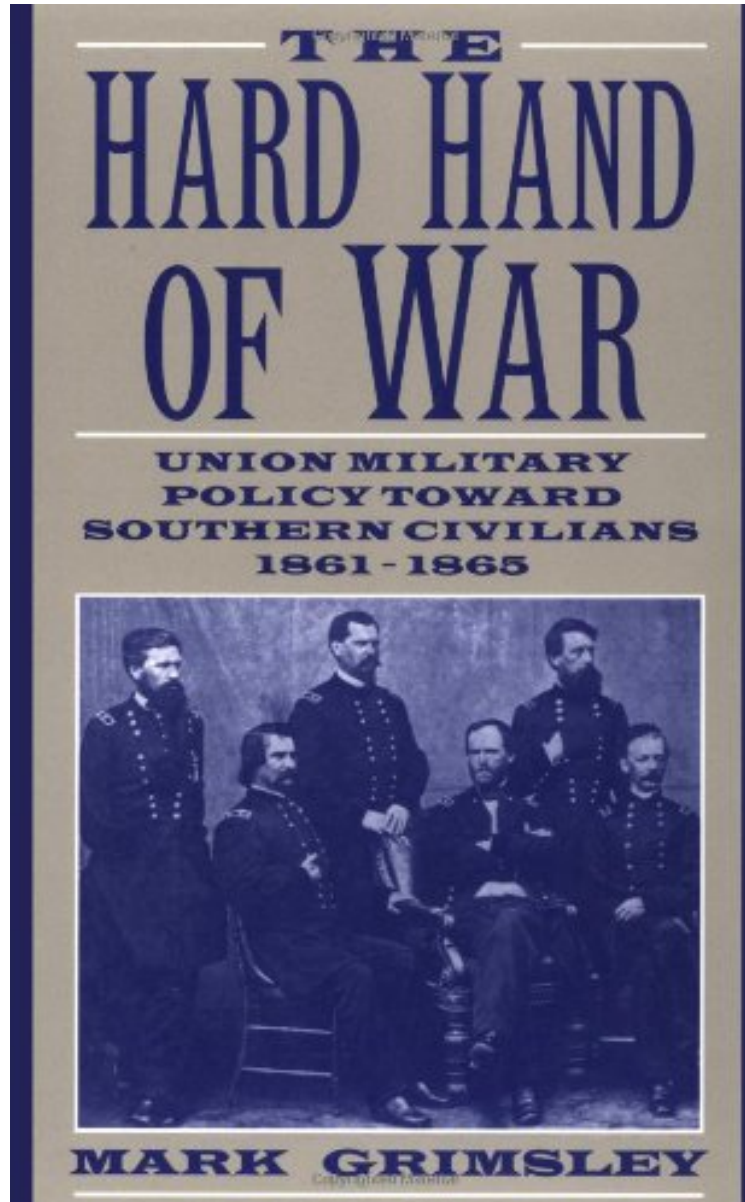


(Download pdf) The Hard Hand of War

The Hard Hand of War

Mark Grimsley

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#778370 in Books Cambridge University Press 1997-02-28Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.98 x .63 x 5.98l, .91 #File Name: 0521599415260 pages | File size: 60.Mb

Mark Grimsley : The Hard Hand of War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Hard Hand of War:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. a classicBy Richard WeltyGrimsley's Hard Hand of War was published 8 years ago, and remains the best account of evolving Federal war policy towards the Confederacy over the

