

Could the Senecas have accomplished their far-reaching cultural overhaul in lieu of the Quaker presence? Dennis thinks not, yet he stresses the agency of Seneca actors in the “purposeful transformation and revitalization” (224) of their lifeways amidst intensifying pressures from the surrounding settler population. By the end of Dennis’s account, the reader is rewarded with a nuanced understanding of how the Senecas, notwithstanding frequent contemporary assertions of their status as a “backward” population (187), represented such a frustrating obstacle for their would-be oppressors precisely because of their innovative success in engaging the new economic realities of the early American republic: market exchange, natural resource management, and land leasing as a means of economic development.

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The Union War. By GARY W. GALLAGHER. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011. 215 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$27.95.)

In *The Union War*, Gary Gallagher seeks to reclaim what the concept of Union meant to Northerners who fought in the Civil War. The author views his thesis as a needed corrective to the common misconception, advanced by historians of the “freedom school” of Civil War history, that the second important goal of the North—emancipation—somehow eclipsed the equally worthy goal of preserving the Union. Gallagher chastens these students of the Union war effort, pointing out that they have collectively failed to appreciate the context in which the citizens of the loyal states understood the significance of the word “Union” as a sacred tradition born of antebellum political philosophy.

Gallagher asserts that the hallowed meaning of “Union” has disappeared from the American vernacular. “Recapturing how the concept of Union resonated and reverberated throughout the loyal states in the Civil War,” he contends, “is critical to grasping northern motivation. No single word in our contemporary political vocabulary shoulders so much historical, political, and ideological meaning; none can stir deep emotional currents so easily” (46). Northerners’ attention to the sanctity of Union emerged from years of poignant reflection through which they collectively connected themselves with a primordial sense of nationalism.

Although Gallagher’s book helps recover this lost vocabulary, his analysis becomes a list of reprimands against historians who have intentionally or unintentionally obscured the importance of Union. Few schools of thought escape his scathing indictment, yet several interpretations stand out as primary culprits. First and foremost, Gallagher rebukes the post-1960s generation who in their effort to recover the centrality of emancipation argued that only the liberation of slaves offered the Union a true purpose (40). Of course, Gallagher does not

ignore the importance of emancipation—in fact, he consigns a whole chapter to its discussion—but he notes that loyal white citizens, both on the home front and on the battlefield, accepted liberation (and, for that matter, black military service) only as a “practical application” to achieve victory (95).

Gallagher also blames academic and popular historians for failing to deal with military action soberly. As Lincoln recognized, and as Gallagher points out, “all else” depended on the progress of Union arms, and “all else” meant the dual goals of Union and emancipation (119). In Gallagher’s words, historians have failed to appreciate the “larger political and social implications of military campaigns” (121). Popular historians trivialized battles and academic historians ignored them. Emancipation could not have occurred without the integral role played by Union soldiers, and the progress of arms resulted in the ebb and flow of the conflict’s other meanings. By avoiding the crucial intersection of military and social life, Gallagher maintains, the significance of Union dropped from the pages of history.

Gallagher’s analysis is forthright and convincing, but not without weaknesses. *The Union War* repeatedly asserts that loyal Northerners used the phrases “Union” and “nation” interchangeably, an avowal that some scholars of nationalism might find troublesome. The true bone of contention, though, stems from Gallagher’s antimodernist approach. He argues that the Union war effort revealed more continuity than change and that “no one should infer a sea change in attitudes toward the nation” (161). Critics might carp on Gallagher’s limited conception of the transformative powers of the war, for he depicts the conflict as a process of restoration, not an ideological crusade to uphold human freedom. These critics have a point; Gallagher might have considered that white Northerners understood and welcomed the transformative powers of the war even if revolutionary motivations never actuated their participation in it.

At any rate, the debate on the Union war is not yet closed, but Gallagher’s excellent book is a sturdy analysis that reminds us that the concept of “Union,” though foreign to readers of the twenty-first century, was nevertheless wholly real and supremely significant to loyal Northerners in the nineteenth.

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TIMOTHY J. ORR

Last to Leave the Field: The Life and Letters of First Sergeant Ambrose Henry Hayward, 28th Pennsylvania Volunteers. Edited by TIMOTHY J. ORR. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011). 344 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$52.)

During the sesquicentennial commemoration of the Civil War, it is only natural that a plethora of books, articles, essays, and online publications has begun