

Civil War Book Review

Summer 2017

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Editorial

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Welcome to the *Civil War Book Review*'s Summer 2017 issue.

With its bright colors and neat lines, George Caleb Bingham's *Election Series* paintings (*Verdict of the People*, 1854, pictured above) reminds its viewers that American democracy before the Civil War was both vibrant, and chaotic. Taking its cue from Bingham, this issue's featured content considers books that demonstrate history's idiosyncratic nature by broad reappraisal of now familiar topics, such as the memory of Reconstruction and public censorship.

Gaines Foster reviews *Remembering Reconstruction: Struggles Over the Meaning of America's Most Turbulent Era*, a collection of essays edited by Carole Emberton and Bruce E. Baker. Foster finds the collection valuable for its attempt to understand both how Americans remembered Reconstruction and why they let its memory languish today.

Anne Marshall reviews Catherine Clinton's *Step-Daughters of History: Southern Women and the American Civil War*. Originally produced for Louisiana State University's Walter L. Fleming lecture series in 2012, the book's essays assess how women's lives became central to understanding of the Civil War era by looking at the actions of women who flouted the period's cultural norms, conformed to its values, or became its most infamous stereotypes.

Reassessment of the familiar continues in Mark E. Neely's *Lincoln and the Democrats: The Politics of Opposition*. Reviewer Barry Alfonso considers Neely's book important because it challenges our perceptions of northern Democrats by examining how they aided the Union war effort, rather than focusing on their vocal disagreements with Lincoln and the Republicans.

Last, but certainly not least, Jeffery Hobson reviews the second edition of Dewey Grantham's important work *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation*

of Progress and Tradition. More than a review of a familiar text, Hobson contextualizes *Southern Progressivism* beside the research inspired by the original. The outcome of Hobson's labors is a valuable reassessment of Grantham's memorable work.

Our latest author interview features Judith Giesberg who talks about her new book *Sex and the Civil War: Soldiers, Pornography, and the Making of American Morality*.

After a brief hiatus, our series on poverty and politics in the decades before and after the Civil War continues. Christopher Olsen's essay examines how poverty contributed to voter intimidation and disenfranchisement in antebellum America.

Resident Lincoln expert, Frank J. Williams, reviews Brian R. Dirck's *Lincoln in Indiana*. Williams commends Dirck for going beyond Lincoln's attempt to minimize how his life on Indiana's frontier shaped his future actions.

Civil War Treasures, our quarterly column about the Civil War era materials held by Louisiana State University's Special Collections Library, highlights David F. Boyd's papers. Often traveling between Baton Rouge and New Orleans during Reconstruction as LSU's superintendent, Boyd's correspondence offers valuable insights into the era's major political upheavals, librarian Hans Rasmussen explains.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Tom Barber, Editor