



Princes of Cotton: Four Diaries of Young Men in the South, 1848-1860 (The Publications of the Southern Texts Society)

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A rogue, a megalomaniac, a plodder, and a depressive: the men whose previously unpublished diaries are collected in this volume were four very different characters. But they had much in common too. All were from the Deep South. All were young, between seventeen and twenty-five. All had a connection to cotton and slaves. Most obviously, all were diarists, enduring night upon night of cramped hands and candle bugs to write out their lives.

Down the furrows of their fathers' farms, through the thickets of their local woods, past the familiar haunts of their youth, Harry Dixon, Henry Hughes, John Coleman, and Henry Craft arrive at manhood via journeys they narrate themselves. All would be swept into the Confederate Army, and one would die in its service. But if their manhood was tested in the war, it was formed in the years before, when they emerged from their swimming holes, sopping with boyhood, determined to become princes among men.

Few books exist about the inner lives of southern males, especially those in adolescence and early adulthood. *Princes of Cotton* begins to remedy this shortage. These diaries, along with Stephen Berry's introduction, address some of the central questions in the study of southern manhood: how masculine ideals in the Old South were constructed and maintained; how males of different ages and regions resisted, modified, or flouted those ideals; how those ideals could be expressed differently in public and private; and how the Civil War provoked a seismic shift in southern masculinity.

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