In studying this text, you will focus on the following objectives:

**Literary Study:** Analyzing a journal.
**Reading:** Distinguishing fact and opinion.
Connect to the Journal

“Mary Chesnut’s Civil War” is a collection of journal entries Chesnut wrote during and after the war. They provide first-hand information on major historical events. Using the chart below, write down what you know and what you would like to find out from reading Chesnut’s journal. Leave the third column blank for now and fill it in after you finish reading the selection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I Know</th>
<th>What I Want To Find Out</th>
<th>What I Found Out</th>
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Build Background

- The following passage from Chesnut’s journal describes the outbreak of the Civil War.
- In early 1861, the South seceded, or separated, from the North and claimed all federal property within the state.
- The South was known as the Confederates while the North was known as Union.
- Fort Sumter was the only property on Southern soil that was still under federal control.
- President Abraham Lincoln refused to remove federal troops from the fort and the Confederates opened fire on the fort on April 12, 1861. When the fort fell to the Confederates, the Civil War began.

Write down two things you find interesting and want to learn more about after reading the Build Background note.

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

Set Purposes for Reading

Read the selection to discover how an influential Southern woman and her family and friends experienced the beginning of the Civil War.
**Literary Element | Journal**

A **journal** is a personal record of experiences, ideas, and reflections that is kept on a regular basis. A journal is often begun with the intention of keeping a record of a significant time or series of events. Have you kept a journal before? On the lines below, write a brief journal entry about your day thus far.

____________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________

**Reading Strategy | Distinguish Fact and Opinion**

A **fact** is a statement that can be proven with evidence. An **opinion** offers a personal point of view or feeling. Look at the statements below. Write an **F** by the statement if it is a fact or an **O** if it is an opinion.

_________ 1. Mary Chesnut was the best female writer of her time.
_________ 2. Fort Sumter was attacked and fell in April 1861.
_________ 3. Slavery, trade, ideas of state’s rights, and the differing economies of the North and South led to the South’s secession from the Union.
_________ 4. President Abraham Lincoln was a really great president.
_________ 5. Eleven Southern states seceded from the United States, also known as the Union.

**Vocabulary | Context Clues**

To learn a word’s meaning, you should look at the other words in the sentence and try to predict a possible meaning. Example: *It was very** fortuitous** that she had another tire in her car.* *Fortuitous* must mean lucky. Now look at this sentence. *The two whispered to keep their conversation** discrete**.* What does **discrete** mean in this sentence?

________________________ How can you tell?
April 7, 1861. . . . Today things seem to have settled down a little. One can but hope still. Lincoln or Seward have made such silly advances and then far sillier drawings back. There may be a chance for peace, after all.

Things are happening so fast.

My husband has been made an aide-de-camp of General Beauregard. Three hours ago we were quietly packing to go home. The convention has adjourned.

Now he tells me the attack upon Fort Sumter may begin tonight. Depends upon Anderson and the fleet outside. The Herald says that this show of war outside of the bar is intended for Texas.

John Manning came in with his sword and red sash. Pleased as a boy to be on Beauregard's staff while the row goes on. He has gone with Wigfall to Captain Hartstene with instructions.

Mr. Chesnut is finishing a report he had to make to the convention. Mrs. Hayne called. She had, she said, “but one feeling, pity for those who are not here.”

Jack Preston, Willie Alston—“the take-life-easys,” as they are called—with John Green, “the big brave,” have gone down to the island—volunteered as privates.

Seven hundred men were sent over. Ammunition wagons rumbling along the streets all night. Anderson burning blue lights—signs and signals for the fleet outside, I suppose.

Today at dinner there was no allusion to things as they stand in Charleston Harbor. There was an undercurrent of intense excitement. There could not have been a more brilliant circle. In addition to our usual quartet (Judge Withers, Langdon Cheves, and Trescot) our two governors dined with us, Means and Manning.

1. **William Henry Seward** was U.S. Secretary of State from 1861 to 1869.
2. An officer who serves as an assistant to a superior officer is an aide-de-camp.
3. **General Beauregard** commanded the Confederate forces surrounding Fort Sumter.
4. **Bar** refers to sand bar.
5. **Texas**, a pro-slavery state, had recently voted to secede from the Union.
6. **Mr. Chesnut** (also called Colonel Chesnut) refers to Mary’s husband James, who served as the liaison between Confederate President Jefferson Davis and Colonel Anderson.
These men all talked so delightfully. For once in my life I listened. That over, business began. In earnest, Governor Means rummaged a sword and red sash from somewhere and brought it for Colonel Chesnut, who has gone to demand the surrender of Fort Sumter.

