



Southern Women in Revolution, 1776-1800: Personal and Political Narratives

Cynthia A. Kierner

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Southern Women in Revolution, 1776-1800 offers readers a new approach to the social history of the American Revolution and a unique perspective on this period in southern women's history. Using ninety-eight petitions that women in North and South Carolina submitted to their state assemblies during or after the war, Cynthia A. Kierner examines southern women's wartime experiences and assesses their changing expectations for public and private life. Between 1776 and 1800, southern women submitted hundreds of petitions to their state legislatures. Most sought compensation for losses incurred during the Revolution, and many included moving accounts of personal and economic hardships. To convey the diversity of women's experiences, Southern Women in Revolution, 1776-1800 includes petitions from Whigs and Tories, rich and poor, whites and African Americans. Suggesting that the public ideology of the American Revolution affected women's understanding of seemingly private personal relationships, the author also includes selections from women's earliest petitions for divorce, property rights, and the emancipation of slaves. Critical and compelling sources, these petitions constitute the largest body of women's writing about the American Revolution and its impact on civilian life. Divided into five chapters, each prefaced with an interpretive essay, the book places the petitions in historical context, focusing on both the stories women told and the language they used when venturing into the public sphere to voice their concerns to their legislatures.

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