

organizers of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition requested the bell, some Philadelphians were sure that “for all the talk about the bell’s importance in promoting patriotism, the real motive was to obtain an attraction with proven ability to bring masses of fairgoers to the exposition grounds . . .” (111). But the expositions did have underlying political purposes, ranging from encouraging sectional reconciliation (New Orleans, 1885) to “Americanizing” Asian immigrants (San Francisco, 1915). Many of the more recent commercial uses of the bell—teapots, slot machines and whiskey bottles—seem to have no underlying political purpose. What does this growing separation of patriotic and commercial use suggest about contemporary American society? That we are less political than our forebears, or simply more resistant to attempts to “sell” patriotic emotion?

Despite this growing separation, the political resonance of the bell remains powerful. In his last chapter, Nash describes the recent controversy surrounding the placement of the new Liberty Bell Center on the corner where George Washington’s slaves once toiled in the new republic’s first “President’s House.” What started out as a clash between Independence National Historical Park and a group of historians became, partially through Nash’s own efforts, a sustained public conversation about America’s racial history. The bell continues to inspire people to discuss the obstacles standing in the way of realizing its call for universal liberty.

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Robert M. Sandow. *Deserter Country: Civil War Opposition in the Pennsylvania Appalachians*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009. Pp. xii, 234, illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$55.00.)

Civil War historians have hotly contested the nature and characteristics of Copperheads and other war resisters within the Union states for decades, but the debate finds Pennsylvania relegated to secondary status within the accumulation of books, monographs, journal articles, dissertations, and other scholarship, with the lion’s share focusing on the border-states, the butternut counties of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, or New York City. To be sure, some impressive work on anti-war forces in Pennsylvania has been published, with Grace Palladino’s analysis of resistance in mining communities in the

state's anthracite coal regions in *Another Civil War* (1990) among the most prominent, but the overall dearth of analysis on wartime dissension within a state as large and varied as Pennsylvania remains striking. In *Deserter Country: Civil War Opposition in the Pennsylvania Appalachians*, Robert M. Sandow helps remedy this anemia with a valuable contribution to the study of the Keystone State's internal wartime tensions. In analyzing the rugged and extensive Pennsylvania Appalachians, in particular the so-called lumber region in the north-central part of the state, Sandow demonstrates that Pennsylvania was anything but a solid pro-war, pro-Republican state.

Although wartime opposition to the Lincoln administration and the state's Republican leadership existed across Pennsylvania, Sandow argues that the Appalachian mountain region, particularly its northern section, was home to some of the most fierce and persistent grassroots opposition to be found anywhere in the Union. In explaining the origins, characteristics, patterns, and intensity of this local resistance, Sandow conscientiously avoids creating a caricature, portraying them as neither treasonous criminals nor principled heroes; rather, he constructs a thoughtfully reasoned examination and explanation of their beliefs, organization, motivations, and actions, and he takes care to place his research into the existing historiography. By emphasizing the powerful interplay between social, economic, political-ideological, and geographic influences, Sandow finds that the war's opponents in the Pennsylvania Appalachians were reacting to the circumstances in a manner consistent with local antebellum beliefs, traditions, patterns, and conditions.

Sandow notes many underlying similarities between dissenters in Confederate Appalachia and the mountain chain's Pennsylvania portion, pointing out that people in both Union and Confederate Appalachia were shaped by a variety of common factors long before the war began. These include a geographic isolation that fostered a powerful sense of localism and autonomy, tenuous links to, and suspicion of, the growing market economy and its influence, an underlying racism against blacks, and resentment towards the influence of centralized and non-local authorities. The widespread opposition and resistance to the war in this part of the Pennsylvania Appalachians, Sandow argues, was rooted firmly in the region's antebellum political, economic, social, and geographic conditions. The terrain was rugged and isolated, with a relatively small population spread out over large areas, with tenuous ties to the growing market-capitalist economy. This fostered a strong sense of local autonomy and suspicion of outside control and led its citizens to develop a powerful agrarian republicanism expressed

through staunch loyalty to the Democratic Party, and jealously guarded against encroachments by outside economic and political forces. Indeed, the Pennsylvania Republican Party's advocacy for the rapid expansion of the market-capitalist economy in the late 1850s established them as the clear adversary even then, and the encroachment of large-scale lumber companies into the region in the 1850s, which threatened local farmers' ability to participate in this valuable business, further inflamed local defensiveness and political sensitivity well before the secession crisis and opening of hostilities with the Confederacy. Unlike Grace Palladino's findings in Pennsylvania's anthracite coal region, which places a newly forming industrial working class at the center of war resistance there, Sandow demonstrates that the resistance in his part of Appalachia was anchored in the area's small-scale farmers and encompassed whole communities who believed their autonomy and republican values were under siege.

