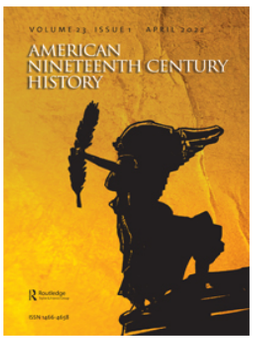

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The transatlantic war: Britain and the American Civil War revisited

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REVIEW ESSAY

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Readers of this journal are well aware that the study of the American Civil War has taken a global turn in the past two decades – some of them, indeed, have led the way. The internationalization of the field has been a welcome development in U.S. historiography in the twenty-first century in general and for good reason the Civil War has been at its forefront. Abraham Lincoln consistently emphasized the war's transnational significance, of course, perhaps never more eloquently than in this famous line from his annual message to Congress in December 1862: "We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth." At first, transnational scholarship concentrated on the ways in which the war's politics played out on the international stage, asking an old question: what was the impact of the conflict overseas? Answers concerned previously marginalized groups and, in particular, working men seeking representative forms of governance at home. Placing secession and Confederate nation-building in comparative perspective with other separatist movements was especially popular.[1] The field of inquiry expanded beyond narrow diplomatic channels and high politics that characterized the prior work of foreign policy historians but remained within the realm of the masculine and the political (and still does).[2] The gaze outwards from North America also turned the other way as developments beyond U.S. borders have been shown to influence domestic history in significant ways, providing a more holistic understanding of America's conflict.[3]

The Atlantic World features prominently in the Civil War's global turn and there is a strong case to be made that the war had the greatest impact there.[4] The four books under review

emphasize forceful reverberations back and forth across the Atlantic and remind us that no nation was more invested in or buffeted by the American Civil War than Great Britain. The 1860s was a tumultuous decade, with crises in Poland, Hungary, Italy and French invasion of Mexico, but none "had as decided an effect on British life" or "reached deep into the political life of the country."[5] Enduring attachments of kith and kin, of history and culture, bound the nations together in spite of the bitter legacy of two wars and a fractious political relationship throughout the antebellum period. The economic connection was preeminent. "England and the United States are bound together by a single thread of cotton," observed Friedrich Engels, "which, weak and fragile as it may appear, is, nevertheless, stronger than an iron cable."[6] Slavery tied the United States to its former mother country through the supply of cotton that fuelled the growth of the textile industry which made Britain a global superpower. Liverpool and Manchester became commercial powerhouses on the back of the labour of the enslaved. Parliament ended slavery in the West Indies in the 1830s, but the peculiar institution thrived in the American South, its cotton underpinned British economic growth and slavery's contentious moral and political problems bridged the Atlantic.

Over the course of a distinguished career, John Oldfield, former Director of the Wilberforce Institute at the University of Hull, has made a major contribution to the study of British antislavery and his study of the mechanics of popular mobilization in the late eighteenth century is a seminal text. Oldfield has tackled the politics of antislavery, the changing socio-economic landscape that nurtured the movement, antislavery culture and the movement's memorialization and commemoration.[7] *The Ties that Bind* takes a transatlantic approach. It is a slimmer volume than his prior monographs, which makes for a sharp, judicious narrative. It analyses the second wave of transatlantic abolitionism from the 1820s, which eventually turned its attention toward American slavery in the late 1830s, drawing out key themes of partnership, campaigning and the crucial role of women. Oldfield is not the first to examine the Anglo-American alliance but provides a succinct and even-handed interpretation.[8] The problems and possibilities of the movement are clearly laid out. Strong connections brought British and American reformers together, most significantly evangelical religion, but the movement was never truly integrated as one, but subject to national peculiarities and simmering tensions.

The Ties that Bind opens with a brief examination of antislavery's origins on both sides of the Atlantic (making it particularly accessible to undergraduates). William Wilberforce was "an object of fascination to American activists" (p. 13) in large part because no U.S. counterpart emerged in the late eighteenth-century Revolutionary era. Wilberforce's speeches were widely circulated in North American newspapers and American reformers closely followed his career. Indeed, William Lloyd Garrison was inspired by his example and by the mid-nineteenth century widely regarded as his successor. African Americans were essential in the emergence, consolidation, and success of antislavery societies in the U.S., and they too paid reverence to British pioneers. Frederick Douglass wrote affectionately about meeting Thomas Clarkson in 1845 whilst travelling with Garrison. This gathering of these antislavery giants transcended national and racial divides just a year before Clarkson's death. It was an all-male affair, but British and American women formed the backbone of antislavery organizations. The movement challenged racial and gender boundaries, unrestrained by national borders, to build "dense transatlantic networks" (p. 49) sustained by regular correspondence and the wide circulation of antislavery literature. The rapid development of steam transportation also brought the two countries closer by making the Atlantic crossing progressively easier.

