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Nina Silber. *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. xi + 213 pp. $75.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-517445-8; $19.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-19-517444-1.

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Beyond the Battlefield

The American Civil War has inspired many historical works. Only in the last forty years have historians seriously explored the role of women in the conflict. Typically works on women and the Civil War include tales of daring spies, merciful nurses, or brave women surviving the home front without their men folk. Two such works are Jane Shultz's *Women at the Front: Hospital Workers in the Civil War America* (2004) and Elizabeth Varon's *Southern Lady, Yankee Spy: The True Story of Elizabeth Van Lew, A Union Agent in the American Civil War* (2005). More recently historians have explored women who served as fighting "men" such as DeeAnne Blanton and the women in Lauren M.Cook's *They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the American Civil War* (2002). Other works, such as Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber's *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War* (2006) discuss how the war challenged gender stereotypes.

Battle Scars is a collection of essays offering a unique view of America's most famous conflict. Rather than rehash the lives of generals or oft-recounted battles, the book emphasizes women and gender issues. According to co-editor Nina Silber, the book's purpose is "to explore ways in which considerations of gender have opened up new directions in how historians understand the era of sectional conflict and slave emancipation" (p. 4). The book is a follow-up to Clinton and Silber's *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (1992), a previous work on gender studies and the civil war.

Battle Scars reveals new scholarship in the past fifteen years since the previous work's publication. The essays are well researched and include the use of both primary and secondary sources. Contributing authors include Elizabeth D. Leonard, Nina Silber, and Thomas J. Brown.

The book is comprised of ten chapters. Some of the essays discuss how women dealt with the hardships of war while others explore how the war challenged gender stereotypes or threatened traditional masculinity. One chapter on public women is not too surprising. Yet, rather than a history of prostitution, the essay explains how the threat of being treated as a public woman kept outspoken women in line. A unique essay is the chapter on Catholic nuns and their position on slavery and the war itself. Another chapter explores the difficulties of two particular women, Dr. Mary Walker and the infamous Mary Surratt. Walker was everything a woman should not have been in the 1860s. She chose a man's career and discarded her petticoats and long dresses for slacks and a long jacket. The essay explores her battle to be recognized as a legitimate surgeon and given the same opportunities as male doctors. The latter half of the chapter discusses the case of Mary Surratt, the boarding house owner implicated in the Lincoln assassination. The author suggests that Surratt represented "the host of women who had gone too far ... in their Civil War work" (p. 116). And, "after the war, women like Mary Surratt and Mary Walker had to be put in their place, one way or another" (p.116).

The book is well written, although some chapters are too complicated for novice readers. *Battle Scars* would be inappropriate for first-year college students or non-specialists seeking information on civil war women or gender issues. The book would be an excellent choice for an upper division course on women's studies or American slavery since some of the chapters deal with black women during Reconstruction. One disturbing chapter entitled "Sexual Terror in the Reconstructed South" graphically describes the ill treatment of black women by disgruntled white Southerners.

Battle Scars is a fine contribution to the study of gender and sexuality in the Civil War. The book presents various essays on the treatment and expectations of women in American society. It also explores how war alters gender stereotypes and advances equality, if only for awhile. The book goes beyond the battlefield and into the hearts and minds of the people.

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