

## *Introduction*

**A**S THE NATION LAUNCHES into a wide array of celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War, we are pleased to present this special issue on Pennsylvania during the Civil War. The format we have selected is a bit unusual. Our goal in preparing this volume has been to offer the reader a taste of the vast scholarship on the Keystone State during the war, while also providing some valuable tools for future scholars of all stripes.

Mark Neely, one of the nation's leading scholars of Northern politics and political culture during the Civil War era, starts things off with a detailed historiographic reflection. As Neely demonstrates, Pennsylvania's rich wartime history has produced a diverse scholarship. Neely's essay surveys fifty years of literature on Civil War Pennsylvania, which began with the realization—at the war's centennial—that while antislavery sentiment might have had its early beginnings in the state, racist sentiment grew as slavery came to an end. The essay should give scholars a sense of where to go next in assessing Pennsylvania's significance in the history of the Civil War.

The three articles that follow, all by fairly young scholars, give the reader a window into some of the most interesting ongoing work on wartime Pennsylvania. Kathleen Shaw's essay considers youth enlistment in one particular community, illustrating the continuing power of the careful case study and allowing scholars to think about enlistment as a coming-of-age experience. Timothy Orr looks at how Pennsylvania recruits navigated the confusing terrain between local enlistment and federal authority and sheds new light on how to assess local loyalties. Brian Matthew Jordan takes us to a very familiar Pennsylvania site, the Gettysburg Battlefield, to ask provocative new questions about race and commemoration in the postwar years. Jordan's essay is well-timed to appear on the eve of the 150th commemoration of the battle and in an election year, as politicians of all stripes make their way to the battlefield for photo-ops. These essays are very different in their core concerns, but they share a fundamental insight. Each author is working outside of the

traditional framework where “military history” and studies of the home front rarely shared the same terrain. All three of these articles demonstrate the value in considering the citizen-soldier—and the commemoration of those soldiers—as intrinsically connected to affairs at home.

From these discussions of scholarship past and present, we move to what we might call scholarship yet to come. Certainly the explosion of internet-based sources has produced a dramatic change in the research landscape. Newspapers that were sometimes only available in archives, or perhaps on microfilm, can now be read online. Researchers who are interested in a particular person, event, or issue can now search hundreds of issues with the click of a few keys. Nearly every novel published in America in the Civil War era can be read (and searched) online, and the list of journals available in electronic formats continues to grow. Meanwhile, archivists are busily scanning all sorts of valuable ephemera, ranging from political cartoons, to patriotic envelopes, to rare photographs. And Civil War enthusiasts are posting material on web pages, blogs, Facebook pages, and all manner of electronic platforms. Every historian, from the energetic middle schooler to the gray-haired scholar, must figure out how best to come to terms with this overwhelming array of information. Sometimes the most difficult task is simply keeping track of what is out there. With that in mind, we think that Sean Trainor has provided us with an invaluable resource in his “Annotated Guide to Online Resources.” Sean has not only brought together a wonderful assortment of web pages, including key sources that are not exclusively dedicated to Pennsylvania history, he has given the reader a taste of what they will find when they click on that link.

When we planned this special issue we decided to devote a special section to uncovering some of the unrecognized or under-used sources that can help us understand Pennsylvania’s rich Civil War history. Our thinking was that the state is full of “hidden gems” that future historians might want to contemplate. Why not use the occasion of this special issue to assemble descriptions of these little-known sources? We cast our net as widely as we could manage, seeking contributions from archivists, librarians, students, and faculty members. We hoped for a good breadth of topics, but we had no idea what contributions might appear.

We are particularly pleased to present readers with the eighteen hidden gems. The contributors illustrate the wonderful range of professionals and students who work on some aspect of Pennsylvania history. The gems

themselves are a reminder of the many sorts of sources available to the Civil War historian. The list includes intriguing examples of familiar types of primary sources: an African American woman's pocket diary, a fascinating letter from a wartime surgeon, the memoir of the war's great financier. A few remind us of the diversity of newspapers published in Pennsylvania during the Civil War, including perhaps the war's most important—and rarely consulted—labor newspaper and an equally valuable Irish Catholic newspaper. Several authors describe wartime manuscripts that hold a wealth of information about the war experiences of diverse individuals, including muster rolls, a deserter roster, and a fascinating examination of one man's pension records. Some of our favorite gems are not traditional paper sources at all. One contributor illustrates what we can learn through the close examination of a battlefield monument; another tells the strange tale of a stuffed horse's head; a third surveys a rich collection of patriotic envelopes. Along the way these sketches remind us of the holdings in many of the state's wonderful archives. This assortment of hidden gems barely scratches the surface of the material hiding in archives across the state, and across the country. Together these sources touch on many of the diverse sorts of primary sources available to the resourceful historian.

