The hard hand of war

*The Hand of War* explores the Union army’s policy of destructive attacks on Southern property and civilian morale – how it evolved, what it was like in practice. From an initial policy of deliberate restraint, extending even to the active protection of Southerners’ property and constitutional rights, Union armies gradually adopted measures that were expressly intended to demoralize Southern civilians and to ruin the Confederate economy. Yet the ultimate “hard war” policy was far from the indiscriminate fury of legend. Union policymakers promoted a program of directed severity – and Professor Grimsley demonstrates how and why it worked.

*The Hard Hand of War* fits into an emerging interpretation of the Civil War that questions its status as a “total war” and emphasizes instead the survival of political logic and control even in the midst of a sweeping struggle for the nation’s future. The primary goal of the Federal government remained the restoration of the Union, not the devastation of the South. Intertwined with a political logic, and sometimes indistinguishable from it, was also a deep sense of moral justice – a belief that whatever the claims of military necessity, the innocent deserved some pity, and that even the guilty should suffer in rough proportion to the extent of their sins. Through comparisons with earlier European wars and the testimony of Union soldiers and Southern civilians alike, Grimsley shows that Union soldiers exercised restraint even as they made war against the Confederate civilian population.
The hard hand of war
Union military policy toward Southern civilians, 1861–1865

MARK GRIMSLEY
The Ohio State University
For my teachers:
Billie Cranford, Inez Curry,
and Williamson Murray
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Abbreviations Used in Footnotes

CWMC Civil War Miscellaneous Collection (USAMHI)
CWTIC Civil War Times Illustrated Collection (USAMHI)
DUL Special Collections, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina
HCWRHC Harrisburg Civil War Round Table Collection (USAMHI)
HEHL Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California
ILHS Illinois Historical Society, Springfield
LC Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
MNHS Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul
MOHS Missouri Historical Society, Saint Louis
NYHS New York Historical Society, New York
OHS Ohio Historical Society, Columbus
SHC Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
USAMHI U. S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania
UW University of Washington, Seattle
VHS Virginia Historical Society, Richmond
WRHS Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland