

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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Winnie Davis: Daughter of the Lost Cause.

Lee, Heath Hardage (Author)

Apr 2014. 248 p. Potomac, hardcover, \$29.95. (9781612346373). Potomac, e-book, (9781612346380). 973.913.

Born in 1864 during the death throes of the Confederacy, Varina Anne “Winnie” Davis, youngest child of Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States of America, quickly and irrevocably became a living, breathing representation of the old South. Lost causes need symbols in order to perpetuate and animate their ossifying mythologies, and Winnie never fully escaped her fate as both her family and genteel southern society confined her to a time capsule, where her public image inevitably trumped her private life. Attempting to carve out her own life as both a professional writer and a woman intent on unifying North and South, she was eventually thwarted in love after she became engaged to the grandson of a prominent Northern abolitionist. Dying at age 33, she became a forever-young icon, revered yet never fully appreciated or understood by the Confederate Civil War generation. Lee makes the most of Davis’ brief life and accomplishments by grounding her subject firmly in historical context.

— *Margaret Flanagan*