
Ever since the Civil War centennial a familiar story has repeated itself — someone looks into great-grandfather’s trunk and in his plundering discovers his ancestor’s diary or his letters written during the War Between the States. Almost inevitably, these epistles or ramblings are published. Thus, another boring volume of trivia that should have never been born is thrust upon the American people. It was, therefore, a happy surprise to find that From That Terrible Field did not fall into the above category.

John Folmar has managed to uncover the well-written and candid letters of areasonably articulate Southern officer, who paints a lucid picture of everyday life in the Confederate army in a little-known theater.

James M. Williams, the letter writer, was an atypical Southern officer in that he was an Ohio-born emigrant to the South of only three years when the war broke out. Williams arrived in Mobile after a stay in Augusta, Georgia, where he married Eliza Pennison, a Southern belle. With the coming of the war, Williams embraced the Southern cause enthusiastically and enlisted in the Twenty-first Alabama Infantry Volunteers, basically a unit of south Alabamans. Throughout the long travail from October 1861 until the spring of 1865, Williams wrote on a regular basis to Eliza. His correspondence chronicles his rise through the ranks to lieutenant colonel. In addition, he records his participation in the Battle of Shiloh and his much longer service with the Confederate forces in the Mobile area.

Williams’s letters, personally written and shot through with his sharp sense of humor and folksy art work, provide an excellent account of a long neglected theater of the American Civil War. The letters provide a firsthand account of the boredom and the tedium of Confederate garrison life during the Civil War.

Folmar has done a good job of editing these letters. However, letters, like diaries, require extensive footnotes for explanation purposes. These notes are better included throughout the body of the work and in close proximity to the letters themselves rather than at the end of the volume. I am not unaware of the economic necessities that force presses to present notes at the end of the volume as has
been done in this case but, nevertheless, it distracts from the continuity of an interesting work. More attention could have also been paid in this volume to the illustrations and map work. Many of the illustrations from the ORA and other sources were reduced to the point that they were almost illegible. In addition, the map presented on page 109 can be confusing to the nonstudent of Alabama history in that it presents Alabama counties as they currently exist rather than as they existed in the Civil War period. Also, important rail points such as Bridgeport are not shown, and several railroads of the period are also not depicted.

Folmar's work will not be remembered as a major contribution to the body of Civil War literature; nevertheless, it should be recognized as a fine and valuable contribution to the state and local history of Alabama and Mississippi.

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Professor Lane has written an important study of suicide, accident, and homicide in nineteenth-century Philadelphia "as measures of personal behavior, especially violence, and then to indicate the relative impact of population and other influences upon that behavior" (p. 1). The sources for his work are drawn from the Philadelphia newspaper, the Public Ledger, health department annual reports, coroner and court of quarter sessions docket books, and federal census records. Through a computerized study he has divided his statistics into nine seven-year periods beginning in 1839 and ending in 1901.

Chapter 1 sets the stage for the problem by providing a historical sketch of how the early twentieth-century sociologists of the University of Chicago viewed nineteenth-century urbanization as "an inevitable tendency toward disintegration of the social order, and indeed of the 'character' of those who composed the society" (p. 4). Lane's aim is to use the statistics on violence to reject the Chicago