



War Stories: Suffering and Sacrifice in the Civil War North

Frances M. Clarke

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The American Civil War is often seen as the first modern war, not least because of its immense suffering. Yet unlike later conflicts, it did not produce an outpouring of disillusionment or cynicism, as most people continued to portray the war in highly sentimental and patriotic terms. While scholars typically dismiss this everyday writing as simplistic or naïve, Frances M. Clarke argues that we need to reconsider the letters, diaries, songs, and journalism penned by Union soldiers and their caregivers to fully understand the war's impact and meaning.

In *War Stories*, Clarke revisits the most common stories that average Northerners told in hopes of redeeming their suffering and loss—stories that enabled people to make sense of their hardship, and to express their beliefs about religion, community, and personal character. From tales of Union soldiers who died heroically to stories of tireless volunteers who exemplified the Republic's virtues, *War Stories* sheds new light on this transitional moment in the history of war, emotional culture, and American civic life.

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