



Halls of Honor: College Men in the Old South

Robert F. Pace

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A powerful confluence of youthful energies and entrenched codes of honor enlivens Robert F. Pace's look at the world of male student college life in the antebellum South. Through extensive research into records, letters, and diaries of students and faculty from more than twenty institutions, Pace creates a vivid portrait of adolescent rebelliousness struggling with the ethic to cultivate a public face of industry, respect, and honesty. These future leaders confronted authority figures, made friends, studied, courted, frolicked, drank, gambled, cheated, and dueled—all within the established traditions of their southern culture.

For the sons of southern gentry, college life presented a variety of challenges, including engaging with northern professors and adjusting to living away from home and family. The young men extended the usual view of higher education as a bridge between childhood and adulthood, innovatively creating their own world of honor that prepared them for living in the larger southern society. Failure to obtain a good education was a grievous breach of honor for them, and Pace skillfully weaves together stories of student antics, trials, and triumphs within the broader male ethos of the Old South. When the Civil War erupted, many students left campus to become soldiers, defend their families, and preserve a way of life. By war's end, the code of honor had waned, changing the culture of southern colleges and universities forever.

Halls of Honor represents a significant update of E. Merton Coulter's 1928 classic work, *College Life in the Old South*, which focused on the University of Georgia. Pace's lively study will widen the discussion of antebellum southern college life for decades to come.

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