

pragmatic, not rhetorical" (22). Mehrer uses aspects of vernacular architecture, household archeology, and social power theory to accomplish this task. Chapter three offers readers an exhaustive layout of the sites and features of the seven chosen areas. This chapter is, perhaps, the most interesting as it includes nearly three dozen site drawings and photographs, which lend visual clarity to Mehrer's methodological schema. Chapters four and five are the most challenging. Aimed primarily at a professional audience, they go into great detail to show "how the configuration of common households . . . sheds light on the development and decline of the region as a whole" (8). Employing more than fifty tables, these two chapters are technically dense and somewhat inaccessible to the lay archeologist. However, there are moments of clarity that make the mental labor worthwhile. In the short conclusion, Mehrer concisely restates his thesis: "There are several different repeating patterns of household layout and examples of common facilities that rose and fell in popularity throughout the region. . . . At the time that Cahokia's planning was carefully regulated, planning in the countryside was relatively casual, often . . . idiosyncratic, and based on logistics rather than arbitrary axes of symmetry" (165). Rural families were self-sufficient, autonomous, and set apart from the social control exerted by elites over town-dwellers. Mehrer's study shows readers how this rural autonomy worked symbiotically with the temple-town first to develop and eventually to dismantle the very society it supported.

I recommend this book, especially as a precursor to a trip to the Cahokia area. The valuable insights as well as the excellent visual materials included in Mehrer's volume could only enhance the reader's walk into the past in Cahokia's countryside.

*For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*, by James M. McPherson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. xviii, 237 pp. \$25.00 cloth.

REVIEWED BY WALLACE HETTLE, UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

A basic question for Civil War historians can be posed simply: why did soldiers fight? This historical premise has been explored in classic works such as Bell Wiley's *Johnny Reb* and *Billy Yank*. The motivation of soldiers is a crucial question because the Civil War was a popular contest in which each side relied heavily on volunteers. In his new book, *For Cause and Comrades*, James McPherson examines a "quasi-representative" sample of more than a thousand letters and diaries as a means to explore the forces motivating Civil War soldiers. His

close reading of the sources illuminates the thinking of soldiers at the front and enriches our understanding of the war.

McPherson explores the connections between soldiers' "initial motivation" (why men enlisted), "sustaining motivation" (why they stayed), and "combat motivation" (why they risked death in battle). His exploration of soldiers' motivation leads him to conclude that the mental forces sustaining soldiers were intertwined with political ideology. He cites examples of northern soldiers determined to fight for the Union in the early years of the war, and documents a shift in soldiers' attitudes towards emancipation as Union troops realized that freeing the slaves was necessary for the war effort. The author also describes southern troops who volunteered to save their section from what they saw as tyranny. For Confederates, white liberty and black slavery were inextricably intertwined. The author does not suggest that political ideology is the sole force motivating soldiers (duty, honor, and masculinity also receive their due), but politics is the central force for each step of motivation, from entering camp to risking death.

*For Cause and Comrades* offers a marked departure from past historiography. Bell Wiley argued that few Civil War soldiers had strong political motivations, and some more recent work supports that conclusion. McPherson arrives at a different interpretation because he takes seriously the sometimes florid Victorian prose of soldiers about subjects such as duty and honor, and recognizes the way soldiers linked those concerns to sectional politics. Many of the soldiers whose papers McPherson examined died in battle, a fact that the author emphasizes repeatedly in order to underscore the gravity of their words. These soldiers inhabited a world much different from that of the twentieth century, a world, McPherson suggests, that was much less cynical about politics. Hence McPherson takes declarations of a willingness to die for the Union or the South at face value, refusing to suggest that such statements mask deeper concerns such as the fear of being labeled unmanly or cowardly. *For Cause and Comrades* documents the intense concern about politics at the front, and thus makes a crucial link between political and military history.

The structure of the book is problematic, however. To the author's credit, he liberally employs the voices of soldiers culled from primary sources to document the horror of combat and the ideas maintaining the fighting strength of armies in the face of mortal danger. But arguments about northern and southern soldiers are sometimes blurred together due to the thematic organization of the book. By emphasizing the similarity between northern and southern soldiers, McPherson seems to be returning to a theme of his instant classic of a decade ago, *Battle Cry of Freedom*. That book noted that both sides claimed as their

own the heritage of the founding generation. Yet after several decades of scholarship that has pointed to fundamental differences between slave society and the free labor North, McPherson's soldiers still appear strikingly similar. His tendency to treat Union and Confederate soldiers in the same chapter, sometimes in the same paragraph, can cause problems. In the chapter on religion, for example, McPherson notes that the Confederate army experienced large-scale revivals while the Union did not, but he fails to explore fully the implications of that difference.

This is a relatively minor problem, however. In this fine book, McPherson provides informative discussions of the psychology of combat, and is sensitive to changes in ideas over time. He clearly believes that the outcome of the Civil War—emancipation—justified its horrible cost. Yet he never romanticizes the ugly business of war, and he uses soldiers' words effectively to convey its terrors. He also notes that not all Civil War soldiers were self-motivated. His discussion of the use of cavalry to halt straggling and to force men to attack provides a welcome antidote to military histories that focus on the brilliance of generals or the heroics of soldiers.

McPherson's argument about the ideological motivation of soldiers would likely hold up especially well for Iowa, as the story of the state's solidly Republican troops is inextricably bound up with notions of free soil, free labor, and free men. Further study of the connection between politics and the Iowa soldier may be in order, however. It would add a dimension to our understanding of the heroism of Iowa troops in the famous Hornet's Nest at the Battle of Shiloh to suggest that they followed newspapers closely and wrote letters suffused with Republican ideals.

*The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat*, by Earl J. Hess. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997. xi, 244 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY RUSSELL L. JOHNSON, BILKENT UNIVERSITY, ANKARA, TURKEY

Earl J. Hess's *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat* represents a useful addition to the growing body of literature on the common soldiers' experience of the Civil War, focusing in this case on the experience of combat. Quoting extensively from the large quantity of letters, diaries, and memoirs which form his primary evidence, Hess allows the soldiers to speak for themselves as much as possible—all the better, he argues, to present his evidence "shorn of modern prejudices" (xi). Despite the problematic nature of the last assertion

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