The abolitionists confronted a simple but daunting problem: how could citizens be mobilized to eradicate U.S. slavery? Oldfield's analysis of pressure groups at work presents a subtle

analysis of the ways in which Americans took elements of British campaigning for themselves. He insists that antislavery pressure was crucial to the passage of the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act through Parliament, bringing the focus back onto individual and group agency rather than changing socio-economic circumstances. The switch from a gradual approach to immediatism was key as the hitherto conservative tactics of the Anti-Slavery Society were superseded by those of a younger, radical element pushing for change. They targeted individual MPs in a system of pledging. James Stephen's *Address to the Electors of the United Kingdom* (1826) called on voters to investigate, and secure if possible, the antislavery pledge of their Member of Parliament and encourage other voters to do the same. The antislavery credentials of political candidates were divided into three categories – those who favoured the status quo; those who were unsure; and those in favour of immediate abolition – and the results were widely publicized. By 1832, immediatism "had become the dominant discourse" (p. 41) adopted by Members of Parliament who indicated a preference in large part because campaign pressure was relentless. Antislavery activists placed their posters in public spaces and on placards, the equivalent of modern-day billboards, to such an extent that the Tory press claimed sedition was at work.

American antislavery organizations were founded on the philosophy of immediatism in the early 1830s but political intervention proved more controversial. Received wisdom has it that Garrisonians preferred tactics of moral suasion that urged the individual to repent of the sin of slaveholding and shunned the political system which had been corrupted by slavery and enslavers. Oldfield challenges this assertion. The American Anti-Slavery Society encouraged its supporters to "interrogate" the intentions of political candidates, as did the Pennsylvania State Anti-Slavery Society in 1838, following the British example. Investigating the abolitionist credentials of candidates for office became known as "pledging" or the "interrogatory system" in the U.S. and contributed to the formation of the Liberty Party in 1840. Traditionally thought of as a failure following its dismal performance in the 1840 and the 1844 presidential election, the Liberty Party had greater influence at the grass-roots level. Although unsuccessful in national polls, antislavery third-party efforts shook up the major political parties, especially the Whigs. Oldfield supports the revisionist interpretation that politics was never far from the centre of the transatlantic antislavery movement.[9] Even Garrison, he tells us, took a keen interest in American politics, although he refused to vote.

Public speaking came of age in the late antebellum period and formed the cornerstone of civil society in Britain and the U.S.[10] Lecturers hoped that the power of their oratory would move audiences in both countries and earn them a reputation for "eloquence." Leading figures from the turn of the century might argue that their oratory was the equal of their successors, although it is clear that lecturing became more professionalized in the middle decades. "A highly organised network of antislavery agents" shared much in common with 1960s civil rights activists working on the front line to force radical change (p. 63). The network's origins lie with the British Agency Committee that, in 1831, hired lecturers to carry out targeted speaking engagements. (George Thompson began his distinguished career in this way.) Theodore Weld expanded the system in the United States and, by the late 1830s, the AASS employed 30 permanent agents and 70 local agents across the Northeast and Midwest. Internecine squabbles split the movement into factions, but public lectures and print literature remained the key tools for disseminating the antislavery message. Agents were white and male to begin with but by the mid-1840s were more diverse. Charles Remond, an intelligent and articulate speaker, was the AASS's first African American agent, appointed in 1838. Frederick Douglass began his distinguished career in 1841 as an agent of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. William Wells Brown was the third member of "the black elite," a self-emancipated slave from Lexington, Kentucky. The first two female

agents were Angelina Grimke and Abby Kelly and, by the late 1840s, the famous suffragists Lucy Stone and Susan B. Anthony also travelled the antislavery circuit.

The movement was led by talented and inspirational figures but also took advantage of the nineteenth-century consumer revolution explored in an outstanding chapter on "Consuming Abolition." Print culture flourished, and countless material artefacts were disseminated, the most famous based on Josiah Wedgwood's iconic "Am I not a Man and a Brother" image of a kneeling slave. Contemporary museums hold hundreds of ceramic items made by manufacturers who sometimes worked hand-in-hand with antislavery activists. Plates, jugs, cups and saucers, and sugar bowls, were items routinely filled with consumables produced by the enslaved. Slavery's invasion of the domestic sphere in everyday food consumption was one of the factors pushing women to the forefront of the movement. The ever more "sacred" space of the home became politicized, and middle-class women took action, such as sugar boycotts, to defend it. Women organized antislavery bazaars and fairs that became an annual feature in the free states, New England in particular. These gatherings raised precious funds and were predominantly an American phenomenon although British women sent a variety of home-made items across the Atlantic. The contribution of Bristolians is well known, but items came from across the length and breadth of the British Isles, from Southampton to Perth, and from Cork and Dublin across the Irish Sea. Anglo-American women made a critical contribution to antislavery and gender will surely play a far more significant role in future transnational studies of the war.

