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**Des Moines
Civil War
Roundtable**

**February 2026
Headquarters District Iowa
General Order No. 507**

- The Second **meeting** of the Spring campaign will **February 18** at the **The Machine Shed**
- The bar will open at 5:30 with the meal served at 6:30.
- Our program **Daniel Smith (Kansas City) Battle of Westport: Largest Civil War Battle West of the Mississippi**
- Meal choices **Baked Ham** and **Steak Tips** at \$26.00
- **Reservations & payment will be accepted until February 15.**

By command of Brigadier General Gordon McKenzie

Our web address www.dmcivilwar.com

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Colonel & Adjutant
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It is time for many to renew your membership the dues are the same this year
\$30.00 for Newsletter via PDF
\$35.00 for Newsletter via USPS
\$40.00 for families

If you have any question please contact me at dmcwrt@gmail.com or 515-491-3626

According to my records the following members had not renewed their membership for the 2025-2026 campaign. If this is incorrect please contact me for the correction. This is for the January through March.

Capps, Gene	Mouchka, Jeremy	Jan
Collins, Chuck	Kristin	Jan
	Rittle, Ron	Jan
Herwig, Steven	Marilyn	Jan
Moraniec, Dave		March

The DMCWRT has a problem with payment of the Machine Shed meals.

We have had an honor system of allowing members to pay at the meeting. Members indicate they plan to attend and I inform the Machine Shed on Monday before the meeting of the number of meals we need. The problem occurs when committed members for whatever reason do not attend. The DMCWRT still has to pay for the meals of the non attending members, and our treasury cannot afford to loss \$26-78 per meeting.

A solution to this problem is (1) either everyone pays in advance or (2) the DMCWRT changes all who say they plan to attend for the meal and do not.

I want to alert the membership to this problem and we can discuss a solution at the next meeting.

Lincoln's "Right Makes Might"

Emerging Civil War By Evan Portman <https://emergingcivilwar.com/2026/01/29/lincolns-right-makes-might/>

Lately, there has been a lot of talk surrounding the principle of "might makes right" and its place in American politics. Lincoln had a few remarks to make on that ancient aphorism and its relationship to slavery in his Cooper Union Address on February 27, 1860.

In early 1860, Lincoln's presidential candidacy was by no means assured, but threats of secession from Southern states had led the country to the precipice of civil war. His speech at the Cooper Union secured his place on the national political stage. In it, Lincoln asserted his firm belief that slavery should not spread to the Western territories,

and the Federal government had the legal and moral right to stop it. According to Lincoln, the prohibition of slavery in the territories was the nation's ethical imperative and hinged upon his belief that enslavement constituted a moral evil. "If slavery is right," Lincoln opined, "all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it, are themselves wrong, and should be silenced, and swept away."

Therefore, slavery's existence and expansion could not be justified by the South's—or the nation's—ability to maintain it. Rather, Lincoln inferred that the death of slavery should be accomplished with a commitment to justice, not power.

The Illinois lawyer closed his Cooper Union Address that day with what has become one of his most oft quoted lines: "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it."

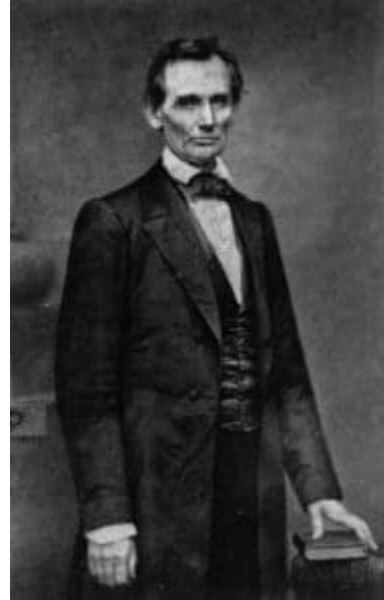
Here, Lincoln inverted the age-old principle of "might makes right," instead arguing that righteousness itself generates strength. He knew that history often favored brute force, but he also believed Americans should work to reverse this, building their strength on the foundation of what is morally correct, like the principle of equality.

Indeed, Lincoln believed wholeheartedly in the rule of law over sheer power. Even when he, as president, exercised broad executive powers in suppressing the rebellion, he convened Congress to seek legislative approval, demonstrating his firm conviction that the republic's strength is only derived from consent.

Lincoln also maintained a sort of religious commitment to the rule of law. "Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher to his posterity, swear by the blood of the Revolution, never to violate in the least particular, the laws of the country; and never to tolerate their violation by others," he said in his immortal Lyceum Address. That even included a rejection of civil disobedience to law, which Lincoln saw little place for within the confines of democracy. If the republic's laws were unjust, the only solution, in Lincoln's mind, would be to repeal them legally and lawfully.

That's why law must, in Lincoln's eyes, be grounded in morality—or mores, as Alexis de Tocqueville would call them. Without mores, democracy is hollow. That, in part, is what caused Lincoln to acutely question the morality of slavery in his Cooper Union speech and denounce might over right.

In fact, that faith in right over might certainly guided his commitment to democracy and should guide our own.



