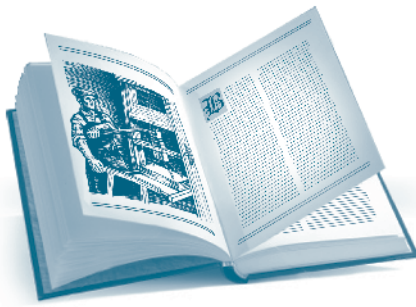


BOOK REVIEWS



History of Andersonville Prison, Revised Edition

By Ovid L. Futch with an introduction by Michael P. Gray

Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011

146 pp., \$19.95 paperback with index and illustrations

Reviewed by Tim Orr, assistant professor of history, Old Dominion University

squalor. Futch's book is a marvel for its brilliant simplicity of argument, its complexity of analysis, and its straightforwardness of opinion. Futch weighs-in on controversial issues: the poor organization of the camp, the inhuman treatment of the prisoners by the guards, the brutal depredations committed by the Raiders (and their eventual suppression), the haphazard regulation of sanitation measures, the lackluster medical care, and the farcical trial of prison commandant Captain Henry Wirz.

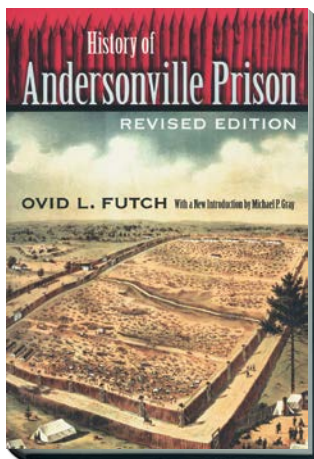
Still, Futch's book offers more than just a list of the sickening acts that occurred at Andersonville; it also gives a highly nuanced account of the atrocity, one that defined culpability in a discerning way. Futch makes it clear to readers that the dramatic death toll had little to do with Confederate cruelty, and Confederate authorities did not deliberately attempt to bring about the deaths of federal soldiers. However, Futch argues that this did not relieve Confederates of liability in the 12,900 prisoner deaths spaced across 14 agonizing months. Ultimately, "gross mismanagement" infested Confederate command at Andersonville, Futch claims, preventing Brigadier General John H. Winder (the camp commander) and Captain Wirz from providing the inmates with adequate sanitation, shelter, clothing, and medical care.

Futch admits that the number of deaths that came about due to the Confederacy's dwindling resources could never be easily differentiated from the numbers who died because of Winder's and Wirz's incompetence, but the evidence makes it all but certain that unconscionable negligence and lack of a proper system led to unnecessary suffering. The Confederate commanders wrongly believed they could handle the gargantuan task before them. In the end, for all the controversy, Confederacy authorities deserve to shoulder the blame. Futch concludes soberly, "Those

who revere the men who fought for southern independence should face the truth as did Eliza Frances Andrews, who wrote of Andersonville: "it is horrible, and a blot on the fair name of our Confederacy."

Michael Gray's introduction offers an excellent historiographical survey, one likely to mirror Futch's book in terms of its longevity. Gray lauds Futch as the "Prison Micro-Monograph Pioneer." He also reminds readers that Futch's interpretation, which casts blame on the Confederacy, never received full recognition from the academy. Some critical reviewers did not appreciate Futch's casting of Wirz as a negligent administrator. "It was a sobering assessment," Gray concludes, "especially for Southern readers coming out of the Civil Rights era in the historic and vitriolic year of 1968."

In any event, if Futch's *History of Andersonville Prison* deserves another review, not much criticism can be found. Now in the 21st century, more research can certainly be done to unravel life inside this terrible camp, but it is doubtful that future scholarship can radically alter the significance of this dreadful moment of American inhumanity. ☀



Ovid L. Futch, a student of Civil War scholar Bell Wiley and a professor at Morehouse College, died suddenly in March 1967, but his dissertation, a finely crafted study of the prisoner of war camp at Andersonville, Georgia, lives on.

Futch's mentor pursued the publication of his student's dissertation, and in 1968, University Press of Florida introduced the first scholarly, single-volume analysis of Andersonville to the reading public. The Press reprinted it in 1999, and in 2011 it received its third iteration, a revised edition enhanced by a new introduction authored by Michael P. Gray.

Futch's *History of Andersonville Prison* stands out as one of the most readable of the several histories of this notorious prison camp. His chapters, arranged thematically, capture the powerful human drama that encircled the camp's 45,000 inmates, held tight on 25 acres of

"We Will Be Satisfied With Nothing Less": The African American Struggle for Equal Rights in the North during Reconstruction

By Hugh Davis

Cornell University Press, 2011

232 pp., \$45 hardcover

Reviewed by Samuel W. Black, director of African American Programs, Heinz History Center

When 145 delegates to the National Convention of Colored Men met in Syracuse, New York, in October 1864, a dual emotional state encompassed the room. Those present felt optimistic, emboldened by the Emancipation