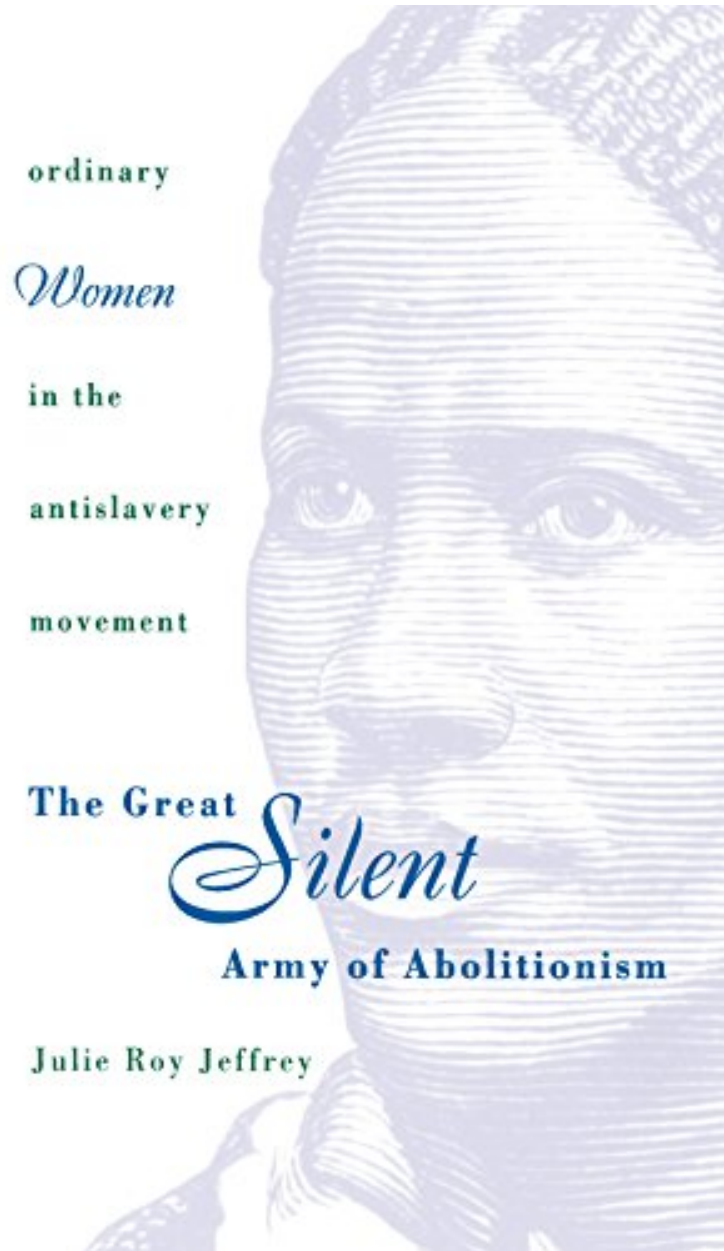


[FREE] The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement

The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement

Julie Roy Jeffrey

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Julie Roy Jeffrey : The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement

before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism: Ordinary Women in the Antislavery Movement*:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Pathfinding if not ground-breaking
By M. E. Jones
I bought this because it's a required text for an Indiana University graduate course in US History I'm currently taking (American Dissent!!!--the history of reform movements in our country, 1800-1970s). I wrote an entire paper on this book (and got an A from a full prof), so here goes: Jeffrey is WELL qualified to write this paper (I scoped that out; please take my word for it: she's earned her academic historian bona fides). Over the past 40 years, women's contribution to the Abolition movement finally has been documented, but primarily for the stand-out white New England females who went on to champion Women's Rights. Jeffrey's great contribution is to document the commitment and activity of "ordinary" women in that great movement, including free black women and those as far west as Ohio. She goes into great detail as to their contributions, a little too much detail at one point (for me) in describing the 'new' anti-slavery fairs of the antebellum period. The book also is notable for its intelligent observations of how their religious- and humanitarian-based work for the Abolition of slavery caused the involved women eventually to question their OWN position in society, since at the time they not only could not vote, but had absolutely NO rights of citizenship. They could not even speak in a public forum without censure. Scary stuff, almost unbelievable--but it's true; it was that way at that time. Jeffrey also notes that the majority of female "silent army" abolitionists did NOT, as a body, segue into the movement for Women's Rights equality, and this astonished me. There certainly was overlap--which Jeffrey explains quite well--but for the most part, apparently and according to Jeffrey, the movement for Women's Rights was subscribed to with commitment and activity at a lesser extent than was the Abolition of slavery. When one considers it took another 50 yrs to realize women's right to vote, it makes sense; had as many women subscribed to the movement for the equality of women, it would have taken far less time. Altogether: excellent text for upper undergrad and graduate studies, though not one I'd have otherwise read.

