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*Rebels in the Rockies: Confederate Irregulars in the Western Territories* by Walter Pittman (review)

Glen Sample Ely

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history than anything else, but Frazier has provided the best account of Confederate efforts in Louisiana during that turbulent season. The volume is richly illustrated and features numerous excellent maps. Students of Texas history will find substantial coverage of units from the Lone Star State. For serious scholars of the Civil War in the trans-Mississippi theater, Frazier's study is indispensable.

East Central University

BRADLEY R. CLAMPITT

*Rebels in the Rockies: Confederate Irregulars in the Western Territories.* By Walter Pittman. (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, 2014. Pp. 260. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index.)

Few historians would claim that events in the American West significantly influenced the outcome of the Civil War. Nevertheless, from 1861 to 1865, the region boasted a fascinating and colorful history, a history certain to engage anyone interested in the topic. Walter Earl Pittman has done a marvelous job in bringing the Civil War West to life in his newest work, *Rebels in the Rockies: Confederate Irregulars in the Western Territories*. This in-depth study largely focuses on Confederate activities in West Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado. Pittman, a retired history professor who taught at both the Mississippi University for Women and the University of West Alabama, currently lives in Roswell, New Mexico.

Pittman is a gifted storyteller who deftly navigates his way through a considerable amount of material covering a large geographic area. He focuses his narrative on Confederate irregulars, rebel partisans, and guerrillas operating in the West who "attempted, with some temporary success, to create their own countervailing military force to the overwhelming Union presence" (219). Anyone who loves reading about spies, intrigue, and military intelligence will thoroughly enjoy this work.

Occasionally, Pittman evinces a southern partiality that mars the book's general objectivity. For example, in one chapter, he mentions Colorado passing "under the shadow of Union domination" (133). He also states that there were parts of the West where "Southern sympathizers were actually in the majority," citing southern New Mexico and Arizona as regions "dominated by pro-Southern populations" (7). In fact, less than 1 percent of residents in New Mexico Territory (including Arizona) were from the South (Upper and Lower States). Most New Mexicans were Hispanics who cared little for the Confederate cause. Pittman claims there was strong secession fervor in Mesilla, New Mexico, but he overstates the region's southern identity. Only 23 of Mesilla's 2,440 residents were southern. A portion of this alleged fervor emanated from a group of Texan fire-eaters who traveled to Mesilla from neighboring El Paso County in March 1861.

In addition, recent scholarship challenges some of the old and outdated historiography regarding southern identity in southern New Mexico.

Pittman endeavors to counter previous conceptions of rebel guerillas as “debased, bloodthirsty outlaws” (219). He argues that many were educated men of means who “probably committed no worse atrocities” (220) than Union partisans. In the context of wartime violence, this could be considered a valid point; however, it does not excuse their conduct. Many of these irregulars were no knights in shining armor. One notable example of this occurred in December 1864 near Fort Leaton, Texas, when Confederate Captain Henry Kennedy and thirty brigands terrorized Hispanic tenant farmers, holding them hostage while pillaging their homes. Overall, the book’s strengths compensate for any such concerns. *Rebels in the Rockies* is an entertaining read that is easy to recommend.

Fort Worth, Texas

GLEN SAMPLE ELY

*The Ordeal of the Reunion: A New History of Reconstruction.* By Mark W. Summers. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014. Pp. 528. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.)

As sesquicentennial celebrations of the Civil War conclude, scholarly and public attention shifts to honoring the anniversaries of Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement. Historians furiously debate the merits, successes, and failures of postwar Federal policies and programs. Current Reconstruction studies highlight race, reunion, radicalism, and the idea of an “unfinished revolution.” *The Ordeal of the Reunion* reminds readers that history “forgets the conservative many, whose influence and power would confine how far any movements toward equal rights had any chance to go” (10). This edifying volume from the Littlefield History of the Civil War Era series stresses the difficulty of balancing reconciliation with national security.

Mark W. Summers is the Thomas D. Clark Professor of History at the University of Kentucky, and a practiced author of seven books. He chronologically and thematically intertwines topics into a comprehensive and engaging narrative that spans from Abraham Lincoln’s 10 percent plan through the return of southern Democrat “Redeemers” to political power. Summers suggests that Americans nationwide were far more concerned with peace, security, and forming an enduring Union than with ensuring the long-term enforcement of civil rights for African Americans. He emphasizes that “Reunion would take reconciliation if it was to win over those whose allegiance had been lost” (13). Civil rights became part of the cost of reconciliation.

The challenge of creating a “New South” and achieving a lasting