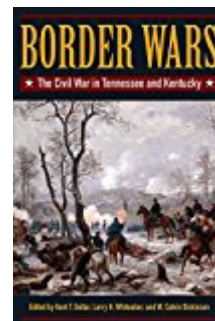


Kent T. Dollar, Larry H. Whiteaker, W. Calvin Dickinson, eds.. *Border Wars: The Civil War in Tennessee and Kentucky*. Kent: Kent State University Press, 2015. 320 pp. \$39.95, cloth, ISBN 978-1-60635-241-0.



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Border Wars is a companion volume to *Sister States, Enemy States: The Civil War in Kentucky and Tennessee* (2009). This earlier essay collection focused on the political, social, and economic dimensions of the war in the two Upper South states, whereas the new volume examines military aspects in the same places. This is somewhat of a reversal of the traditional approach that has dominated Civil War historiography over the years, with a primary focus on strategy, campaigns, and battles. The war's nonmilitary aspects were largely an afterthought until social science history and historians began making inroads into the study of the conflict in the 1990s. For at least twenty years now, historians of the war in the western theater and the trans-Mississippi have been reversing this paradigm by uncovering understudied aspects of the war's impact on individuals, communities, and economies. In a sense, western theater historians are taking the opposite approach from their colleagues who study the East, and with *Border Wars* are now returning to military topics.

The thirteen essays comprising *Border Wars* are organized thematically into two sections: "Battles, Skirmishes, and Soldiers" and "Leaders," with a summarizing afterword by Benjamin Franklin Cooling. As a group, the authors make up a virtual "who's-who" of scholarship on the war in the West, and they skillfully navigate topics that cross the spectrum of warfare, from Aaron Astor's interesting comparative treatment of Confederate recruiting and state militias in Clarksville, Tennessee, and Lexington, Kentucky, to Patricia A. Hoskins's discussion of guerrilla warfare and Derek W. Frisby's examination of military occupation, to Wiley Sword's evocative recreation of the soldier's experience at Franklin, the "Thunder Drum of War." The section on leaders focuses on high command, and with the exception of Brian D. McKnight's essay on Felix Zollicoffer and the early struggle for control of East Tennessee, provides little that is new or interesting to the Civil War scholar. Sam Davis Elliot's evaluation of Tennessee Governor Isham G. Harris's interactions with the Army of Tennessee is, to me, the most interest-

ing piece in this section of the book. Astor points out in his essay that “what the Confederate Army of Tennessee lacked in corps command, it made up in regimental-level élan” (p. 36). This condition, combined with the almost unbroken record of hardship, defeat, and bad luck endured by that army from 1861 to 1865, and the corresponding victories of Union armies in the West, fairly cries out for more analysis of regimental and small-unit leadership. Perhaps scholars who are now opening the aperture on Civil War leadership to junior and field officers will continue to take the armies of the western theater as case studies.

In his wrap-up essay, Cooling ruminates on the end of the sesquicentennial and makes several interesting connections to current events, reminding us that even though “it is death and destruction, disease and suffering attached to what meager glory and honor we may think attends such sacrifice to God and Nation, Banner and Cause,” many Americans “continue to wallow in Patriotic Gore [Edmund Wilson’s phrase] by way of Civil War memory, commemoration, and self-inflicted veneration of reenactment of carnage.” Cooling goes on to remind us of the many ways in which the Civil War’s western theater continues to offer useful and interesting avenues for research and scholarship. War “is mainly about people in the final analysis,” and “animals and things, even the landscape itself, were locked in this people’s conflict—lest we forget that fact” (p. 271). *Border Wars* is an excellent compendium of leading-edge scholarship on many of these areas as they touched the war in Tennessee and Kentucky. All scholars of the Civil War will want to read it.

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