By focusing on male leaders of the abolitionist movement, historians have often overlooked the great grassroots army of women who also fought to eliminate slavery. Here, Julie Roy Jeffrey explores the involvement of ordinary women--black and white--in the most significant reform movement prior to the Civil War. She offers a complex and compelling portrait of antebellum women's activism, tracing its changing contours over time. For more than three decades, women raised money, carried petitions, created propaganda, sponsored lecture series, circulated newspapers, supported third-party movements, became public lecturers, and assisted fugitive slaves. Indeed, Jeffrey says, theirs was the day-to-day work that helped to keep abolitionism alive. Drawing from letters, diaries, and institutional records, she uses the words of ordinary women to illuminate the meaning of abolitionism in their lives, the rewards and challenges that their commitment provided, and the anguished personal and public steps that abolitionism sometimes demanded they take. Whatever their position on women's rights, argues Jeffrey, their abolitionist activism was a radical step--one that challenged the political and social status quo as well as conventional gender norms.

Provides a wealth of insights. . . . While Jeffrey's work has certainly not been the last word on female abolitionists, it has established itself as one of the first places to begin.--*Historical Journal of Massachusetts* Of vital importance for all students of abolitionism and for scholars interested in antebellum women's history.--*Journal of the Early Republic* Thoroughly researched and elegant . . . fills a long standing gap in abolitionist studies.--*Journal of Interdisciplinary History* This fine, definitive, and exhaustively researched book locates women as central actors in the antislavery struggle, emphasizing how their efforts both transcended and transformed the parameters of the emergent public sphere.--*Journal of American History* The first general survey to bring together this diverse and growing literature on women abolitionists. . . . Essential reading for students of the antebellum period and serves as an inspiring testament to the important, often unheralded, work that individuals can do in their homes, communities, and churches to challenge societal wrongs and injustices.--*New England Quarterly* An outstanding and indispensable addition to the literature on American antislavery work. . . . A brilliant success. [Jeffrey] has recaptured the voices of hundreds of forgotten women, weaving their stories together in a moving and effective narrative that clearly establishes the centrality of women's work to the abolitionist movement. She has, in this way, left an enduring mark on all future study of the antislavery struggle.--*The Historian* In the context of antebellum America, the decision to work on behalf of the abolition of slavery was a radical act, especially for women. *The Great Silent Army of Abolitionism* offers a superb analysis of women's antislavery activism, incorporating black and white women, local and national leaders, Garrisonians and political abolitionists. In providing the first book that captures the full scope, diversity and significance of women's work for emancipation, Julie Roy Jeffrey makes a compelling contribution to the history of both the antislavery movement and women's activism.--Nancy A. Hewitt, coeditor of *Talking Gender: Public Images, Personal Journeys, and Political Critiques* Jeffrey's careful, detailed, and prescient examination of ordinary women in an extraordinary reform movement--abolitionism--extends the debate over gender and politics in the early Republic. . . . An important book.--*Choice* Jeffrey investigates the broader scope of the movement and brings antislavery into the

realm of social history. . . . In the process, the book examines how abolitionism affected the lives of ordinary women and how women in turn influenced the abolitionist movement.--Journal of Southern History Jeffrey's extensive research into the lives of ordinary women confirms much that has been said in shorter venues and adds intriguing new interpretations of its own as it broadens our considerations of abolition to include the articulate female majority in its rank and file. Useful to scholars, the book should also be accessible to advanced undergraduates because of its underlying chronological organization and brief summaries of important events in the history of abolition.--Journal of Southern History A comprehensive study of women's participation in the abolitionist movement from the 1830s through the Civil War. . . . [Jeffrey] presents a new way of framing female abolitionist activism. . . . An important book for historians of abolitionism in particular and nineteenth-century social reform movements in general, for it demonstrates that women were not peripheral to abolitionist men, despite the patriarchal structure of national and state antislavery organizations.--American Historical From the Inside Flap Explores the essential yet overlooked role of ordinary women in the abolitionist movement.