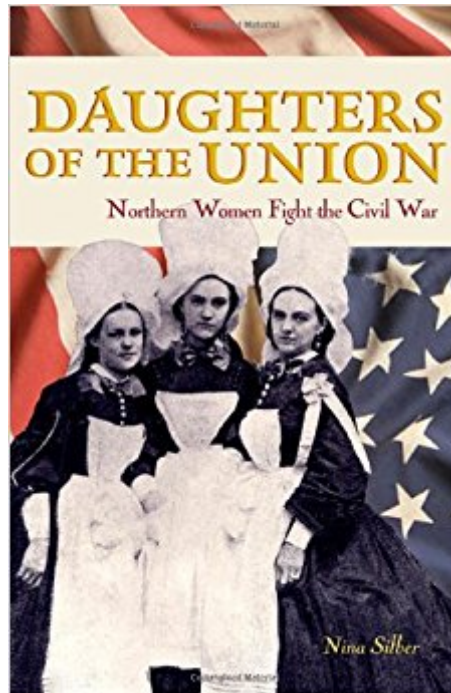


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# Daughters Of The Union: Northern Women Fight The Civil War



## Synopsis

Daughters of the Union casts a spotlight on some of the most overlooked and least understood participants in the American Civil War: the women of the North. Unlike their Confederate counterparts, who were often caught in the midst of the conflict, most Northern women remained far from the dangers of battle. Nonetheless, they enlisted in the Union cause on their home ground, and the experience transformed their lives. Nina Silber traces the emergence of a new sense of self and citizenship among the women left behind by Union soldiers. She offers a complex account, bolstered by women's own words from diaries and letters, of the changes in activity and attitude wrought by the war. Women became wage-earners, participants in partisan politics, and active contributors to the war effort. But even as their political and civic identities expanded, they were expected to subordinate themselves to male-dominated government and military bureaucracies. Silber's arresting tale fills an important gap in women's history. She shows the women of the North--many for the first time--discovering their patriotism as well as their ability to confront new economic and political challenges, even as they encountered the obstacles of wartime rule. The Civil War required many women to act with greater independence in running their households and in expressing their political views. It brought women more firmly into the civic sphere and ultimately gave them new public roles, which would prove crucial starting points for the late-nineteenth-century feminist struggle for social and political equality.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although Dorothea Dix, Clara Barton and Anna Dickinson have cameo roles, Civil War historian Silber reaches far deeper than such star turns to address "the diminishing place of Union women in American memory," the corollary that their commitment was "lackluster" and the domestic fallout of their involvement— "the expansion of the nation-state into the lives of ordinary Americans citizens." Relying heavily on letters and diaries, Silber's scholarly account is solidly informative for the serious historian and quite accessible for general history buffs and students. As primary breadwinners go off to war, women serve as fund-raisers, post mistresses, suppliers, nurses, government workers and teachers. That's a familiar enough story, but with a greater public role, women find "their personal, intimate relationships subjected to intense... scrutiny, not only from neighbors and kin but also from state and federal officials." Those who work as nurses are "required to be plain looking women." The result, Silber argues, was a change in the way marriage's regulatory function worked in society in ways that continue to reverberate through homes and jobs. In this provocative, challenging work, Silber writes ordinary women onto the page and reshapes the boundaries of Civil War history. Her attention to the presence of Northern black women is particularly noteworthy. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Although Civil War literature abounds, relatively little has been written about the roles many Northern women played in the conflict. With the exception of such legendary figures as Clara Barton and Harriet Beecher Stowe, and unlike their Southern counterparts, these otherwise ordinary women have not been portrayed as active participants in the war effort. Silber seeks to rectify this oversight by providing a fascinating accounting of the economic, social, and political challenges met and overcome by patriotic Union women in both the domestic and the civic spheres. Perhaps most significantly, the author also traces the tentative roots of the female political activism that manifested itself in the suffrage and temperance movements of the late nineteenth century to the new identities forged by Yankee women during the war years. This worthy contribution to the scholarship and popular culture of the Civil War will also appeal to women's historians. Margaret Flanagan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

It's a great book for my next historical novel. The research and biographies are wonderful as is the detail that is described.

Good history written in easy-to-read style. Women have been neglected in Civil War histories so this

was a real winner. I've recommended it to others in this year of Civil War remembrance

Based on the title of this book, I was looking forward to reading it. I knew I was in trouble when the author made her bias very clear in the prologue. She said she was going to prove that all the others who've written about women in the Civil War, including those who were there, were wrong. In her view the Civil War only proved the lowly status of women and that they were unable to handle the responsibilities thrust on them by the war. While she cites her examples, I kept getting the feeling that she was cherry-picking or mis-interpreting what was written by women of the time. An example: in the Epilogue she quotes a nurse who wrote of "seeing soldiers 'faithfully plodding through the dust protecting me' had made her 'feel more insignificant than words can express'." In the author's view this proves the nurse learned how "subordinate" she was. A better interpretation, one most of us would say on watching the same thing today, would be gratitude for the sacrifice the troops are making for us. I made it through the book, but I would not recommend this as an introduction to women in the Civil War, it's just too biased.

Book was sent out immediately, arrived within a few days, and was of excellent quality.

I had checked this book out of at my library and was enjoying it so much I added it to my Wishlist. I received it for Christmas and have thoroughly enjoyed reading it. The amount of new information I am learning about this time period and the northern women's role has been fascinating. It reads quickly and fun to read though reading a lot of historical information.

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