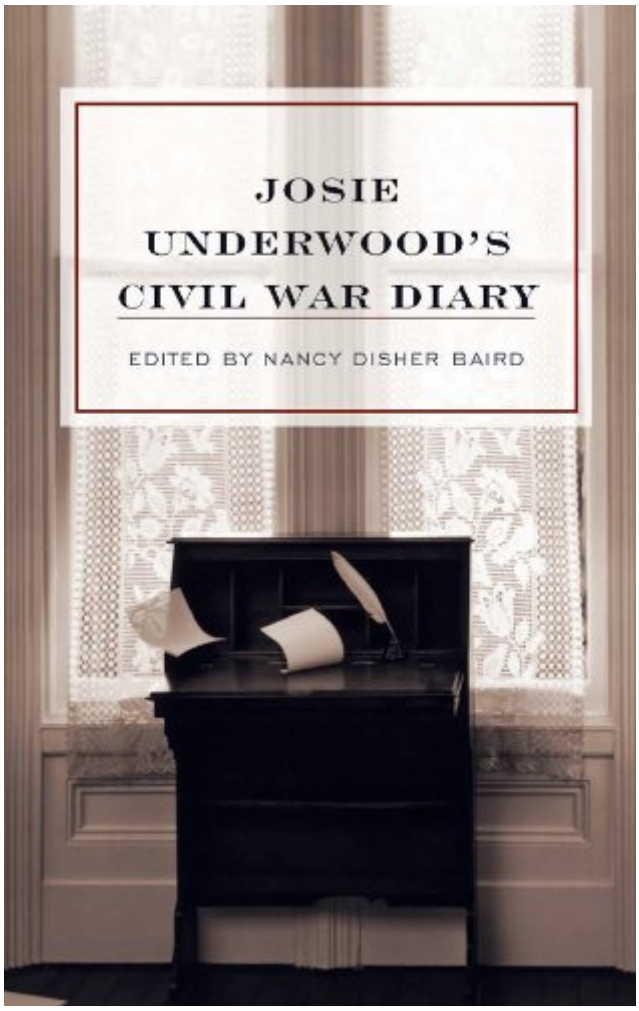
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Josie Underwood's Civil War Diary



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Synopsis

A well-educated, outspoken member of a politically prominent family in Bowling Green, Kentucky, Josie Underwood (1840--1923) left behind one of the few intimate accounts of the Civil War written by a southern woman sympathetic to the Union. This vivid portrayal of the early years of the war begins several months before the first shots were fired on Fort Sumter in April 1861. "The Philistines are upon us," twenty-year-old Josie writes in her diary, leaving no question about the alarm she feels when Confederate soldiers occupy her once-peaceful town. Offering a unique perspective on the tensions between the Union and the Confederacy, Josie reveals that Kentucky was a hotbed of political and military action, particularly in her hometown of Bowling Green, known as the Gibraltar of the Confederacy. Located along important rail and water routes that were vital for shipping supplies in and out of the Confederacy, the city linked the upper South’s trade and population centers and was strategically critical to both armies. Capturing the fright and frustration she and her family experienced when Bowling Green served as the Confederate army’s headquarters in the fall of 1861, Josie tells of soldiers who trampled fields, pilfered crops, burned fences, cut down trees, stole food, and invaded homes and businesses. In early 1862, Josie’s outspoken Unionist father, Warner Underwood, was ordered to evacuate the family’s Mount Air estate, which was later destroyed by occupying forces. Wartime hardships also strained relationships among Josie’s family, neighbors, and friends, whose passionate beliefs about Lincoln, slavery, and Kentucky’s secession divided them. Published for the first time, Josie Underwood’s Civil War Diary interweaves firsthand descriptions of the political unrest of the day with detailed accounts of an active social life filled with travel, parties, and suitors. Bringing to life a Unionist, slave-owning young woman who opposed both Lincoln’s policies and Kentucky’s secession, the diary dramatically chronicles the physical and emotional traumas visited on Josie’s family, community, and state during wartime.

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Customer Reviews

This is a wonderful glimpse of the Civil War times. Being related to the diary's author, Josie Underwood, and knowing Nancy Baird who put this diary together, it makes the diary even more interesting. Josie was well educated, well-to-do, well read and quite outspoken. This is her diary of the times when the Confederate troops invaded Bowling Green KY and then the Union troops - both causing destruction of the Underwood property, Mt. Air and changing forever the social life of a young lady. I recommend highly!

The book is a great look into a young girls look at life during the Civil War.

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