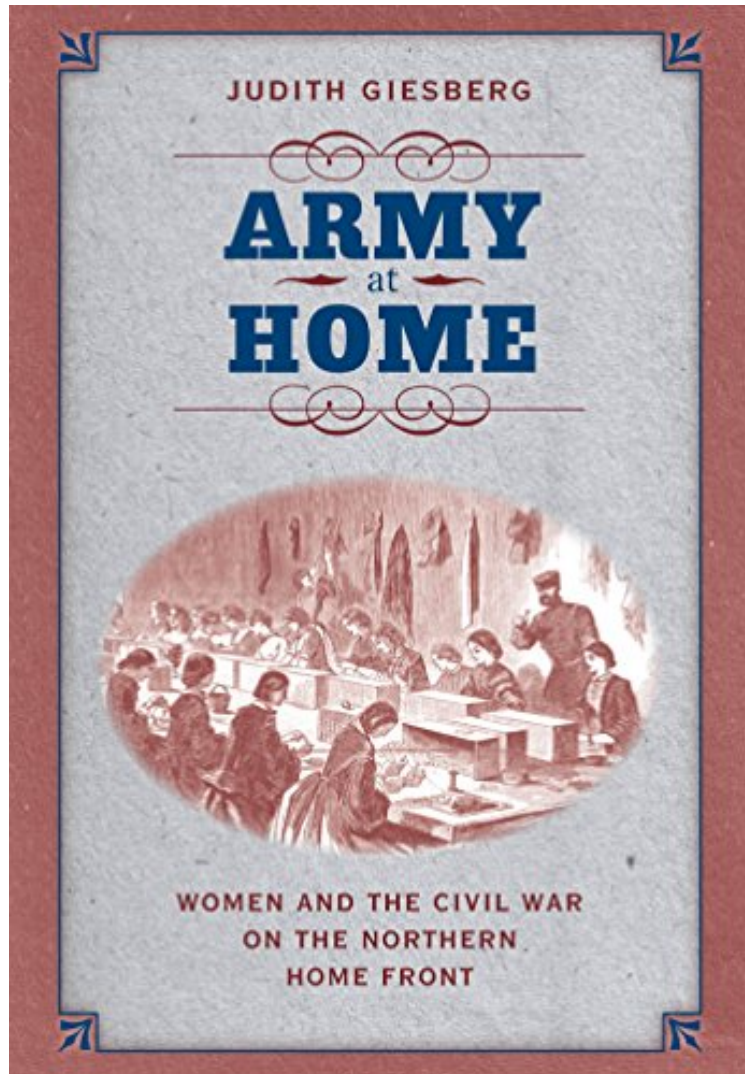


[E-BOOK] Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front (Civil War America)

Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front (Civil War America)

Judith Giesberg

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Judith Giesberg : Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front (Civil War America) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front (Civil War America):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A lot of information in an itty bitty space By Maggie True or false: It may well have been because of its women that the South lost the Civil War. It is often a statement, often a question, and always conjecture; for Judith Giesberg this question rests at the heart of her book, Army at Home - Women and

the Civil War on the Northern Home Front. In less than two hundred pages, Giesberg attempts to quickly illustrate that Northern women were instrumental in national social reform, and that women were instrumental in the war effort. Arguably, Giesberg would disagree with the opening line of this paper. Giesberg's attempt to reconcile the aforementioned question, while addressing the seriously marginalized working-class, immigrant, and African American women of the Civil War, is a noble task; one she accomplishes fairly well. Despite the book being one of war, how women responded in various ways to war, Giesberg employs a thematic, not a chronologic, outline for her narrative. While the war was literally in the backyards of Southern women, Northern women faced issues of their own. Giesberg's thesis essentially contends the Northern home front was not restricted to the battlefield, the women were an army at home, influencing the entirety of the war in every regard. (p. 12) Each chapter serves as a brief case study of sorts, addressing issues relevant to Northern women who were experiencing the war as a withdrawal of labor from their farms and their rural communities. (p. 19) The brief chapters cover a wide range of motifs, from women learning to how to cope with managing the family farm in place of their soldier husbands (chapter one), to the relocation of thousands of women at the hands of the military; a commonly shared experience in the South (chapter two). She also tackles the broken social dichotomy created, or rather emphasized, when women entered the male dominated workforce (chapter three). Giesberg argues traditional antebellum concepts of separate spaces for men and women collapsed during the Civil War, women produced spaces where they ceased being the object of war and became its subjects; even if unknowingly so at the time. (p. 13) Among other topics for discussion in *Army at Home* is the fight for civil rights (chapter four), how white Northern women attempted to protect their communities from the draft, the ramifications of emancipation and from integration (chapter five), and lastly, women traveling to the battlefield to retrieve their perished loved ones, and the question of to what extent soldiers and their families were the responsibility of the state (chapter six). (p. 93, 143) 'Each of these points is significant to the successes and drawbacks of Giesberg's book. A success in her formatting is that in a short space she manages to cover a wide spectrum of topics, traditionally not broached in conventional Civil War historiography. She does not cover just one city, one state, but rather a significant portion of the country, from Philadelphia to San Francisco. Giesberg demonstrates how something as simple as women's attire played against them in travel; restricting not only their movement, but the impression of their independence juxtaposed with their male counterparts. While Giesberg purports a general idea of Northern women versus Southern women, she generally deals with the Northeast and California, a state not typically associated with the Civil War. However, her greatest success in demonstrating social change is with the Streetcar Battles, which led to case law with lasting ramifications. There is, however, a great deal of speculation throughout the chapters of her book, some to a good extent she could have controlled. Giesberg considerably overstates in saying, 'The Civil War changed the way people on the home front saw space and moved through it. (p. 164) In the beginning of the book she acknowledges the reallocations of work and space in which women had to adjust when their soldier husbands enlisted, as if to suggest women were stationary and change was altogether foreign. (p. 27) Even taking into account the dichotomy of domestic and public domains, women did travel for charity work, families did relocate, and on occasion women did run the family farm, even before the Civil War. " Gaps in military, state, and family records exclude some of the more intimate details surrounding what women's thoughts were about the war, as such it is impossible to paint a complete picture of the period. (p. 37) Giesberg adequately depicts the hardships Northern women of various socio-economic backgrounds were facing. Giesberg opens the door for other historians interested in pursuing women's history, especially pertaining to the Civil War; clearly there is a precedent set for further research to be done.' 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Women in History Enthusiasts will be rewarded! By Sue Myers As an admitted Women in History enthusiast, this book touched on so many "women at home" issues I was unaware of during the Civil War in the North. A plus is my ancestor Elizabeth Schwalm is included in Chapter 1 as an example of women in rural Pennsylvania. I had the added pleasure of meeting the author, Dr. Giesberg, at a recent event; she was very gracious in sharing her time and love of 19th century history and women's issues. This book is a must read as telling the full story of the Civil War. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I really enjoyed the way it was written making it an easy ... By Sarah Wright Of all the books I have read on northern women during the Civil War, this was the most interesting and offered more information and insight beyond the overresearched USSC, local aid societies, and nursing (though it did not neglect them). I really enjoyed the way it was written making it an easy read.

