick, Brig. Gen. Hayes, Gen. Webb, Gen. Taylor, Gen. Bailey.

Wounded : Gen. Josh T. Owens (since dead), Gen. T. G. Stevenson, Gen. James C. Rice (dead), Gen. Getty, Gen. Talbott, in bowels; Gen. Robinson, in leg.

Captured ; Gen. Seymour, Gen. Shaler, Gen. Neal.

Recapitulation : killed, 6; wounded, 6; captured, 3; total, 15.

88 Tuesday July 7th 1863

Mr. Blisby thinks it was not a large affair

LeROY AND SLAVERY



Julia Ann



- There were 93 slaves on the Gresham plantations; 8 in their Macon household.
- LeRoy mentions many by name; he obviously had affection for them.
- He describes how plantation crops, etc. supported the family home.
- It is important to remember that LeRoy was born into this life, so he did not know anything else.

TERMINALLY ILL



Saw off my leg.

- LeRoy was terminally ill with tuberculosis but he was never told.
- Approximately 70% of people at that time carried TB, but were able to suppress it.
- His version of the disease ate through his back, and is known as Pott's Disease. It still exists in some parts of the "Third" world.
- He wrote about his symptoms, remedies, pain, treatment in detail.
- His is the only detailed TB account by a patient in 19th century history.

