

H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Steven E. Woodworth, Kenneth J. Winkle. *Atlas of the Civil War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 359 pp. \$85.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-19-522131-2.

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Given the plethora of American Civil War titles rolled out by the presses each year, one might reasonably assume that of all those titles one would surely include numerous superb atlases providing precise and detailed maps of battles and other topics important in the history of that conflict. One might make such an assumption but one would be wrong. Indeed, in the entire universe of Civil War scholarship, few works have been as routinely anemic and unsatisfactory as those intended to provide adequate maps and charts. Happily, all of that ends with the publication of this atlas. Students would find this atlas sufficiently remarkable if Woodworth and Winkle had simply supplied adequate maps, but there are strengths in their work that push it far beyond that.

First, of course, there are the maps themselves, and in each instance they are far more than “adequate.” They are clear and precise and each is augmented with comprehensive, straightforward symbols and keys. Each is also presented with an accompanying narrative that explains the significance of the event depicted and places it in the chronology of the war. All of the maps are also presented in full-color formats that can easily be converted into slides that will significantly enhance classroom presentations.

A second strength in this work is the comprehensive coverage of the war it affords. Maps detail not only such well-known battles as Manassas, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg and Chickamauga, but less familiar actions such as Steele’s Arkansas Campaign and the battles of Iuka, Olustee, and Brice’s Crossroads. Readers will also delight in the fact that the authors have removed the bane of scholars and teachers everywhere—the cluttered, indecipherable map. The authors have divided the larger and longer-lasting actions such as Shiloh, Antietam, Atlanta,

and the Overland Campaign into phases and stages, and the result is clear and easily understood depictions that readers will applaud.

Nor are the presentations limited to the actions of ground forces. Naval actions such as Mobile Bay and the fabled 1862 encounter at Hampton Roads receive full coverage, as do naval contributions to the Union victories at Forts Henry and Donelson, Island No. 10, and the Vicksburg Campaign.

A third great strength of this volume is that the narratives, maps, charts, and graphs are not limited solely to battles. Maps devoted to political subjects such as voting on the Compromise of 1850 and the divisions in political support for the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments are included along with illustrations, tables, and graphs that depict the development of technology, tactics and strategy during the war as well as the evolution of weapons and field fortifications. The omission of a map to accompany the explanation of the fate of prisoners of war will disappoint those interested in this routinely neglected topic (this author included in that number!), but the scope of subjects addressed is vast nonetheless.

A final strength is that the subjects addressed in this atlas do not terminate with the surrender at Appomattox. In a chapter titled “Epilogue to War,” the authors supply tables, maps, graphs and accompanying narratives that chart the course of Reconstruction and offer explanations of such topics as politics in the postwar South, the impact of the Morrill Act, and voting in each of the presidential elections through 1876.

In sum, Woodworth and Winkle have produced a truly exceptional work, and students and teachers of the American Civil War will all benefit from their efforts.

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