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Review of *Union Heartland: The Midwestern Home Front during the Civil War*

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believed that republican political and cultural values were at stake in the election. He indicates that even in the South republicanism, or what Rodgers somewhat misleadingly refers to as “planter republicanism,” played a major role in the large voter turnout.

In his third essay, Fuller applies political realignment theory to the election, and finds it wanting as an analytical tool. Party realignment, according to this popular theory, occurs about every thirty years, and the election of 1860 seems to have fit the pattern. Using Indiana as a test case, however, Fuller concludes that the element of contingency and short-term political strategy are more useful than long-term realignment in explaining elections in United States history, including that of 1860.

Lawrence Sondhaus provides a brief though illuminating account of the European reaction to the election. Diplomats in Washington, Sondhaus writes, believed that Lincoln's nomination was a fluke, while the European press generally concluded that his election would not create a danger to the Union. The last essay, by Douglas G. Gardner, provides an informative historiography that no reader should miss. This reviewer, however, would have preferred the piece at the beginning of the volume. This fine collection of essays is recommended for anyone interested in the election of 1860.

**Union Heartland: The Midwestern Home Front during the Civil War**

Edited by Ginette Aley and J. L. Anderson


Histories of the Southern home front have long outnumbered histories of the Northern home front. Lately, however, there has been a minor surge of books and anthologies on the Civil War in places other than the South and the Northeast; *Union Heartland: The Midwestern Home Front during the Civil War* is another effort to fill that lacuna. As the editors point out in their very useful introduction, the Midwest differed from the rest of the North in several ways: not only was it “newer” than the East (with several states entering the Union during the decade or two before the war), it was also more ethnically heterogeneous, more rural and more dependent on
cash crops, more anxious about internal threats, and less united politically. The editors argue that the book supports "the premise that multiple Norths existed that were marked by regional differences and distinctiveness on several levels," and that each, "like the Midwest, asserted its own counternarrative of the larger Northern narrative of the Civil War" (p. 3). Although the seven pieces in the collection all make excellent points based on solid research, only three meet the editors' goal of providing "a usable regional past" (p. 3).

R. Douglas Hurt's largely quantitative essay chronicles the changes in the technological and marketing processes of the region's farmers, who replaced manpower with horse and machine power to expand production of traditional cash crops and even began growing tobacco, sorghum, and cotton, products they normally obtained from the South in peacetime. Ginette Aley's essay shows how, unlike eastern and urban women, midwestern farm women defined patriotism less in terms of their contri- butions to sanitary fairs and other famous home front war efforts and more in terms of simply keeping their farms running by taking over men's work—perhaps more literally than in any other part of the North. Finally, Brett Barker recounts the "chillingly effective" efforts by Republicans to quash dissent in southeastern Ohio—a particularly divided section of the state—through intimidation and violence (p. 169).

One should not make too much of the extent to which the remaining essays do or do not take a particularly midwestern slant on their subjects, despite the editors' stated purpose. All of them provide useful local studies of the home front North that connect pre-war conditions and attitudes to wartime developments: Michael P. Gray on prison camp tourism at Johnson's Island, Julie A. Mujic on student patriotism at the University of Michigan, Nicole Etcheson on the intriguing relationships between Indiana soldiers' wives and their in-laws, and J. L. Anderson on family dynamics in hard-pressed Iowa farm families. The essays about families, especially, help explain marriage and family relationships in ways that transcend the war itself.

Although historians will keep writing about the more dramatic and possibly more fraught history of the Confederate home front, books like this one are helping to close the gap between our knowledge of the lives of Northern and Southern civilians.

James Marten is Professor of History at Marquette University. He is author of a number of books, including The Children's Civil War (1998), Civil War America: Voices from the Home Front (2003), and Sing Not War: The Lives of Union & Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America (2011).