The Ties that Bind does an excellent job revealing the nuts and bolts of transatlantic abolition, befitting a book part of the "Antislavery Usable Past" AHRC Care for the Future project. Its examination of antislavery songs is most original. There were close to 500 antislavery songs and Oldfield compares them with civil rights anthems of the 1960s. Music and protest went hand-in-hand and developed "a sense of identity and belonging" (118) that was exemplified by the rise of professional antislavery performers. The Hutchinson Family Singers of New Hampshire were the most famous practitioners having been converted to the cause in 1843 by Nathaniel Rogers, the Garrisonian editor of the *Herald of Freedom*. In a strange coincidence, they were on the same ship as Frederick Douglass when both made their maiden voyage in August 1845. Following a rather underwhelming beginning – British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society meetings were quite formal and staid – the Hutchinsons found their most appreciative audience in Mechanics Institutes and their fame gradually spread, although reception remained mixed outside the Northwest of England. The final chapter examines the friendship between George Thompson, who came from humble origins and was never accepted fully by the BFASS hierarchy, and William Lloyd Garrison. It takes the story full circle, although only very briefly through the Civil War years.

Advocates of Freedom is also an important study of Anglo-American abolition at work from the perspective of black activists in Britain. Hannah-Rose Murray, Leverhulme Fellow at Edinburgh University, has already done sterling work in this area by taking on the daunting task of documenting antislavery/antiracist lectures by African Americans in Britain during the nineteenth century.[11] Her first monograph draws on a now very large secondary literature as well as new primary research from British newspapers. Its interdisciplinary approach blends historical, cultural, and literary elements to provide an overview of black sojourners in chronological order of arrival. Welcome attention is drawn to previously neglected figures such as Sarah Jackson, the wife of fugitive John Andrew Jackson. African Americans were the pivotal link in the transatlantic reform movement. The pioneering Moses Roper, who helped to refocus British abolitionists toward American obligations in the 1830s, was followed by many others including Frederick Douglass, Henry "Box" Brown, Samuel Ward, Ellen and William Craft, and William Wells Brown. Tours were not always well received, and success

depended on a variety of factors, not least the patronage of antislavery societies. For the most part, though, African Americans were welcomed at all levels of Victorian society and exerted a salutary influence in the public sphere. Black activists nurtured and consolidated the principle of civic activism and political representation that was crucial to the growth of liberalism in the Atlantic World in the second half of the nineteenth century.[12]

Public lectures offered a visceral connection to the horrors of the plantation for British audiences and black speakers struck an emotive chord at a crucial moment when it would have been easy for interest to fade in the wake of Caribbean emancipation. Not all were formally enslaved. Sarah Remond, for example, was a free black woman from Salem, Massachusetts, but nonetheless spoke with authority on matters of racial and gender oppression. African Americans crossed the Atlantic for political and personal reasons. The strengthening of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850 threatened the liberty of self-emancipated slaves in the free states, and Britain offered a place of refuge. Some came to raise funds for church communities back home or to free themselves or their family members. The black abolitionist mission took on an added significance in the 1860s when "Britain came so perilously close to recognizing the Confederacy" (p. 220), not only countering pro-Confederate propaganda but contesting its increasingly racialized message. Most scholars suggest recognition was unlikely but there is no doubt that African Americans played a key role in the movement led by the London Emancipation Society and the Manchester Union and Emancipation Society that campaigned in support of Lincoln's policy from late 1862 onwards. But the story does not finish there, continuing through the last third of the nineteenth century in a welcome discussion of Josiah Henson's tour in the late 1870s and Ida B. Wells in the mid-1890s. This long view allows for an extended reflection on the planning, execution, delivery, and success of different waves of activism.

The book's strength is its focus on the men and women who tirelessly traversed town halls, churches, and many other meeting points across the length and breadth of Britain and Ireland. One gets an intimate sense of the public and private costs that their service demanded, as the traumatic experience of slavery was relived repeatedly for the benefit of a white audience. There has been considerable work on the subject of black performance on the British stage on which Murray builds with particular sensitivity to the interplay of race, class, and gender.[13] What struck this reviewer most, though, was how hard African Americans worked to cultivate their influence and reputations.

