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0521599415 - The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865

Mark Grimsley

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The hard hand of war

The Hard 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.

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MARK GRIMSLEY

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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
HCWRTC	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
OR	<i>War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies</i> , 128 vols. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880–1901
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