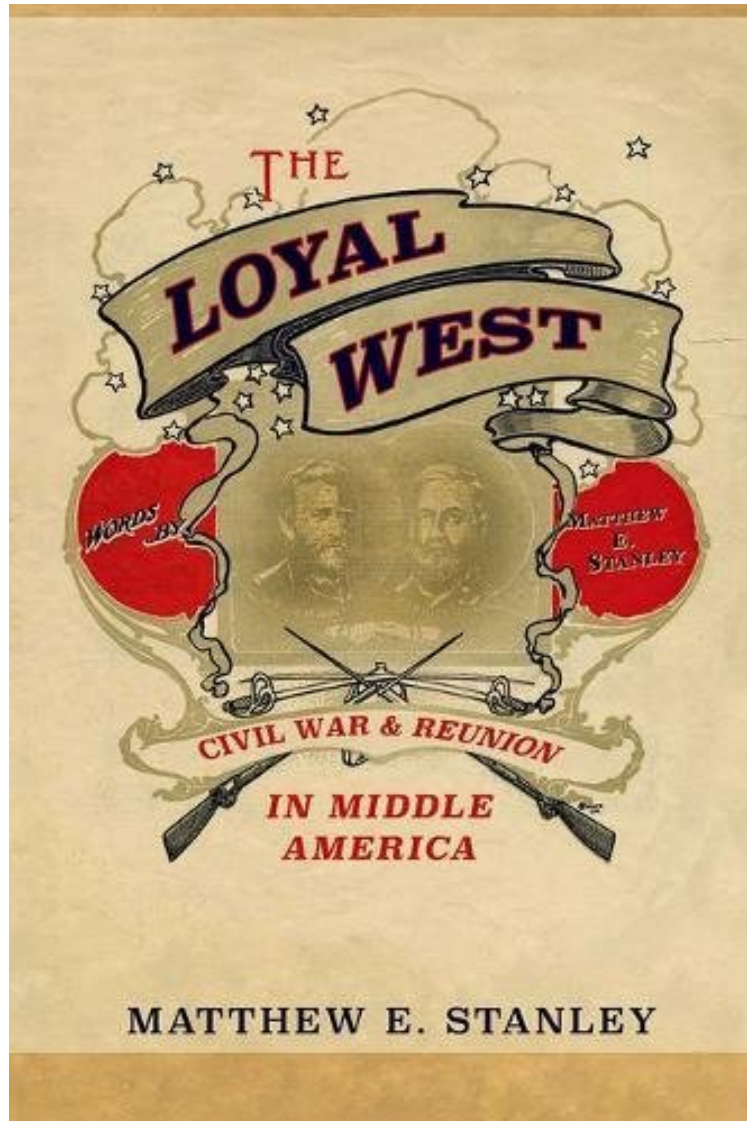


The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America

Matthew E. Stanley

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Matthew E. Stanley : The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Loyal West: Civil War and Reunion in Middle America:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Required reading for anyone who wants to understand how different regions experienced and remembered the Civil War.By MCHStanley's study is both part and parcel of a broader movement exploring the intersection of Civil War memory and regionalism. Thoroughly researched and thoughtfully

written, *The Loyal West* helps drive home the notion that even during the war itself, "the South" and "the North" were not so neatly delineated as they appear today in textbooks or on film. As a result, readers are forced to confront an unfamiliar narrative in which identity politics and racial violence take center stage, all in a part of the Union that never seceded and had contributed many a soul to the army that ultimately made emancipation possible.

A free region deeply influenced by southern mores, the Lower Middle West represented a true cultural and political median in Civil War-era America. Here grew a Unionism steeped in the mythology of the Loyal West--a myth rooted in regional and racial animosities and the belief that westerners had won the war. Matthew E. Stanley's intimate study explores the Civil War, Reconstruction, and sectional reunion in this bellwether region. Using the lives of area soldiers and officers as a lens, Stanley reveals a place and a strain of collective memory that was anti-rebel, anti-eastern, and anti-black in its attitudes--one that came to be at the forefront of the northern retreat from Reconstruction and toward white reunion. The Lower Middle West's embrace of black exclusion laws, origination of the Copperhead movement, backlash against liberalizing war measures, and rejection of Reconstruction were all pivotal to broader American politics. And the region's legacies of white supremacy--from racialized labor violence to sundown towns to lynching--found malignant expression nationwide, intersecting with how Loyal Westerners remembered the war.

"The Civil War transformed the Southern Midwest's cultural and political affinity with the border South into a strong Unionist (but not emancipationist) loyalty that helped the North win the war. As Matthew Stanley makes clear in this intriguing study, however, the Ohio Valley region led the Northern retreat from Reconstruction and the reconciliationist movement of the 1890s that partially restored that antebellum cultural affinity and pushed the historical issues of slavery and abolition into the background."--James M. McPherson