



# The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865

*Alice Fahs*

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## **The Imagined Civil War: Popular Literature of the North and South, 1861-1865** Alice Fahs

In this groundbreaking work of cultural history, Alice Fahs explores a little-known and fascinating side of the Civil War--the outpouring of popular literature inspired by the conflict. From 1861 to 1865, authors and publishers in both the North and the South produced a remarkable variety of war-related compositions, including poems, songs, children's stories, romances, novels, histories, and even humorous pieces. Fahs mines these rich but long-neglected resources to recover the diversity of the war's political and social meanings.

Instead of narrowly portraying the Civil War as a clash between two great, white armies, popular literature offered a wide range of representations of the conflict and helped shape new modes of imagining the relationships of diverse individuals to the nation. Works that explored the war's devastating impact on white women's lives, for example, proclaimed the importance of their experiences on the home front, while popular writings that celebrated black manhood and heroism in the wake of emancipation helped readers begin to envision new roles for blacks in American life.

Recovering a lost world of popular literature, *The Imagined Civil War* adds immeasurably to our understanding of American life and letters at a pivotal point in our history.



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