



Mary Chesnut's Civil War

By Mary Chesnut

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An authorized account of the Civil War, drawn from the diaries of a Southern aristocrat, records the disintegration and final destruction of the Confederacy.

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Mary Chesnut's Civil War By Mary Chesnut Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"A major book of this year."—Edmund Fuller, *The Wall Street Journal*

"Thanks to [Vann Woodward], we have the first authoritative text of this great work, now revealed as the masterpiece it is; the finest work of literature to come out of the Civil War, perhaps one of the half dozen or so most important diaries in all literature; if you will, a Southern *War and Peace*."—Reid Beddow, *The Washington Post Book World*

"Here is a book to curl up with over a whole lifetime—to read and reread, to ponder and savor."—Selma R. Williams, *The Boston Globe*

"Perhaps one of the half dozen or so most important diaries in all literature; if you will, a Southern 'War and Peace.'"—Reid Beddow, *The Washington Post Book World*

"A feast for Civil War buffs. . . . One of the best firsthand records of the Confederate experience. . . . Mrs. Chestnut's diary is electrifying."—Walter Clemons, *Newsweek*

"An admirable blend of scholarship and style. . . . C. Vann Woodward's impressive edition guarantees that Mary Chestnut's Civil War will take its rightful place as an American classic."—Joan Reardon, *Christian Science Monitor Book Review*

"This definitive edition of her massive, much-revised journal captures vividly the experience of war in the Old South, from the first hopeful days. . . to the ruinous end. . . . The book teems with interesting portraits (of generals and society ladies, of maids and slaves), with reports of battles and balls, and with highly evocative descriptions of everyday scenes (such as men sitting on coffins, talking and laughing) that bring the period to life."—*Publisher's Weekly*

"Woodward's edition of this most famous of contemporary Southern sources on the war is definitive. . . . Woodward's work, scrupulously and exhaustively annotated, presents the most reliable portrait yet of this most remarkably vital, intelligent, witty woman. An outspoken feminist who abhorred the slavery system, Chesnut was also a keen observer of her times and of the men and women who crossed her path. An elaborate introduction and a magnificent index enhance a book sure to be hailed by historians, lovers of literature, and indeed anyone with a taste for the human story."—*Library Journal*

"Mary Chestnut's spirit, wit, independence, and incisive pen come sparkling through, making this a literary as well as historical document of major importance."—*Choice*

"Here is the rich and full context, as the author herself recreated it. It is by all odds the best of all Civil War memoirs, and one of the most remarkable eye-witness accounts to emerge from that or any other war."—Louis D. Rubin Jr., *The New Republic*

"Now, thanks to the judicious editing of C. Vann Woodward, the great Yale historian of the South, we can read nearly the whole of Mary Chestnut's work and see precisely which passages came from the original journal of Civil War vintage and which were revised in later years. And this more authentic version is if

anything more impressive as the account of an exceptional woman and the society she both represented and questioned. . . . [A] splendid volume."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Part diary, part work of literary art, *Mary Chestnut's Civil War* retains its value as an account of a society caught in the vortex of far-reaching change. It is good to have, at long last, a definitive version of this classic, and it is appropriate that Woodward, who has done more to shape the study of southern history than any other historian of his generation, has produced it."—Eric Foner, *The History Book Club Review*

"The 'big' book of 1981—the book that's going to be acclaimed and read and remembered over others. . . . No title has been more anticipated."—William W. Starr, *The State* (Columbia, South Carolina)

"The work is really an epic in which the accumulation of quotidian detail—the weather, parties, receptions, rumors, duels, love affairs, murders, promotions and demotions, intrigues, illnesses, celebrations—provides a sense of the rhythms of ordinary life during those chaotic four years in a way that no other book has done."—William Styron, *The New York Review of Books*

"Underlying even the darkest passages is a cheerfulness of spirit, almost a buoyancy, that in effect aerates the narrative and provides much of its charm and readability. A great epic drama of our greatest national tragedy."—William Styron, *The New York Review of Books*

"Vann Woodward's long awaited edition of Mary Chestnut's 'Diary' of the Civil War is the first uncorrupted and annotated text of a novelistic memoir, at one an illuminating historical document and a work of genuine literary distinction. Woodward's ingenious blending of the original journals and the subsequent 'Diary' makes this version immensely superior to the previous ones and enables us for the first time to appreciate the mind and art of this remarkable mind."—Daniel Aaron, Harvard University

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