And now, patience—we must wait.

Why did that green goose Anderson go into Fort Sumter? Then everything began to go wrong.

Now they have intercepted a letter from him, urging them to let him surrender. He paints the horrors likely to ensue if they will not. He ought to have thought of all that before he put his head in the hole.

April 12, 1861 … Anderson will not capitulate.

Yesterday was the merriest, maddest dinner we have had yet. Men were more audaciously wise and witty. We had an unspoken foreboding it was to be our last pleasant meeting. Mr. Miles dined with us today. Mrs. Henry King rushed in: “The news, I come for the latest news—all of the men of the King family are on the island”—of which fact she seemed proud.

While she was here, our peace negotiator—or envoy—came in. That is, Mr. Chesnut returned—his interview with Colonel Anderson had been deeply interesting—but was not inclined to be communicative, wanted his dinner. Felt for Anderson. Had telegraphed to President Davis for instructions.

What answer to give Anderson, &c&c. He has gone back to Fort Sumter, with additional instructions.

When they were about to leave the wharf, A. H. Boykin sprang into the boat, in great excitement; thought himself ill-used. A likelihood of fighting—and he to be left behind!

I do not pretend to go to sleep. How can I? If Anderson does not accept terms—at four—the orders are—he shall be fired upon.

I count four—St. Michael chimes. I begin to hope. At half-past four, the heavy booming of a cannon.

I sprang out of bed. And on my knees—prostrate—I prayed as I never prayed before.

There was a sound of stir all over the house—pattering of feet in the corridor—all seemed hurrying one way. I put on my double gown and a shawl and went, too. It was to the housetop.

The shells were bursting. In the dark I heard a man say “waste of ammunition.”

Vocabulary

**audaciously** (ô dâ’ shəs lē) adv. boldly; arrogantly

**prostrate** (pros’ trat) adj. stretched out with face to the ground in humility, adoration, or submission
I knew my husband was rowing about in a boat somewhere in that dark bay. And that the shells were roofing it over—bursting toward the fort. If Anderson was obstinate—he was to order the forts on our side to open fire. Certainly fire had begun. The regular roar of the cannon—there it was. And who could tell what each volley accomplished of death and destruction.

The women were wild, there on the housetop. Prayers from the women and imprecations\(^8\) from the men, and then a shell would light up the scene. Tonight, they say, the forces are to attempt to land.

The Harriet Lane\(^9\) had her wheelhouse smashed and put back to sea.

We watched up there—everybody wondered. Fort Sumter did not fire a shot.

Today Miles and Manning, colonels now—aides to Beauregard—dined with us. The latter hoped I would keep the peace. I give him only good words, for he was to be under fire all day and night, in the bay carrying orders, &c.

Last night—or this morning truly—up on the housetop I was so weak and weary I sat down on something that looked like a black stool.

“Get up, you foolish woman—your dress is on fire,” cried a man. And he put me out. It was a chimney, and the sparks caught my clothes. Susan Preston and Mr. Venable then came up. But my fire had been extinguished before it broke out into a regular blaze.

Do you know, after all that noise and our tears and prayers, nobody has been hurt. Sound and fury, signifying nothing.\(^10\) A delusion and a snare....

Somebody came in just now and reported Colonel Chesnut asleep on the sofa in General Beauregard’s room. After two such nights he must be so tired as to be able to sleep anywhere....

April 13, 1861. . . . Nobody hurt, after all. How gay we were last night. Reaction after the dread of all the slaughter we thought those dreadful cannons were making such a noise in doing.

Not even a battery\(^11\) the worse for wear.

Fort Sumter has been on fire. He has not yet silenced any of our guns. So the aides—still with swords and red sashes by way of uniform—tell us. But the sound of those guns makes regular meals impossible. None of us go to table. But tea trays pervade the corridors, going everywhere.

Some of the anxious hearts lie on their beds and moan in solitary misery. Mrs. Wigfall and I solace ourselves with tea in my room.