Introducing readers to women whose Civil War experiences have long been ignored, Judith Giesberg examines the lives of working-class women in the North, for whom the home front was a battlefield of its own. Black and white working-class women managed farms that had been left without a male head of household, worked in munitions factories, made uniforms, and located and cared for injured or dead soldiers. As they became more active in their new roles, they became visible as political actors, writing letters, signing petitions, moving (or refusing to move) from their homes, and confronting civilian and military officials. At the heart of the book are stories of women who fought the draft in New York and Pennsylvania, protested segregated streetcars in San Francisco and Philadelphia, and demanded a living wage in the needle trades and safer conditions at the Federal arsenals where they labored. Giesberg challenges readers to think about women and children who were caught up in the military conflict but nonetheless refused to

become its collateral damage. She offers a dramatic reinterpretation of how America's Civil War reshaped the lived experience of race and gender and brought swift and lasting changes to working-class family life.

Engaging. . . . Offers a distinctly new vantage point. . . . Original, thought-provoking, and insightful, this is a very valuable addition to Civil War scholarship.--Civil War History"An excellent job addressing a topic not discussed in adequate detail previously. This book deserves a place in local libraries and on the bookshelves of anyone interested in the contributions of women made during the American Civil War.--Civil War NewsA fine, well-written account that significantly enlarges our perspective of the often hidden, but no less dramatic, impact of the Civil War on Northern women.--Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography[Giesberg] does an exemplary job using available sources to give voice to women previously overlooked and she offers insight into a world historians are only beginning to uncover.--Ohio Valley HistoryOffers a new perspective on women in the Civil War North.--Civil War Book Civil War buffs, feminists, and labor historians, students of the complex intersection of class, race, location, and gender will all thank Judith Giesberg for her thoughtful sketching out and then filling in of the void in our current portrait of women in the northern states during this volatile period in American history. . . . Draws together all available scarce resources to make a convincing argument for the major changes that took place in the lives of rural, working-class white, and African-American women as a result of the gaps and opportunities in culture created by the war.--Journal of American CultureA work that addresses a neglected and very important topic. . . . Highly recommended.--ChoiceA valuable addition to the literature of the Union home front in general, not just that of Northern women. . . . Paints a rich portrait of the North. . . . This excellent work will quickly find its way onto many a syllabus, returning these women to their rightful place in the story of the American Civil War.--Journal of American HistoryRelying on extensive, detailed research, Giesberg tells her story with clarity and verve. . . . This book goes far toward reminding us that the forgotten women who sewed the uniforms and made the munitions used in the war also felt that they sacrificed much, perhaps too much.--American Historical An original and fascinating contribution to the trend in Civil War studies that seeks to blur the traditional distinctions between the home front and the battlefield. . . . An important book that contributes to our understanding of the outcomes of the Civil War.--The Journal of Southern HistoryPersuasive . . . Giesberg's work leaves no room for doubt that the war dramatically altered the daily lives of working-class women, urban and rural, as well as the form and location of women's political engagement.--The Annals of Iowa In Giesberg's action-packed Civil War study, women risk body and soul to make a living and to protest segregation, conscription, and low wages. These are not teary-eyed maidens waiting out the war with hankies gripped to their throats; they embody home front struggles that paralleled battlefields in transforming U.S. society.--Victoria Bynum, author of *The Free State of Jones: Mississippi's Longest Civil War*A highly original analysis of how the war affected working-class women and how those women affected the war effort in heretofore underrecognized ways, *Army at Home* is also a very valuable case study in how to apply larger theoretical insights to the Civil War era.--J. Matthew Gallman, author of *America's Joan of Arc: The Life of Anna Elizabeth Dickinson*From the Inside FlapJudith Giesberg examines the lives of working-class women in the North, where they managed farms that had been left without a male head of household, worked in munitions factories, made uniforms, and located and cared for injured or dead soldiers. As they became more confident in their new roles, these women became visible as political actors, writing letters, signing petitions, moving (or refusing to move) from their homes, and confronting civilian and military officials. Giesberg provides a dramatic reinterpretation of how America's Civil War reshaped the lived experience of race and gender and brought swift and lasting changes to northern working-class family life.