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Christopher Phillips. *The Rivers Ran Backward: The Civil War and the Remaking of the American Middle Border.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2016. 528 pp. $36.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-518723-6.

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Christopher Phillips's important and far-reaching book examines the breakup of the "middle border," the once cohesive region encompassing the states of Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, all watered by the Ohio River. Through the first half of the nineteenth century, that waterway connected the white citizens who lived both north and south of its banks. They shared a worldview of white supremacy established in the United States Constitution and adhered to a common acceptance of the role of slavery in their economic, social, and political lives. Theirs was a white man's country. They eschewed, Phillips writes, both the extreme views of abolitionists and proslavery militancy of the East and South respectively. Residents of the middle border held a middle-ground attitude to slavery, accepting it where it existed, yet comfortable with the fact that several northeastern states had done away with human bondage. Slavery was the law in Kentucky and Missouri south of the river, and while the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 barred slavery in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, human bondage flourished in those states through legal dodges undertaken by white citizens well into the 1830s. As antislavery sentiment grew in much of the North, leading to calls to abolish the institution, many in the middle border saw slavery was a "negotiable issue" (p. 73) and set themselves up as the mediators in the national dispute.

In his opening chapters, Phillips carefully shows that the region's self-appointed moderator role in the national conflicts over slavery weakened. As abolitionism intruded in areas north of the Ohio River, regional consensus fractured. Reacting to growing antislavery sentiment, proslavery adherents in Kentucky and Missouri, aided by allies north of the river, "adopted the mantra of southerners" (p. 97) to defend the institution. Still, the moderate middle border consensus continued through the political conflicts of the 1850s and into the Secession Crisis of 1860-61, when proslavery Unionists in Kentucky and Missouri clutched tenaciously at the hope of compromise over slavery. Phillips argues persuasively that the middle border's slave states' policy of neutrality was not secessionism in sheep's clothes, but a last-gasp effort to mediate a peaceful resolution. Theirs was a conditional Unionism as long as the federal government protected slavery. Likewise, many moderate Unionists in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois reacted with shock at the militancy found in Republican antislavery rhetoric in the North.

Indeed, once war came middle border moderates in both the Democratic and Republican parties recoiled at the aggressive measures of both the Confederate rebels and the Republican admin-

istration of President Abraham Lincoln. Modifying historian Mark Grimsley's thesis on "hard-hand" policies toward slave-owners in the region, Phillips argues that Lincoln adopted tough tactics (e.g., martial law, suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, arrests) early in the conflict in 1861, treating the many neutrals and conditional Unionist slave-owners in Kentucky and Missouri—which did not secede from the Union—as rebels and disloyalists. Lincoln's policy of arming African American men to fill the army's ranks both enraged and terrified these government supporters. Soon, slave-owning Unionists turned against the administration and toward the rebel Confederacy as a way to preserve their institution. Significantly, Phillips argues that their shift derived not from resonance with Southern culture; nonetheless, thereafter they identified as "Southern" in sympathy with the Confederates fighting to maintain chattel bondage. Similarly, Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation of September 1862 confirmed in many Northern Democrats' eyes the abolitionist bona fides of the administration. They bolted from the pro-war coalition with Republicans, causing the midterm election disaster in the middle border's free states. Conservative and moderate Westerners rejected the Proclamation, as well as Lincoln's military arrests of civilians and suppression of the Democratic press, as insupportable violations of the Constitution. In Kentucky and Missouri, formerly Unionist men and women aided or participated in guerrilla warfare to preserve slavery, while north of the Ohio River opposition to the war and resistance to government measures grew increasingly violent.

The surrender of Confederate armies and the end of the war failed to end the conflict in the middle border. The political fights over the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution, among other issues, heightened racial violence. Ex-Confederates held control of the Democratic Party in both ex-slave states Former rebels —many still sporting their Confederate uniforms —seized control of Kentucky government when President Andrew Johnson withdrew federal troops in 1866, inaugurating a reign of terror over both white and black Unionists. In the decades to come, residents of Kentucky and Missouri identified themselves as Southerners, taking up the Lost Cause as aggrieved victims of an unholy and unconstitutional abolitionist onslaught. North of the river, Republicans consolidated political power in the immediate postwar years. Later, residents of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois came to portray themselves as ever antagonistic to slavery and ever stalwart supporters of the martyred Lincoln. Soon, no commonality between the formerly middle-ground moderate alliance survived.

In *The Rivers Ran Backwards*, Phillips ranges over the whole nineteenth century in detailing the decline of middle border moderation. His focus, however, rests closely on the midcentury Civil War years. Before each chapter, he provides useful vignettes illustrating how individuals or locales navigated the politics of race, war, and growing division in communities. His ample footnotes display a sweeping command of archival sources. Throughout, he engages a vast secondary literature with aplomb. Historians will consult the book with profit and will assign it to their graduate students for careful study. It is, alas, not without flaws. Along with a number of relatively minor factual miscues (e.g., John Greenleaf Whittier was from Massachusetts, not Indiana; George Washington Julian served in the US House, not the Senate; Indiana governor Oliver P. Morton fought successfully against military authorities who desired to declare martial law in his state), sections —particularly in chapter 8—show sloppy editorial work, where text appears garbled and some endnotes do not match the text. As well, the book's often dense prose makes it less than ideal for assignment to undergraduate students. These reservations aside, Phillips has produced a major statement on the nature and consequences of the Civil War on the middle border.

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