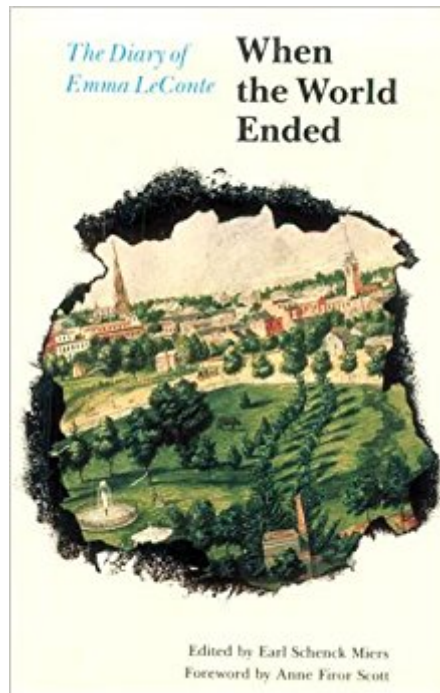




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When The World Ended: The Diary Of Emma LeConte



Synopsis

"I wonder if the new year is to bring us new miseries and sufferings," seventeen-year-old Emma LeConte wrote in her diary on December 31, 1864. In fact, the worst was yet to come. Her later entries portray the city of Columbia, South Carolina, like much of the South, under the grip of Sherman's army. No reader of this diary is likely to forget the defiant, well-bred Emma, who describes a family's anxieties and brave attempts to get on with life while the Civil War rages around them.

Book Information

Diary: 124 pages

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Customer Reviews

The Diary offers a new insight into the civilian side of the war's last bitter days in the South. It is an impressive literary creation that reveals some of the characteristic social structures and attitudes of the southern upper class at midcentury. It tells the reader a good deal about certain kinds of southern women.

In a new foreword to the Bison Books edition, Anne Firor Scott, a professor of history at Duke University whose writings include *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930*, rounds out the story of the remarkable Emma LeConte and the life she made after her familiar world ended.

LeConte specifically records her experiences in Columbia, South Carolina, during Sherman's

devastating march through the South in this volume of her work. Reading something like this can develop the reader's understanding of the long lastingness of bitterness and hatred that follow war. I have heard many jokes about how "those Southerners just won't let go" and people wonder about the continued obsession with the Civil War or The War Between the States, depending on where you are from. There is information about the ethics of war, i.e. killing civilians, burning food supplies to cause starvation of civilians, etc. It seems silly to me in some sense, when we are talking about killing people, to wonder if we should save libraries and museums. Nevertheless, for those interested in that conversation this is an important volume. I found the information about LeConte interesting from a feminist point of view, as she is educated and pushed toward intellectual growth by her father, among others. I found her to be highly intelligent and likable, which made it more shocking to hear her comments and beliefs about slaves. She truly believes this group is inferior and although that is not news in itself, it is the casualness with which it is conveyed that floors. The introduction and forward to this volume are also full of good and helpful information, helping me to notice things in the diary that I might not have noticed otherwise (as all good intros should). I was really bothered by reading Twains Diary of Adam and Eve because of the way he spoke about women, and found myself thinking about how I would feel reading this if I were African American rather than Euro-American. It is disturbing AND important. Five stars for importance?

This is a great little book about the civil war in South Carolina thru the eyes of a 16 year old girl. Her home is right on the USC horseshoe.

Though Emma writes from the perspective of the losing side of the Civil War, and though her beliefs on race clash greatly with our times, her persistence in the face of horrible suffering is a magnificent example to us all. She stands as testimony to the powerful spirit of the South and of Southern women in particular. Were we as committed to the ideals of our day as she was to those of her day, ours would be a powerful society indeed. Her diary is all the more shocking when you realize that she was only seventeen when she began writing

The United States is built on ruination. Emma survived but the promise that the Constitution had been for mankind perished with Columbia. I share Emma's story with many people who are better for knowing it. You might benefit from reading it as well.

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