

In 1854 Caroline Seabury of Brooklyn, New York, set out for Columbus, Mississippi, to teach French at its Institute for Young Ladies. She lived in Columbus until 1863, through the years of mounting sectional bitterness that preceded the Civil War and through the turmoil and hardships of the war itself. During that time, her most intimate confidant was her diary. Discovered in the archives of the Minnesota State Historical Society, it is published here for the first time. The diary is an illuminating account of southern plantation society and the "peculiar institution" of slavery on the eve of its destruction. Seabury also records her uneasy attempts to come to terms with her position as an unmarried, white, Northern woman whose job was to educate wealthy, white, Southern girls in a setting seemingly oblivious to the horrors of slavery. The diary is not simply a chronicle of daily happenings; Seabury concentrates on remarkable events and the memorable feelings and ideas they generate, shaping them into entries that reveal her as an accomplished writer. She frames her narrative with her journey south in 1854 and the hazardous and exhausting return north through battle lines in 1863. Disapproving of slavery, yet deeply attached to friends and her life in Columbus and also painfully conscious of the fragility of her own economic and social position, Seabury condemned privately in her diary the evils that she endured silently in public. There are striking scenes of plantation life that depict the brutalities of slavery and benumbed responses to them. Seabury also successfully captures the mood of Mississippi as it changed from a fire-eating appetite to fight the Yankees to a grim apprehension of inexorable defeat. Most impressive of all is Seabury's poignantly honest presentation of herself, caught in the middle.

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The Diary of Caroline Seabury, has 8 ratings and 2 reviews. Emily said: I got this book because I felt like I ought to be interested in it. Fou. The diary is an illuminating account of southern plantation society and the 'peculiar institution' of slavery on the eve if its destruction. The Diary of Caroline Seabury, "Caroline Seabury Edited with an Introduction by Suzanne L. Bunkers Wisconsin Studies in Autobiography.

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