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Paul A. Cimbala, Randall M. Miller, eds. *The Great Task Remaining before Us: Reconstruction as America's Continuing Civil War.* New York: Fordham University Press, 2010. 200 pp. $65.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8232-3202-4; $24.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8232-3203-1; ISBN 978-0-8232-3204-8.

J. Matthew Gallman. *Northerners at War: Reflections on the Civil War Home Front.* Kent: Kent State University Press, 2010. 266 pp. $39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-60635-045-4.

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Commissioned by Martin P. Johnson

Reconstruction, A Great Task

*Reconstruction is one of the most challenging eras of American history to teach. Southerners, black and white alike, saw the world that they had known exploded. Immediately after the Civil War, what would take the place of the Old South was utterly unclear. Much of Reconstruction was a battle among freedmen, white Southerners, and white Northerners to determine what the South would be. This moment could be one of pregnant opportunity, fury, or despair. Many treatments of Reconstruction work largely on the level of high politics: Supreme Court cases, battles between Congress and the president, fights for control of legislatures, constitutional amendments, and new laws. But Reconstruction profoundly affected millions of Southerners trying to navigate their way through and to a new kind of life, and we too rarely hear the stories of how Reconstruction played out on a more local level.

The Great Task Remaining Before Us is a collection of eleven case studies, most of which are state-level studies. While considering a collection like this as a whole can be difficult, this volume does cohere better than many. Taken together, the articles underscore the point that editors Paul A. Cimbala and Randal M. Miller make in their preface: that "neither victor nor vanquished accepted the war's end as settling all that the war had cost in blood and loss" (p. xiii) This was not a short-term problem, as we all know. Reconstruction, they note, "remained incomplete as the century closed." Indeed, one could argue that it remains a work in progress even today.

These essays have some fascinating insights. Derek W. Frisby and Margaret M. Storey write about Unionists in western Tennessee and Alabama after the war and ask what happened to them. They did not fare well, as it turns out. They were not protected well by the army, and the goals of Radical Reconstruction went well beyond their comfort zone. In both states, Unionists "found themselves living between two worlds, yet … strangers in both," as Frisby writes (p. 29). Similarly, Unionists in Kentucky and Missouri felt betrayed during the war by a government that had promised to protect slavery where it existed but then allowed African Americans into uniform. That experience, as Aaron Astor notes, led them to oppose Reconstruction.

Some of New Orleans' free blacks, facing this new world of Reconstruction, opted to take advantage of it by "passing" as white. Justin A. Nystrom's thoughtful essay points out that this was not easy to do. It required the complicity of black and white family members and generally took more than a single generation to disguise one's racial background fully and successfully. Until then, this could be a precarious undertaking.

Perhaps the most interesting article in the collection is Jason Phillips's "Rebels in War and Peace: Their Ethos and Its Impact." Here he argues that the myth of the Lost Cause was not a break from the past but wholly continuous. The roots lay in a long-standing Southern belief that Southerners were not only indomitable but in fact superior to anyone else. This notion, which persisted through the Civil War and into Reconstruction, was the "distinguishing characteristic" of the hardcore, Phillips says: "It shaped their identity, influenced their view of the war, and guided their actions after surrender" (p. 156). Their belief in their own superiority allowed them to insist after the war that they were not genuinely beaten, that their soldiers were unmatched, and that their cause was just. The outcome of the war was trivial compared to the

Rebels' valiant performance on the field.

Northerners at War is a misleading title. In truth, this collection of a career's worth of essays by J. Matthew Gallman might better be titled *Pennsylvanians at War*, or more specifically, *Philadelphians at War.* Of the eleven articles contained in the book, five have to do with Philadelphia and four feature Anna Dickinson, a Philadelphian who became the most renowned woman speaker of the Civil War, as a central focus of the essay. Of the two pieces that do not have a Philadelphia connection, one is about Gettysburg and the other is on African American soldiers who fought at the Battle of Olustee, in Florida. In the sense of its geographic diversity, then, *Northerners at War* falls far short of its name. Boston, New York, and Washington, DC, are represented in passing. The Western states are wholly absent.

That said, the articles that compose this book, all of which have appeared elsewhere, are insightful studies of Philadelphia and its economy during the war, and of its favorite wartime daughter. What emerges from the collection as a whole is Gallman's strong sense that for all its expense in terms of men and materiel, the Civil War made little difference in the North's long-term economic or social trajectory. To the contrary, he argues in "The Civil War Economy" (with Stanley L. Engerman), the war had a far greater effect on the South because it destroyed slavery and the plantation system, forced the government–as opposed to private industry–to open more factories and lay more railroad line, and produced a more forceful and centralized government than the North did because of its paucity of men and resources.

As interesting as any single article in the book is the way that, in following the career of a single social historian, it largely traces the path of social history itself. Coming out of Brandeis in the mid 1980s, Gallman began as a cliometrician (following in the footsteps of his father, Robert Gallman). The early essays in the book feature lots of numbers, although not so many as to overwhelm the math-phobic reader. They can be tagged as community microhistories–so popular at the time–or urban histories. The piece Gallman wrote with Engerman is a piece of economic history, a side interest that Gallman already included as part of his earlier studies of Philadelphia, and continues in "Entrepreneurial Experiences in the Civil War."

From there Gallman's career veered rather dramatically, first in comparing how the Irish famine played out in Liverpool and Philadelphia (nothing from that period is in this volume), and then in embarking on women's history. He became particularly interested in Dickinson, who seemed to challenge so many norms of her time. Yet for all her work and fame and speeches, she was an outlier, Gallman concludes, and any gains that Northern women may have made during the war were lost in the postwar years. Again, a story of continuity rather than a sharp break for the North.

Gallman returns to Dickinson to engage in another new (for the time) trend in social history: using literature to examine historical events. He does this by comparing a novel Dickinson wrote with that written by another Philadelphian, Silas Weir Mitchell. This article also delves into another new avenue of social history, that of memory.

This book is a useful volume for anyone interested in Philadelphia during the Civil War or in Anna Dickinson. Its article on Gettysburg is a masterpiece of community history and a brilliant model for anyone interested in microhistory. It is much less about the Northern homefront, writ large, during the Civil War.

But the volume has a strange double life. Not only is it a particularly strong source for information on the City of Brotherly Love, but by tracking one historian's career it also turns out to be a fascinating presentation of the major historiographical trends of the past generation. For that reason it could be a very intriguing addition to a historiography class at either the undergraduate or graduate level.

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