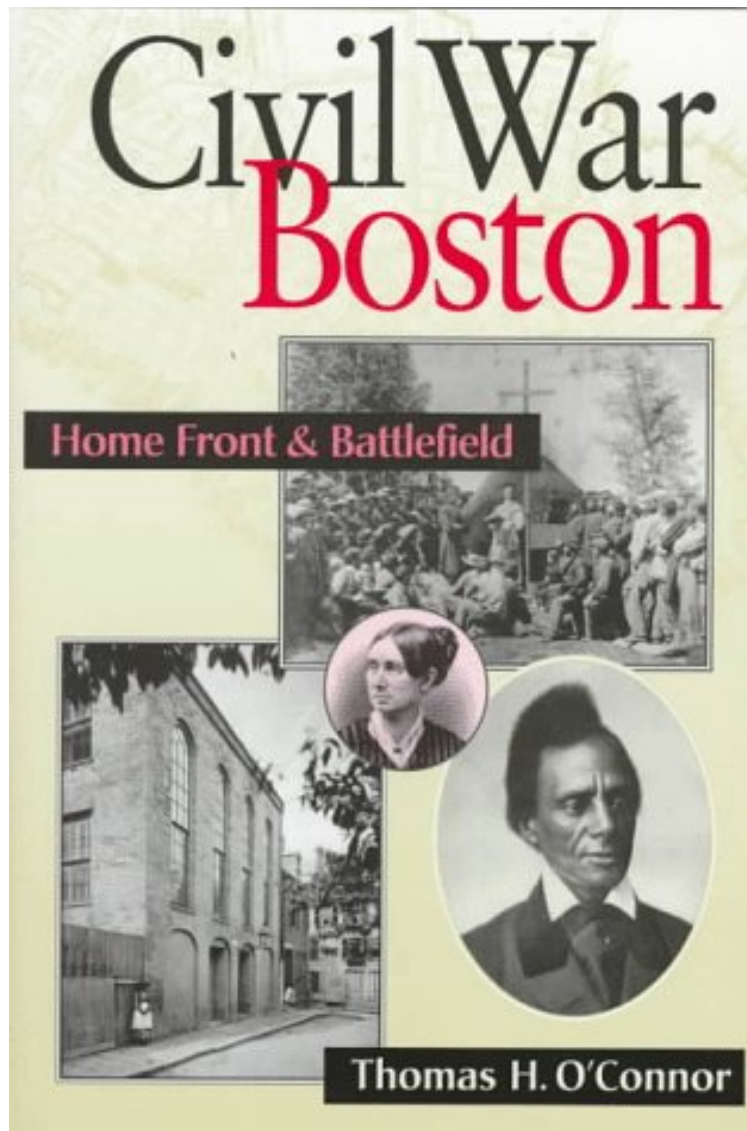


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Civil War Boston: Home Front and Battlefield

Thomas H. O'Connor

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Thomas H. O'Connor : Civil War Boston: Home Front and Battlefield before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Civil War Boston: Home Front and Battlefield:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A lively social and political history of Civil War Boston By A Customer In his most recent book, Civil War Boston, Boston College History Professor Thomas O'Connor illuminates how America's most devastating war impacted and changed the lives of Boston's citizens and its political climate. Although O'Connor's book is rife with detail and scholarship, he never losses sight of the great story he is telling. The

author achieves a perfect balance of detailing the war on a national scale while reflecting on its impact in Boston. If you are tired of dry narratives of the Civil War, read this book and learn about the personal side and the dramatic change wrought by the divisive conflict.

An examination of the role that Boston and its inhabitants played in the Civil War which focuses on business men, Irish Catholic immigrants, African Americans, and women in the antebellum period.

From Library Journal No place in America was left unaffected by the Civil War. Although some distance from the fighting, Boston too felt the triumphs and the tragedies of the Union cause. With patriotic fervor, the city and the state of Massachusetts contributed at least their fair share of soldiers to the Union armies, while businesses kept the cotton mills producing clothing and supplies for the Federals, and Irish Americans enlisted in droves. Shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation, African American regiments were recruited, the first from Massachusetts. On the home front, women nursed wounded soldiers and did the work formerly done by men now at war. O'Connor (history, emeritus, Boston Coll.) follows the paths of all these groups in Boston throughout the Civil War and its immediate aftermath. With extensive notes and fine detail, he brings to focus the local struggles against the larger picture of a nation divided. Though this is a fine history, its appeal would be limited to libraries with extensive Civil War collections or those in the Massachusetts area. Grant A. Fredericksen, Illinois Prairie Dist. P.L., Metamora Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s In this informative microcosmic study of a city during four crucial years, O'Connor (The Boston Irish, 1995) describes how the Civil War's battlefield upheavals were matched by quieter revolutions in metropolitan society, commerce, and politics. One part of O'Connor's narrative--the progress of the Hub's soldiers through four unexpected years of agony--is enlivened by excerpts from contemporary diaries and letters, but covers the same ground as regimental and Army of the Potomac histories. Fortunately, he also spotlights how four local groups, often at loggerheads in the antebellum period, rallied behind the Union after the attack on Fort Sumter. Yankee businessmen, once conservative, not only lent their financial support and civic influence to the mobilization effort, but joined former abolitionist foes like William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips in pressing Abraham Lincoln for emancipation. Women witnessed the end of their monopoly of the high-skill dressmaking trade, as a result of innovations such as the sewing machine, yet began shedding their professional subjection by becoming nurses and by lobbying for humanitarian causes, thus honing skills they would later employ as suffragettes. Irish Catholic immigrants showed courage in war that mitigated the antipathy of Brahmins; the Irish grew more attached to America and gained economic stability via new jobs then opening up. Still, although Boston's African-Americans cheered the 54th Massachusetts Regiment and slavery's destruction, they remained, at war's end, in segregated neighborhoods that limited their political and educational opportunities for another long century. O'Connor could have made this a more useful contribution to Civil War studies by reducing battlefield summaries in favor of exploring how the wartime economy redrew boundaries of class, ethnicity, race, and gender. But he achieves his ambition to show how the war ``disrupted [Bostonians'] homes, altered their work habits, reshaped political alliances, [and] transformed their ideas." An estimable contribution to Civil War, urban, and reform- movement history. (illustrations, not seen) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. O'Connor has again done Boston the great favor of resurrecting its riotous and vivid past. -- Martin F. Nolan, Boston Globe