

## A Convergence Of Contexts

Colleen H. Fava

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## Editorial

### A CONVERGENCE OF CONTEXTS

Fava, Colleen H.

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*Civil War Book Review* has been through its fair share of changes and upheavals over this past year. Early last summer I began my tenure as the new editor. In the fall we learned that our publishing partner could no longer afford to fund our journal. A few months later it was decided that the *Review* would cease print publication and move to an online only format. This transition, like all of my experiences at this journal, was remarkably smooth. This is due in no small part to the talent and dedication of Leah Wood Jewett, director of the United States Civil War Center, and our webmaster, April Ayto.

This note is written with both a heavy heart and great satisfaction, because I must report one more change. I will begin teaching Freshman Composition at LSU in the fall and so this is my final issue as editor. If we employ history as a judge, and I think our participation in this particular endeavor implies that we do, this transition, too, will be seamless. My term at the *Review* has been personally and professionally rewarding. The support of our reviewers, readership, and staff has been immeasurable. I wish I had the room to thank all of the people who have been so unsparing with their time and expertise, but I am more grateful that there are too many to list individually. I know I can count on all of you to extend your warmth and generosity to our new editor, Chris Freeman. Chris comes to us with a degree in history from Berea College in Kentucky and will be pursuing an advanced degree in Political Science at LSU. I'm sure Chris will appreciate the exposure, as I have, to the various perspectives on history, representation, language, and literature that have made their way through the space of our journal.

This issue is a perfect example of a convergence of contexts and viewpoints. Four of the books reviewed in this issue explicitly address the famous battle of Gettysburg, a battle of which even the most novice Civil War student holds at least a modicum of knowledge. These books consider the battle from contradistinctive positions. In a comparative piece, author Kent Gramm offers an analysis of two very differently focused texts, *Gettysburg: The Meade-Sickles*

*Controversy* by Richard A. Sauers (Brassey's, ISBN 1574884883, \$24.95, hardcover) and *The Stand of the Union Army at Gettysburg* by Jeffrey C. Hall (Indiana University Press, ISBN 0253342589, \$49.95, hardcover). Sauers' book offers a narrow and specialized study of the controversy named in the title, while Hall presents a comprehensive study in his large coffee-table sized book. Cornelius Cronin, who teaches courses on the literature of war at Louisiana State University, evaluates another extensive campaign history devoted to the battle in his review of *Gettysburg* by Stephen W. Sears (Houghton-Mifflin, ISBN 0395867614, \$30.00, hardcover). Rounding out the Gettysburg books, in our column Perspectives from Afield and Afar, is guest columnist Jeff Smithpeters' examination of a fictional Confederate victory in *Gettysburg: A Novel of the Civil War* by Newt Gingrich and William R. Forstchen (Thomas Dunne Books, ISBN: 031230935X, \$24.95, hardcover).

Also contained in this issue are appraisals of three books committed to varying facets of the Lincoln legacy. Executive director of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, Michael F. Bishop, looks at *Lincoln, Religion, and Romantic Cultural Politics* by Stewart Winger (Northern Illinois University Press, ISBN 0875803008, \$38.00, hardcover); Chief Justice Frank J. Williams assesses *Lincoln and Booth: More Light on the Conspiracy* by H. Donald Winkler (Cumberland House Publishing, Inc., ISBN 1581823428, \$16.95, softcover); Meg Galante-DeAngelis reviews *Mr. Lincoln and the Time Train* by WeWrite Kids a new book written for children by children (University of Illinois at Springfield, ISBN 0938943219, \$8.95, softcover).

As a creative writer and native Northerner living in the Deep South, I found that one segment in particular offered an interesting and informative perspective on a writer I had long respected but apparently knew little about. David Madden has reintroduced me to that master of the short-story, O. Henry, in his column Rediscovering Civil War Classics. Madden dispels the myths that O. Henry was primarily a New York writer and exposes O. Henry's physical and literary move from South to North while revealing the never-abandoned Southern imprint on virtually all of his writing.

Additional books reviewed address women's issues, state politics, the great American pastime, economic systems, methodological approaches to studying the South, historical novels, tactical initiatives, perspectives on slavery and race relations including antebellum inter-racial relationships, wartime views from England, and contemporary representations of slavery in museums.

I am proud of the current issue of *Civil War Book Review* and I hope it brings you as much pleasure in the reading of it as I received putting the issue together. I am confident that the continued commitment of our reviewers, the staff at the United States Civil War Center and LSU Libraries, along with the energy and dedication of the new editor will ensure the success of future editions. Thank you all for your part in making my time here so valuable.