

Southerner By Choice Records Battery's Action

A Keystone Rebel: The Civil War Diary of Joseph Garey of Hudson's Battery, Mississippi Volunteers. Edited by David A. Welker. Illustrated, maps, bibliography, softcover, 114 pp., 1996. Thomas Publications, P.O. Box 3031, Gettysburg, PA 17325, \$11.95 plus shipping.

Joseph Garey was somewhat of an enigma. Having lived in Pennsylvania for all his 21 years, he moved to Mississippi with his brother in 1860. With the commencement of hostilities, the brothers enlisted in the Southern army. Both during and after the war Joseph's fervent support of the Confederacy never wavered.

Joseph's diaries describe his service with Hudson's Battery, Mississippi Volunteers, in the Western campaigns from the fields of Shiloh to capture and parole at Vicksburg. His writings chronicle a progression from virtual certainty of success to outright despondency for Southern prospects.

In 1861 he declared that Albert Sidney Johnston and his army ought to be able to capture a continent. Yet by 1862 he discouragingly questions whether Johnston's plan of "retreating rather than advancing" was advantageous. His enthusiasm was somewhat rekindled at Shiloh, a site of "unabated fury" that he apparently deemed a Southern victory.

However, following the fall of Vicksburg and Chattanooga, with Charleston and Richmond besieged, he reported the Confederacy's prospects as "gloomy indeed," citing despondency commonplace, provisions scarce, and currency depreciated.

When the war ended, he briefly went North to visit his parents, but returned with his brother to reside in his beloved vanquished South.

The diary concludes with his partisan denunciation of a federal government allegedly subjugating civil liberties through confiscation, suspension of habeas corpus, and repression of political dissent. He bemoaned the passing of the Old South, stating, "She is gone and lives alone in the hearts of those who fought to sustain her by throwing themselves into the breach."

Although the diary entries are generally succinct, Joseph vividly portrayed the commonality of suffering faced by soldiers in the field and that confronting civilians on the homefront. The writing style is straightforward and descriptive, with no hedging opinions. Although unquestionably an advocate for the Southern cause, Joseph never expressed any dislike of Northerners merely because of his chosen sectional residency. Rather, he denounced Lincoln and those Radical Republicans he perceived as opportunists interested in subjugating the South for political and economic advantage.

The accompanying photos and maps are well-selected to illustrate the text, and the editor's annotations appropriately place the diary entries in their historical context. Accordingly, readers will find this work to be a useful and interesting addition to any collection of wartime writings by rank-and-file soldiers.

Kemp Burpeau