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Taylor M. Chamberlin, John M. Souders. *Between Reb and Yank: A Civil War History of Northern Loudoun County, Virginia.* Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2011. 356 pp. $49.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-7864-5924-7.

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Between Popular and Academic History: The Problem of Local Studies

In the years before and during the Civil War, a section of Virginia argued to keep the Old Dominion in the Union, encouraged dissenters to avoid military service, traded with the United States, and flaunted Confederate authority. This description is typically assigned to those counties that became West Virginia. But there is another section of Virginia with Unionist sympathies long overlooked by historians, North Loudon County. There are some books that focus on individual units that were raised or served in Loudon County, as well as works that describe the region in detail. But overall, surprisingly little is known about the war in that area or the war's effect on the regions' citizens. In their work, *Between Reb and Yank: A Civil War History of North Loudon County, Virginia*, Taylor M. Chamberlin and John M. Sounders attempt to shed light on this often overlooked aspect of Virginia's home front during the Civil War.

The authors' intent is to connect the local events, people, and experiences of Loudon County with the wider war. The primary goal of this work is to "remedy [the] amnesia," which has obscured "any detailed appreciation of the long, bitter struggle waged by local loyalists and rebels as the tides of that conflict ebbed and flowed around them" (p. 1). The authors' claim that though Mosby's Rangers and other Confederate units that were recruited and operated in and around Loudon County have received some historical attention, the interplay of those units with Unionists and Quakers remains shrouded. This work is a local study which also incorporates military, political, and social history elements throughout the text. The approach helps the authors focus on how the Civil War played out among Loudon County's Quakers, German and Scotch-Irish immigrants, Southern sympathizers, Northern and Southern occupying troops, as well as Federal and Confederate authorities.

The authors' first chapter starts with John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia and describes the raid's close proximity to Loudon County, the panic of the county's citizens, the slow recruitment of its militia, and the subsequent reverberations that would shake the nation to its core. The first chapter is short and serves as an engaging hook to the narrative, though it could appear chronologically out of place to some readers. This is because the second chapter discusses the founding, populating, and development of Loudon County in the antebellum period by the various immigrant groups that came to call this section home. Much of the first two chapters is filled with detailed descriptions of the ethnic make-up of the county, the slave-ownership rates, and the political machinations of local groups. This information provides a good deal of context that can help explain the actions of Loudon's citizens during the war. However, the chapters are marred by ambiguous statements like, "some [people] employed slaves, others did not" (p. 3), which does not aid the reader in understanding why and how certain people owned or employed slaves and how that possibly affected their politics and allegiances.

Subsequent chapters are chronologically organized and named after a particular event or person, sometimes encompassing a few months, sometimes a whole year. In total, the book contains thirty-six chapters, from the antebellum period to the first few years of Reconstruction. At some point, every chapter explains the effect of armies, politicians, or civilians on the community's experiences. This chronological organization allows for the authors' primary sources to offer fascinating ground-level views of major events, like the Confederate march into Maryland during Robert E. Lee's first invasion of the North. As a consequence of this organization, some chapters are surprisingly brief, containing only a few pages, while others are several dozen pages long. Though this chapter breakdown can at times seem haphazard, it does not adversely affect the flow of the narrative.

Chamberlin and Sounder's narrative is guided by the words of civilians and soldiers alike, providing broad and diverse perspectives. Newspapers, Quaker religious meetings, maps and reports from spies, diaries, letters, Treasury Department documents, Judge Advocate General testimonies, official correspondence, and other primary sources add a great deal of detail to the narrative. Many of these documents were overlooked by previous researchers, making this book a welcome addition to the historiography. Though the majority of the text is well written, certain passages seem overburdened by the level of detail provided by the authors. In some cases, entire paragraphs serve as laundry lists of people at a particular event, with a few relevant and irrelevant facts. This is an common problem in local studies.[1] These portions can be cumbersome and will undoubtedly lead to many readers simply skipping over the passage to the next, less tedious paragraph. Despite this drawback, the narrative remains tight throughout the work, and the occasional cumbersome details are undoubtedly useful to future researchers.

