

History 225
Re: Directed research paper
Due date(See syllabus)

Spring '95

Title: "Divided South: Cause of the Confederacy's Defeat?"

One of the most exciting and productive research areas in American history is the so-called "New Social History," especially the long neglected social history of the Civil War. (See James McPherson's excellent forward in Divided Houses).

While McPherson calls for historians to integrate the military or battlefield history with the home front or social history of the war, his idea of integration runs only one way: the events on the battlefield causes the changes in society, never visa versa. (See McPherson's essay in Boritt, "American Victory, American Defeat;" see also G. Boritt's own dogmatic assertion that the Confederacy lost the war on the battlefield--case closed, in his Introduction to Why the Confederacy Lost).

After having read McPherson (and Boritt's "final words") there is still a nagging doubt as to whether, indeed, the South's defeat can be attributed solely to battlefield reverses. The reasons for the Confederacy's defeat still remains mysterious even to McPherson (see his essay in Boritt, p. 18).

The purpose of this directed research paper is not for you to resolve this issue: Whether the South lost the war on the battlefield or the home front, but to examine one aspect of this question and draw your own conclusions:

What role did Southern womanhood play on the home front to weaken the Confederacy's military will or effort and help pull Ole Dixie down?

Formating: The paper should be typed and double-spaced and a minimum of 6 pages in length.

Bibliography: The works you will consult are the following:

George Rabble, "Missing in Action:" Women of the Confederacy," in Divided Houses.

Drew G. Faust, "Altars of Sacrifice," in Divided Houses

Reid Mitchell, "Afterword: The Soldiers' War: The Junction of Social History and Military History," on Library Reserve

Michael B. Chesson, "Harlots or Heroines? A New Look at the Richmond Riot," on Library Reserve

George Rabble, Two chapters from his book Civil Wars. Chpt. 5

"The Political Economy of the Southern Home Front," and Chpt. 8,

"The Coming of Lucifer's Legions," both on Library Reserve.

And a reread of the above cited views of McPherson and Boritt.