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John N. Fain, ed. *Sanctified Trial: The Diary of Eliza Rhea Anderson Fain, a Confederate Woman in East Tennessee.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004. Illustrations + notes + bibliography + index. $42.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-57233-313-0.

Reviewed by Giselle Roberts (History Department, La Trobe University)
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A Confederate Woman's Christian Interpretation of the Civil War and Defeat

In recent years, historians have brought the diaries, letters, and autobiographies of nineteenth-century southern women to a wider audience. From archives and private collections, these accounts have provided a window into the daily activities of middle- and upper-class women. John Fain's book, *Sanctified Trial: The Diary of Eliza Rhea Anderson Fain, a Confederate Woman in East Tennessee*, contributes to this important scholarship by telling the wartime story of a farming woman and devout Presbyterian. Eliza Fain's fascinating religious interpretation of Federal occupation, the demise of slavery, and southern military defeat offers insights into the ways in which Christianity bolstered southern nationalism and the Confederacy's will to fight. Eliza Fain never abandoned the southern cause, but instead resigned all things to the will of God. Her submission allowed her to negotiate her way through war and defeat without sacrificing her deeply held beliefs on race, class, and gender.

Eliza Rhea Anderson Fain was born on August 1, 1816, to Elizabeth Rhea and Audley Anderson. Eliza's father died when she was two, leaving her mother, Elizabeth, with little alternative but to seek refuge for herself and her family with her brother. In 1832, Elizabeth married Nicholas Fain, and eighteen months later, Eliza married her step-brother, Richard. A merchant, banker, and president of the Rogersville and Jefferson Railroad, Richard was part of the emerging commercial-professional elite of East Tennessee. The couple owned a two-hundred-acre farm two miles east of Rogersville, where Eliza Fain raised thirteen children. She encouraged them to follow the dictates of evangelical Protestantism and to be proud of their southern heritage. The Fains owned eight slaves, four of whom were under the age of twelve at the start of the Civil War.

Eliza Fain kept a diary from age nineteen until nine days before her death at seventy-five. John Fain, a distant descendant of Eliza's, has edited a selection of these volumes–previously stored in a trunk in the upstairs closet of his parents' home–that concentrates primarily on the Civil War years. *Sanctified Trial* opens during the first flush of war in January 1861, when Eliza Fain's husband and three sons enlisted in the army, donned their uniforms of gray, and headed off to defend the Confederacy. Richard Fain served as organizing colonel of the 63rd Tennessee Infantry Regiment, which was stationed in Knoxville for much of 1862.

Eliza Fain frequently visited the army camp, and she used this time with her family to impress upon them their Christian duty to defend and honor the South. A religious compass, she declared, would guide the soldier and the Confederacy to victory. "I am becoming more firmly fixed in my conviction concerning this war that religion will be more intimately interwoven in its history than any which had ever preceded it," she wrote on October 13, 1862. "The men who have honored God are the men he has chosen to honor on almost every field" (p. 45).

Unlike most elite white women, who rarely wrote in depth about slavery or its connection to the war effort, Fain wrote extensively on the "moral plan" that southerners had for their slaves–and the northern quest to corrupt these noble endeavors. She regarded the war as a religious battle between God-fearing southerners and an enemy who had abandoned God. "How little they [northerners] know of the deep anguish many of us feel in regard to our servants for their immortal souls," Eliza cried on June 2, 1861. "And I do feel the judgments of Almighty God will rest upon the heads of the Northern people for their unjust interference and thereby thwarting our plans for the elevation of our colored people in a moral point of view" (p. 13).

Slavery, Eliza Fain believed, was the cornerstone of the war effort–the very reason her kin had pledged to fight and die for the cause. When a band of Federal soldiers passed her home in October 1863, she challenged

them to reflect upon their motives to wage war. "They have to acknowledge that slavery has been the inciting cause to this war," she triumphantly declared. "They all tell me if they thought they were fighting to free the Negro they would quit and go home" (p. 106). Unable to fight and die for her cause, Eliza used her Bible as a weapon against passing Federal troops. She gave religious tracts to raiding Yankee soldiers in the hope that the Lord would "impress the precious truth which they contain on the minds of those to whom given," thereby weakening the northern resolve to fight (p. 120).

