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Editorial

EDITORIAL NEW ANGLES AND NEW TOPICS

Nathan Buman

Summer 2010

As we approach the Civil War Sesquicentennial, one begins to wonder how we can possibly find anything new to discuss. It seems as if scholars and the followers of Civil War history have talked endlessly about the war but the books that continue to pour into our office, onto the shelves at book stores across the country, and into the hands of thousands of readers suggests otherwise. The promising works that continue to appear remind us that one can never completely understand the Civil War and all of its complicated and interwoven aspects fully; that is, again, the case with the Summer 2010 issue of *Civil War Book Review*.

I am pleased to announce a new feature for our site. In recognition of the Sesquicentennial, each quarter we will feature a different image in our editorial that highlights one specific soldier, North or South. We hope that this serves as a constant reminder of one of the very personal elements of the war as hundreds of thousands of men left their families to fight. This summer we have chosen a portrait of Private Sampson Altman, Jr., Company C, 29th Regiment Georgia Volunteers, C.S.A. Private Altman fought in the battle of Shiloh but died of disease on April 23, 1863.

The Summer 2010 issue of *Civil War Book Review* features a nice assortment of both new angles and new topics in Civil War history. Stephanie McCurry has asked us to; again, examine the notion of Confederate nationalism as we remember that the war disrupted all of society throughout the American South in *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South*. The war served as a platform for women and slaves to become political actors, challenging the authority of the central government and McCurry tells this story quite effectively. Next, Donald Stoker offers the grandest of strategic investigations of the entire war in *The Grand Design: Strategy and the U.S. Civil War*. Stoker examines all aspects of the war, blending political and military details very successfully, to assert his belief that the war's outcome boiled down, primarily, to President Lincoln's superior strategic plan. In *The Long Shadow of*

the Civil War: Southern Dissent and its Legacies, Victoria E. Bynum seeks to understand southern society, specifically, those pockets of southern dissent in Texas, North Carolina, and Mississippi where inner civil wars challenged the Confederacy's success. Following emancipation and Reconstruction, Bynum details the legacy of these pockets of resistance after the failed attempt at southern independence as dissenters and former Confederates continued to live side-by-side. Finally, Benjamin Ginsberg, in *Moses of South Carolina: A Jewish Scalawag during Radical Reconstruction*, looks at one of the more peculiar characters in southern history, Franklin Moses, Jr. Moses, an ardent supporter of secession who served in the Confederate army as an officer, supported racial equality after the war provides a new lens for understanding the complexity of social relations across the South.

Kenneth W. Noe was gracious enough to grant *Civil War Book Review* an interview to discuss his latest book, *Reluctant Rebels: The Confederates Who Joined the Army after 1861*. In the book and in the interview, Noe discusses those soldiers who resisted enlistment in the earliest months of the war, instead choosing to enlist for much more personal, localized motives, yet often fought with no less zeal and dedication than their veteran comrades.

This summer, Leah Wood Jewett has dug through the archives at Louisiana State University to find a collection of letters in which a prominent Louisiana planter pondered the coming presidential election. Her findings help us to understand the growing anticipation of the war as Americans looked forward pensively, just as we await the Civil War Sesquicentennial and begin to celebrate our look back at the conflict.

Since the previous issue, *Civil War Book Review* has relocated to a new office on the campus of Louisiana State University. Always a painstaking undertaking, the move was made much easier by the staffs of LSU Libraries and Special Collections; their help is appreciated greatly. Everything is in order and we look forward to continuing to provide our supportive readers and reviewers with the best publication possible.