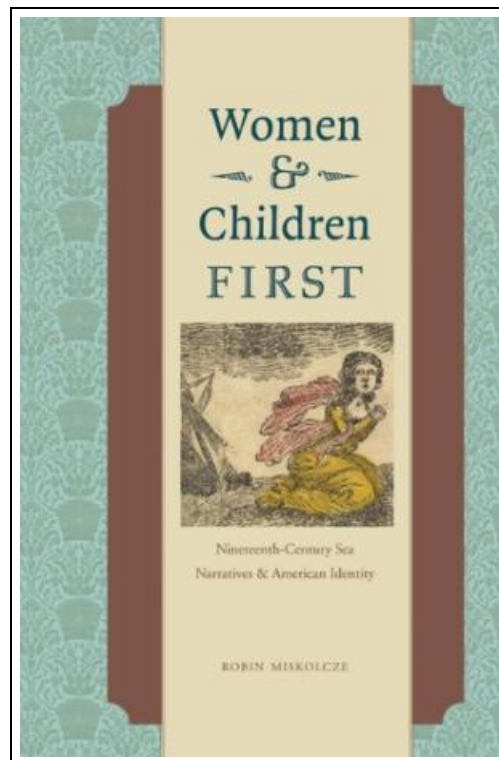


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WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST: NINETEENTH-CENTURY SEA NARRATIVES & AMERICAN IDENTITY

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University of Nebraska Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Women & Children First: Nineteenth-Century Sea Narratives & American Identity, Robin Miskolcze, At a crucial time in American history narratives of women in command or imperiled at sea contributed to the construction of a national rhetoric. Robin Miskolcze makes her case by way of careful readings of images of women at sea before the Civil War in her book Women and Children First. Though the sea has traditionally been interpreted as the province of men women have gone to sea as mothers wives figureheads and slaves. In fact in the nineteenth century women at sea contributed to the formation of an ethics of survival that helped to define American ideals. This study examines often for the first time images of women at sea in antebellum narratives ranging from novels and sermons to newspaper accounts and lithographs. Anglo-American women in antebellum sea narratives are often portrayed as models of American ideals derived from women's seemingly innate Christian self-sacrifice. Miskolcze argues that these ideals in conjunction with the maritime directive of "women and children first" during sea disasters in turn defined a new masculine individualism one that was morally minded rooted in Christian principles and dedicated to preserving virtue. Further Miskolcze contends that without the antebellum sea narratives portraying the Christian self-sacrifice of women the abolitionist cause would have suffered. African American women appealed to the directive of "women and children first" to make manifest their own womanhood and by extension their own humanity.

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