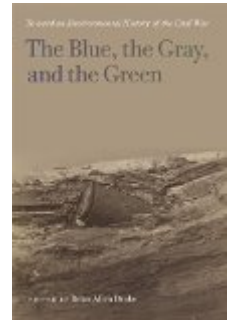


Brian Allen Drake, ed.. *The Blue, the Gray, and the Green: Toward an Environmental History of the Civil War*. Uncivil Wars Series. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015. vi + 250 pp. \$69.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8203-4714-1.



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Published on H-War (October, 2015)

Commissioned by Margaret Sankey (Air University)

Both military and environmental historians share an interest in studying the American Civil War, but *The Blue, the Gray, and the Green*, edited by Brian Allen Drake and the fourth work in the University of Georgia Press's UnCivil War Series, is the first self-conscious "environmental foray into Civil War studies" (p. 7). The authors of this collection provide readers with new ways to think about and reassess the Civil War in terms of the environment, or more specifically the "interactions between humans and nature across time" (p. 2). Collectively they demonstrate that the environment "shaped the course of war in consequential—rather than random or ephemeral—ways," which ultimately produced an environmental management state (pp. 226-227).

The ten essays in this collection are diverse in topic, scope, and framework, but all seek to foster an interest in Civil War environmental history. Particularly notable is Megan Kate Nelson's essay, "The Difficulties and Seductions of the Desert': Landscapes of War in 1861 New Mexico," which examines Major Isaac Lynde's retreat in New

Mexico. Nelson finds that the desert's landscape and climate shaped the course of the Civil War in the Southwest, by accounting for Lynde's seemingly irrational decisions as a commander. Kathryn Shively Meier's essay, "The Man Who Has Nothing to Lose': Environmental Impacts on Civil War Straggling in 1862 Virginia," argues that historians need to distinguish between desertion and absenteeism in their scholarship, because, as she demonstrates, unlike desertion, sometimes absenteeism was a survival technique in order to improve soldier performance and stay alive. "Nature as Friction: Integrating Clausewitz into Environmental Histories of the Civil War" by Lisa M. Brady brings together Carl von Clausewitz's model of warfare and environmental history by defining nature as a component of friction. Using this framework, Brady examines acoustic shadows in three different campaigns: Fort Donelson, Tennessee; Iuka, Mississippi; and Perryville, Kentucky. Timothy Johnson's essay, "Reconstructing the Soil: Emancipation and the Roots of Chemical-Dependent Agriculture in America," links the rise of

chemical-dependent agriculture in Hancock County, Georgia, to race relations and environmental factors. After the war, Johnson notes, local fertilizer mogul David Dickson marketed fertilizers as a salve for the “imbalances in social [race] relations and new political realities” and ailing postwar landscape (p. 199).

The Blue, the Gray, and the Green is a call to Civil War historians to incorporate environmental history in their scholarship and does not claim to be a comprehensive survey of Civil War environmental history. Rather, as noted in the epilogue by Paul S. Sutter, many of the essays reexamine various aspects of traditional military history. If historians are going to examine the environmental ramifications of the Civil War they need to understand them, not only in terms of traditional military history but also in terms of the newest trends in the field. This collection should encourage Civil War historians to incorporate environmental history into the study of traditional military history as well as the home front, women and gender, race, veterans, and memory, among other potential areas. Moving beyond a traditional military history focus will also open up new environmental analysis in regions neglected in *The Blue, the Gray, and the Green*, such as the agricultural power of the Midwest. Despite these minor limitations, this collection of essays successfully demonstrates a need for Civil War environmental history and will appeal to Civil War, environmental, and military historians alike.

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Citation: Lindsey Peterson. Review of Drake, Brian Allen, ed. *The Blue, the Gray, and the Green: Toward an Environmental History of the Civil War*. H-War, H-Net Reviews. October, 2015.

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