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Scarlett's Sisters: Young Women in the Old South

Anya Jabour

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Scarlett's Sisters explores the meaning of nineteenth-century southern womanhood from the vantage point of the celebrated fictional character's flesh-and-blood counterparts: young, elite, white women. Anya Jabour demonstrates that southern girls and young women faced a major turning point when the Civil War forced them to assume new roles and responsibilities as independent women.

Examining the lives of more than 300 girls and women between ages fifteen and twenty-five, Jabour traces the socialization of southern white ladies from early adolescence through young adulthood. Amidst the upheaval of the Civil War, Jabour shows, elite young women, once reluctant to challenge white supremacy and male dominance, became more rebellious. They adopted the ideology of Confederate independence in shaping a new model of southern womanhood that eschewed dependence on slave labor and male guidance.

By tracing the lives of young white women in a society in flux, Jabour reveals how the South's old social order was maintained and a new one created as southern girls and young women learned, questioned, and ultimately changed what it meant to be a southern lady.

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