

reduced to a personal conflict between General Curtis and one of his corps commanders, the German-born Franz Sigel. But what did the rank-and-file think? How did ethnic splits play out within and between regiments? The authors do not approach these subjects. Ethnic conflict in the Confederate army is even more simplified, revolving around the several American Indian regiments that fought on the Confederate side. The authors "resolve" that conflict by asserting that the Indians did not commit the atrocities usually attributed to them. Were there no immigrants in the Confederate army?

In the final analysis, Shea and Hess argue, the blame for Confederate defeat at Pea Ridge lies squarely on Earl Van Dorn. Three particular mistakes stand out. Van Dorn decided to rush his army to battle without its supply trains, leaving his troops critically short of ammunition on the second day of the battle. Then, during the battle, he lost contact with about half of his army and so never effectively utilized his forces. And he failed to coordinate his numerically superior artillery properly. More generally, Shea and Hess conclude that Van Dorn was impetuous to the point of recklessness, and hence not really fit for command.

Indeed, the authors miss no opportunity to criticize Van Dorn. Sometimes he is even criticized for doing something (such as cutting himself off from his base of supplies) that Curtis is later praised for doing. Curtis, a more stolid figure than Van Dorn, got away with cutting himself off from his supplies as he marched through Arkansas after Pea Ridge; Van Dorn's army was hampered throughout the battle by his having tried the same maneuver in the days leading up to Pea Ridge. Thus one often gets the impression that Van Dorn is criticized because he failed; Curtis praised because he won.

*Trials and Triumphs: The Women of the American Civil War*, by Marilyn Mayer Culpepper. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1991. x, 427 pp. Illustrations, bibliography. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ELIZABETH D. LEONARD, COLBY COLLEGE

As Marilyn Mayer Culpepper rightly notes in her introduction, "Every schoolchild has heard about Fort Sumter and Gettysburg and Appomattox, but relatively few Americans, young or old, know much about the activities of women during the Civil War" (1). This generalized ignorance regarding the contributions of women on both sides of the Civil War effort is a result, I believe, of a pro-

tracted adherence to the notion that war is part of man's sphere, not woman's. Until recently that assumption led historians of war to focus on men, and historians of women to focus on anything but war. Culpepper's *Trials and Triumphs* is one of several new works to liberate us from such narrow vision and demonstrate that wars not only affect but also engage women as well as men. The Civil War was no exception.

The extensive bibliography appended to *Trials and Triumphs* attests to Culpepper's voluminous archival and published primary source research on Civil War women. Her diligence in seeking out and compiling these records provides readers of all sorts with a means to plunge into the world of American women's experience between 1861 and 1865. In quote after quote, Culpepper's "Civil War friends" (4) reveal their hopes, anxieties, and anguish, and describe their wartime struggles and service—at home and on the battlefield. For those who yearn for a rich and poignant sampling of material from the journal entries, letters, and reminiscences of a cross-section of literate women during the Civil War, *Trials and Triumphs* is a fine place to start.

For those who yearn for theory, analysis, and exposition, the book is much less useful. Culpepper forewarns the reader: "There are few conclusions drawn here. The material is presented with as little interpretation as possible" (3). For the most part, Culpepper resists scholarly engagement with the sources she has so carefully collected, as well as with other historians. At the end of the book Culpepper does devote a few paragraphs to a discussion of the various ways in which women's wartime activities permanently challenged the "typical stereotype of women as delicate, submissive China dolls" (391), but that section seems tacked on and makes no reference to previous historical work exposing that stereotype in the first place, such as Barbara Welter's 1966 article in the *American Quarterly*, "The Cult of True Womanhood." More important, here and in the few other places where Culpepper steps back from her sources, she does not ground her commentary in the expanding contemporary historical discourse on women and the Civil War. For example, much of her material dealing with the suffering of Confederate women seems rootless, for lack of a connection with George Rable's *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (1989) or Drew Gilpin Faust's "Altars of Sacrifice: Confederate Women and the Narratives of War" (1990). Similarly, the chapter on Civil War nurses cries out for enhancement (and updating) on the basis of the work of Jane Ellen Schultz, Nina Bennett Smith, and Ann Douglas Wood. These examples could be multi-

plied throughout the book. Clearly, Culpepper's interest lies in simply allowing the women to "speak for themselves and their times" (3). The question that lingers, however, is whether, unassisted by contemporary scholarly insight, we can fully understand the larger implications of what the women were saying when we "hear" them "speak."

However one responds to that question, *Trials and Triumphs* is still an important addition to the rapidly growing literature on women and the Civil War. Readers of all types will find the women's words informative, engaging, heartrending. Scholars, too, owe Culpepper a debt of gratitude for uncovering and bringing together in one volume excerpts from so many wonderful primary sources.

*Dubious Victory: The Reconstruction Debate in Ohio*, by Robert D. Sawrey. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992. xii, 194 pp. Illustrations, map, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY ROBERT R. DYKSTRA, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY

*Dubious Victory* is about Ohio politics in the period 1865–1868, which—as in Iowa—centered on the related issues of Reconstruction and African-American civil equality. Professor Sawrey gives us a straightforward, blow-by-blow account of both internal state politics and the national events that influenced Ohio's electoral behavior.

Ohioans experienced something roughly similar to what voters underwent in other northern states in the Reconstruction era, inviting specific comparisons. For example, the events of 1865 in Ohio contrast remarkably with those of Iowa that same year as presented in my *Bright Radical Star: Black Freedom and White Supremacy on the Hawkeye Frontier* (1993). In both states, the Republican party was forced to grapple with proposed black suffrage at its June convention; returned soldiers were rumored to strongly oppose voting rights for blacks; in August the Democrats nominated a gubernatorial candidate who ran as an outspoken white supremacist; the ensuing campaign (between two Civil War officers) hinged on black civil equality; and the Republicans won October's election, but by margins down from those won by President Abraham Lincoln in 1864. There the similarities end. Ohio's Republicans refused to endorse black suffrage. In fact, their gubernatorial candidate, Jacob D. Cox, had his agents in the convention actively campaigning against such an endorsement. He later issued a statement favoring a

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.