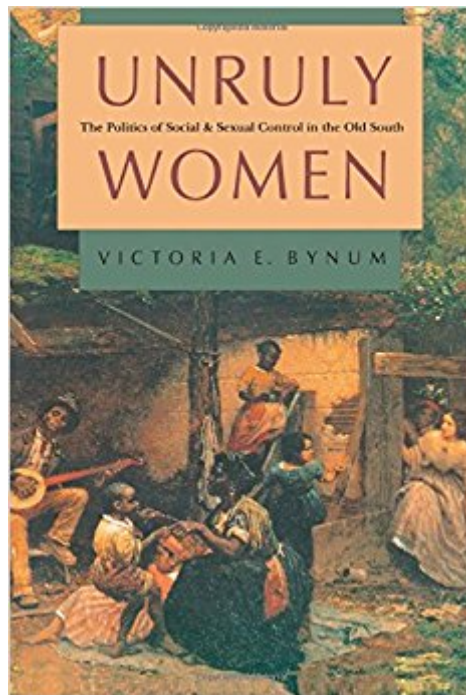


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# Unruly Women: The Politics Of Social And Sexual Control In The Old South (Gender And American Culture)



## Synopsis

In this richly detailed and imaginatively researched study, Victoria Bynum investigates "unruly" women in central North Carolina before and during the Civil War. Analyzing the complex and interrelated impact of gender, race, class, and region on the lives of black and white women, she shows how their diverse experiences and behavior reflected and influenced the changing social order and political economy of the state and region. Her work expands our knowledge of black and white women by studying them outside the plantation setting. Bynum searched local and state court records, public documents, and manuscript collections to locate and document the lives of these otherwise ordinary, obscure women. Some appeared in court as abused, sometimes abusive, wives, as victims and sometimes perpetrators of violent assaults, or as participants in illicit, interracial relationships. During the Civil War, women frequently were cited for theft, trespassing, or rioting, usually in an effort to gain goods made scarce by war. Some women were charged with harboring evaders or deserters of the Confederacy, an act that reflected their conviction that the Confederacy was destroying them. These politically powerless unruly women threatened to disrupt the underlying social structure of the Old South, which depended on the services and cooperation of all women. Bynum examines the effects of women's social and sexual behavior on the dominant society and shows the ways in which power flowed between private and public spheres. Whether wives or unmarried, enslaved or free, women were active agents of the society's ordering and dissolution.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

[An] illuminating and thoughtful book."Southern Cultures"A welcome and ambitious study."Journal of the History of Sexuality"•An• illuminating and thoughtful book."Southern Cultures"A fascinating and carefully argued interpretation of southern women."Journal of American History"A sophisticated but lively account . . . of a subset of women whose experiences reflect importantly on the nature of southern society."Choice"A powerful exposé of the seamy aspects of antebellum southern society."American Historical Review"A powerful exposé of the seamy aspects of antebellum southern society."American Historical Review"A powerful exposé of the seamy aspects of antebellum southern society."American Historical Review"

Drawing on records of women who appeared in courts in three counties of the North Carolina Piedmont to seek redress against abuse or to answer charges of disorderly behavior, [Bynum] analyzes how courts attempted to enforce ideals of domesticity and how deviant women resisted. . . . A sophisticated but lively account of the lives of a subset of women whose experiences reflect importantly on the nature of southern society.--ChoiceA fascinating and carefully argued interpretation of southern women.--Journal of American History[An] illuminating and thoughtful book.--Southern CulturesA welcome and ambitious study.--Journal of the History of SexualityVictoria Bynum's thorough and sensitive analysis of the poor women of the North Carolina piedmont refuses to be limited by class, race, or legal status. With material so rich, so various, and by turns tragic and downright funny, Bynum is writing emancipated new southern history. Her view of the women who represented the bedrock of southern society is essential reading for students of southern history today.--Nell Irvin Painter, Princeton UniversityA powerful expose of the seamy aspects of antebellum southern society. . . . [Readers] will appreciate [Bynum's] nuanced depiction of the elaborate networks of kin and neighborly relations in the Piedmont and will find her study immensely informative and persuasive about social groups in the South that heretofore have been little understood.--American Historical Review

I knew Black women were held in bondage, but I was surprised that White women were a step above them in bondage.The injustice against women was disturbing, yet it's a reflection of some--not all--but some male attitudes today. Thanks for the research and sharing your findings.Author Pat Simmons

I think that Victoria Bynum writes the most accurate books on the Southern South. I was born and raised in Mississippi, I'm 77 years old. My family was from Jones County. Over the years I've heard many tales about living in the that area and the Civil war.

This is very interesting how the many different women being abuse by all kind of men and women that no one will realize that it can happen right now.

I bought this book because a Google search showed it had information about one of my ancestors. I wasn't sure what to expect. Dry dissertation? Hugely slanted feminist agenda? History reduced to charts and tables? None of the above, I'm happy to say. This is an interesting and engaging look at the lives of some not-so-upstanding women of the 1800s in central NC. It's both approachable for the non-academic (that's me) and yet offers a good, full set of references with which one can do more research. If this were a class, I'd take it in a heartbeat. As a bonus, I found information about more than one of my own ancestors in the book. Boy, I wish I'd had some of this information when my mother would go on about "your generation doesn't know how to behave like ladies and gentlemen." Yeah, well, mom, apparently neither did your grandmothers' generation!

Wife loves southern history and this was a gift. I can't speak to the accuracy, writing quality or the writing style.

Written like a study, as opposed to a nonfiction read. It was very academic. While this was fine with me, I needed to read it for a college history course. I don't know if I would recommend it for a pleasure read. It was very thorough, and provided enough information to get a solid paper out of it.

This product came on time, in good condition. It helped with school and I didn't expect anything more. I do not recommend reading for entertainment purposes. =]

This secondary source was truly unique and different from all women's history book that I have ever read. It gives a detailed view of atypical and deviant women who engaged in behaviors that were controversial during the Antebellum period. I used this when I was writing a report on deviant women of the south. This book takes place in North Carolina because N.C. has the most records of divorce, miscegenation, etc. She uses court cases and divorce records and compares different

counties and their court rulings. This book is an excellent source for reports and entertainment. It never bores and keeps you reading and educated all the way.

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