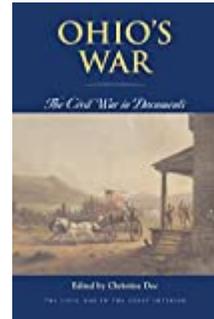




Christine Dee, ed. *Ohio's War: The Civil War in Documents*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007. xviii + 244 pp. \$16.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8214-1683-9.



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A Small Book with Big Aims

“This collection illuminates the relationships between these soldiers in the field and their communities at home, recognizing that military success and failure had a direct impact on battles over emancipation, conscription, civil liberties, and political economy,” Christine Dee announces in the preface. She also wants to consider the “war’s legacy” (p. xv). This is a huge agenda.

The chapters span the pre-war political crisis to the post-war legacy. Dee offers voices from cities and countryside, men and women, black and white, Republican and Democrat, pro-war and anti-war. The balance in a given chapter, however, can sometimes be uneven. Chapter 2, devoted to pre-war political views, is heavily slanted towards the Republicans. Readers would lack insight into Democratic doctrines such as popular sovereignty.

Chapters 3, 5, and 7 concern the military. Chapter 3 on mobilization and the early period of the war features women, labor leaders, farmers, politicians, aid workers, and soldiers. The themes of chapter 5 will be familiar to readers of James M. McPherson’s *For Cause and Comrades* (1997). Letters between soldiers and their wives display

the tension between honor and duty, and obligations to home and family. Chapter 7 features the battles of 1864, the emergence of black soldiers, and the presidential election.

Chapters 4 and 6 more closely follow home front sentiment. We see Ohioans’ reactions to emancipation, women’s activism, the impact of Confederate General John Hunt Morgan’s raid, and anti-war sentiment. There is a long section about the arrest of Clement Vallandigham, the nation’s premiere Copperhead. These selections give readers a good sense of the arguments between Republicans and Democrats over national security versus civil liberties in wartime.

Some chapters have curious omissions. The first chapter develops Ohio’s place in the nation. There is a great deal about fugitive slaves including the Oberlin-Wellington rescue and the memoirs of the African American Underground Railroad conductor John P. Parker. But there is no mention of the Margaret Garner case. The final chapter on the post-war legacy seems particularly skimpy. It contains no reaction from Ohioans to Abraham Lincoln’s assassination or to Reconstruction policy

such as the use of the military or black voting, or towards the Ku Klux Klan. There is a set of extracts about Senator Benjamin Wade's views on labor, but no discussion of how this impacted impeachment by making Wade next in line to be president if Andrew Johnson should be removed—too much of an economic radical for some Republicans. The timeline ends at 1867 despite the promise to consider the post-war period.

Readers will find documents on familiar subjects such as women's aid work during the war and soldiers' experience of combat, but they will also find documents on less examined subjects such as agriculture and labor during the war. Although there is no one theme that can tie such a disparate collection together, Dee clearly shows the evolution of race relations throughout the war. Early

in the war, War Democrat William Scott feared an influx of southern blacks coming north. Scott recognized that the war had irrevocably changed the racial status quo. Ohioans debated the emancipation proclamation, and white and black laborers clashed in a riot on Toledo's docks. There are documents from both a white officer in a black regiment and black soldiers.

No collection such as this can be all encompassing and Dee has done a good job of finding a variety of sources. This review can only touch on the disparate topics that the collection considers. The chapter introductions are particularly thorough. Students of Ohio history should find this collection a useful introduction to the Civil War in that state.

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