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Caroline E. Janney. *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. xiii + 290 pp. $35.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8078-3176-2.

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Restoring a Lost Tradition

The American South would have been a different place without the many dozens of Ladies' Memorial Associations (LMAS) set up in the wake of the Civil War. These organizations raised monuments to honor the Confederacy in communities across the South. They pioneered ceremonies to mourn the Confederate dead and directed efforts that led to the creation of national Confederate cemeteries. They played a formative role in establishing the Confederate museum in Richmond, Virginia. Most of all, they made sure that the lost cause interpretation of the Civil War survived and prospered in the midst of Radical Reconstruction and beyond.

Caroline E. Janney's interesting and important new work provides the first detailed examination of these organizations. She argues that scholars have overlooked the significance of community-based groups, like the LMAS, tending instead to focus on white Southern men's memorial activities or on national associations, such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). As a result, they have failed to comprehend the genesis of lost cause ideology and seriously underestimated the strength of white women's support for the Confederacy, as well as misunderstanding the extent and nature of their postwar activism. The first of these arguments is amply supported by Janney's evidence; the second raises a series of questions requiring further analysis.

Despite her book's inclusive title, Janney's work does not look at all LMAS, but at those set up in five Virginian communities: Winchester, Fredericksburg, Petersburg, Lynchburg, and Richmond. Similar organizations existed in Georgia, North and South Carolina, Mississippi, and Alabama, with somewhere between seventy and one hundred of these associations established overall in the postwar South. Although these organizations maintained friendly contact with each other, there was no overarching national body that dictated policy or collected funds. Local conditions were, therefore, important in determining the shape and support of LMAS from different regions, as Janney acknowledges. Examining in depth a small number of these associations from a single state raises questions about representativeness. For instance, were women in other Southern states as active as those in Virginia (a state that saw more fighting than any other and contained the Confederate capital)? Nonetheless, the decision to concentrate on a smaller number of LMAS is a sound one, allowing Janney to follow particular individuals and debates over half a century and offering a solid base for future comparisons.

In following these five Virginian associations, Janney's narrative proceeds chronologically. She begins during the war years, looking at the way aid work mobilized significant numbers of pro-Confederate women, extending female networks and allowing women to reimagine themselves less as family members than as civic participants playing important political roles in supporting the Confederate state. Asserting that the Confederate war effort "necessitated the development of a collective women's consciousness and a new sense of direct participation in the state," Janney claims that Southern white women were stronger supporters of the Confederacy and more politically motivated than recent scholarship has acknowledged (p. 38). When women set out to memorialize the Confederacy at the end of the war, she argues, they were not simply working to shore up men's identities in the wake of defeat; they were continuing a wartime tradition of political activism in which women imagined themselves as patriots with a direct stake in politics.

Taking issue with work by Drew Gilpin Faust (*Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* [1996]), LeeAnn Whites (*The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890*

[1995]), and George C. Rable (*Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* [1989]), in particular, Janney seeks to overturn recent arguments that the Confederacy increasingly lost support among women, who found their needs and wishes trumped by military necessity as the war continued. In one sense, her point is well taken; clearly, many privileged white women remained firm supporters of the Confederacy. She ably demonstrates that such women went on to become some of the most ardent shapers and proponents of lost cause ideology in the postwar years. Yet, in another sense, she is too quick to dismiss this earlier scholarship. Given Janney's interest in acknowledging women's political roles, it is ironic that she sets up her argument in opposition to work by Rable, Faust, and Whites, for their research complicates one of the central tenets of the lose cause ideology: that Confederate failure was inevitable in light of inferior numbers and material. Instead, these scholars show that the Confederacy eroded, at least partly, from within. Demonstrating the importance of home front sentiment in undermining Confederate morale, they look at women from various classes–from the thousands of destitute women applying for poor relief in Rable's story and the distressed evacuees of Whites's study, to the isolated plantation mistresses of Faust's work–suggesting that women played a key role in the Confederacy's defeat. Janney claims too much in implying that the activities of her LMAS members invalidate arguments made in this literature regarding the declining support for the Confederacy among white women in general. As important as the associations were in furthering positive memories of the Confederacy, they constituted a relatively small number of middle-class and elite women–a few thousand in all, mostly urban and socially well connected–hardly representative of the spectrum of female attitudes canvassed in the scholarship on white Southern women's wartime experiences.