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We have both especially enjoyed this project because we each have written on the Civil War home front, and between us we have wandered through many of the state's fine archives, libraries, museums, battlefields, and historical sites. We were tempted to pack the hidden gems section with our own contributions, but we opted to leave those pages to our colleagues across the state. Instead, we thought we would use the final pages of the introduction to share some of our own experiences exploring Pennsylvania in the Civil War.

MATT GALLMAN

I began my work on the Civil War with a study of wartime Philadelphia. This was back in the dark ages before the internet, when we relied on card catalogues and published finding aids to identify sources. I spent long hours in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the Library Company next door, and I made fruitful excursions to Haverford,

Swarthmore, the University of Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia City Archives, and other local archives. For most of my time in the city I focused on the great wealth of traditional primary sources: diaries, letters, business records, annual reports, newspapers, government reports, census data, and so on. I did stumble upon a few “hidden gems” along the way. Perhaps my favorite, because it was pure serendipity, turned up when I visited a friend at Columbia University. When she went to class I wandered off to the archives, where I found the Civil War diary of Philadelphian Anna LaRoche, who I believe eventually married someone associated with Columbia. Historians interested in wartime entrepreneurs should also consult the superb records of the R. G. Dun and Company, housed in Harvard University’s Baker Library. The final reports of the district provost marshals are another particularly valuable, and still somewhat obscure, source for studying recruitment, conscription, and dissent. The originals are in the National Archives in Washington, DC, but they are also available on microfilm.

More recently, I have become interested in exploring printed materials of all sorts: novels, short stories, song sheets, poems, political cartoons, photographs, patriotic envelopes, and the occasional satirical game. The internet is invaluable in identifying and examining these sources, especially as I sit at my computer in Florida. In Pennsylvania, the web pages of the Library Company of Philadelphia and Special Collections at Gettysburg College are particularly useful. These sources offer another sort of window into what Northerners were reading and talking about during the Civil War. Of course they also illustrate a larger point: Pennsylvanians lived in a wartime world where communities and states existed within a much larger culture. How do we assess the significance of a novel or cartoon that was available in Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago? What do state and region mean in this complex world of printed public discourse?

JUDY GIESBERG

As a historian of the Civil War home front, I feel pretty fortunate to have landed in Pennsylvania, where the sources are everywhere and archivists are eager to get them into your hands. Early on, I was awarded a Resident in Scholar Fellowship at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, where I spent a glorious six weeks exploring the collections at the State Archives in Harrisburg. I’ve done work in many

places over the years, but I had never found so many “hidden gems” and such an expert and approachable staff of archivists. There a researcher will find an embarrassment of riches—everything from claims filed for lost property in the wake of the Confederate invasions of Pennsylvania (1863 and 1864) to an extensive collection of Civil War-era cartes de visite to a lovely collection of handmade mourning bonnets. The problem, of course, is reminding oneself to leave Harrisburg once in a while and look elsewhere. Like the Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh where I learned about the Allegheny Arsenal explosion and the nearly eighty women who lost their lives there at an explosion in 1862 or the National Archives at Philadelphia that, as you’ll see, has correspondence and materials related to Camp William Penn, the primary training camp and rendezvous point for United States Colored Troops, and that also has an extensive collection of letters from women working as seamstresses at the Schuylkill Arsenal in Philadelphia during the war. Then there was that roster of prostitutes at the syphilis hospital during the war that turned up at the Philadelphia City Archives. Where to start? For anyone interested in exploring how the Civil War was lived on the home front, Pennsylvania provides no end to possibilities. I have only named a few.

Since I began my work here, though, I have watched with concern as many of these sites have suffered from shrinking budgets and short-sighted cost-cutting decisions. In the last few years, archives have eliminated positions and restricted their hours. Many historic sites have closed indefinitely. Ambitious digitizing efforts like the one underway at Penn State are expanding access to many items, but this work is hardly keeping up with the pace of closures that will bury some of the state’s Civil War sources and the early retirements of archivists who can lead you to that hidden gem just waiting to be discovered. Of course, *PMHB* readers are aware of these trends, but it strikes me on the occasion of the sesquicentennial—and in this special issue—that some of my best finds were made while chatting over coffee or lunch with senior archivists or as I was flipping through the (still as yet undigitized) finding aids of various largely unprocessed collections. I am thrilled to have been part of *PMHB*’s special issue, which I hope will encourage others to dig in and root around in the state’s rich archives, local historical sites, and university libraries, where you can still learn surprising things about Pennsylvanians’ Civil War experiences. I hope this issue helps to uncover and keep unburied some of the state’s rich sources.

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Before we leave you to enjoy this special issue, we both would like to express our deep appreciation for Tammy Gaskell and the work she does not only as editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* but also for all the other things she does at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make accessible that institution's sources to a wide public. Her duties, too, have expanded over the years, yet she continues to ensure that this magazine publishes the most timely and significant scholarship in the region. It has been a pleasure working with her on this issue.

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