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Targeting Women on Sherman's March
A Study of Home Front Hostilities in the Civil War

Baton Rouge—Lisa Tendrich Frank's book *The Civilian War*, to be published in April 2015, explores home front encounters between elite Confederate women and Union soldiers during Sherman's March, a campaign that put women at the center of a Union army operation for the first time. Ordered to crush the morale as well as the military infrastructure of the Confederacy, Sherman and his army increasingly targeted wealthy civilians in their progress through Georgia and the Carolinas. To drive home the full extent of northern domination over the South, Sherman's soldiers besieged the female domain—going into bedrooms and parlors, seizing correspondence and personal treasures—with the aim of insulting and humiliating upper-class southern women. These efforts blurred the distinction between home front and warfront, creating confrontations in the domestic sphere as a part of the war itself.

Historian Lisa Tendrich Frank argues that ideas about women and their roles in war shaped the expectations of both Union soldiers and Confederate civilians. Sherman recognized that slaveholding Confederate women played a vital part in sustaining the Rebel efforts, and accordingly he treated them as wartime opponents, targeting their markers of respectability and privilege. Although Sherman intended his efforts to demoralize the civilian population, Frank suggests that his strategies frequently had the opposite effect. Confederate women accepted the plunder of food and munitions as an inevitable part of the conflict, but they considered Union invasion of their private spaces an unforgivable and unreasonable transgression. These intrusions strengthened the resolve of many southern women to continue the fight against the Union and its most despised general.

Seamlessly merging gender studies and military history, *The Civilian War* illuminates the distinction between the damage inflicted on the battlefield and the offenses that occurred in the domestic realm during the Civil War. Ultimately, Frank's research demonstrates why many women in the Lower South remained steadfastly committed to the Confederate cause even when their prospects seemed most dim.

Lisa Tendrich Frank received her Ph.D. in history from the University of Florida. She is the author and editor of numerous works relating to the Civil War, including *Women in the American Civil War* and the forthcoming *The World of the Civil War: A Daily Life Encyclopedia*.

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