

views from those of today's religious right. It was the Civil War, she writes, that led abolitionists "to put abolition above their peace principles" (p. 94). (In fact, with a few exceptions, abolitionists endorsed violent means against slavery during the 1850s.)

Pinckney and McClay are not as well versed in abolitionist/Civil War historiography as Stauffer and Sinha. Pinckney (based on Quarles) mainly discusses the relationship between black and white abolitionists and black influences on Abraham Lincoln. However, toward the end of his essay, he observes that "nothing gets started without rebels" (p. 132). McClay, with a few caveats, endorses Delbanco's interpretation. He mistakenly links abolitionism, a movement that included evangelicals, Quakers,

Unitarians, and what contemporaries called "infidels," with Puritanism. But he also suggests that abolitionism's legacy lies in recognizing the "universal dignity of all human beings" (p. 149).

The divisions of opinion represented in this book are not new, but Stauffer and Sinha deserve praise for refuting Delbanco's conservative thesis. All of the essays, with the possible exception of McClay's, are too discursive. Nevertheless, those who like clashes of ideas may enjoy reading them.

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Battle Hymns

The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War

By Christian McWhirter

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. Pp. vii, 321. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.)

The first Civil War song appeared three days after the Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter, South Carolina. By war's end four years later, more than two thousand new melodies had been composed. No other event in history has made such an impact in the field of music. Yet the vast library of Civil War literature rarely contains any reference to the songs of that unforgettable war. Indeed, the only scholarly study in the

field—Willard A. Heaps and Porter W. Heaps's *The Singing Sixties* (1960)—appeared a half-century ago. Now the longstanding gap has been filled in praiseworthy style. The eighty-five pages of notes and bibliography that follow eight easy-to-read chapters suggest that Christian McWhirter is now the premier authority in the field of Civil War music.

Music possessed a special appeal in the Civil War; it became a language

everyone could speak. Even the most illiterate person could feel and express rhythm. Lyrics—whether about God, country, home, or beloved individuals—spurred an emotionally charged generation.

In this volume, McWhirter analyzes and ranks in importance every major melody from the war. The two sides differed over their favorite tunes. “Although most northerners were content with patriotic songs,” McWhirter states, “Confederates wanted anthems ... defining a people’s goals and beliefs” (p. 60).

The enduring popularity of many Civil War songs is revealing. As expected, McWhirter refers often to “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” He uncovers the odd background of the lyrics of “John Brown’s Body,” the antecedent of Julia Ward Howe’s moving poem. Contrary to popular thought, “The Star-Spangled Banner” achieved greater popularity during the war years than “Battle Hymn.” However, the latter became the favorite of postwar northerners; it served as the unofficial national anthem until 1931, when Congress enacted the less singable “Star-Spangled Banner” as the nation’s official song of praise. “Dixie,” on the other hand, was a Southern favorite throughout

the war years. Southerners later rallied around the song to “promote a pro-Confederate interpretation of the war, popularly known as the Lost Cause” (p. 186), and that development remains to this day.

In a study as broad and fact-filled as this book, some disagreement is inevitable. This reviewer takes issue with only one of McWhirter’s assertions—that sentimental music did not eclipse patriotic songs as the war progressed. The author’s own statements (pp. 20, 24) suggest otherwise, as do the events of the war. It is difficult to imagine the remainder of Ulysses S. Grant’s army, having suffered 60,000 casualties in their failed effort to take Richmond, singing “The Battle Cry of Freedom” or to envision weary Confederates digging new earthworks while warbling lines from “The Yellow Rose of Texas.” Soldiers’ favorite song of the war was “Home, Sweet Home,” whose popularity soared in the final years of the struggle.

General Robert E. Lee once stated: “I don’t see how we could have an army without music.” McWhirter has done an excellent job of opening our eyes and our ears to why this was so.

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