In dealing with this scholarship, Janney occasionally oversimplifies other historians' arguments when, for instance, she suggests that Faust depicts privileged white women simply returning "to antebellum gender patterns" in the postwar era (p. 88). Faust's argument about the war's effects on privileged white women is more subtle than this; she traces a shift in subjectivity among slaveholding women, who were forced to confront the unwanted reality that they could no longer rely on men for protection. Recognizing that they had to defend their own status and interests, she argues that such women did not revert to prewar roles in the wake of defeat, but, instead, went on to engage in political activities, like urging the passage of women's property acts. Janney might have used works like Faust's to support her arguments. She seems not to have done so to make clear that her historical subjects were in no sense trying to "prop up southern patriarchy" but were rather working as political actors on their own behalf (p. 5). In making this point, Janney shows that pro-Confederate white women saw their activities as critically important–so much so that they openly fought with veterans groups over the right to control certain aspects of wartime memory. Do such struggles really prove that LMAS women were not interested in maintaining or bolstering gender hierarchy in the abstract? If this were the case, why did LMAS women engage solely in celebrating men's wartime activities? Might they not just as easily have memorialized their own or other women's actual war work?

However we understand the personal objectives of LMAS members, Janney persuasively shows that they helped to propagate a masculine memory of war centered on battlefield heroism. In the wake of defeat, Confederate soldiers' valor was by no means secure. Ex-Confederate men who wanted to celebrate their cause during Reconstruction risked being treated as traitors. Given a general presumption that women were apolitical, however, they could continue to proclaim their allegiance to the Confederacy under the guise of mourning. Janney reveals not only that LMAS were more prolific and better organized than previously assumed, but also that they became the guardians of Confederate memory during Reconstruction, creating legitimate venues (such as memorial days) for men to gather and publicly praise their lost cause. In the North, Union veterans organized and directed Memorial Day activities, offering women only supporting roles. By contrast, it was LMAS members in the South who took the initiative and did the planning, even if they allowed men to stand on the podiums and give the speeches.

LMAS women were just as active in disinterring and reburying the Confederate dead in newly designed "national" cemeteries. Recent books by Faust (*This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* [2008]) and John R. Neff (*Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* [2005]) have examined the way Civil War participants dealt with mass death: the former by examining the cultural work of mourning; the latter by focusing on how partisan feelings were reflected in and encouraged by the primacy each side gave to their own dead. Janney's research adds compelling new detail to this story. As paid Federal employees fanned out across the South, looking for Union soldiers' bodies to dig up and rebury in Federal cemeteries, she shows that they aroused anger and suspicion among

white Southerners. Were these gravediggers collecting the right bones? Were Union and Confederate soldiers' remains receiving equal consideration? The Federal government took on the burden of reburying Union soldiers in the postwar years; in the absence of a central government in the South, this enormous task fell to LMAS. Hiring men to do their work, they repatriated tens of thousands of bodies, establishing "national" Confederate cemeteries, and organizing memorials to lay flowers and wreaths on the newly dug graves. In the process, Janney argues, LMAS women forged new roles in relation to the state. Acting as a kind of "shadow government," they ensured that the bodies of men from all of the former Confederate state were reinterred together, officially overseeing the work of cemetery building, record keeping, and monument raising, asserting women's roles as representatives of the former Confederate "nation" (p. 88).

Having adopted the guardianship of Confederate memory, LMAS women were unwilling to be elbowed aside at the end of Reconstruction when male veterans groups found a new interest in memorializing the past. By the 1870s, LMAS women were embroiled in disputes with several men's associations over such issues as the design of the Robert E. Lee Monument or the right to decide where the Confederate dead should be buried. Interestingly, women emerged victorious from most of these disputes. If they had not done so, the lost cause would have had a very different "organizational structure" by the turn of the century, Janney argues (p. 127). No doubt, there would have been just as many male veterans' organizations. But there might well have been fewer associations focusing on monument building; and certainly a smaller number of groups dedicated to inculcating children with the lost cause message, through museums, monuments, or children's organizations (the LMAS being formative in organizing "junior associations").

In most scholars' minds, this kind of work is firmly linked not to local women's groups but, rather, to the UDC, a national organization established in 1894. In short order, UDC membership skyrocketed, achieving a popularity far surpassing that of LMAS and entirely eclipsing them within a few decades. Janney's final chapter deals with this remarkable success. The UDC's victory over its smaller rivals was made possible only by the conditions and opportunities the latter provided, she argues. Yet, ultimately, two differences between LMAS and the UDC were formative. First, in an era of mass interest in female associations, the UDC appeared more youthful and vibrant than local LMAS groups, because it was a new organization with a young membership and it drew its members from a broader section of the white population. Second, the UDC openly sought to uphold racial hierarchy. LMAS leaders shied away from any explicit discussions of race, even as they worked to propagate a romantic vision of the slaveholding South. The UDC had no such concern, openly proclaiming their support for segregation and states' rights. By the late nineteenth century, enthusiastic support for white supremacy apparently helped the UDC to separate itself from its more genteel, less openly aggressive rivals.

In demonstrating the importance of local women's groups in nurturing the lost cause ideology, and giving birth to the UDC, Janney has written an important work of scholarship. Based on substantial archival research and providing a detailed institutional history of a number of LMAS, it will be useful to scholars working in the fields of Civil War memory, gender history, and Southern history, as well as those working on the history of women's organizational activities.

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