The book's historiographical intervention argues that black activists practised "adaptive resistance," consisting of three interdependent elements. First, performances in front of public audiences attacked slavery as an abomination in the civilized world and emphasized innate black humanity. Some speakers made extensive use of props, such as instruments of torture, while others mainly relied on the power of their delivery. Henry Brown amazed his audiences by recreating his famous escape in a large wooden box. But the *rhetorical* strategy of black speakers was more uniform, Murray argues, cohering between assimilationist techniques that "appealed to Victorian norms and used rhetoric with which British audiences were familiar" and techniques of dissonance that were deliberately confrontational and made the audience "feel physically or mentally uncomfortable" (p. 14).

Second, the success of "adaptive resistance" required the help of the British antislavery community. Activists could be denied logistical support and tours failed consequently, sometimes deliberately as reputations became tarnished but also because of the perennial squabbling between the British Garrisonians and the BFASS. Moses Roper found out the great cost of falling out with his white sponsor at the end of the 1830s.[14] Black sojourners struggled to keep control of their publications and their reputations continually had to be affirmed by whites in letters of introduction and testaments that were standard features of slave narratives.

Third, the most successful black activists built on the impact of their lectures – be that over weeks, months, or years – through the strength of their connections with newspapers and publishers to disseminate the antislavery message nationally and internationally. British public debate *mattered*. It reverberated around the Atlantic world in the fast-growing print culture of the nineteenth century. Issues of slavery and race took centre stage most prominently in the 1850s, their importance heightened by the soaring success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.[15] Indeed, twenty-five years after its publication, Josiah Henson exploited association with Stowe's novel, supposedly based on his life story, to publicize his 1876–1877 tour. Regrettably, public memory after the Civil War regressed towards crass racial stereotypes, while Britain's connection to slavery was minimized and sometimes forgotten completely while its antislavery credentials were venerated, a process Murray calls "superior displacement" (p. 257).

Advocates of Freedom synthesizes a great deal of work on African Americans in Victorian Britain and suggests questions for future research. We have a deep understanding of black activists and the message they delivered but know next to nothing about the audiences whom they addressed. Is it possible to identify a particular segment of British society that attended meetings, or did they reflect a cross-section? Middle-class women were particularly receptive, but to what extent did others share the concern? Did audiences change over time – it seems likely that lectures were first held in church buildings, but to what extent did they move into town halls and Mechanics Institutes? Finally, the field as a whole must resolve a fundamental contradiction. The problem of British racism at home by mid-century, fed by pro-slavery propaganda and the pseudoscience of ethnology, has attracted the attention of several scholars who suggest its growing influence. It appears that American racism traversed the Atlantic to become a significant factor in public responses to the Civil War, for example.[16] Yet the leverage and persuasiveness of black speakers, and the demonstrable success of their lectures attacking slavery *and* prejudice, suggests that popular dissemination of racial science was checked until after 1865. This is surely the conclusion to be drawn from the failure of Confederate agent Henry Hotze's campaign to counter the pro-Union swing in British public support following the Emancipation Proclamation. Hotze switched from a message that emphasized cultural and historical bonds between Britain and the South to one based on scientific racism and black inferiority in 1863. This racist diatribe was a last throw of the dice but had such little public impact that Confederate envoy James M. Mason left London in September 1863 believing that British recognition was an impossibility.[17]

Anglo-American abolition is a well-ploughed field in comparison with the subject of *Losing the Thread*. Jim Powell's reconsideration of the Lancashire cotton famine is one of the most important works published in the field for many years. It is the first fresh examination of the single most devastating economic impact of the American Civil War overseas since the 1960s when the overproduction thesis was established by the Manchester School of economic historians.[18] W. O. Henderson argued that bumper cotton harvests from the American South in 1859 and 1860 oversupplied raw cotton to British merchants, who simultaneously struggled to sell their glut of finished products on the world market. The textile industry was supposedly destined to endure a period of contraction with or without the blockade of southern cotton. The idea that the war caused the famine was "a stupefying misconception" according to Douglas Farnie.[19] The cotton famine was inevitable and short-term – a blip rather than a major problem, in other words – and Civil War historians have taken them at their word ever since. How else is it possible to explain why "Lancashire distress," as it was widely known at the time, barely registers in the history of the Civil War written before or after the global turn? The Atlantic economy as a whole has been strangely neglected during the war. We know that British companies supplied ships, guns, armaments, wool, linen, metals, clothing, medicine and so on and so forth, while American grain imports increased in return, but

lack the basics of how and to what extent. It is staggering that there is not an economic study of a British city and the war even: Birmingham would be a great place to start.[20]