The war placed pressures on the local populace almost immediately, and as outside authorities and their decisions became more invasive, opposition spread and intensified in response. The fact that most of these outside influences were coming in the form of laws and decrees passed and enforced by Republican authorities at both the Federal and state levels made it natural for local Democrats to see a partisan assault behind such monumental war-time decisions as emancipation and conscription. Indeed, Sandow argues that conscription and the efforts to enforce it, perhaps more than any other single factor, exacerbated a widespread and determined resistance to the war effort because it seemed to assault the most fundamental principle of the American Revolution—free and willing consent. Although often portrayed by Republican newspapers and Federal authorities as lawless, disloyal brigands united in spirit and action by nefarious secret cabals, these resisters to Mr. Lincoln's war saw themselves as the true defenders of the Revolution and Constitution, and whatever coordination may have existed among them was more reflective of their spontaneous attempt to defend their idea of American republicanism than an underground network of treason. In their own understanding, any violence perpetrated against their pro-war Republican neighbors and government enforcement agents was wholly justified.

Significant anti-war sentiments and activities can be found across the Union, but what made the Pennsylvania Appalachians unique were its depth, breadth, and enduring character. Nowhere else in the Union, Sandow argues, can such large portions of the population be found with such a staunch and frequently violent opposition to both local pro-war Republican citizens and to state and

Federal authority. Sandow effectively reviews the perilous and often fruitless efforts by the provost marshals to root out and capture deserters and draft evaders. Faced with the stony silence or active resistance of entire communities, and punctuated by sometimes violent encounters with armed vigilantes, the few troops allotted to the marshals were usually unable to achieve their enforcement goals. Consequently, this region became "deserter country" because the widespread local attitudes of resistance combined with the intensely rugged and isolated mountain terrain made it a perfect place for deserters and draft resisters to elude capture by the authorities or Unionist citizens.

At just under 150 pages of text, the book's brevity might be judged by some as a minor weakness, albeit not one of Sandow's making, given the relative paucity of primary sources often encountered in nineteenth-century rural history. Sandow's skillful use of the extant primary sources, including personal letters and diaries, court and legislative records, census data, manuscript collections, newspapers, as well as Provost Marshal and other military records, lends consistent credibility to his main points, and he reminds readers that because of the limited nature of the sources, his findings should often be regarded as more tentative than conclusive. It should also be noted that its relative short length, coupled with a cogent and clear style, allows *Deserter Country* to be easily incorporated into classroom use on both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

A minor flaw in *Deserter Country* is revealed in the subtitle, *Civil War Opposition in the Pennsylvania Appalachians*. Readers are led to expect an examination of the entire Appalachian chain within the Pennsylvania borders, but Sandow did not include an explicit examination or review of the southern half of the Pennsylvania Appalachians to compare to his central study on the state's northern Appalachians. Readers might wonder to what extent the economic, social, and political conditions in the southern Pennsylvania Appalachians were similar to, and different from, the northern mountain areas that Sandow examines. Was it more or less integrated into the market economy than the lumber region? Were the Democrats as strong there as they were in the lumber region? Was draft resistance as widespread? This shortcoming does not detract from Sandow's fascinating discoveries about the lumber region, but a comparison to counties in the southern half of Pennsylvania's Appalachians would have perhaps shed more light on his region's uniqueness within the Keystone State, and a chapter devoted to such a comparison would have enhanced the book's overall effectiveness.

Deserter Country, originally Sandow's dissertation at Pennsylvania State University, is stylistically and organizationally well written; his narrative is

crisp, his arguments clear and firmly anchored in the larger historiography, and the conclusions never stray beyond what the evidence allows. *Deserter Country* is a much-needed contribution to the study of wartime dissent and resistance within Pennsylvania during the War of the Rebellion, and it invites further inquiry into wartime resistance patterns, both within Pennsylvania and beyond.

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Robert P. Wolensky and Joseph M. Keating. *Tragedy at Avondale: The Causes, Consequences, and Legacy of the Pennsylvania Anthracite Coal Industry's Most Deadly Mining Disaster, September 6, 1869*. (Easton, PA: Canal History and Technology Press, 2008. Pp. 191, illustrations, maps, appendixes. Paper, \$19.95.)

At 10:30 A.M. on Monday, September 6, 1869, flames erupted from Avondale's Steuben shaft. The only entry/exit was engulfed in flame, robbing the mine of all available oxygen and further emitting noxious gasses. Collapsed debris and toxic fumes precluded rescue efforts for over forty hours. One hundred and ten people perished in the event and subsequent rescue efforts. Sixty seven were found asphyxiated behind a make-shift barricade.

The long-accepted explanation for the disaster, based largely on the results of an official Coroner's inquiry, suggested that sparks from the ventilation furnace ignited the wooden mine shaft lining. However, the fire appears to have started over 300 feet from the furnace, and 200 feet from the flue's entry into the mine-shaft. Witnesses gave mixed testimony. The authors re-invigorate an interpretation that has historically been left unexamined—that the disaster may have been an intentional act of arson. While the authors adeptly examine various possibilities, the evidence clearly merits consideration of the incendiary explanation. The disaster occurred four days after a three-month strike cracked and miners returned to work. Racial tensions between the Welsh and Irish permeated the region; the majority of Irish workers were absent from the mine the day of the disaster; and no such accident—furnace generated fire—had previously occurred. Further, the burnt brattice having been above the mid-way point of the shaft indicates that the fire did not emanate from below.

The Workingman's Benevolent Association (WBA), an early union of anthracite miners, claimed that the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Co.