



Intellectual Manhood: University, Self, and Society in the Antebellum South

Timothy J. Williams

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In this in-depth and detailed history, Timothy J. Williams reveals that antebellum southern higher education did more than train future secessionists and proslavery ideologues. It also fostered a growing world of intellectualism flexible enough to marry the era's middle-class value system to the honor-bound worldview of the southern gentry. By focusing on the students' perspective and drawing from a rich trove of their letters, diaries, essays, speeches, and memoirs, Williams narrates the under examined story of education and manhood at the University of North Carolina, the nation's first public university.

Every aspect of student life is considered, from the formal classroom and the vibrant curriculum of private literary societies to students' personal relationships with each other, their families, young women, and college slaves. In each of these areas, Williams sheds new light on the cultural and intellectual history of young southern men, and in the process dispels commonly held misunderstandings of southern history. Williams's fresh perspective reveals that students of this era produced a distinctly southern form of intellectual masculinity and maturity that laid the foundation for the formulation of the post-Civil War South.

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