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## Women on the Civil War Battlefield

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pands our understanding of the Confederacy's "public women"; Mark Neely follows Klement's footsteps, although he focuses on Jefferson Davis and civil liberties in the Confederacy; and William Blair addresses the heated postwar discussion over treason and punishment for former Confederates.

Altogether, this volume shows that revisionism of this sort not only adds much to our understanding of the American past but also provides a richly rewarding lens through which to view human beings in the crucible of war. The disparate nature of some essay collections makes it difficult to find and assess common themes. However, though fundamentally different in many ways, the essays in this volume achieve a certain harmony by concentrating on new ways of thinking about well-worn topics and on explorations into new people, events, and ideas. This volume should find its way into the personal libraries of anyone with a serious interest in the Civil War.

*Women on the Civil War Battlefield*, by Richard H. Hall. Modern War Studies. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006. x, 397 pp. Illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer LeeAnn Whites is professor of history at the University of Missouri-Columbia. She is the author of *Gender Matters: Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Making of the New South* (2005).

In *Women on the Civil War Battlefield*, Richard H. Hall gives readers a wide-ranging overview of the various ways women participated directly in military aspects of the Civil War. He divides his initial chapters by the form of participation, and he includes discussions of women who were variously Daughters of the Regiment, vivandières, nurses, cross dressers, women cross dressers in the cavalry, and women who served as spies, scouts, and saboteurs. He also includes chapters that focus on women who ended up in prison in connection with their military service and African American women who served, as well as a chapter in which he takes on a dozen cases of women who are thought to have served in the military, but who were actually postwar fakes or just urban legends. In the last chapter and also in a lengthy appendix, the text becomes a list of short biographies, totaling, in the case of the appendix, more than 400 documented cases of women who served during the Civil War. In compiling so much basic information about women who served, Hall has done a useful service for other historical researchers. His work can be compared in this regard to the recently published book by Thomas Lowry, *Confederate Heroines: 120 Southern Women Convicted by Union Military Justice* (2006), which also provides

a useful service to researchers by briefly describing the cases of many women who appeared before U.S. military justice tribunals in the course of the Civil War.

By diligently compiling the cases of so many women, Hall has certainly substantiated one of his central claims: that a substantial number of women served in the Civil War, and that while their gender in some ways modified where or how they might serve, it certainly did not stop them from serving ably. In passing, Hall also presents some interesting issues that are worth further development. For example, he observes that while women who cross dressed as soldiers were initially lauded in the press, by the end of the war such women were much more likely to be presented as being “coarse” and acting in a fashion undignified for a woman. He also argues that women who served represented a wide range of the class spectrum, while at the same time tending to serve in different capacities based on their class backgrounds. Further examination of either of these issues would give more chronological depth and social structural context to our understanding of why these women insisted on serving their country as they did.

Some historians may take issue with Hall’s claim that military service as a nurse, a spy, or even as a drummer boy, made these women into soldiers like any other. Some may also take issue with Hall’s almost total neglect of antebellum passing women as a core group and key motivation behind women’s service in the war. Finally, some may find his thin interpretation of the meaning of women’s service to be basically derivative of works already published on the subject, such as Blanton and Cook’s *They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the Civil War* (2002) or Elizabeth Leonard’s *All the Daring of the Soldier: Women of the Civil War Armies* (1999).

At the end of the book, Hall calls for any researchers or descendants of the women he discusses to come forth with further information or clarification about them. It still remains a puzzle why these women were so adamant about their desire to serve, many of them as men, while the overwhelming majority of women were content to remain, even in the gender-shattering context of the Civil War, “the sex.”

*Vanishing Footprints: The Twenty-second Iowa Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War*, by Samuel D. Pryce; edited by Jeffrey C. Burden. Iowa City: Camp Pope Bookshop, 2008. xvii, 249 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, appendix, bibliography, index. \$18.95 paper.

Reviewer Timothy B. Smith is lecturer of history at the University of Tennessee at Martin. He has written extensively, including two articles in this journal, about national Civil War military parks.