Powell, in a revision of his 2018 University of Liverpool doctoral thesis, has torn up the existing script. His slim monograph presents a forensic examination of merchants, brokers and cotton shipments coming in and out of Liverpool. It cuts through received wisdom with a sharp knife (who knew that the weight of a bale of cotton, the standard measurement of supply, differed markedly according to country of origin?) in a refreshingly iconoclastic book. An extraordinary picture of the Liverpool cotton market during the war emerges, a market that held little in common with that which existed before or afterward. Surprisingly, sources such as the Liverpool Bills of Entry have been ignored by historians who have uncritically accepted the far from reliable work of late-nineteenth-century cotton broker-turned-historian Thomas Ellison. Powell overturns Ellison and those who followed Ellison's path like the Manchester School. In terms of modern casualties, Sven Beckert's notion of "war capitalism" is scrutinized. Efforts to open up new lines of supply overseas were stepped up but did not result in the rapid, decisive expansion of the cotton nexus ruthlessly carried out by British imperial power in partnership with mill barons. There is no ambiguity: the cotton supply dried up, and the subsequent depression was disastrous.[21]

Within this wider thesis, *Losing the Thread* makes three major claims. First, while the amount of raw cotton arriving in Britain plummeted, brokers were not only unaffected but flourished in a situation in which cargos were bought and sold multiple times. Liverpool's cotton traders were supposedly either buyers or sellers and earned a commission of 0.5% on each sale. In fact, most were double-dealing, and this form of inside trading ensured that brokers enjoyed a commission of 1% on every sale as buyers *and* sellers. The Liverpool futures market developed rapidly as the price of raw cotton soared due to scarcity and cotton consignments were sold repeatedly before reaching port. Brokers might make as much as twenty times the commission on a single consignment as they would have expected before the war.

Second, and conversely, the British textile industry faced devastation as the supply of its vital raw material plummeted. For cotton operatives, the threat of starvation was very real as the mills ground to a halt while their wealthy employers faced a cotton scarcity the likes of which they had never encountered. Southern cotton, Powell insists, was not replaced by alternative supplies from overseas. Merchants in India, Brazil, and Egypt did indeed see an opportunity to fill the gap and ramped up production, but their crop was of vastly inferior quality. The price paid to new overseas producers was far less than that to southern enslavers. Their product was not a substitute for southern cotton, replacing less than half of the total supply lost because of the war.

Finally, Liverpool was not "the most pro-Confederate place in the world outside the Confederacy itself," as is commonly assumed.[22] This port city had long-standing commercial ties to the southern states and was home to a large number of southerners, but trade with the free states accounted for three quarters of the total value of U.S. goods arriving in the city before the war. It was a cosmopolitan, thriving place of business in the first half of the 1860s that considered itself independent of Lancashire and did not suffer at all like its great rival, Manchester. On the contrary, Liverpool maintained a confident, buoyant economic outlook as the docks handled an increase in the volume of transatlantic trade in war-related industries to offset the decline of cotton. A comparison of 1858–1860 with 1862–1864 reveals a 7% per annum rise in tonnage arriving in port and 5% increase in dock revenue. Liverpool was also a centre of shipbuilding for both the Confederacy and the Union. It was not quite business as usual, but merchants had no pressing need to worry about the war's outcome because they made good profits as long as the conflict lasted. This section of the book is more speculative than its surefooted handling of economic data. But, undoubtedly, Powell

offers an important corrective, and a detailed examination of Liverpool's support for each side, based on qualitative sources, will surely follow. The correspondence of James Spence, the Liverpool iron and tin merchant who was the Confederacy's leading British agitator, might be the place to begin.

Michael Turner also returns to a venerable topic in the transatlantic history of the American Civil War that has been at a standstill for a while: British public opinion – on which scholars were once in agreement. The "traditional interpretation" of Ephraim Adams, and Donaldson Jordan and Edwin Pratt, was established in the early twentieth century. Historically, socially, and culturally, the upper class had far more in common with the South, they argued, and were not only sceptical of American democracy but found the inhabitants of the American North rude, uneducated, capricious and provincial. The British working class's pro-northern sympathies thwarted the designs of the upper class and did much to maintain the policy of neutrality. Two years after the end of the war, their stoic support was rewarded by the passage of the 1867 Reform Act.[23] In the mid-twentieth century, historians began to chip away at this consensus, finding more and more examples of those who did not fit the pattern. Mary Ellison's *Support for Secession* blew a massive hole in the traditional interpretation by depicting the pro-Confederate sympathy of Lancashire workers as motivated by their stomachs rather than their hearts. Given the huge influence of Ellison's book – which reaches the grand old age of 50 this year – it is easy to forget that it was a revised version of her PhD thesis. It is also the case that Peter d'A Jones's epilogue – "The History of the Myth" – presented a polemical attack on the traditional interpretation that pushed the evidence further than Ellison did.[24]

