



The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865 (Johns Hopkins Studies in the History of Technology)

Mark R. Wilson

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This wide-ranging, original account of the politics and economics of the giant military supply project in the North reconstructs an important but little-known part of Civil War history. Drawing on new and extensive research in army and business archives, Mark R. Wilson offers a fresh view of the wartime North and the ways in which its economy worked when the Lincoln administration, with unprecedented military effort, moved to suppress the rebellion.

This task of equipping and sustaining Union forces fell to career army procurement officers. Largely free from political partisanship or any formal free-market ideology, they created a mixed military economy with a complex contracting system that they pieced together to meet the experience of civil war. Wilson argues that the North owed its victory to these professional military men and their finely tuned relationships with contractors, public officials, and war workers.

Wilson also examines the obstacles military bureaucrats faced, many of which illuminated basic problems of modern political economy: the balance between efficiency and equity, the promotion of competition, and the protection of workers' welfare. The struggle over these problems determined the flow of hundreds of millions of dollars; it also redirected American political and economic development by forcing citizens to grapple with difficult questions about the proper relationships among government, business, and labor.

Students of the American Civil War will welcome this fresh study of military-industrial production and procurement on the home front?long an obscure topic.

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