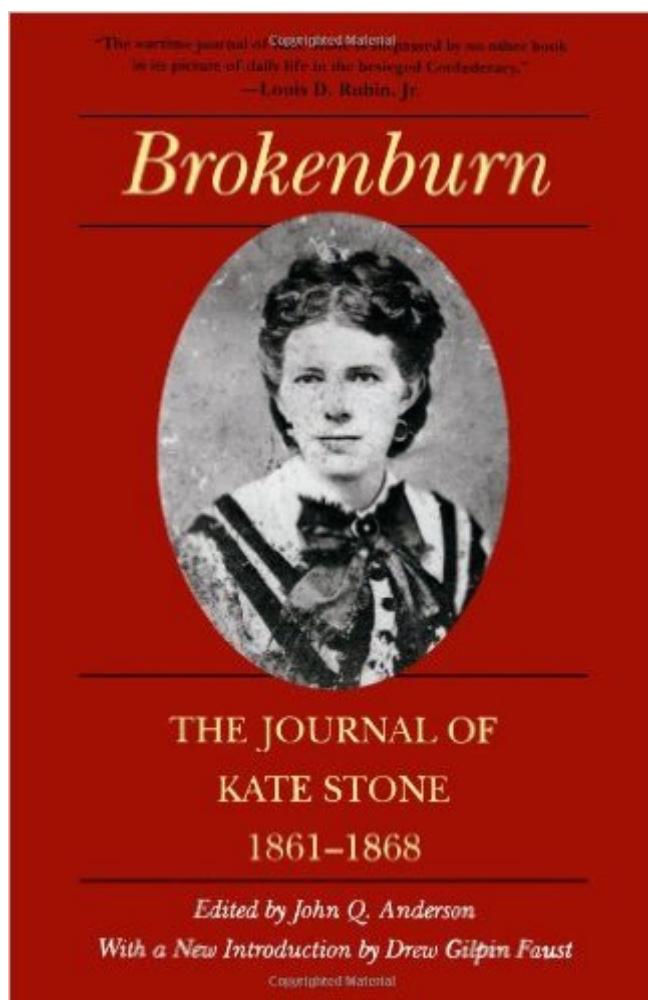


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Brokenburn: The Journal Of Kate Stone, 1861--1868 (Library Of Southern Civilization)



Synopsis

This journal records the Civil War experiences of a sensitive, well-educated, young southern woman. Kate Stone was twenty when the war began, living with her widowed mother, five brothers, and younger sister at Brokenburn, their plantation home in northeastern Louisiana. When Grant moved against Vicksburg, the family fled before the invading armies, eventually found refuge in Texas, and finally returned to a devastated home. Kate began her journal in May, 1861, and made regular entries up to November, 1865. She included briefer sketches in 1867 and 1868. In chronicling her everyday activities, Kate reveals much about a way of life that is no more: books read, plantation management and crops, maintaining slaves in the antebellum period, the attitude and conduct of slaves during the war, the fate of refugees, and civilian morale. Without pretense and with almost photographic clarity, she portrays the South during its darkest hours.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Kate Stone is one of my favorite Civil War diarists. She is an admixture of a great privilege, passionate beliefs, lover of literature, keen social observations and amazing fortitude. Her Civil War was dangerous, turbulent and life changing. Brokenburn was a large plantation containing over 150 slaves in Madison Parish, LA. From 1862 on, it was in the center of the Union Army's fierce assault to gain control of the Mississippi River and divide the Confederacy in half. Plantations were commandeered and slaves were encouraged to revolt. The civilian population was helpless before

the demands of military control. Madison Parish had a population of approximately 9,000 of whom 7,000 were slaves. After 1861, the Parish was emptied of able-bodied white men, most of whom had been sent to far-off Virginia and Tennessee, leaving none to protect the civilians. In 1861, Kate was 20 years old, her immediate future being beaus, courtship, and a gay social life before she settled down to become a proper southern matron. She was unsure whether this route was ideal, as she remarked, "women grew significantly uglier in wedlock and ignored and abandoned their former female friends." This comfortable world was turned upside down, never to reappear again. With great enthusiasm and some trepidation, she watched her three older brothers go off to war. Her widowed mother made it clear that 14-year-old James was now in charge of the running of the plantation and the protection of the rest of the family. I was amazed at the serene assumption that a young teenager was thrust in this role, but it seems that was the custom of the times. If you had to grow up fast, you did. Yellow fever was a constant in the area, and longevity was not a norm.

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