Richard Blackett and Duncan Andrew Campbell's landmark monographs, published at the beginning of this century, responded to Ellison in different ways and further historiographical progress has essentially ground to a halt since.[25] This is not because scholarly agreement on this topic was restored, far from it. Blackett's meticulous study of public opinion (read mostly middle- and working-class, non-conformist), centred on Lancashire but nationwide in scope, restored the traditional interpretation's assignment of Union support to workers and radicals, although there were exceptions and class constituted just one underlying factor among several others. Campbell's assiduous reading of political opinion (read mostly upper-class, traditional) in Parliament and the metropolitan press found interest in the war to be exaggerated and suggested that many did not care much for either side. The respective conclusions were quite different but perhaps not so far apart on closer inspection. Blackett presented a highly complex survey of divided public opinion which is easily mischaracterized and difficult to quantify. Campbell similarly warned against simplistic generalizations and criticized prior scholarship that was too quick to assert the support of different classes to the war's protagonists. Both pointed toward the inadequacy of the traditional interpretation's insistence that support can be traced to one source, such as class, politics, or religion, but both essentially remained within the framework of the traditional interpretation rather than proposing an alternative. Historians have approached this topic in new ways subsequently – Hugh Dubrulle on the transatlantic post-colonial relationship, Peter O'Connor on the British construction of American sectionalism, and Stephen Tufnell on the lobbying of Americans living in Britain, for instance – but we still do not have an alternative to the traditional framework that everyone agrees is now dated.[26]

A fresh examination of British support for the Confederacy is thus welcome. Turner, a prolific historian of Victorian England at Appalachian State University, first encountered Anthony Beresford Hope years ago but was unaware of his southern connections until discovering that the Stonewall Jackson statue in Richmond was a gift from "English gentlemen." Turner wanted to understand the provenance of the statue, unveiled in 1875 a decade after

the war had concluded, and discovered that the Confederate hero had a number of British admirers. Why was Jackson popular? This important historiographical question is discussed in two separate parts. The first focuses on Hope as the leading figure in the British pro-Confederate lobby, who worked closely with James Mason and Henry Hotze, and developed friendships with John C. Breckinridge and Jefferson Davis. Hope was a Conservative MP for 30 years, a dedicated High Churchman, and founder and co-owner of the *Saturday Review*, although not its editor during the war as is sometimes assumed. Without an archive of private letters from which to draw, the discussion follows Hope's many printed publications in newspaper articles, lectures, and pamphlets. The second half of the book recovers the tenacious efforts to fund a statue memorializing Stonewall Jackson after his death following the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863. Hope played a major role in the campaign that eventually succeeded in erecting the statue in 1875. A controversial unveiling ceremony attracted the attention of a partisan press in the U.S. Newspapers that formerly supported the Confederacy praised it as a noble gesture, honouring a remarkable individual, while those that had taken the Union's side asked what the devil the British were doing.

Stonewall Jackson, Beresford Hope, and the Meaning of the American Civil War in Britain is built on a deep mining of printed sources, intertwined with insights from the most recent secondary literature. That combination brings its greatest reward in part two of the book which follows the twists and turns of the campaign to build the Stonewall Jackson statue. From the outset, Hope's appeal for funding was highly controversial. It provoked a storm of protest in Britain from those favouring the North and to a greater extent from those who disliked slavery. "What is most remarkable," Turner writes, is not that the appeal was made "but that it was pursued for so many years and defended so vigorously whenever it was criticized" (p. 257). Remarkable indeed. Turner recovers the regard, even fascination, in which Jackson was held by most of the British press and points toward widespread regret at his untimely death expressed in messages of sympathy from across the country, although he concedes that "a small minority" protested he was "fighting in a bad cause" (p. 172). Was this because Jackson represented a pious, heroic, modest figure of undoubted military genius or was it a sign of public sympathy for the Confederacy?

