



Lugoff native to star in Civil War movie

- By MARTIN L. CAHN C-I (Camden, S.C.) editor mcahn@chronicle-independent.com
- Sep 1, 2025

Riley Brazell, a Lugoff native, recently signed on for the leading role in *Love Never Dies*, the cinematic adaption of acclaimed Civil War novel *Marching Through Culpeper* by Virginia Beard Morton. His Dream Productions LLC made the announcement on Thursday in a press release. Brazell, who is currently based in New York City, will portray Constance Armstrong, the fictional Culpeper, Va., resident who is the story's strong-willed protagonist.

Brazell, 22, is the daughter of Jody and Jennifer Brazell, part of the Roy's Wood Products family that includes her uncle, Kershaw County Council Vice Chair Russell Brazell and his wife, Kayci; her grandparents, Roy and Edith Brazell; and her great-grandmother, Lucille Brazell, wife of the late Roy Brazell Sr., who founded the family business.

Homeschooled through the 9th Grade, Brazell later attended Thomas Sumter Academy, from which she graduated in 2021. Thanks to being dual enrolled at Central Carolina Technical College, she earned 30 credit hours in technology, philosophy and English that helped her graduate from Auburn University in only three years with a BFA in theater performance. She has also trained at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts for Screen Acting.

During all of that, and since, Brazell has been involved in a number of theater, film and television productions.

“I spent a lot of time in Camden at the Fine Arts Center [now known as the Arts Center of Kershaw County]. That’s where I spent most of my extracurricular time,” she said during a telephone interview on Saturday from New York. “I took a ton of classes. I lived in that little theater for a minute. I attended summer camps when I was very young, and kickstarted my theater work and stuff.”

Her Arts Center years included being in *Winnie the Pooh Jr.* and *It’s a Wonderful Life*. She also worked behind the scenes on the center’s productions of *The Addams Family* and *Jungle Book*. In college, at Auburn, she played Miss Bennett in *Pride & Prejudice*.

During her high school years, she acted in *Godspell*, and a World War II-era production called *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, that she called “gut-wrenching” in much the same way as *Love Never Dies*.

“[The character of] Constance Armstrong is almost like the last person to survive — the same as *Butterfly*, where the character I played loses her entire family, everyone. It’s interesting how these two things have similarities. Camden is kind of a small town in the middle of nowhere, and Culpeper’s the same way in Virginia, and they both have war history. I’ve always loved the history in Camden and always went to the reenactments,” Brazell said.

That love of history and the similarities between Camden and Culpeper is what drew her to *Love Never Dies*.

“I submitted my audition, but didn’t hear for a bit, but felt good about it, so I prayed and prayed and prayed,” Brazell said. “I ended up getting a callback on Zoom, and the team and I talked about Culpeper and Camden — and found out that the producer had been to Camden — hearing their side about what they wanted to do. I was interested in learning more about the true story, about the real people.”

In a press release sent by the movie’s production team, His Dream Productions LLC, Brazell said she is honored to tell Constance’s story.

“I feel heavily connected to her as I am also a girl from a small Southern town. Her heart for those she loves and her passion for her dreams are very similar to myself,” she said in the press release.

Love Never Dies adapts Morton’s beloved *Marching Through Culpeper*, which was published in 2000 and has sold more than 10,000 copies. The book spawned a successful

stage play in 2012 and has brought thousands of visitors to Culpeper, to tour the real-life landmarks featured in the book.

In addition, the production company announced that Los Angeles-based actor Ethan Averton, who is originally from the UK, will star opposite Brazell in the lead male role of fictional Culpeper resident and Union soldier Aaron Ames. Together, they will tell the film's central love story. Brazell said both characters are fictionalized versions of real-life people who lived during the Civil War.

His Dream Productions said *Love Never Dies* will be filmed using what it called an innovative hybrid of traditional filmmaking and artificial intelligence (AI). During Saturday's conversation, Brazell confirmed that filming will only take about three weeks, from Sept. 30 to Oct. 17, in Culpeper, and that about half the production will involve green screen work.

"There'll be a ton of green screen stuff instead of everything being on set, which is why we can go pretty quick," she said. "They're doing things really differently with the green screen so we don't have to go from location to location to location. It's extremely helpful in terms of time. Luckily, we've had the script for a while, so we've been talking a lot to get moving with things as quickly as possible."

Brazell is also into fantasy, especially romantic fantasy. One of her upcoming credits will be for *The Canon of Grimward*, a fantasy serial sitcom that will run for free on the Reveel online platform.

"You know *Cheers* and *Lord of the Rings*? Imagine if those two shows had a baby — that would be it. It's a really fun, high fantasy based in a tavern," Brazell said, adding that the show's first season will run on Reveel after it comes out of post-production as it looks for wider distribution.

Brazell's other on-screen credits include Apple TV+'s crime documentary series, *Fatal Attraction*, and the short film *GOOD: The Examination of an Accused Witch*, for which she also handled makeup duties. She also worked as a makeup artist for the short films *Don't Say My Name*, *Fish Out of Water*, *A Blood Throne*, and *The Porcelain Chef*.

And what's coming after *Love Never Dies*?

"I have some things in the works," Brazell said. "I have managers in Los Angeles, and they're constantly submitting me for auditions. I'm also working on New York Fashion Week, working as a model, and doing some crew stuff."

She will also be working soon behind the scenes with a project crew on a game show in Massachusetts and has done other work in that state. In fact, Brazell said she might end up moving to Massachusetts if work there continues to grow.

But she doesn't rule out one other place to work in the future.

"Hopefully, I'll work in Camden one day, too," Brazell said. "I still have tons of family and friends in Lugoff and Camden."