

### *The Civil War in the Border South*

By Christopher Phillips

(Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2013. Pp. xiv, 171. Illustrations, notes, index. \$37.00.)

Writing to Illinois senator Orville H. Browning in late September 1861, President Abraham Lincoln explained his reversal of General John C. Frémont's order emancipating slaves in Missouri. It was essential, he reasoned, not to antagonize the border slave states but to retain them in the Union coalition against the rebel Confederacy: "I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game. Kentucky gone, we can not hold Missouri, nor, as I think, Maryland."

Distinguished historian Christopher Phillips shows how the slave states of Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware formed the much-contested central battleground of the Civil War. In a little more than one hundred pages of text covering the war years, Phillips succinctly demonstrates how many border-state residents changed from wartime Unionists to aggrieved Confederate sympathizers in the postwar decades. While economically, politically, and culturally tied to the free-state North, at the beginning of the rebellion white residents remained equally committed to the Union and slavery. But wartime impositions such as military occupation, arrests, loyalty oaths, and trade restrictions strained pro-Union sentiment.

Worse, the presence of federal troops threatened the slave system

in the border states. Many free-state soldiers showed disdain for slave owners. Slaves fled to the protection of federal camps in search of freedom. Policies developed by the Republican-controlled Congress and the Lincoln administration to weaken slavery and the Confederate war effort spilled over into occupied border areas. The Confiscation Acts presaged Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which, while it carefully exempted the border slave states, showed clearly the federal government's abolitionism. After Lincoln's order took effect, many white border-state residents who had supported the Union cause recognized that slavery in Kentucky, Missouri, and the other border states was in jeopardy. Writing about proslavery adherents in Kentucky, Phillips notes that "emancipation spurred a rapid transition for unionists, conditional and even unconditional, into war dissenters" (p. 81). Moreover, white residents' "racial antipathy" (p. 65) to African American men and women governed their thinking. Fear of free blacks in their midst seized their imaginations. The Lincoln administration's policy of recruiting African American soldiers especially alarmed them. Even Kentucky's pro-Union governor adamantly held out against black enlistments until the summer of 1864. Consequently, when Confederate troops raided border regions,

many former Unionists rallied to them. They knew that the rebels fought to preserve slavery as their bedrock institution.

After the rebellion was crushed, reconstruction of government in the former Confederacy commenced, and the Constitution amended to end slavery, many former Unionists reacted angrily by inaugurating a “politics of rage” against the institutions and groups that had ended bondage (p. 112). They coalesced into groups to sustain white supremacy; the Democratic Party in Kentucky came to be dominated by former Confederates. In time, the border states transitioned into the Border South as white residents accepted Lost Cause myths and embraced a southernness they never exhibited before.

Phillips deftly weaves quotes from border-state residents’ letters and diaries, as well as archival records, into his analysis to depict the transition

from wartime conditional unionism to postwar pro-Confederate defiance. A useful bibliographic essay helps readers assess the growing literature on the border states in the Civil War era. If complaint must be registered, the work focuses (rightly) on the fraught conditions in Kentucky and Missouri. Maryland receives much less attention, Delaware hardly any. The text evinces poor copy-editing. As this work will be used in classrooms for years to come, the publisher owes it to author and readers to fix typos and other issues in future printings.

STEPHEN E. TOWNE is Associate University Archivist at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and the author of *Surveillance and Spies in the Civil War: Exposing Confederate Conspiracies in America’s Heartland* (2015).



### *The Kentucky Derby: How the Run for the Roses Became America’s Premier Sporting Event*

By James C. Nicholson

(Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2014. Pp. 296. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95.)

Focusing on Kentucky and the Derby as representations of the antebellum Old South and larger American icons, James C. Nicholson’s *The Kentucky Derby: How the Run for the Roses Became America’s Premier Sporting Event* skillfully explores how popular

media and collective memories reinvent the past, invent regional culture, and transform in response to larger social and political changes. Across 135 Derbies, participants and visitors have used the event as a connection to real and imaginary constructions of