



Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War

Drew Gilpin Faust

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A **New York Times** Notable Book of the Year

Winner of the Francis Parkman Prize

Winner of the Avery Craven Prize

In the ante-bellum South, women from elite slaveholding families were raised to consider themselves not so much as "women" but as "ladies," models of dependent femininity. But that ideal was to prove impossible to maintain during the social upheaval of the Civil War, when they found themselves suddenly assuming unaccustomed roles as workers, protectors, and providers. Through the use of hundreds of moving and eloquent letters, memoirs, and diary excerpts, Drew Gilpin Faust, one of the foremost historians of the American South, illuminates the lives of a wide array of Confederate women: from Lizzie Neblett, a housewife facing a life of physical labor for the first time, to Sallie Tompkins, a Virginia aristocrat turned military nurse, to Belle Boyd, a ruthless teenaged spy. An intensely personal work of scholarship, **Mothers of Invention** gives voice to the hitherto silent half of the Confederacy's ruling class and explains how its ethos continues to influence the lives of Southern women even today.

"A dramatically revealing study...[Faust looks] directly at the past, with a daughter's hard, steady gaze, and with a daughter's generous heart."--New York Times Book Review

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