

*Rebels in the Making: The Secession Crisis and the Birth of the Confederacy*, by William L. Barney. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. ix, 380 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$34.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Madeleine Forrest is a visiting assistant professor of history at the Virginia Military Institute. Her research focuses on the nineteenth-century U.S. South, specifically the American Civil War and community studies.

More than once, I've been asked, "What is there left to say about the Civil War?" While it may appear to many that the war has been exhaustively covered, William L. Barney's latest work masterfully illustrates that there is still much left to say about America's greatest conflict. Until now, there has not been a book dedicated to the secession crisis that took place in the fifteen slave states, and Barney weaves together stories from the summer of 1860 to the secession of the upper South in 1861. Arguing that secession was a "slaveholder-driven movement from the top" and not inevitable, Barney contends that certain events and decisions, such as Abraham Lincoln's election and call for troops, "built momentum" culminating in the battle of Fort Sumter (4). While the secession crisis has received significant focus at the state and local level, the success of this work is his synthesis of those studies with his own extensive research. Throughout the book, Barney is careful to reaffirm the centrality of slavery to the secessionist cause but makes sure to highlight the complexity of reasoning that existed within each state.

Barney's task is immense. Not only does he analyze the experiences of each of the slave states, he differentiates between regions of the South and is careful to also include Northern reactions to the various events and arguments being made across the Southern United States. As Barney notes, there was no universal point of view of secession; a white Southerner's class, occupation, and location all influenced his or her feelings on the subject. He incorporates a wide range of sources relying heavily on newspapers and correspondence to include the voices of planters, non-slaveholding whites, women and the enslaved. The first two chapters are constructed thematically before marching through the secessionist debates in the slave states chronologically. While each chapter covers a broad topic relating to secession, various sub-headings helpfully divide them, allowing for easily digestible parts to be assigned in the classroom.

This work has broad readership appeal and is as useful to a graduate student preparing for comprehensive exams as it is to an established academic. While this book does not advance any major new conclusions, as Barney confirms what many local studies have already determined, the great benefit of the text is that it consolidates the events surrounding the secession debates in one place (and in a more concise manner than

William Freehling's landmark work, *The Road to Disunion* [2007], referred to by Barney as "the last major work on secession" [3]). If there are any quibbles, one would be that reiteration of arguments. Barney contends that the older generation of white planters was more conservative and cautious in its views of secession and so some of the blame thus lay at the feet of younger slaveholders. This was decisively argued in Peter Carmichael's *The Last Generation* (2009); however, Carmichael only examined planters and their families in Virginia. So, while Barney's findings are not radical, the success of this book is that it unites the experiences of all Southerners, so that similarities, such as the generational argument, can be understood to have existed across state lines.

To those who may have a more regional focus on the Midwest, this book is helpful in providing context to the beginning of a war that had huge ramifications for midwesterners. Understanding secession is integral to understanding the Civil War, and while state and local histories are immensely important for the focus and detail they provide, equally useful are the works that consolidate those studies and allow for larger conclusions to be drawn. Barney has shown that once again there is still something new to be learned about the Civil War.

*A Thousand May Fall: Life, Death, and Survival in the Union Army*, by Brian Matthew Jordan. New York: Liveright, 2021. x, 368 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$28.95 hardcover.

Reviewer James Marten is Professor of History at Marquette University. He is a historian of the Civil War era, and the author of numerous books, including *Sing Not of War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (2011) and *America's Corporal: James Tanner in War and Peace* (2014).

The study of almost any Civil War regiment can reveal useful insights about the conflict and about the men who fought it. From the hundreds of nineteenth-century accounts written by survivors to modern efforts by historians to make sense out of the war experience, unit histories offer the opportunity to tackle issues related to politics, community, ethnicity, and other social and cultural issues that traditional military histories often avoid.

*A Thousand May Fall* is the history of the 107<sup>th</sup> Ohio, which was representative of many Union regiments recruited in 1862, and one of the thirty or so other regiments that were "ethnic"—70 percent of its soldiers were immigrants, most from Germany. It fought in two of the most violent clashes of the war, but also spent much of the war in desultory garrison and picket duty in the deep South. Rightfully or wrongly, they, along with other units in the Eleventh Corps—and particularly the other