The first section of the book explores British pro-Confederate support. Hope's campaign was waged in print and presented a wide-ranging case for recognition of the Confederacy. He defended the South's right to secede, claimed that secession had nothing to do with slavery and emphasized the South's natural affinities with Great Britain that made it a much closer friend than the alien North. Perhaps more surprisingly to the casual reader, but not to the specialist, he argued that the South had inherited slavery, made it a benign institution, that emancipation would proceed safely in an independent southern nation and that a Confederate victory would benefit the wider world. Hope did not follow Hotze's example in foregrounding race. Why he fervently defended the Confederacy, particularly as he had never been to the South, is not so clear. Hope disliked the Union and admired southerners "who shared the same blood, spoke the same language, and evinced the same hatred of tyranny" (p. 55), although these traits surely characterized those above the Mason-Dixon Line as much as those below. It seems a fairly shallow motivation for the amount of time and effort Hope devoted to a doomed cause.

To what extent pro-Confederate arguments galvanized wider British support remains the critical question. As Blackett and Campbell have shown, measuring levels of support is far from easy – like nailing jelly to the wall perhaps, to borrow one historian's memorable phrase.[27] The place to begin is surely with organizations like the Central Association for the Recognition of the Confederate States, formed in April 1863, and its affiliates, the Southern Independence Association of London and the Manchester Southern Club. It has become

standard practice to assume that the Emancipation Proclamation pulled the rug from under Confederate efforts in Britain, but if so Hope and his collaborators did not get the message.[28] Frustratingly, we find out who Hope's associates were but little more about them, crucial information for evaluating the depth of British pro-Confederate feeling. The vice presidents of the Manchester Southern Club, for example, included Hope's brother-in-law, Lord Robert Cecil (Stamford MP and future Marquess of Salisbury) and several other Conservative MPs from across the British Isles, including W.H. Gregory, Sir Edward Kerrison, G.W.M. Peacock, and James Whiteside. But Liberal MPs were also vice presidents: J.T. Hopwood, W.S. Lindsay, and Frederick Peel, as well as the maverick independent Sheffield MP John Arthur Roebuck. This cohort appears to share similarities with the Tory, anti-reform, genteel elite of the much-maligned traditional interpretation. We know the flaws in the traditional interpretation but in the absence of an alternative and given the historian's task of seeking meaningful generalizations that fit the available evidence perhaps there is life in the old dog yet.

What is alive and thriving, despite the plethora of existing work in the area, is scholarly inquiry into the Civil War's transatlantic impact. The books under review emphasize the vibrancy and significance of what remains a particularly fertile field with the continued prospect of new insights. They provide a welcome reminder that the discipline of history has considerable relevance for the contemporary world and offers much more than a conversation about the past. John Oldfield and Hannah-Rose Murray both conclude by briefly focusing on the present day. Antislavery's emphasis on protest, morality, change, and collaboration, across lines of race, class, and gender transcending national borders, has urgent resonance in the era of Black Lives Matter and Me Too. Can nineteenth-century antislavery activism provide lessons for protest culture in the twenty-first century? It would be nice to think so, particularly when talk of the new, post-racial era that was common during Barack Obama's presidency seems like a lifetime ago. Jim Powell and Michael Turner also discuss matters that have never been more relevant. The links between the financial impropriety of cotton brokers in the early 1860s, particularly their ability to make huge profits from an economic disaster, and a pandemic in which the super-wealthy have spectacularly enhanced their portfolios are obvious. That those gains have not come under scrutiny underlines the enduring staying power of conservatism that has seemingly never been more dominant in the United States and Great Britain. One is tempted to say that the more things change, the more they stay the same, but the recent removal of the Stonewall Jackson statue and all other Confederate monuments from Richmond reminds us that significant change is never impossible.

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Notes

1. Don H. Doyle, ed., *Secession as an International Phenomenon: From America's Civil War to Contemporary Separatist Movements* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010); Paul Quigley, *Shifting Grounds: Nationalism and the American South, 1848–1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Don H. Doyle, *The Cause of All Nations: An International History of the American Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).
2. The absence of women and gender is touched on in a foundational conversation over the transnational turn: "Interchange: Nationalism and Internationalism in the Era of the Civil War," *Journal of American History* 98, no. 2 (2011): 455–89.
3. Andre Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861: The American Civil War in the Age of Nationalist Conflict* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Niels Eichhorn, *Liberty and Slavery:*

European Separatists, Southern Secession, and the American Civil War (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2019).

