



From Morning To Night: Domestic Service at Maymont and the Gilded-Age South

Elizabeth O'Leary

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Step off the lush carpet and push through the swinging door of the butler's pantry to enter the bustling realm of domestic workers at Maymont House from 1893 to 1925. In *From Morning to Night*, Elizabeth O'Leary takes the reader behind the scenes in the opulent mansion of the Richmond multimillionaire James H. Dooley and his wife, Sallie. Drawing upon personal letters, business and government documents, and numerous oral histories of older Richmonders—both black and white—O'Leary examines the parallel and divergent viewpoints of server and served in this Virginia version of "Upstairs/Downstairs."

Raised in slave-owning households before the Civil War, the Dooleys experienced the transformation of the master/mistress-slave relationship to that of employer-employee. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they relied on a full complement of domestic servants to maintain their lavish residences and lifestyle. In turn, numerous men and women—predominantly African American—labored to meet the day-to-day challenges of running an elaborate household. At the same time, they negotiated the era's increasing Jim Crow restrictions and, during precious hours off-duty, helped support families, churches, and the larger black community.

By examining the formalities and practices of the Dooleys at home and by giving a presence and voice to their "help," *From Morning to Night* offers insights into domestic and social systems at work within and beyond the upper-class household in the Gilded Age South.

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