By 1863, Fain may have been forgiven for believing that God had abandoned her family and the Confederate war effort. In January, her ailing husband informed her that he would soon resign from his post and return home. The news made Eliza anxious and depressed. "I do feel could he stand the service I do not want him to resign if he is useful to his country *as I hope and believe he is*," she wrote on January 23, 1863 (p. 64). Richard resigned, and by June, Eliza received the news that her son, Nick, and nephew, Sam, had been captured by Federal troops and sent to Johnson's Island prison in Ohio. Unable to find out anything certain, she spent months in a "state of suspense" over her loved ones, while eking out a wartime existence replete with shortages and military uncertainty. Rogersville was occupied by Longstreet's army until April 1864, and for the rest of the year lay on the border between the two armies and subject to raiding parties of violent guerillas. On more than one occasion, the ruthless bands left Eliza contemplating her "great want of provisions" (p. 169).

Fain bore the loss of food and other goods with stoic heroism but watched in disbelief at the demise of the "domestic institution" she had so staunchly defended. As her own slaves abandoned their posts for the safety of Union lines, Eliza could not face the harsh reality that the "sacred relationship" binding master and slave may have been a one-sided affair. Instead, she worried about the moral welfare of the "poor, infatuated Negroes," whom she believed had been falsely lured by northern promises of freedom. "He leaves a home of plenty and I may say peace and happiness," she wrote sadly. "He goes to them, they take the deluded victims and in most cases put them in squads of 20 or 30 with an overseer to work out a miserable existence … with a ten fold severer infliction of punishment than he has ever known in his Southern home" (p. 106).

When one of Fain's last house slaves left in April 1865, she lamented that the young girl had not informed her of her impending departure, as she would have "given her something for her journey." Eliza had no feelings of unkindness for the "deluded girl," whom she believed had "started upon a life of trial such as she had never known before" and become the slave of a "more despotic power" (pp. 315, 334). Eliza conceded that perhaps the Lord had allowed the North to rule over her former servants in a grand plan to make them "more humble and better slaves" (p. 334).

Eliza Fain bore defeat with the same Christian resignation. She cried bitter tears when her husband, Richard, took the oath of allegiance to the United States and applied for a pardon, which was granted by President Andrew Johnson in October 1865. In brief moments of despair, she questioned why "a God of truth, of love should permit such a people to overcome us" (p. 342). As Confederate family and friends fled East Tennessee in the wake of Radical–and often violent–Republican rule, Fain searched for meaning in a world turned upside down by war. She concluded that the Lord had "pour[ed] out his wrath upon the South on account of the amalgamated race who have been born in a state of slavery" (p. 342). Two of the Fains' slaves had been born of a white-black liaison, and Eliza believed such "evils" had resulted in the Lord's "withdrawal of aid" to the South (p. 357).

Clinging to her Christian resolve, Eliza Fain faced a hard postwar life shaped by poverty. Three of Eliza and Richard's daughters died of consumption during the 1870s and three sons left East Tennessee. Unable to sustain his family by farming, Richard worked as a clerk for his prosperous cousin, Sam Fain. The family relocated to Mossy Creek in the late 1870s, where Richard died in 1878. Eliza died in 1892.

John Fain's book makes a valuable contribution to the published letters and diaries of the women of the South. The book is thoroughly referenced, even containing a separate chapter on principal characters in the diary. I do, however, have reservations about the editorial policy governing the book. Edited and omitted sections of the diary are not represented by ellipses. Misspelled words have been corrected, sentences punctuated, paragraphs standardized, and a "logical sentence structure imposed" (p. xx). Inconsistencies are the hallmark of diary-writing. It is the responsibility of the editor to make a text accessible to a reader without impeding the ability of the writer to tell his or her story. In an effort to impose consistency, John Fain has in many cases chosen accessibility over the integrity and charm of Eliza Fain's original account. Nevertheless, *Sanctified Trial* provides significant insight into one woman's religious perspective on slavery, the Civil War, and defeat.

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