4. Don H. Doyle, ed., *American Civil Wars: The United States, Latin America, Europe and the Crisis of the 1860s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).
5. R. J. M. Blackett, *Divided Hearts: Britain and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 4; Douglas R. Egerton, "Rethinking Atlantic Historiography in a Postcolonial Era: The Civil War in a Global Perspective," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1 (2011), 79–95, sets out the challenges Britain faced because of the war.
6. Cited in Brian Schoen, *The Fragile Fabric of Union: Cotton, Federal Politics and the Global Origins of the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 225.
7. John Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion against the Slave Trade* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); *"Chords of Freedom": Commemoration, Ritual and British Transatlantic Slavery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007); *Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Age of Revolution: An International History of Anti-Slavery, c. 1787–1820* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
8. Betty Fladeland, *Men and Brothers: Anglo-American Antislavery Cooperation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972).
9. David Brown, "William Lloyd Garrison, Transatlantic Abolitionism and Colonisation in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Revival of the Peculiar Solution?" *Slavery and Abolition* 33 (June 2012): 233–50; Corey M. Brooks, *Liberty Power: Antislavery Third Parties and the Transformation of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
10. Tom F. Wright, *Lecturing the Atlantic: Speech, Print, and an Anglo-American Commons 1830–1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).
11. Hannah-Rose Murray, "'With Almost Electric Speed': Mapping African American Abolitionists in Britain and Ireland, 1838–1847," *Slavery & Abolition* 40, no. 3 (2019): 522–42.
12. David Brown and Clive Webb, "Rivalry and Reform: Abolition, Race and Anglo-American Relations in the Nineteenth Century," in Alan P. Dobson and Steve Marsh, eds., *Anglo-American Relations and the Transmission of Ideas: A Shared Political Tradition?* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2022).
13. Audrey Fisch, *American Slaves in Victorian England: Abolitionist Politics in Popular Literature and Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Hazel Waters, *Racism on the Victorian Stage: Representations of Slavery and the Black Character* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
14. Fionnghuala Sweeney and Bruce E. Baker, "'I Am Not a Beggar': Moses Roper, Black Witness and the Lost Opportunity of British Abolitionism," *Slavery and Abolition*, doi:10.1080/0144039X.2022.2027656.
15. Sarah Meer, *Uncle Tom Mania: Slavery, Minstrelsy, and Transatlantic Culture in the 1850s* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005).
16. Robert Nowatzki, *Representing African Americans in Transatlantic Abolitionism and Blackface Minstrelsy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010); Hugh Dubrulle, "'If It Is Still Impossible … to Advocate Slavery … It Has … Become a Habit Persistently to Write Down Freedom': Britain, the Civil War, and Race," in Simon Lewis and David Gleeson, eds., *The Civil War as Global Conflict: Transnational Meanings of the American Civil War* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2014), 56–85.
17. Robert E. Bonner, "Slavery, Confederate Diplomacy, and the Racialist Mission of Henry Hotze," *Civil War History* 51 (September 2005): 288–316.
18. The smaller French textile industry was also devastated, although the wider effects were not as disruptive as feared as unemployed operatives found work in other industries. Stève Sainlaude, *France and the American Civil War: A Diplomatic History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).
19. W. O. Henderson, *The Lancashire Cotton Famine, 1861–1865* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, revised edition, 1969 [1934]); Douglas Farnie, *The English Cotton Industry and the World Market, 1815–1896* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 143.

20. Eli Ginzberg, "The Economics of British Neutrality during the American Civil War," *Agricultural History* 10, no. 4 (October 1936): 147–56. A monograph examining the Atlantic economy similar to Jay Sexton's study of transatlantic finance, *Debtor Diplomacy: American Foreign Relations in the Civil War Era, 1837–1873* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), would be welcome.
21. Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014). Powell's analysis aligns with books by Giorgio Riello, *The Fabric That Made the Modern World* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015) and Prasannan Parthasarathi, *Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not. Global Economic Divergence, 1600–1850* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
22. Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 260.
23. Ephraim Douglass Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War* (London: Longmans, 1925); Donaldson Jordan and Edwin Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1931).
24. Mary Ellison, *Support for Secession: Lancashire and the American Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972). Philip S. Foner, *British Labor and the American Civil War* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1981) responded vigorously to Ellison's work but Philip John Auger, "The Cotton Famine, 1861–1865: A Study of the Principal Cotton Towns during the American Civil War," Cambridge University PhD, 1979, presents a more balanced assessment.
25. Blackett, *Divided Hearts*; Duncan Andrew Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003).
26. Hugh Dubrulle, *Ambivalent Nation: How Britain Imagined the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2018); Peter O'Connor, *American Sectionalism in the British Mind, 1832–1863* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017); Stephen Tufnell, *Made in Britain: Nation and Emigration in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020).
27. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1–17.
28. Indeed, the pro-Confederate British campaign did not get into gear, in an organizational sense, until the middle of 1863. Peter O'Connor, "Defending the Indefensible? The Pro-Confederate Lobby in Britain in the Aftermath of the Emancipation Proclamation," *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* 19 (2021): 167–88.