Christopher Rein argues that the only history of the effects of the Civil War on the state of Alabama comes from a biased account written by Walter Fleming. This work, produced forty years after the war's end, suffered too much from the prejudices of its time to provide a nuanced view of actual events. Rein's book, *Alabamians in Blue: Freedmen, Unionists, and the Civil War in the Cotton State*, seeks to tell the story of the Civil War in Alabama by diverging from the standard approach that often follows the Confederate army and events occurring in the Black Belt and Montgomery regions. Instead, Rein recounts the state's story through the eyes of its inhabitants who fought for the Union and traveled with its forces through southern Tennessee and the Chattahoochee River valley down through Pensacola, Florida. Rein follows black and white Union regiments from Alabama and seeks to answer three questions: Who were the Alabamians in blue, why did they choose to join the Union, and what did they accomplish?

Before addressing the Union men, Rein opens his book with a history of Alabama, briefly noting the elevated level of violence before discussing the origins of Alabamian secession and foreshadowing future conflicts. Despite ranking fourth in the United States by total number of slaves (435,000) and by their percentage of total population (45 percent) in 1860, positions on slavery within the state remained disparate. When the convention met on January 9, 1861, the secessionists prevailed with fifty-six votes to the Unionists' forty-six. This vote is representative of the diverse thoughts and attitudes of the residents of Alabama and proves that the state's general population was neither dependent on nor wholly approved the institution of slavery. The men not involved with the vote, who made up the dissenting Unionists, were either freed slaves or inhabitants who morally opposed succession and/or slavery. Rein states, “Many white Alabamians sought to hold on to one constant, the flag and the Union of states they had known since birth” (p. 39), and “many black Alabamians embraced the onrushing chaos as a harbinger of the long-awaited exodus that promised deliverance from bondage and a new life in a promised land” (39). Confederates, or anti-Unionists, began to use the legal system to fight against their neighbors as the conflict turned Alabama into a war for resources characterized by local skirmishes. Loyal men eventually gathered in northern Alabama to rally against the Confederate cause. By the winter of 1861, over eight hundred loyal Alabamians had organized, ready to defend themselves from the predations of their neigh-
bors. These men and freed slaves, after months of informal guerrilla action, crossed the Mississippi border to Corinth, where they formally mobilized under General Grenville M. Dodge.

The record of the Alabamian Union regiments speaks for itself when addressing Rein’s third question, about the unit’s accomplishments, and General Grenville M. Dodge warrants consideration as the Alabama Union’s most influential figure. He aggressively recruited freed slaves and Unionists to join his army, eventually forming over five regiments from his recruits alone. Dodge successfully led two separate units out of Corinth to support the defense of the Tennessee Valley railways and functioned as General Ulysses S. Grant’s intelligence chief for the Western theater. The Alabama Colored Heavy Artillery unit defended Fort Pillow in Memphis, Tennessee. It later became a rallying cry for free blacks after news of their slaughter by General Nathan B. Forrest after the fort’s capture. More units from Alabama defended the Florida coast at Fort Barrancas in Pensacola, keeping vital ports open and under friendly control. Finally, the 106th and 110th United States Colored Infantry marched with General William T. Sherman on his famous campaign from Atlanta to the sea. The Alabamian units helped bring an end to the Civil War and “actively participated in efforts to remake Southern society” (p. 212), even though their efforts were overturned years later by their former enemies.

Rein never intended to argue that Alabamian Union forces turned the tide of the Civil War. Instead, he wanted to correct the ledger of history with respect the men who served. Rein demonstrates that the Alabamians who wore Union Blue were ideological men who believed in preserving the Union or ending chattel slavery, and freedmen ready to fight to maintain their freedom. He also describes the success of their well-known campaigns. But Alabama, untouched by the large-scale conflicts of the Civil War, witnessed widespread local animosity between neighbors, leading to guerilla warfare between the anti-Unionist population and the loyal Union regiments. The Alabama Union regiments faithfully acquitted themselves during these encounters of the war and in the more minor battles. Rein concludes by lamenting the efforts of the Unionists and freedmen, for all the gains they achieved within Alabama would be overturned during the next decade, and guerilla warfare would continue to be propagated by groups like the Ku Klux Klan.

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