



## **From the Pen of a She-Rebel: The Civil War Dairy of Emilie Riley McKinley (Women's Diaries and Letters of the South)**

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SHORTLY AFTER SHE BEGAN her diary, Emilie Riley McKinley penned an entry to record the day she believed to be the saddest of her life. The date was July 4, 1863, and Federal troops had captured the city of Vicksburg, Mississippi. A teacher on a plantation near the city under siege, McKinley shared with others in her rural community an unwavering allegiance to the Confederate cause. What she did not share with her Southern neighbors was her background: Emilie McKinley was a Yankee. McKinley's account, revealed through evocative diary entries, tells of a Northern woman who embodied sympathy for the Confederates. During the months that Federal troops occupied her hometown and county, she vented her feelings and opinions on the pages of her journal and articulated her support of the Confederate cause. Through sharply drawn vignettes, McKinley - never one to temper her beliefs - candidly depicted her confrontations with the men in blue along with observations of explosive interactions between soldiers and civilians. Maintaining a tone of wit and gaiety even as she encountered human pathos, she commented on major military events and reported on daily plantation life. An eyewitness account to a turning point in the Civil War, From the Pen of a She-Rebel chronicles not only a community's near destruction but also its endurance in the face of war.

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