

(Download free pdf) Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Women in American History)

## **Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Women in American History)**

*George C. Rable*

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**George C. Rable : Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Women in American History)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism (Women in American History):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Well-written, insightfulBy J. JamakayaHoopla about the Civil War's 150th anniversary inspired me to search for topics I was less familiar with, and I was richly rewarded by this well-written, insightful book about the experiences of southern white women by George C. Rable.Rable does a marvelous job of setting the stage, describing the culture and ideology of the antebellum south with special focus on the positions and expectations of three classes of white women: wealthy plantation mistresses, the wives of yeoman farmers and poor women. He then follows these women through the war years, tracing their efforts to support the war effort, to deal with the extra burdens at home, to maintain faith in an increasingly lost cause and to battle for survival when the Yankees finally prevail.Quotes from diaries and memoirs capture the excitement and trauma of the war and its destructive impact on southern homes and home life. Despite women's passion for the Confederate cause, their war work was channeled into limited and `acceptable' feminine activities. One interesting section describes the problematic relationships between plantation mistresses and slaves as the war progressed and emancipation dawned. Some

mistresses were bitter and vindictive. In other cases, the tables were ironically reversed, with well-off women reduced to the childlike, dependent state mistakenly ascribed to slaves, unable to cook, sew or even tie their own shoes without assistance. Despite the immense changes wrought by the Civil War, traditional notions of southern womanhood survived. Indeed, one of Rable's central themes is that white women themselves were the instruments for maintaining the racist and sexist order before, during and after the war. Fascinating read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Linda Leady Good purchase 17 of 18 people found the following review helpful. A WORTHWHILE READ! By W. D. Grady The thesis of this book is that Confederate women were slow to challenge the class and gender roles of their society, even though the Civil War exposed them to hardships that required them to temporarily take on the roles of men. George Rable uses a variety of sources, including women's diaries from the period, official Confederate military records, and family papers and correspondence from women and military leaders from the period. Rable shows how the plantation women stepped up and ran the plantations in the absence of most men, who were gone off to the war. He also takes the reader back to a time when the Confederacy was being overrun by Union soldiers. By showing how Confederate women suffered as a result of the thieving and looting carried out by Union soldiers, Rable gives the reader a good insight into why women longed for a return to their traditional and familiar lifestyles. War and ruin would naturally make anyone long for the past, even if the past meant a return to submissive status. If the book has a weakness, it is the fact that Rable limited his study to white women. He did not discuss the roles of African American or Native American women in the Confederacy. However, he did discuss women from wealthy, yeoman, and poor backgrounds. This book is very informative. It is one of my personal favorites. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND IT!

From Library Journal In this study of Southern white women during the Civil War and after, Rable examines the until-now unexplored interior cultural conflict spawned by the war and tries to discover how it affected women's views of themselves, their social identity, and their world. The war momentarily jarred many women into questioning traditional domestic, sexual, and social roles. But in the end, the innate conservatism of Southern women, albeit "based more on habit and inertia than conviction," not only survived but flourished. Based upon massive research in primary sources, eminently readable, and ever skeptical of the facile generalizations of earlier historians, this provocative book is essential for specialists of the period and in women's history. - Thomas E. Schott, Engineering Installation Div., Tinker Air Force Base, Okla. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Filled with striking material gathered from an impressive variety of sources." -- s in American History From the Back Cover A full-length study of white women during the Civil War .