

# How Does the Civil War Transcend?

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## Editorial

### HOW DOES THE CIVIL WAR TRANSCEND?

Winter 2012

Civil War historians spend so much of their craft on examining the minutiae and the nuts and bolts of their topics that it becomes easy to lose sight of the ways in which war transcends...everything. Civil War scholars dedicate thousands of hours familiarizing themselves with and analyzing the people that they study; it is easy to lose sight of the ways in which that war transcended those people, the war itself, or even the nineteenth century more broadly. The American Civil War grants us countless lessons with which we can better understand American history and this, the Winter 2012 issue of *Civil War Book Review* displays that we will not suffer from a lack of new and exciting scholarship anytime soon.

In this issue we feature, as our cover image, a photograph of Private Bentley Weston, a bugler in Company A, 7th South Carolina Cavalry.

Recent works should encourage followers of Civil War and Civil War-Era studies with its fresh perspective and re-analysis. First William C. Harris in *Lincoln and the Border States: Preserving the Union* shares with us the precarious nature of Lincoln's relationship with the vital border slave states as he worked tenuously to maintain Union on the frontier of the Confederacy. In *The Confederate Heartland: Military and Civilian Morale in the Western Confederacy*, Bradley R. Clampitt shows us how Civil War soldiers, at times, transcended themselves, overcoming significant hardship and continuing to fight for four long years. Connecting the battlefield with the home front, Clampitt reminds readers the ways in which the military depends on society and vice versa for a unified, disciplined war effort. Barbara Gannon investigates relations between black and white veterans in the Grand Army of the Republic to explore both how they looked at the war and how they looked at one another as comrades in arms. Gannon's *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* makes significant strides to show how the events of the war itself transcended those four years and influenced the society that emerged from the American Civil War. James Marten's *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union & Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* shines light on

the, sometimes difficult, reintegration of Civil War veterans back into the society that they left before the war. Often very difficult, this process and the resulting relationships between veterans, their families, and the community at large helped to shape American society during the Gilded Age. Finally, David Blight has provided a new and useful look at the ways in which Civil Rights-Era activists used the Civil War to inform their outlook on society and events during the twentieth century in *American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era*. The Civil War certainly transcended the nineteenth century and Blight expertly shows how African-American writers and activists used the Civil War Centennial to better understand society during their own time.

Adam Arenson, author of *The Great Heart of the Republic: St. Louis and the Cultural Civil War* spoke with Civil War Book Review about his work with the history of St. Louis. A complex and fascinating study of America's heartland, Arenson sheds new light on this vital crossroads between North, South, and West in order to better understand American history more broadly.

Our Civil War Sesquicentennial Feature Column this quarter, provided by Chandra Manning, provides a phenomenal outlook on the status of Civil War historiography relating to the study of Union soldiers and their motivations for fighting. Professor Manning has certainly provided an important contribution to *Civil War Book Review*, providing us with a pulse on the current scholarship while suggesting a few points where scholars might continue to push the envelope in the future.

In the Civil War Treasures feature this quarter, Michael Taylor shines light on some fascinating developments taking place at the LSU Special Collections. The digitization of historical documents seems to be the way of the future and Taylor highlights the ways in which LSU is standing at the frontlines of this effort, providing some excellent opportunities for Civil War scholars to access parts of LSU's collection from their own home or office.

*Civil War Book Review* would like to thank the readers and contributors for the continued support. Time and time again, we are reminded how the enthusiasm for Civil War studies transcends all and we will continue to push forward together.