<https://emergingcivilwar.com/2026/01/22/book-review-from-gray-to-blue-galvanized-yankees-in-the-american-civil-war/>

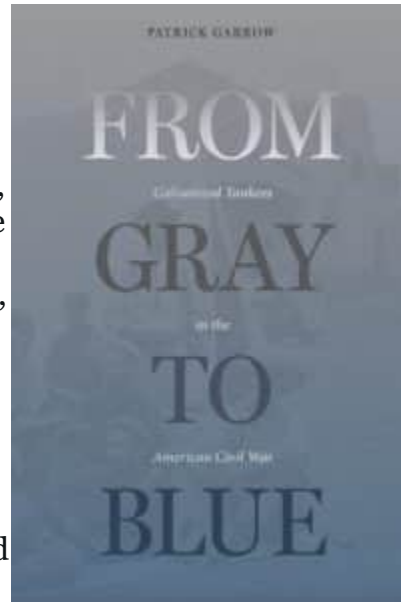
From Gray to Blue: Galvanized Yankees in the American Civil War.

By Patrick H. Garrow. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2025. Hardcover, 276 pp. \$70.00.

Reviewed by Greg M. Romanek

Wade Hampton Richardson mustered out of the Union 1st Florida Cavalry on November 17, 1865. Upon returning home, Richardson realized that many of his neighbors, and even family members, held great animosity towards him for donning the Union uniform and fighting against the Confederacy. In his own words Richardson noted, “I will add that a great many of my comrades never lived to get home, a greater number were killed after the war than fell in the actual service. I, myself went armed for months, not knowing when or where I might be attacked.” (101) Richardson eventually moved north, finished college, and lived in Milwaukee. As a transplanted Floridian, Richardson worked as a teacher,

became a real estate agent, and wrote his autobiography, which detailed his unique Civil War service. Wade Richardson was one of over 100,000 southern White men who joined the Federal armed services.



Written as a follow-up to the author’s 2020 book titled “Changing Sides: Union Prisoners of War Who Joined the Confederate Army,” this publication details elements of the experiences of the thousands of Confederate prisoners, or former soldiers, who changed sides during the war. As author Patrick Garrow notes, the term “galvanized Yankee” was coined by Confederates who compared the transformation of former friends to blue-coated foes, to the industrial process of galvanization whereby iron was coated with molten zinc thereby altering its functionality and appearance.

There were several ways in which a former Confederate could galvanize and become a Union soldier. In some instances, newly minted Yankees took the form of Confederate soldiers who had completed their full term of service with the Confederate army and then chose to take a loyalty oath and join a Federal unit. In some cases, these secondary recruits received an enlistment bonus that could be funneled back to their family. In other cases, Confederate deserters would head north and enlist as substitutes, thereby freeing a northern man desirous of avoiding military service, while simultaneously earning a bonus for taking his place. However, while Garrow chronicles these types of

enlistment initiatives carried out by former Confederate troops, the most common motivation to galvanize was the cruel reality of confinement in a Union military prison.

In some of his better pages, Garrow details the conditions that imprisoned Confederates faced in places such as Camp Douglas, Rock Island Prison, and Point Lookout. Faced with the very real probability of a lingering death in prison, tens of thousands of Confederates galvanized and joined newly created regiments. Many of these units were sent west to take on duties within the frontier, thereby freeing more traditional regiments to return east to fight in the major campaigns of the war. Although there is no way to get an accurate count on the number of galvanized Yankees who served on the frontier, it is fair for the author to declare, “The recruitment and use of galvanized Yankees strengthened the Union army while further weakening the Confederate army. The number of men who changed sides was not enough to affect the outcome of the war, but it was significant, particularly in the western theater.” (9)

In many instances, as Garrow describes, galvanized troops were more prone to desertion than typical Federal units. This was particularly true in galvanized regiments that enlisted for a three-year term of service rather than a single year. Further, while the use of galvanized enlistees was tactically beneficial to the Union military effort, these soldiers were not uniformly trusted or valued. For example, in Kansas, a state that experienced bloody irregular warfare as well as costly engagements with Native Americans, the presence of galvanized troops was decried. The Leavenworth Times, which held galvanized soldiers and deserters responsible for heinous crimes, commented about the service of the Third U.S. Infantry, which contained many galvanized troops, in this way, “We are opposed to paying galvanized rebels for cutting the throats of our neighbors and emigrants.” (168)

Upon the conclusion of their service, many galvanized Yankees had a difficult time reintegrating into their southern homes. Resentment of what was perceived as betrayal led to the abuse, and even murder, of many galvanized Yankees. Further, galvanized Yankees were generally not eligible for military or spousal pensions regardless of their wartime service in the Union Army. Looking at the experiences of returning galvanized Yankees, Garrow concludes that many of them went west to start a new life for themselves and their families.

In writing about galvanized Yankees, Patrick Garrow tackles a generally overlooked, and fascinating, subject. In terms of research, Garrow makes use of numerous primary data sources and does so in a meticulous and impressive manner. Each chapter focuses on a particular unit or theater of operations, and then provides demographic information about galvanized soldiers in a way that is impressive. While it is true that Garrow sometimes focuses more attention on the broad campaigns that galvanized soldiers participated in rather than their individual fates, readers will come away with new information about an obscure Civil War topic.