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8. **Imprecations** are curses.
9. The **Harriet Lane** was a federal ship that brought provisions to the troops at Fort Sumter.
10. “Sound and fury, signifying nothing” is taken from *Macbeth* (act 5, scene 5, lines 27–28), a play by Shakespeare.
11. A **battery** is an artillery unit.
April 15, 1861 . . . I did not know that one could live such days of excitement.

They called, “Come out—there is a crowd coming.”

A mob indeed, but it was headed by Colonels Chesnut and Manning. The crowd was shouting and showing these two as messengers of good news. They were escorted to Beauregard’s headquarters. Fort Sumter had surrendered.

Those up on the housetop shouted to us, “The fort is on fire.” That had been the story once or twice before.

— ★ —

When we had calmed down, Colonel Chesnut, who had taken it all quietly enough—if anything, more unruffled than usual in his serenity—told us how the surrender came about.

Wigfall was with them on Morris Island when he saw the fire in the fort, jumped in a little boat and, with his handkerchief as a white flag, rowed over to Fort Sumter. Wigfall went in through a porthole.

When Colonel Chesnut arrived shortly after and was received by the regular entrance, Colonel Anderson told him he had need to pick his way warily, for it was all mined.

As far as I can make out, the fort surrendered to Wigfall.

But it is all confusion. Our flag is flying there. Fire engines have been sent to put out the fire.

Everybody tells you half of something and then rushes off to tell something else or to hear the last news....
**After You Read**

**Connect to the Journal**
Look back at your chart on page 124. Were any of the things you wanted to find out present in "Mary Chesnut’s Civil War"? If so, what did you find out? If not, write down what you did discover from reading Chesnut’s journal entries. Fill out the web diagram below with what you have learned.

**Literary Element**  **Journal**
Journals give insight into a person’s character. How would you describe Mary Chesnut’s character and personality after reading her journal entries? Use textual evidence to support your description.

_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

**Reading Strategy**  **Distinguish Fact and Opinion**
Chesnut’s journal is a primary source of information on what life was like during the Civil War. However, her position as an affluent, well-educated Southern woman influences her interpretation of events. Below are excerpts from her journal. Write **F** next to facts and **O** by opinion. If the statement is an opinion, explain why.

1. “My husband has been made an aide-de-camp of General Beauregard.”  _____________________________

2. “There may be a chance for peace, after all.”  _____________________________

3. “Why did that green goose Anderson go into Fort Sumter? Then everything began to go wrong.”  _____________________________

4. “Seven hundred men were sent over. Ammunition wagons rumbling along the streets all night.”  __________________
Vocabulary

A. Word Meaning  Circle the answer that best fits the meaning of the boldfaced vocabulary word in each sentence.

1. The student spoke **audaciously** to the principal, earning him a week of detention.
   - a loudly
   - b honestly
   - c cleverly
   - d rudely

2. Maria had **delusions** of fame and fortune but she was only the star’s understudy.
   - a nightmares
   - b fantasies
   - c thoughts
   - d spells

3. In the scene, the actor lay **prostrate** in front of the love interest, asking for her forgiveness.
   - a face down and humble
   - b kneeling and gracious
   - c kneeling and thankful
   - d face down and feeble

4. Kelly ruined the surprise birthday party with her **allusion** to our party plans.
   - a direct statement
   - b casual mention
   - c loud hint
   - d easy-going comment

5. Inside the old house a smell of rotting wood **pervaded** the air.
   - a absent from
   - b leaving to
   - c carried on
   - d spread through

B. Context Clues  Circle the context clues in the following sentences that help you determine the meaning of each boldfaced vocabulary word. Then explain your choices.

1. He skipped a rock across the lake and ripples **pervaded** the water.
   - Explanation: ____________________________________________

2. After all the negative press he received, even the smallest **allusion** to the team’s loss made the coach upset.
   - Explanation: ____________________________________________

3. Cindy had been class president two years in a row, but the new student had **delusions** of winning the title.
   - Explanation: ____________________________________________
Time Line

A timeline can help you organize and make sense of the events you encounter in a text. Place the following events taken from Mary Chesnut’s journal entries and place them in chronological order. Choose two other events to add to the timeline, placing them in their proper place.

“Reaction after the dread of all the slaughter we thought those dreadful cannons were making such a noise doing.”

“Our flag is flying there.”

“If Anderson does not accept terms—at four—the orders are—he shall be fired upon.”

“Today at dinner there was no allusion to things as they stand in Charleston Harbor.”