

*An Uncommon Time**The Civil War and the Northern Home Front*

Edited by Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller

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Notes, tables, index. \$45.00.)

*Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front**Wartime Experiences, Postwar Adjustments*

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(New York: Fordham University Press, 2002. Pp. xvi, 508. Notes, tables, index.
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In these two ample essay collections Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller bring together a substantive new array of sources on the Civil War, supplementing a growing series on the North published by Fordham. If the collections are a bit uneven, each essay is well researched and thoughtful, drawing on multiple traditions of historical research, from political to social to cultural, as well as on varying sources of evidence ranging from advertisements to letters, newspapers, diaries, and memoirs.

While the title of *An Uncommon Time* stresses the idea of the Civil War as a decided break from the past, the essays themselves suggest both continuity and change. In her fine piece, "A Monstrous Doctrine? Northern Women on Dependency during the Civil War," Rachel Seidman argues that women not only used the well-established ideal of women's economic and emotional dependency on men for the greater good of their families (to argue that their men be released from service, for example), but that they also resisted it in new and old ways, through petitions, strikes and unions.

Essays range from an analysis of the media and popular culture of the Northern home front to the politics of religion, partisan wrangling, the effects of the war on national institutions (the Smithsonian) and policies, the Confiscation acts, and the federal system of war claims. One particularly fascinating piece concerns the tycoon Jay Cooke and the ways he reconfigured patriotism through his national War Bond drives. "Cooke's accomplishment," Melinda Lawson argues, "was the creation of an alternative definition of loyalty: an accessible and profitable version of national patriotism, rooted in a liberal understanding of citizenship as the pursuit of self-interest, even in times of war" (p. 105).

Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front concerns primarily the members of the armed forces and their interaction with those at home, following the recent work of scholars such as James McPherson and Reid Mitchell. Somewhat narrow articles on mobilization in local communities open up to a more expansive section on the war itself. The book closes with essays that move into the postwar era.

Some of this collection's most unusual articles illuminate both the unexpected adaptations that the war forced upon the Northern populace and the ways Northerners ultimately resisted the consequences of change. In a lively essay, "Listen Ladies One and All: Union Soldiers Yearn for the Society of Their Fair Cousins of the North," Patricia Richard explores advertisements placed in local newspapers by lonely soldiers looking for some way to meet respectable women with whom to correspond, flirt, and, potentially, marry. The war, she argues, disrupted romantic trajectories, and slowed or barred people's ability to start families. Here was a way in which people worked to overcome obstacles to their futures.

In a very different but just as successful article, David Cecere analyzes the racial ideologies that white Northerners carried with them to war, and the ways these were challenged by new relationships and experiences. "The force of daily encounters with—or at least observations of—blacks eroded and modified Yankees' two-dimensional racial notions," Cecere finds, "thereby blending the image of a comical, simple-minded, even subhuman African American with more complex racial models, the nature of which varied from one New Englander to another" (p. 323).

Certain articles challenge long-standing assumptions about the war in pro-

vocative ways. In "We Are All in This War: The 148th Pennsylvania and Home Front Dissension in Centre County during the Civil War," Carol Reardon illuminates the ways that community values—in this case conservative and Democratic—persisted throughout the war, undercutting any shared sense of national purpose. Michael Bennett also analyzes a constituency that resisted the norm in "Saving Jack: Religion, Benevolent Organizations, and Union Sailors during the Civil War." Rather than the religious dedication attributed to soldiers of the Civil War era, Bennett finds both active and passive resistance to piety, even among sailors faced with death daily—from the elements as well as the Confederates.

In short, gems are found throughout these collections. As material on the North has grown the historical landscape has changed, with the result that we now have a more nuanced and insightful history of the war than the polemics of the past gave us. Cimbala and Miller are to be commended for adding to that work.

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