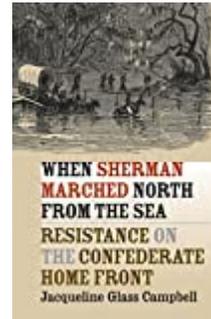


Jacqueline Glass Campbell. *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea: Resistance on the Confederate Home Front.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003. xii + 177 pp. \$27.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8078-2809-0.



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Gender, Race, and Resistance on the Confederate Home Front

Using the dual lens of gender and race, Jacqueline Glass Campbell provides a unique view into the intersection of military and civilian life. Tracing Union General William T. Sherman's march from Savannah, Georgia, through the Carolinas, Campbell challenges the notion of southern female passivity to military occupation. She also calls into question the simplistic perception of slaves as either disloyal or faithful, a dichotomy made popular by postwar reminiscences. Contrary to these portrayals, Campbell demonstrates that Sherman's hard war policy toward the southern home front provided women with "material and ideological reasons to resist" and complicated the decision of slaves to flee (p. 4).

A central theme in Campbell's study is the increasingly complex relationship between soldiers and female civilians as the Union practice of confiscating private property fueled women's resistance to the occupiers. In examining South Carolina, Campbell details how the state's reputation as the "cradle of secession" made it a target for Sherman's men. Yet by taking the war into households, which remained the political center of the home front, soldiers soon found themselves engaged in

a struggle with women willing to defend against Yankee invasion. The resulting conflicts challenged Victorian notions of proper gender behavior and forced soldiers to temper their treatment of female civilians with moral control.[1]

Confederate women's animosity toward Sherman's troops also leads Campbell to question prevailing interpretations by historians that equate disenchantment with the war with disloyalty to the cause.[2] Drawing upon Gary Gallagher's study of the Confederate home front and the examination of wartime Virginia by William Blair, Campbell suggests that women's patriotism depended not on their material comfort but rather on their day-to-day contact with the enemy.[3] "Initial disillusionment and war weariness were not enduring emotions for all citizens," Campbell posits, "but frequently just the first stage in a process of rededication to Southern independence" (p. 69). This reaffirmation of Confederate loyalty was particularly evident in North Carolina. Material deprivations affecting the home and family brought women to wage a campaign for a "moral economy of war" directed toward state leaders (p. 83). Yet, as female

Confederates witnessed Union soldiers destroy personal property and livestock, they refocused their discontent on the invading enemy and reasserted their allegiance to the Confederate cause.

Campbell likewise explores the reactions of slaves as they encountered Sherman's soldiers. Mistreatment stemming from northern racial attitudes and soldiers' perception of slaves as "an encumbrance to marching ranks," brought many African Americans to question the benefits of leaving the plantation (p. 17). The plundering of slave homes and sexual assaults against African-American women exacerbated slaves' fear of their potential liberators. "Black families who had longed for freedom," Campbell argues, "soon realized that few Union soldiers harbored true abolitionist sympathies" (p. 45).

The final chapter of *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea* examines the conditions of General Joseph E. Johnston's surrender to Sherman and the subsequent reaction of the civilian population. In his initial terms, Sherman hoped to recast his role as that of ally, avoiding "a protracted partisan war" (p. 93). The United States government, however, refused to accept Sherman's terms and ordered an unconditional surrender. This approach to the defeated southerners led to "a rededication to the Confederate cause, a deification of General Robert E. Lee, and a demonization of William T. Sherman" among southern women who had supported the Confederacy (p. 94).

Using numerous personal papers from soldiers and civilians, Campbell illuminates the transformation of homes into battlegrounds and women into "warriors." The most insightful, and often entertaining, aspect of this study is the anecdotal evidence of women's resistance to Sherman's troops. The stories of "sesech women" diverge from previous studies of Sherman's march, such

as Joseph Glatthaar's *The March to the Sea and Beyond*, that focus solely on the soldiers' experiences of these encounters.[4] Campbell's analysis of race relations could have been stronger by delving deeper into slaves' reactions to Union occupation and Confederate surrender, although the limitations of this discussion may well result largely from a dearth of evidence. Overall, Campbell's well-written and engaging study is a "must read" for scholars and students seeking to understand the interplay between Union military policy and Confederate women's patriotism.

Notes

[1]. For studies of Union policy toward civilians in the occupied South, see Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and Stephen V. Ash, *When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

[2]. See Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), and George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

[3]. Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); William Alan Blair, *Virginia's Private War: Feeding Body and Soul in the Confederacy, 1861-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[4]. Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman's Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaigns* (New York: New York University Press, 1985).

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