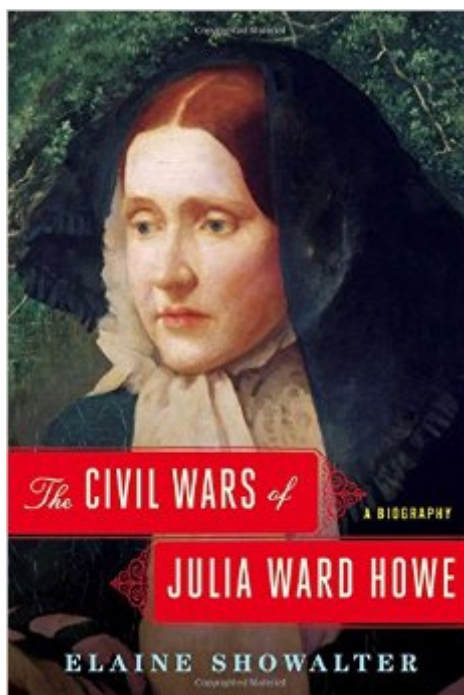


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The Civil Wars Of Julia Ward Howe: A Biography



Synopsis

• "Unfailingly vivid" and fair-minded • "The Atlantic" • "The New York Times Book Review" • "A biography with the verve and pace of a delicious novel...a polemic and a pleasure." • "The Boston Globe" The first biography to reveal Julia Ward Howe "the author of The Battle Hymn of the Republic" as a feminist pioneer who fought her own battle for creative freedom and independence. Julia Ward (1819–1910) was a heiress and aspiring poet when she married Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, an internationally-acclaimed pioneer in the education of the blind. Together the Howes knew many of the key figures of their era, from Charles Dickens to John Brown. But he also wasted her inheritance, isolated and discouraged her, and opposed her literary ambitions. Julia persisted, and continued to publish poems and plays while raising six children. Authorship of the Battle Hymn of the Republic made her celebrated and revered. But Julia was also continuing to fight a civil war at home; she became a pacifist, suffragist, and world traveler. She came into her own as a tireless campaigner for women's rights and social reform. Esteemed author Elaine Showalter tells the story of Howe's determined self-creation and brings to life the society she inhabited and the obstacles she overcame.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Growing up in the Dark Ages of the 1950s I had to search hard to find female role models. Not that my teachers were not great; I admired them immensely. I longed for women who were heroic and brave--and not fictional. In junior high I read began reading biographies: Jane Addams, Clara

Barton, Florence Nightingale, Joan of Arc. And I have been reading biographies of women ever since. The Civil Wars of Julia Ward Howe by Elaine Showalter is a biography that, unlike the biographies of my childhood reading, portrays a woman both driven and intelligent and flawed and human. I liked it immensely. Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910) is remembered today for writing The Battle Hymn of the Republic, a rousing anthem with powerful, Biblical inspired words. Otherwise most know little about her. Her poetry, plays, and failed opera did not pass the critical eye or become timeless. Her activism as an abolitionist and suffragette now is forgotten. She worked for abolition of the death penalty and prison reform, education reform, immigrant rights, Indian affairs, worker's rights, and was instrumental in the creation of Mother's Day and the Association of American Women. In her youth she was called the 'Diva' for her sparkling wit, beauty, and intelligence; in maturity she was the 'Mother Superior' of Boston philanthropy and 'the grand old lady of America'. Julia was born to wealth and had a top-notch education. She studied French six hours a day. Her vocal teacher was from the Italian opera company. Her father had commissioned Thomas Cole for The Voyage of Life, a series of four allegorical paintings depicting the stages of life. Julia met the greats of her time including Longfellow, Dickens, Margaret Fuller, and Charles Sumner.

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