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# Editorial

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The American Civil War was one of the defining events that shaped the history of the United States, and the echoes of its outcome still reverberate today. Over four years, from 1861 until 1865, more than 625,000 lives were lost, over one million casualties were suffered, and few American families, black or white, remained untouched by war. As well as the devastating human cost, the war ravaged the South, leaving its infrastructure in tatters. The war, however, brought the end of the vile institution of slavery, and over four million African Americans became free.

It is with great pleasure that *Eras* brings you this special American Civil War 150th Anniversary supplement. We have three articles which, while appearing unconnected, indicate a progression of how the end of slavery shaped the thoughts and actions of Americans from both the North and the South. In our first article, Darren Dobson examines the way in which leading Southerners expressed their opposition to Abraham Lincoln's policies in the decade leading up to the outbreak of the Civil War. David Hopkins then explores how Michigan soldiers interpreted and responded to President Lincoln's Proclamation of Emancipation in 1863. And finally, Cecily Tiernan analyses how freed African Americans developed their own free labour in the former Confederate states during Reconstruction, despite vehement opposition and the very real threat of racial violence by white Southerners.

Also included are two book reviews, and we thank the publishers for the review copies of their publications.

We would like to thank the academics who agreed to act as peer reviewers and whose generosity of spirit allows this journal to continue to be a platform for post-graduate students. We hope you enjoy this supplement as much as we did in bringing it to you.

*Darren Dobson and Kathleen Shaw*

*Editors for the American Civil War 150th Anniversary Supplement*