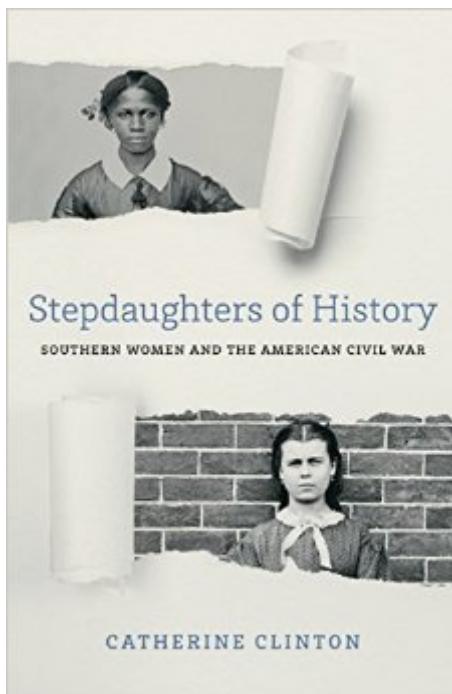


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Stepdaughters Of History: Southern Women And The American Civil War (Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures In Southern History)



Synopsis

In *Stepdaughters of History*, noted scholar Catherine Clinton reflects on the roles of women as historical actors within the field of Civil War studies and examines the ways in which historians have redefined female wartime participation. Clinton contends that despite the recent attention, white and black women's contributions remain shrouded in myth and sidelined in traditional historical narratives. Her work tackles some of these well-worn assumptions, dismantling prevailing attitudes that consign women to the footnotes of Civil War texts. Clinton highlights some of the debates, led by emerging and established Civil War scholars, which seek to demolish demeaning and limiting stereotypes of southern women as simpering belles, stoic Mammies, Rebel spifires, or sultry spies. Such caricatures mask the more concrete and compelling struggles within the Confederacy, and in Clinton's telling, a far more balanced and vivid understanding of women's roles within the wartime South emerges. New historical evidence has given rise to fresh insights, including important revisionist literature on women's overt and covert participation in activities designed to challenge the rebellion and on white women's roles in reshaping the war's legacy in postwar narratives. Increasingly, Civil War scholarship integrates those women who defied gender conventions to assume men's roles—including those few who gained notoriety as spies, scouts, or soldiers during the war. As Clinton's work demonstrates, the larger questions of women's wartime contributions remain important correctives to our understanding of the war's impact. Through a fuller appreciation of the dynamics of sex and race, *Stepdaughters of History* promises a broader conversation in the twenty-first century, inviting readers to continue to confront the conundrums of the American Civil War. "Spies, smugglers, nurses, plantation mistresses, liberators of slaves, traders, writers, freedom fighters, wives, and mothers" Catherine Clinton considers the many roles of diverse groups of southern women from the Civil War to the late nineteenth century in these lively and provocative essays. "Jacqueline Jones, author of *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present*" Clinton's sweeping synthesis is a timely call for rethinking women's roles in the Civil War. Her panoramic view of the existing scholarship, her revealing new histories, and the questions that she raises for the future offer a rich scholarly feast that is useful for undergraduates and seasoned historians alike. "Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, Peter V. and C. Vann Woodward Professor of History, Yale University" "Stepdaughters of History is a timely treatise on the legacy of the Civil War and how Americans both remember and forget the women who dreamt and helped build the landscape with which we reside. The writing is accessible and engaging. Clinton integrates gender studies, political history, and current events into this slim volume and challenges us to continue to build a Civil War

historiography that is full and more honest.â •â "Deirdre Cooper-Owens, professor of history, Queens College, CUNY â œCatherine Clinton delights in disentangling the ambiguities and contradictions of the experiences of southern women, whether they were free or enslaved or rich or poor, in Stepdaughters of History. In this beautifully written volume, she explores how the field of Civil War history has demolished the Lost Cause shibboleths of the devoted mammy and the submissive plantation mistress. Clinton reminds us that history should never offer the comfort of a bedtime story, and in Stepdaughters of History there is plenty for us to ponder late into the night.â •â "Peter Carmichael, director of the Civil War Institute and author of The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion

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