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978-1-107-12269-7 - From Hometown to Battlefield in the Civil War Era: Middle Class
Life in Midwest America

Timothy R. Mahoney

Excerpt

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From Hometown to Battlefield in the Civil War Era

Mahoney examines how members of the middle class from small cities across the great West were transformed by boom and bust, years of recession, and civil war. He argues that in their encounters with national economic forces, the national crisis in politics, and the Civil War, middle class people were cut adrift from the social identity that they had established in the “face-to-face” communities of the “hometowns” of the urban West. By grounding them in their hometown ethos, and understanding how the Panic of 1857 and the subsequent recession undermined their lives, the author provides important insights into how they encountered, responded to, and were changed by their experiences in the Civil War. Providing a rare view of social history through the framework of the Civil War, the author documents the dramatic change and development of modern life in nineteenth-century America in both breadth and depth.

Timothy R. Mahoney is Professor of History at the University of Nebraska. He is the author of *River Towns in the Great West: The Structure of Provincial Urbanization in the American Midwest* (Cambridge University Press, 1990) and *Provincial Lives: Middle-Class Experience in the Antebellum Middle West* (Cambridge University Press, 1999). Collectively this trilogy of books, crisscrossing similar ground and following the same people from the 1800s through 1880s, reflects his efforts to tell a comprehensive story of the transformations of the Midwest and nineteenth-century American society in general.

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TIMOTHY R. MAHONEY

University of Nebraska, Lincoln



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