



# **A Southern Writer and the Civil War: The Confederate Imagination of William Gilmore Simms**

*Jeffery J. Rogers*

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Historians of the American Civil War have debated a wide range of questions raised by the war and its outcome. None have been more vigorously argued as those surrounding its outcome. One of the leading explanations for Confederate defeat has been the argument that the Civil War South lacked a national identity. Related to and supporting this argument is the contention that the Civil War South failed to produce a distinct and vibrant literary culture. These contentions have been challenged by a growing body of literature which argues that the Civil War South did produce a sense of cultural and national identity. This book adds to this counter current through an examination of the Civil War experiences and writings of the Antebellum South's leading literary figure. Surprisingly, given William Gilmore Simms' well-known status prior to the war, his life and work during the course of the war itself has been understudied. This examination reveals the depth and extent to which Simms not only supported the Confederate war effort but how Simms conceptualized and articulated a vision of Confederate nationalism.

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