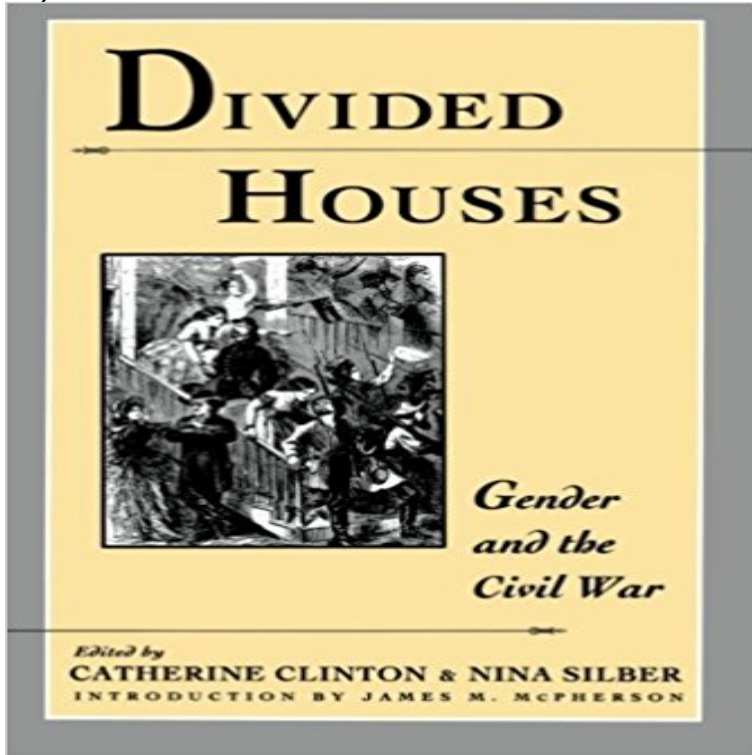


Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War (Harc Global Change Studies; 1)



No American needs to be told that the Civil War brought the United States to a critical juncture in its history. The war changed forever the face of the nation, the nature of American politics, the status of African-Americans, and the daily lives of millions of people. Yet few of us understand how the war transformed gender roles and attitudes toward sexuality among American citizens. *Divided Houses* is the first book to address this sorely neglected topic, showing how the themes of gender, class, race, and sexuality interacted to forge the beginnings of a new society. In this unique volume, historians Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber bring together a wide spectrum of critical viewpoints--all written by eminent scholars--to show how gender became a prism through which the political tensions of antebellum America were filtered and focused. For example, *Divided Houses* demonstrates that the abolitionist movement was strongly allied with nineteenth-century feminism, and shows how the ensuing debates over sectionalism and, eventually, secession, were often couched in terms of gender. Northerners and Southerners alike frequently ridiculed each other as effeminate: slaveowners were characterized by Yankees as idle and useless aristocrats, enfeebled by their peculiar institution; northerners were belittled as money-grubbers who lacked the masculine courage of their southern counterparts. Through the course of the book, many fascinating subjects are explored, such as the new manly responsibilities both black and white men had thrust upon them as soldiers; the effect of the war on Southern women's daily actions on the homefront; the essential part Northern women played as nurses and spies; the war's impact on marriage and divorce; women's roles in the guerilla fighting; even the wartime dialogue on interracial sex. There is also a rare look at

how gender affected the experience of freedom for African-American children, a discussion of how Harriet Beecher Stowe attempted to distract both her readers and herself from the ravages of war through the writing of romantic fiction, and a consideration of the changing relations between black men and a white society which, during the war, at last forced to confront their manhood. In addition, an incisive introduction by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian James McPherson helps place these various subjects in an overall historical context. Nowhere else are such topics considered in a single, accessible volume. Divided Houses sheds new light on the entire Civil War experience--from its causes to its legacy--and shows how gender shaped both the actions and attitudes of those who participated in this watershed event in the history of America.

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