

Editorial: Spring 2017

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Welcome to the CWBR's Spring 2017 issue. This issue's feature reviews cover a wide range of topics that include the Atlantic slave trade, New England Brahmins, prison escapes, and popular memory.

William Wagner reviews Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai's *Northern Character: College-Educated New Englanders, Honor, Nationalism, and Leadership in the Civil War Era*. Wagner praises the book for its detailed description of honor among the young New Englanders who joined the Union Army. Steeped in notions of self-control, self-sacrifice, and independent thought, New Englanders joined the war effort to secure a worldview that valued free labor and social distinction, an ideology that could be both politically radical, but socially conservative. An explanation that Wagner highlights as a reason why formally educated New Englanders joined as officers, fought against slavery, but later lost interest in the project of Reconstruction.

Lorien Foote's *Yankee Plague: Escaped Union Prisoners and the Collapse of the Confederacy* follows the exploits of the Union soldiers who flooded the Confederate backcountry in the war's waning months. Union escapees did not cause the Confederacy's collapse, Foote argues. Instead escapees functioned as heralds of the Confederacy's downfall. In following these stories, reviewer James Marten views Foote's work as essential because the book demonstrates just how the Confederacy unraveled in its last months.

Peter Wood reviews Sowande' M. Mustakeem's *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage*. Wood asserts that Mustakeem's work recovers not only the grim details of the middle passage, but also convincingly demonstrates how the "massive prevalence of death" affected the actions and thinking of those who survived the passage. In doing so, Wood concludes, the book adds to a growing historical literature that refuses to define the Atlantic slave trade by national boundaries.

Bradley Keefer reviews Matthew C. Hulbert's *The Ghosts of Guerilla Memory: How Civil War Bushwhackers Became Gunslingers in the American West*. Hulbert argues that the memory of Confederate guerillas remained influential long after their battles on the Confederacy's geographical margins. Confederate apologists, northern critics, and Hollywood writers, as Keefer notes, appropriated guerilla memory to expand the Lost Cause, chastise the South, and later as context for the outlaw heroes that defined American westerns in the 1940s.

Our feature column hosts a double review of Joseph M. Beilein Jr.'s *Bushwhackers: Guerilla Warfare, Manhood, and the Household in the Civil War Missouri* and Sergio A. Lussana's *My Brother Slaves: Friendship, Masculinity, and Resistance in the Antebellum South* by Joshua Lynn. Freedom and enslavement, created two very different foundations for masculinity. For Beilein, the Missouri guerillas' war time actions grew out of their roles as household patriarchs, and the social hierarchies that made southern plantation household possible. Denied traditional markers of nineteenth-century manhood often associated with property holding, and often segregated by sex, masculinity for enslaved black men occurred in same sex social environments. Friendships among enslaved men developed in the context of labor and resistance to plantation rules. In spite of these differences, however, Lynn suggests that important continuities existed. Black and white southern men acknowledged manhood in public displays that ranged from hunting to feats of strength.

Drawing on the Civil War Era's most popular magazines (*Punch* and *Harper's Weekly*), LSU Special Collections librarian Hans Rasmussen explains how Shakespearian idiom framed the Civil War and Reconstruction.

In this issue's Look at Lincoln, Frank Williams reviews Sidney Blumenthal's, *Wrestling with his Angel: The Political Life of Abraham Lincoln, Volume 2, 1849-1856*. Williams finds Blumenthal's second volume a worthy investigation of how Lincoln's moral beliefs led to his break from the Whig Party and convinced him to join the Republican Party.

This issue's interview features Douglas Egerton, author of the prize winning *Thunder at the Gates: The Black Civil War Regiments that Redeemed America*. In the interview, Professor Egerton explains how the performance of these individuals units reshaped the Union's war effort through individual valor, personal hardship, and political activism.

Thank you for reading and contributing. Have a great summer!

Tom Barber, Editor