

BOOK REVIEWS

Revolutionary Mothers is an easy read, a good quick introduction to some of the prominent women activists, writers, and American and British patriots of the late eighteenth century. It is a welcome synthesis of some of the scholarship of the last quarter century, particularly of the older works. It would work well in high schools and perhaps as one supplementary text in the first half of the U.S. survey. *Revolutionary Mothers* also points to the need for a new scholarly synthesis of women and revolution—a history that will recapture the full diversity of early America's women and the complicated consequences of an organized political and military war for independence and an inadvertent social and cultural revolution.

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Kent Masterson Brown. *Retreat from Gettysburg: Lee, Logistics & the Pennsylvania Campaign*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005. Pp. x, 534, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth \$45.00)

To most students of the Civil War the battle of Gettysburg ends with Pickett's Charge and a defeat for Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Ken Masterson Brown presents a slightly different interpretation. Brown contends that when Lee invaded Pennsylvania he may have had thoughts about European intervention, Northern unrest, and the destruction of the Army of the Potomac, which, he hoped, would end the war, but "his objectives for the invasion of Pennsylvania appear to have been nothing more complicated than to feed and equip his army and to keep it intact" (p. 16). Though Lee suffered a costly tactical defeat at Gettysburg, Brown argues that, in reality, he achieved a general success. The successful retreat of the Army of Northern Virginia, with the vast fodder, stores, and food, enabled the Southern Army to survive. Brown further contends that "Gettysburg cannot be viewed as the turning point of the Civil War or even a turning point of the eastern theater of war after Lee's remarkable retreat" (p. 390).

Although the author's contentions are somewhat controversial he does an outstanding job of proving his thesis. This book is the culmination of 20 years of research and Brown uses many newly uncovered records documenting material confiscated by the Army of Northern Virginia. He presents a graphic picture of the heroic work done in Confederate hospitals and the Herculean

effort in the evacuation of the wounded. Relentless in his telling the story of systematic southern confiscation of food and fodder, Brown goes into great detail itemizing all of the various items seized. Although all of this data is most informative, it is so extensive that it can distract from the flow of the book. One of the joys of the study is the vast number of anecdotes that give meaning and poignancy to the narrative.

Brown traces the two major Confederate wagon trains as they began the retreat. Lee entrusted Brigadier General John D. Imboden with the safety and movement of the 17 mile long train containing the many Confederate wounded. Its path wound through the Cashtown Gap and then on to Greencastle and eventually Williamsport. He also traces the movement of the second, and larger train, through Fairfield, the Monterey Pass, Hagerstown, and Williamsport. His discussion of the retreat immerses the reader in the suffering of the wounded, the impact of the harsh weather, and the relentless pursuit of the Federal cavalry and infantry units. Brown describes the destruction of the Confederate pontoon bridge at Falling Waters, and the impact of that destruction on the retreating Confederates. He also goes into significant detail as he describes the often vicious fighting that occurred at Monterey Pass, Mercersburg, Smithsburg, Hagerstown, Williamsport, and Funkstown. The chronological presentation of these battles gives the reader an idea of the broad expanse covered in the retreat and fighting, and also delivers a geography lesson on southern Pennsylvania and northern Maryland.

On the federal side, Brown highlights the supply problems faced by the pursuing Army of the Potomac and its commander Major General George Meade. This evaluation of the breakdown of supply somewhat softens the sting of the attacks leveled against Meade and his army's failure to close with Lee. Federal involvement was not handled as thoroughly as the Confederate side, but that is not Brown's purpose.

Brown also illustrates the treatment of African-Americans including their role in the Army of Northern Virginia, and the plight of the many Federal prisoners of war as they made their way south. He points out that anywhere from 6,000 to 10,000 slaves labored for the Army of Northern Virginia, many functioning as teamsters, cooks and laborers as well as personal servants for their owners. There are a number of anecdotal stories of slaves and their personal interaction with their owners in the army. The saga of the Federal prisoners is one of suffering, privation, and the effort to survive in a difficult position. As with the slaves, this also is embellished by personal histories of Union men in captivity after Gettysburg.

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Kent Masterson Brown presents a well researched, well documented study of Lee's retreat, which is complemented by a series of excellent maps. This is a work I would unhesitatingly recommend to any student of the Civil War, but for those interested in the battle of Gettysburg or the Army of Northern Virginia it is a must.

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Robert P. Wolensky, Kenneth C. Wolensky, and Nicole H. Wolensky. *Voices of the Knox Mine Disaster: Stories, Remembrances, and Reflections on the Anthracite Coal Industry's Last Major Catastrophe, January 22, 1959*. (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 2005. Pp. iii, 268, glossary, index. Paper \$16.95)

Reflecting on her views of the tragic Knox Mine Disaster, Anita (Ostrowski) Ogin, daughter of a victim stated: "I don't think they should call it the Knox Mine Disaster. I think they should call it the Knox Mine Murders because I feel as though everyone was paid off, everything was under the table and hush-hush, and double-dealings." Others interviewed for the book *Voices of the Knox Mine Disaster* looked at the event as an "act of God." Still others felt it was the fault of the workers themselves and/or the result of a virtually unregulated industry. Some took a narrower perspective and viewed the whole affair as the result of basic human greed. Like any historical event, those directly affected have diverse feelings, opinions, and perspectives on what happened, why it happened, and who should be blamed.

In *Voices of the Knox Mine Disaster*, Robert P. Wolensky, Kenneth C. Wolensky, and Nicole H. Wolensky provide a forum for the varied views on the event and cast a wide-net to construct a narrative that tells the human side of the story. To achieve this, the authors integrate a variety of different sources including oral histories, personal letters, newspaper articles, poetry, song lyrics, photography, among other data. In contrast to their earlier work, *The Knox Mine Disaster* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1999), a historical account of the event, they now present a perspective on how the disaster is remembered after over forty-five years since icy "flood-stage" waters from the north branch of the Susquehanna River, on January 22, 1959, burst through the