As stated before, the authors' purpose is to bring more attention to the large and forgotten Unionist population in Loudon County. The primary sources and published works from soldiers and civilians provide a great deal of information about how great Unionist feeling was in the county and the consequences this dissension caused with Confederate authorities. Likewise, these sources also show how Unionists actively helped the U.S. Army and Federal authorities, as well as how the Union used many extra-legal methods to imprison pro-secessionist civilians living in Loudon County. However, despite these insights, few if any academic secondary sources are used to shed light on the phenomena of Unionists, treason, occupation, military tribunals, and guerrilla warfare. Works like Daniel W. Crofts' *Reluctant Rebels: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (1993) or John C. Inscoe and Robert C. Kenzer's *Enemies of the Country: New Perspectives of Unionists in the Civil War South* (2004), to name just a few, would have aided the authors in fulfilling their goal of discussing the heavy Unionist presence in the county. Such works would have allowed them to effectively connect Loudon's Unionists to the broader experience of Unionists throughout the South, a goal that the authors unfortunately fail to accomplish. Additionally, the authors engage topics that have received considerable scholarly attention, like violence and the Southern honor code (p. 359, n. 6), yet never bother to consult the works of Bertram Wyatt-Brown, one of the foremost authorities on these topics.

That is not to say that the entire work lacks an academic focus. The book contains such a wealth of sources that it will be useful to scholars. This work also presents a detailed description of Civil War Loudon County that has yet to appear in the historiography. However, there are many points, conclusions, and topics that could be enriched by additional secondary studies. Furthermore, the few scholarly secondary studies that do make the book's bibliography, like Mark Grimsley's *The Hard Hand of War: Union Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (1995) and Mark E. Neely Jr.'s *Southern Rights: Political Prisoners and the Myth of Confederate Constitutionalism* (1999), are only used to discuss briefly a particular event, statistic, or terminology. For example, Neely Jr.'s work is used to mention the establishment of a Confederate shadow court system (p. 78), while Grimsley's work is used to define the term "hard war" (pp. 168). The sources are effective in describing similar phenomena that occurred in Loudon County with the rest of the war-torn South, but these sources could have been used more extensively. The authors are initially successfully in their attempt to connect the county's experiences with the wider war, but they fail to make the jump from *mentioning* similarities, to *analyzing* and *extrapolating* the parallels in depth. Such a goal is, admittedly, outside of their stated scope, though further historiographical engagement would have strengthened the text.

Chamberlin and Sounder's work is likely intended for fans of popular history, residents of Loudon County, the general public, and undergraduate students alike. Due to the large amount of research and primary sources in this work, graduate students and scholars will no doubt find the book informative, substantive, well researched, and well written. However, its overall usefulness to Civil War scholars may be limited by the authors' failure to connect this narrative with the broader work done by professional historians. Furthermore, the authors' ambiguous statements described earlier detract from the work's effectiveness, raising another issue with respect to its utility for scholars and graduate students.

Another drawback of the authors' style is their use of certain terminology that can cause the reader to confuse the voices of a contemporary with the authors' own. Certainly the authors do not think that all the Northerners coming to the county in the antebellum period were "abolitionist fanatics" (p. 5) or "abolitionist hordes" (p. 8), but without using quotations, citations, or attributing the term to a local resident, the authors burden themselves with adopting their subjects' phrasing, thus making it appear they share the sentiment. At times the authors will quote the word "darkey" (p. 63), attributing it

to a Northern officer who encountered an African American in his travels. The usage is not an issue when following sentences or paragraphs that discuss racism, Northern perceptions of African Americans, African American self-emancipation, etc., which properly relate the term to the reader in a way that increases their knowledge and understanding of the subjects' position and the history behind it. But when such terminology is employed simply to pepper a statement with archaic phrasing, the term serves no substantive purpose and detracts from the work's ability to reach a broader readership.

Overall, this is a very strong book. The authors clearly devoted a great deal of time and energy to this study, which successfully details the experiences of Unionists in Loudon County, Virginia. The sources brought to bear, the tight narrative, and the contribution to the historiography are all clearly major strengths that should be commended. However, *Between Reb and Yank* appears to be caught between popular and academic history. This middle ground appears to be a growing and ambiguous area of historiography that employs modern research methods to successfully study local history, though it often fails to incorporate the hallmarks of the last twenty years of scholarly studies.[2] This field will undoubtedly continue to grow, as the demand for local history that is increasingly professional feeds this growth, requiring academic and popular historians to adjust and meet this challenge.[3]

The authors have produced a workable text that will surely correct the "amnesia" surrounding Loudon County's Unionists. This book will also serve as an important text for amateur historians of Loudon County and the general public, as well as effective directory for scholars seeking sources on the war in Virginia's border counties.

Notes

[1]. Charles W. Humphreys, "The Writing of Local History: A Review Article," *BC Studies* 22 (Summer, 1974): 71-75.

[2]. Ann Curthoys, "Crossing Over: Academic and Popular History," *Australasian Journal of Popular Culture* 1, no. 1 (2012): 7-18.

[3]. Stephanie Pasternak, "A New Vision of Local History Narrative: Writing History in Cummington, Massachusetts" (MA Thesis, University of Massachusetts, 2009).

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