Editorial: What We Teach

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Editorial

EDITORIAL: WHAT WE TEACH

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This is a very exciting time for Civil War historians. The sesquicentennial of the Battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg has just passed. A great deal of new and interesting work has been published about the Civil War because of these new events. Living history, new books such as those featured and reviewed here, and other, newer ways of presenting information have all come out very recently. One example of this is the Smithsonian's new look at Gettysburg using interactive GIS maps.¹ Taken altogether, our understanding of the Civil War has never been better.

Now, as many of us turn our attention to the upcoming school year, we must find ways to integrate these new ideas into our traditional teaching about the war, and the *Civil War Book Review* is here to help. The books featured in this issue look at many new or forgotten parts of the war. Gretchen Long, who graciously granted the Review a wonderful interview last issue, is the author of the first featured book, *Doctoring Freedom: The Politics of African American Medical Care in Slavery and Emancipation*. As discussed in the interview, this book examines medical care as a vehicle for African American advancement and citizenship. *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom*, Walter Johnson's new work, explores the role of slavery in the expansion and development of the United States, ultimately leading to war. Bruce Levine delves into the upheaval in the South, and beyond, in the aftermath of the war in his book *The Fall of the House of Dixie: The Civil War and the Social Revolution that Transformed the South*. Finally, it seems appropriate after the recent remembrance events that took place at Gettysburg, to take a new look at the leader of the Union army who won the battle, which Tom Huntington does so well in his recent work, *Searching for George Gordon Meade*.

Stephen Kantrowitz is the subject of this issues author interview. We talked in detail about this recent work *More than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic*, a must read for anyone interested in the successes and failures of African Americans as they worked to carve out a place

for themselves in the American republic. Finally, Frank Williams column, A Look A Lincoln, returns with a discussion of Benjamin Franklin Cooling III's new work, *The Day Lincoln was Almost Shot: The Fort Stevens Story*.

Taken altogether, I hope, that these reviews, interviews, and columns will help readers to expand their understanding of the Civil War while providing them with new ideas that they can take to the classroom, battlefield parks, and speaking engagements and help us to inspire a new generation of Americans as to the importance of this period in our history.²

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¹ See A Cutting-Edge Second Look at the Battle of Gettysburg

² The next issue of the Review is slated for release on November 1, 2013, but will be released a few days early as that is right in the middle of the Southern Historical Associations annual meeting in St. Louis, which I will be attending. Please come up and say hello as you see me prowling around the book exhibit!