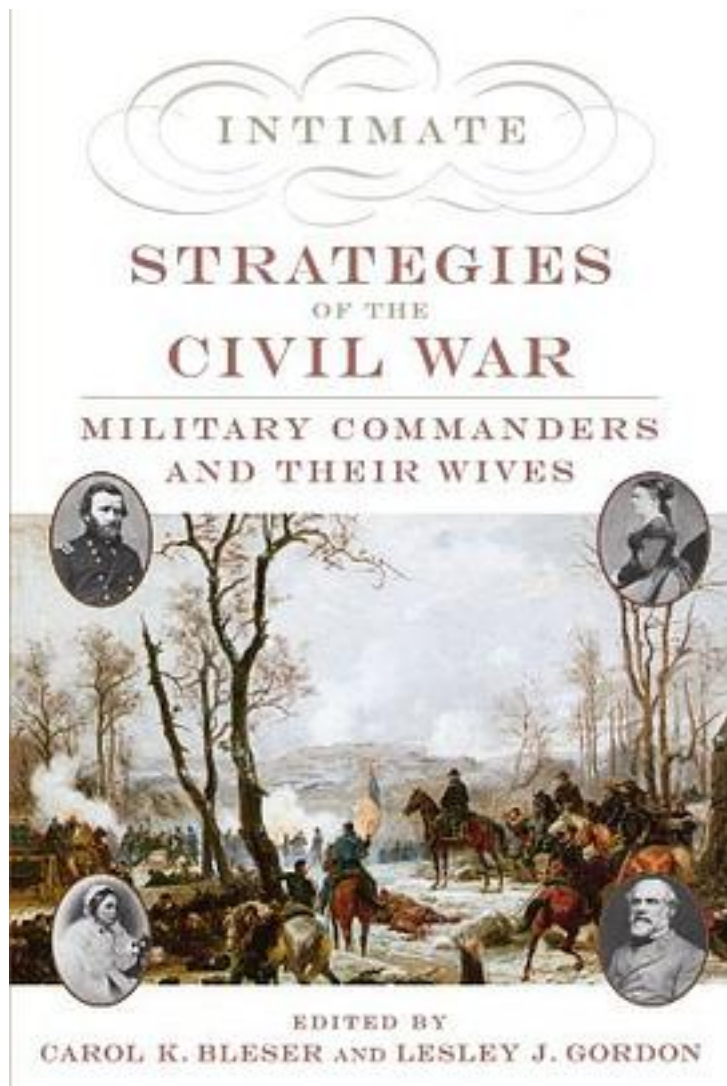


Intimate Strategies of the Civil War



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The wives of Civil War commanders had widely divergent roles in their marriages before, during, and after the war - some wives changed their roles as their husbands gained prominence. Most of the wives of military commanders in this collection sought to have some influence over their husband's professional career with mixed success. Carol Bleser strongly asserts that Varina Davis's role in running the Confederate government was much larger than many have previously believed. Shirley Leckie depicts Libbie Custer using her considerable charisma and charm to win political support for her husband and promote the Boy General. Virginia Jeans Laas finds Elizabeth Blair Lee continuously counselling her husband on military affairs and using her powerful family connections to help her husband's naval career. Jessie Fremont was essentially her husband's unofficial chief of staff, even going so far as to pay a visit to Abraham Lincoln to urge him to intervene on behalf of General Fremont. Lizinka Ewell similarly swayed her husband with military advice, pressuring him to keep her son out of harm's way in battle. However, there were limits to these wives' influence.

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