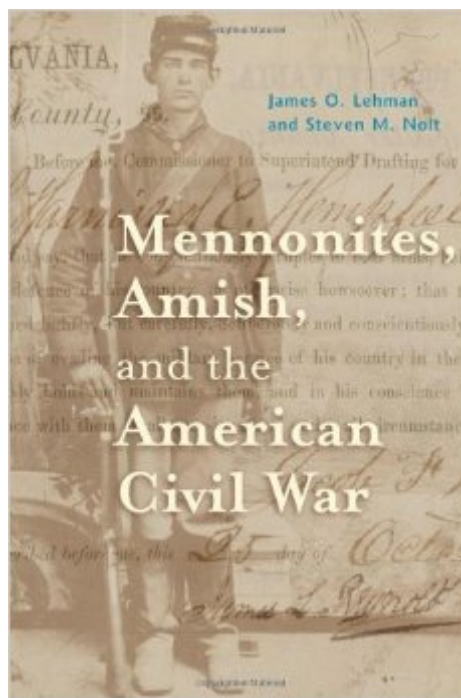


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Mennonites, Amish, And The American Civil War (Young Center Books In Anabaptist And Pietist Studies)



Synopsis

During the American Civil War, the Mennonites and Amish faced moral dilemmas that tested the very core of their faith. How could they oppose both slavery and the war to end it? How could they remain outside the conflict without entering the American mainstream to secure legal conscientious objector status? In the North, living this ethical paradox marked them as ambivalent participants to the Union cause; in the South, it marked them as clear traitors. In the first scholarly treatment of pacifism during the Civil War, two experts in Anabaptist studies explore the important role of sectarian religion in the conflict and the effects of wartime Americanization on these religious communities. James O. Lehman and Steven M. Nolt describe the various strategies used by religious groups who struggled to come to terms with the American mainstream without sacrificing religious values—some opted for greater political engagement, others chose apolitical withdrawal, and some individuals renounced their faith and entered the fight. Integrating the most recent Civil War scholarship with little-known primary sources and new information from Pennsylvania and Virginia to Illinois and Iowa, Lehman and Nolt provide the definitive account of the Anabaptist experience during the bloodiest war in American history.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

During the American Civil War, the Amish and their fellow Anabaptists such as the Mennonites were largely pacifists, preferring to stay away from secular politics and political movements, and the war

created by regional differences within the country. Authors James O. Lehman and Steven M. Nolt have written a fascinating book that examines the Amish and Mennonites of Pennsylvania and other states during the Civil War. Published by Johns Hopkins Press, this book is perhaps the first detailed study of the pacifistic perspective of the local Amish and Mennonite communities. The book is wonderfully written, flows well, and offers fresh information and a new perspective on the home front in the Civil War that is rarely (if ever) covered in other works. Mennonites, Amish, and the American Civil War fills a hole in the historiography of the war, adding depth and color to the struggles of this peace-loving group who struggled with the decisions of faith versus Americanism, of individual free-will versus community pressure, and whether to take up arms and renounce their traditional values (and in some cases, risk being shunned by their families and friends to fight in the army). Scholarly and well-researched, this book is a must-read for York and Lancaster countians wishing to gain a better understanding of the internal conflicts within the region during the war years. The activities of the Quakers and the Pennsylvania German Lutherans are perhaps better publicized and studied, which is why Lehman and Nolt's book is of interest. The authors begin with a sweeping overview of religion, politics, religious minorities, and their place within the changing American society of the mid-19th century.

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