



African American Women During the Civil War (Studies in African American History and Culture)

Ella Forbes

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This study uses an abundance of primary sources to restore African American female participants in the Civil War to history by documenting their presence, contributions and experience. Free and enslaved African American women took part in this process in a variety of ways, including black female charity and benevolence. These women were spies, soldiers, scouts, nurses, cooks, seamstresses, laundresses, recruiters, relief workers, organizers, teachers, activists and survivors. They carried the honor of the race on their shoulders, insisting on their right to be treated as "ladies" and knowing that their conduct was a direct reflection on the African American community as a whole.

For too long, black women have been rendered invisible in traditional Civil War history and marginal in African American chronicles. This book addresses this lack by reclaiming and resurrecting the role of African American females, individually and collectively, during the Civil War. It brings their contributions, in the words of a Civil War participant, Susie King Taylor, "in history before the people."

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