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*Women's War: Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War*  
by Stephanie McCurry (review)

Jennifer Lynn Gross

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classroom. This volume thus comes highly recommended for scholars and students alike.

University of Virginia

FRANK J. CIRILLO

*Women's War: Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War.* By Stephanie McCurry. (Cambridge, Mass., and London: Harvard University Press, 2019. Pp. xiv, 297. \$26.95, ISBN 978-0-674-98797-5.)

In *Women's War: Fighting and Surviving the American Civil War*, Stephanie McCurry works from the premise that "Women are not just witnesses to war"; they are actors in it and impact "all the major dynamics, processes, and outcomes of the war" (p. 203). In each of the book's three chapters, she extensively illustrates instances when women played a transformative role in conventionally male realms like the military and politics. In sum, McCurry's latest work reveals, "There is no Civil War history without women in it" (p. 204).

In the first chapter, McCurry analyzes the change during the Civil War from the assumption of Confederate women as innocents to their consideration by Francis Lieber as potential "'war rebel[s]'" (p. 41). The shift was not an easy one, but eventually President Abraham Lincoln's administration was forced by Confederate women's actions to dispense with the notion that women were "the quintessential noncombatants" and focus instead on their loyalty or disloyalty. McCurry concludes that the alteration in policy was radical: "There is a great deal at stake in the idea of women's innocence and of noncombatant protection in war. It represents an investment in the gender order itself" (p. 61).

In chapter 2, McCurry explores how African American women were impacted by the Emancipation Proclamation's call for African American soldiers. As she astutely puts it, "enslaved men were to take the martial path to freedom and enslaved women the marital one," though there was no such legal person as the "'slave wife'" (pp. 7, 63). Just as it was the enemy women who forced the change in the rules of war discussed in chapter 1, it was African American women who forced the federal government to recognize them. Importantly, McCurry observes, the hierarchical gender order of marriage was replicated "to govern the relations of the millions of new American citizens whose freedom was confirmed by the Thirteenth Amendment" (p. 122).

Acknowledging that one life experience can only take historians so far toward a new history of Reconstruction, in chapter 3 McCurry uses Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas's perspective to illuminate "how the huge structural changes in land, capital, and racial ideology that form the usual subjects of Reconstruction history were inextricably wound up with highly intimate matters of marriage and family, sexuality and love" (p. 10). In light of recent challenges to the idea that Reconstruction marked a significant break in American history (because of the legacy of racism in American society), McCurry makes a solid case for continuing to see Reconstruction as revolutionary, especially in how it impacted "the most personal realms of life, touching on matters of love and belonging, marriage and motherhood" (p. 201).

Using three underconsidered stories of war, McCurry makes a solid argument that women participants were written off after the war as exceptions, and women's role in the war became solely a story of sacrifice and service to men,

even though their participation had been widely acknowledged during the war. In the epilogue, McCurry considers why, concluding that this postbellum narrative emerged from assumptions about women's "normative identity as wives willingly subject to the authority of their husbands. "Those principles are hard to live without," she writes; "when war is over they have to be restored" (p. 205). Although men were certainly major actors in this willful forgetting, many women accepted these same ideas, even couching their postwar justification for women's rights in terms of their sacrificial service to men during the war, not their own active heroism. Akin to the postwar whitewashing of the war as a so-called brother's conflict instead of a war caused by slavery, McCurry illustrates "the larger historical problem of women and war: about how much of that past is disowned—or rendered exceptional—when it is in fact foundational" (p. 62).

Jacksonville State University

JENNIFER LYNN GROSS

*Clara Barton's Civil War: Between Bullet and Hospital.* By Donald C. Pfanz. (Yardley, Pa.: Westholme Publishing, 2018. Pp. xii, 228. \$28.00, ISBN 978-1-59416-310-4.)

In order to understand and assess Clara Barton's involvement and impact during and after the American Civil War, Donald C. Pfanz seeks to dispel the myths and mystique of Barton by unpacking her writings. Pfanz, a historian at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, acknowledges the misinformation about Barton in existing scholarship and also highlights her absence in the largest collections of Civil War-era materials. Existing scholarship about Barton rests on the belief of the reliability and accuracy of Barton's own writings and statements. Much of the myth, as Pfanz explains, was created by Barton herself.

While Barton's stories have been embellished, Pfanz skillfully demonstrates how her actual life's work during and after the war was truly valiant. As Pfanz notes, scholarship, including Stephen B. Oates's *A Woman of Valor: Clara Barton and the Civil War* (New York, 1994), depends on the reliability of Barton to recall her own contributions during and after the American Civil War. Largely based on Barton's accounts, Oates's narrative portrays Barton as someone who independently and skillfully managed to provide care, secure supplies, and work with others. Additionally, Pfanz exposes the issue with Barton's absence in soldiers' letters. Given the magnitude of her contributions, as Barton expressed it in her own writings, these letters neglect to mention her. This book's major contribution is Pfanz's great effort to present a factual and accurate account of Barton's life and work. He highlights her successes by exposing the true series and sequence of events without diminishing her bravery, tenacity, or nurturing spirit. While Pfanz intends to dispel the myths of Barton's career, he also details how the accurate and truthful events of her life did not need excessive or unnecessary embellishments. The true events of Barton's life during and after the American Civil War, as Pfanz details throughout this excellent narrative, were remarkable without the inclusion of these unnecessary additions.

To showcase Barton's own writings and thoughts, Pfanz includes an appendix of her most noted speeches, as they have been used to understand Barton's service during the American Civil War. Pfanz does acknowledge