4 years of the American Civil War. Grimsley carefully outlines the evolution from the conciliatory strategy of the first year of the war through the pragmatic policies of the mid period, and finally to the "hard war" which is most associated with General Sherman. his argument is nuanced and well documented. Highly Recommended. 22 of 25 people found the following review helpful. For Specialists Only! By David W. Nicholas This is a conversion of the author's graduate thesis, composed while he was a student at The Ohio State University. The subject of the study is evident in the subtitle of the book: Union Military Policy toward Southern Civilians 1861-1865. The central theme of the book is that the policy mentioned evolved over time, getting more and more harsh with the civilians that the army encountered. The evolution, however, didn't go nearly as far as some later alleged, and the supposed depredations of the Union army in the various Southern states in the last year of the war are, as far as the author is concerned, mostly exaggerations. This is a good overview of the subject, and the author goes over things with a good analytical eye. I disagree with the other reviewer, who thinks that he's unfairly easy on the Union soldiers who foraged "liberally" during the latter part of the Civil War. I did notice one shortcoming of the book's central argument: the author went over the motivation for attacking things like houses in retaliation for ambushes and attacks against Union troops, but overlooked the possibility that the troops themselves needed to feel that they were somehow retaliating for being attacked. Burning down a house, even if it had no effect on the Southerners who ambushed them, did serve the purpose of making the Union soldiers think that they were doing *something*. This is a thesis, reworked as a book. It's sprinkled with footnotes, and written in a scholarly, dry tone. The result is a lot of information, with interesting and well-reasoned arguments stemming from them, written in rather wooden prose that's not very easy to read. I would recommend this book to hard core Civil War buffs who want to know more about the subject, but only to them. 7 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Interesting, but requires some slogging. By Thomas W. Robinson This is an expansion of Grimsley's doctoral dissertation and, as such, is written with academics in mind. That does not mean that Civil War or history buffs cannot pick it up and read it, but this book does require some slogging. I managed to read it in a week for a graduate school class, but it wasn't the easiest read in the world. At any rate, I digress...the book itself is very interesting and one of the few books I've seen that tries to figure out when the Union armies turned to a "hard war" policy and why. The answers are surely not the final word on the subject as one reviewer pointed out some records that Grimsley missed or overlooked. However, Grimsley does have some useful information of the formation of Union military policy toward Southern civilians and how it evolved. Grimsley is smart to point out that there are always exceptions to the rule, but one gets a sense that much of his thesis is proven as to how and why the policy evolved. In short, at the beginning of the war the Union policy was one of conciliation toward Southern civilians, the thinking being that secession was not favored by a majority of the people and if Union armies occupied Southern areas, the people would rise up and want to rejoin the Union, especially if the Union armies treated them civilly. This policy began to shift in 1863 as Grant attempted to take Vicksburg and began to live off the land. Grant, and Sherman, still attempted to keep their men from outright looting, but were more than happy to confiscate supplies, while still leaving enough for the families they took from to eat themselves. By the time Grant comes to command of all Union troops in 1864, the policy has evolved further to the point that Sheridan burns the Shenandoah Valley and Sherman goes on his March to the Sea and Carolinas Campaign. Grimsley argues that the goal was still not to simply ransack, loot, and pillage, but to either seize or destroy anything of military value. However, this did not always happen and the "hard war" of making Southern civilians pay for secession was meant to hit home and force a quicker end to the war. As much as some people may be revolted by it, Grimsley certainly argues that Grant and, even more so, Sherman felt this could save lives by making battles less important by simply leaving no supplies for the Confederacy. Whether one agrees with Grimsley's interpretation or not, this is still an important book in Civil War historiography because it is one of the few that tackles this issue. I think Grimsley tries to be even-handed and point out when Union troops went overboard, but I could see some thinking he is too lenient at times. However, you also come away learning a lot (especially about Benjamin Butler, which I found fascinating. Butler in reality is a lot different than the "Beast" Butler often remembered). All that aside, though, I still only give the book 3 stars because Grimsley wraps 1864-1865 up pretty quickly after devoting so much time to 1861-1863 and the book is just not an easy, or enjoyable, read. This book is kind of like advanced math--you may learn a lot, but you don't necessarily enjoy it while you are learning it.

The Hard Hand of War explores the Union army's policy of destructive attacks upon 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 policy makers promoted a program of directed severity, and Professor Grimsley demonstrates how and why it worked. This volume fits into an emerging interpretation of the Civil War that questions its status as a "total war" and instead emphasizes 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 through 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.

"This is one of the best books of Civil War military history published in twenty-five years." *Journal of American History*"Well researched, clearly written, and elegantly conceived, this is an important book." *Choice*"Students of the Civil War continue to debate the degree to which the North embraced a strategy designed to punish the Confederacy's civilians as well as to defeat its soldiers. The *Hard Hand of War* is a major contribution to this debate, in which Mark Grimsley argues that northern policies and practices fit comfortably within European traditions rather than marking a dramatic break with the past. Especially useful in its discussion of factors that promoted restraint among the North's citizen-soldiers, Grimsley's book should be essential reading for anyone interested in whether the Civil War deserves to be called a 'total war.'" Gary W. Gallagher, *The Pennsylvania State University*"Mark Grimsley has written the best study of how Northern policy evolved from a limited war to restore the old Union into a "hard war" to dismantle the old South and build a new free-labor nation...The writing is lucid, the argument persuasive, the analysis illuminating." James M. McPherson, *Princeton University*, author of *Battle Cry of Freedom*"Mark Grimsley's *The Hard Hand of War* is the latest and best study to strip away the myth and explore the reality of Sherman's attack on the Southern civilian economy and population as a means of winning the war...Grimsley tells that story more clearly than anyone else has so far done. In lucid, straightforward prose grounded in thorough research he analyzes the evolution of Union strategy through three main phases." James M. McPherson, *New York of Books*The '*Hard Hand of War*' is an excellent account of how Northern military policy hardened over time, gradually allowing and even advocating foraging and destruction of civilian property which might aid the Southern war effort....Grimsley persuasively ties together a variety of sources to provide the best one-volume account of the origins of 'total war' in the 1860s. His book should be required reading for those who want to understand the roots of one of the more storied decisions in American military history, and would be an excellent addition to both graduate and undergraduate courses on the Civil War." Lance Janda, *Journal of Military History*"Mark Grimsley challenges that old assumption by insisting that the civil war was not a total war, but a "hard war" in that the destruction of southern property was not the work of mindless human 'beasts,' but a calculated, measured attempt to demoralize the Confederate population by striking at chosen areas in order to cause surrender....Professor Grimsley has written a provocative and original book; it makes a reader look forward to more works from this rising Civil War scholar." *The Civil War News*"The text of *The Hard Hand of War* flows with the chronology, precision, and rationale of a well-written legal brief....Mark Grimsley presents an irrefutable argument that the primary goal of the Federal government was at all times the restoration of the Union, not the devastation of the South....the result is a well-reasoned and elegantly written monograph that will take its place as one of the more important works about the Civil War to appear in years." David Long, *Civil War History*"Mark Grimsley deserves respect for his keen concern with moral action in war." *The Journal of Southern History*"The impact of the war on civilians is often not fully understood or misunderstood or quite deliberately misstated. So those new to the Civil War should read Mark Grimsley's *The Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865*. It examines the intentional and unintentional effects of the conflict in a balanced, comprehensive manner." Fritz Heinzen, *Osprey Military Journal*From the Back CoverThe *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.