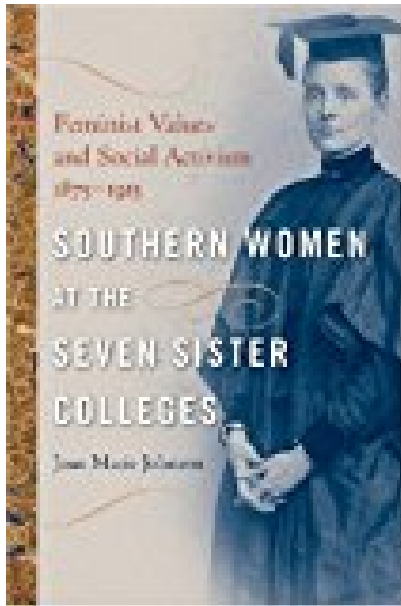


Southern Women at the Seven Sister Colleges Feminist Values and Social Activism 1875-1915



BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Joan Johnson
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BOOK SYNOPSIS

From the end of Reconstruction and into the New South era, more than one thousand white southern women attended one of the Seven Sister colleges: Vassar, Wellesley, Smith, Mount Holyoke, Bryn Mawr, Radcliffe, and Barnard. Joan Marie Johnson looks at how such educations—in the North, at some of the country's best schools—influenced southern women to challenge their traditional gender roles and become active in woman suffrage and other social reforms of the Progressive Era South. Attending one of the Seven Sister colleges, Johnson argues, could transform a southern woman indoctrinated in notions of domesticity and dependence into someone with newfound confidence and leadership skills. Many southern students at northern schools imported the values they imbibed at college, returning home to found schools of their own, women's clubs, and woman suffrage associations. At the same time, during college and after graduation, southern women maintained a complicated relationship to home, nurturing their regional identity and remaining loyal to the ideals of the Confederacy. Johnson explores why students sought a classical liberal arts education, how they prepared for entrance examinations, and how they felt as southerners on northern campuses. She draws on personal writings, information gleaned from college publications and records, and data on the women's decisions about marriage, work, children, and other life-altering concerns. In their time, the women studied in this book would eventually make up a disproportionately high percentage of the elite southern female leadership. This collective biography highlights the important part they played in forging new roles for women, especially in social reform, education, and suffrage.

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