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Harold S. Wilson. *Confederate Industry: Manufacturers and Quartermasters in the Civil War.* Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002. xxii + 412 pp. $45.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-57806-462-5; $30.00 (paper), ISBN 978-1-57806-817-3.

Reviewed by David Woodard (Concordia University, St. Paul, Minnesota)
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In this well-researched book, Professor Harold S. Wilson examines Southern industrial capabilities during the American Civil War. Wilson's primary focus is on the question of whether the South was so industrially deficient, that winning the war was never a possibility. Wilson argues that the South was industrially sufficient at the start of the war. In fact, he persuasively describes an antebellum South that was one of the leading industrial areas in the world by 1860. Using meticulous research and a plethora of data, Wilson shows that the South ranked high in comparison with other developed countries of the world in areas such as per capita income, life expectancy, miles of telegraph lines, mills, and railroad facilities.

After effectively proving that the South possessed ample industrial facilities, Wilson goes on to examine and explain how that base of industry was harnessed during the war itself. He also introduces a number of related issues like: was the new Southern manufacturing class more moderate in their view of states rights? Did the Confederacy utilize its manufacturing base enough during the war? How did the destruction from the war effect postwar manufacturing? And did the war's destruction pave the way for the new industrial South?

In order to ascertain answers to some or all of these questions, Wilson's primary focus of analysis is the C.S.A. Quartermaster General's Office during the war and how it operated. At the start of the conflict, it was clear that the Confederacy had to figure out how to manage and utilize its prosperous industrial base. Wilson determines that by the war's end, the Quartermaster's Office had appropriated more than half the South's produced goods for the military and hundreds of mills, and actually controlled the flow of Southern factory commodities. Wilson makes his case using several arguments. First, he shows that in the initial stages of the Quartermaster's Office labors, and for quite some time after, the Confederacy actually experimented with a sort of "military socialism," in order to exploit its numerous resources. It is clear that the states' rights South did not always agree with these efforts, but those political rifts are not the spotlight of Wilson's study. The ability–or sometimes the inability–of the Quartermasters to feed, cloth, and support the C.S.A. troops is the primary area of examination here.

The two Confederate Quartermaster Generals, Abraham C. Myers and Alexander Lawton, are each introduced by the author. Myers proved to be ambivalent as well as much too bureaucratic and hesitant to steer off course. This proved his downfall as Myers was unable to make the office work like it should. By 1862, Confederate troops were still ill-fed and often without shoes and other essentials. In fact, in many instances under Myers's tenure, local suppliers and other small Southern businesses did a better job equipping the army than the Quartermaster's Office itself. Myers often had to depend on the states themselves to supply their own troops. Some states actually did well in establishing effective state supply systems. Even though unsympathetic to Myers, Wilson points out that the office and Confederate government had been unprepared for war; Myers was given few personnel and his office lacked structure from the beginning.

After Gettysburg, in 1863, the ineffective Myers was replaced by Brig. Gen. Alexander R. Lawton and things immediately improved. The army began to get supplies, and Wilson maintains that the Quartermaster process was in full gear by mid-1864. There were still many difficulties for the South, which the author discusses. Southern manufacturers lacked a skilled-labor supply and, by 1864, it was clear that Southern factories were becoming more and more dependant on imports. Even with the successful Union naval blockade and other quandaries, Lawton's tenure was generally a success. The Quartermaster office was equipping C.S.A. soldiers with clothing and other necessities. In addition, Lawton conducted

the first census of Confederate resources, which caused department planning to improve tremendously. He organized the Bureau of Foreign Supplies to help import goods, and even streamlined the awkward and often unwieldy supply system. Lawton took advantage of local support, made quick decisions when needed, and was more than willing to try alternative methods to secure supplies for the troops. When Wilson does cite problems within Lawton's organization, he generally blames Myers's supply system.

Wilson's secondary theme centers on providing links between the Southern pre-war manufacturing class and the postwar New South. During the course of his narrative, Wilson introduces the reader to many of those key Southern manufacturers–names that have not often been examined. We meet Southerners like the Crenshaw family woolen manufacturers of Virginia; Duff Green of Georgia; Francis Levin Fries and Edwin Michael Holt of North Carolina; William and James Gregg, South Carolina mill owners; James Barrington King and Henry Merrell in Arkansas; and Daniel Pratt of Alabama. At the start of the war, these men had generally opposed secession–most had ties with the North, worked with Northern capital, and were internationalist in outlook. But once the war started, these industrialists served the Confederacy reasonably well and overcame the extensive difficulties of dealing with Quartermasters' demands and the evolving Confederate bureaucracy.

These business leaders also provide the transition in Wilson's thesis. As Union forces began to destroy much of the manufacturing infrastructure which the Confederacy had constructed during the rebellion, the question became what would happen when the war ended? Would Southern manufacturers continue to assert some control, or would the old planter aristocracy regain power? Wilson demonstrates that it was the industrialists who led the way in the New South. The industrial class had amassed enough political power during the war and enough of the industrial base had survived for them to be able to move into the post-war era. These same manufacturers were also able to adapt to the new labor conditions in the South. They soon developed a segregated labor force whereby blacks did most of the unskilled work, while poor whites held the semi-skilled jobs.

Wilson is clearly sympathetic to the Southern industrialists; they did well before the war, performed credibly during the rebellion, and were able to take power in the New South and move the section forward in the postwar era. He asserts that very soon after the Civil War, these industrialists were already planning a new urbanized, industrial South. Wilson ends by stating that, by the beginning of the First World War, half the nation's spindles lay within the former Confederacy, home of a new boom in manufacturing and the land of America's staple crop, cotton.

This is an important book for the many questions it attempts to answer. Wilson successfully re-opens a debate about Southern industrial strength at the start of the Civil War. The author also presents a number of Southern individuals who are too-often overlooked–industrial and manufacturing leaders who influenced the South both before and after the war. While this is an extremely well-researched book, it probably ends up being a little too narrow in scope. The connections between pre- and postwar Southern industrialism do not connect well. While the examination of the Quartermaster's Office was important and interesting, it did not provide the transition needed to tell us about the future. Wilson might have provided some broader insights into larger questions about many of these issues. The narrowness of the Quartermaster's examination seems to stray from the real historical debates surrounding American and Southern industrialization. Nonetheless, I liked learning about some new Southern characters, and I yearn for more about these relationships in the Confederacy.

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