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Cynthia A. Kierner

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Cynthia A. Kierner : Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700-1835 (Comstock Classic Handbooks) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700-1835 (Comstock Classic Handbooks):

Much has been written about the "southern lady," that pervasive and enduring icon of antebellum regional identity. But how did the lady get on her pedestal--and were the lives of white southern women always so different from those of their northern contemporaries? In her ambitious new book, Cynthia A. Kierner charts the evolution of the lives of white southern women through the colonial, revolutionary, and early republican eras. Using the lady on her pedestal as the end--rather than the beginning--of her story, she shows how gentility, republican political ideals, and evangelical religion successively altered southern gender ideals and thereby forced women to reshape their public roles. Kierner concludes that southern women continually renegotiated their access to the public sphere--and that even the emergence of the frail and submissive lady as icon did not obliterate women's public role. Kierner draws on a strong overall command of early American and women's history and adds to it research in letters, diaries, newspapers, secular and religious periodicals, travelers' accounts, etiquette manuals, and cookery books. Focusing on the issues of work,

education, and access to the public sphere, she explores the evolution of southern gender ideals in an important transitional era. Specifically, she asks what kinds of changes occurred in women's relation to the public sphere from 1700 to 1835. In answering this major question, she makes important links and comparisons, across both time and region, and creates a chronology of social and intellectual change that addresses many key questions in the history of women, the South, and early America.

From Publishers Weekly
Cynthia A. Kierner debunks the myth of the delicate flower of Southern womanhood in *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700-1835*. From the earliest settlements onward, Southern women worked hard and long to provide the underpinnings of life in a new land. Examining the influence of slavery, religion and the dominance of the ideals of republican politics and of gentility, Kierner shows how these women were kept in their place for more than a hundred years. 22 bw photos. (Cornell Univ., \$49.95 304p ISBN 0-8014-3453-X; paper \$17.95 -8462-6; Nov.) Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Kierner debunks the myth of the delicate flower of Southern womanhood." *Publishers Weekly* "This study will be a useful resource for general courses on southern history. The richest new material appears in its chapters on women's wartime political correspondence and their postwar participation in public celebrations." *Choice* "Historians of southern women have always had to confront the image of the 'southern lady' that permeates the field of American history like recalcitrant mildew. No matter how often they assert the existence of real women whose lives were nothing like that of the mythic lady, her shadowy self continues to reappear despite the repainting provided by countless scholars and their detailed studies of southern women. Cynthia A Kierner synthesizes much of this recent scholarship to provide a useful and accessible study of real women and their lives in those areas with the largest populations, the most complex societies, many of the oldest settlements, the best-kept historical collections, and the most readily available sources: Virginia and the Carolinas." *American Historical* . April, 2000 "Subtle and sophisticated . . . it bridges a gap between some of the best new scholarship on women in the colonial period and on women in the nineteenth century." *Virginia Libraries* "Students and scholars of women's history will appreciate the important connections Kierner makes between southern and northern women and the impact of social and intellectual changes in southern women's lives." Diane C. Vecchio, Furman University, *The North Carolina Historical* . October, 1999. "A richly textured study . . ." Christie Anne Farnham, Iowa State University, *The Journal of American History*. December, 1999. "A well-written, impressively researched revisionist account of women's roles in the early South which documents how women in diverse ways both accepted and moved beyond gender ideals and helped shape the evolving public sphere. The book is filled with insightful comparative connections across time and space and merits the close attention of historians of women and the South in general." John B. Boles, Rice University