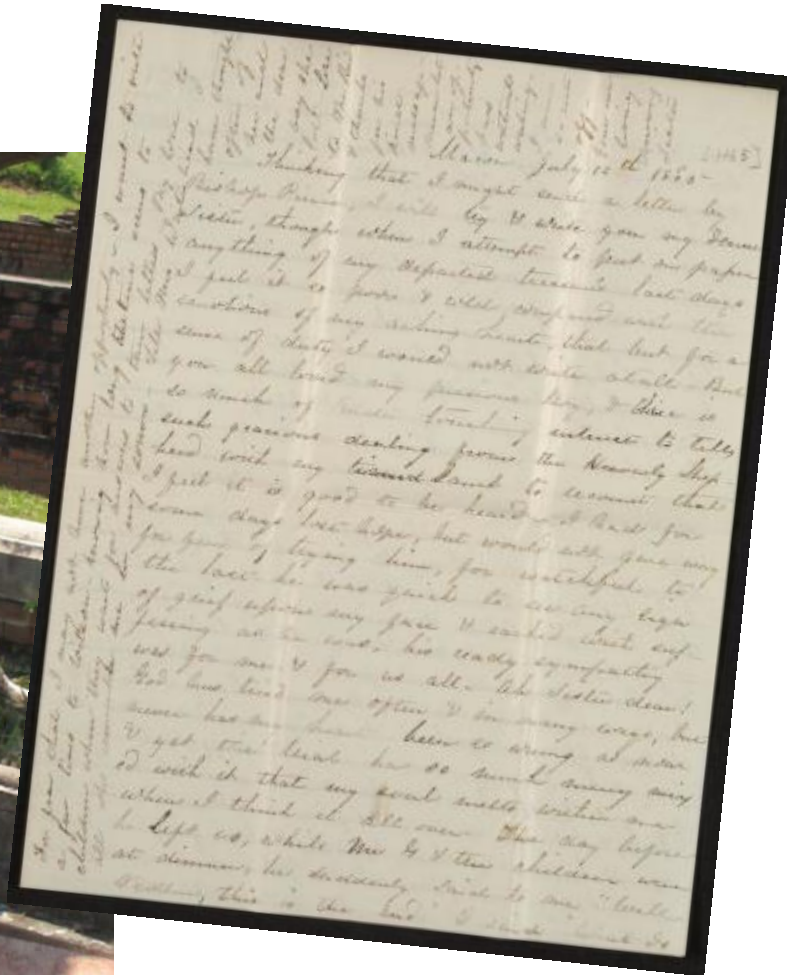
DECLINE

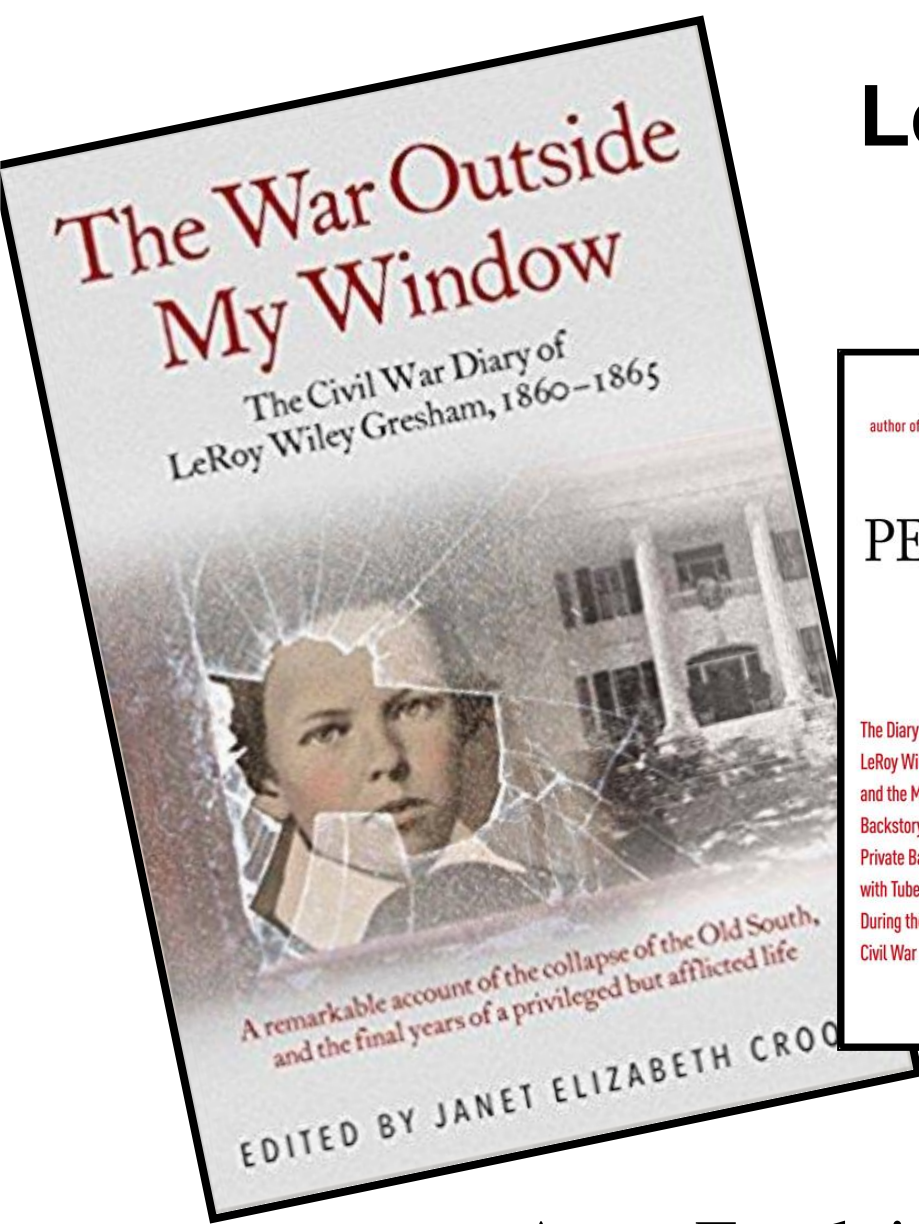


- The eventual Southern defeat depresses LeRoy and he noted this.
- As 1865 arrived, LeRoy began to take more morphine, grew weaker, and the pain he described was horrendous.
- He grew increasingly concerned as his “good” leg began drawing up and became useless.
- Journaling took his mind off his disease....

FINAL HOURS AND DEATH

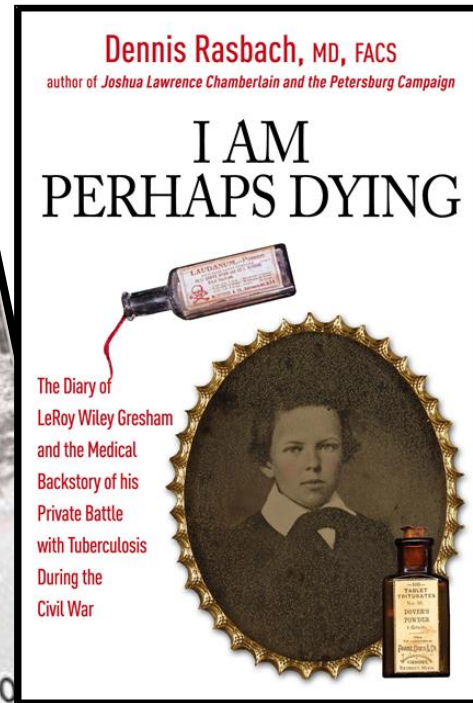
- The handwriting in his journal began to change...
- June 8, 1865: “I am perhaps...”
- Mary’s heartbreaking 7-page letter to her sister describing the details of LeRoy’s final hours, death, and burial is included in the book.
- LeRoy was chronicling the decline of the Old South, which paralleled his own decline and death.





LeROY'S GIFT TO HISTORY

- This is the only teenaged male non-combatant account of the Civil War.
- It is the only “insider’s view” of a prominent Southern family during the Civil War.
- This is the only detailed diary in the world on the course and treatment of tuberculosis in the 19th century.
- Companion book *I Am Perhaps Dying*, by Dr. Dennis Rasbach discusses LeRoy and his disease.



Anne Frank is recognized as the young voice of World War II.
LeRoy is the young voice of the Southern Confederacy.