



# Irish American Civil War Songs

Identity, Loyalty, and Nationhood

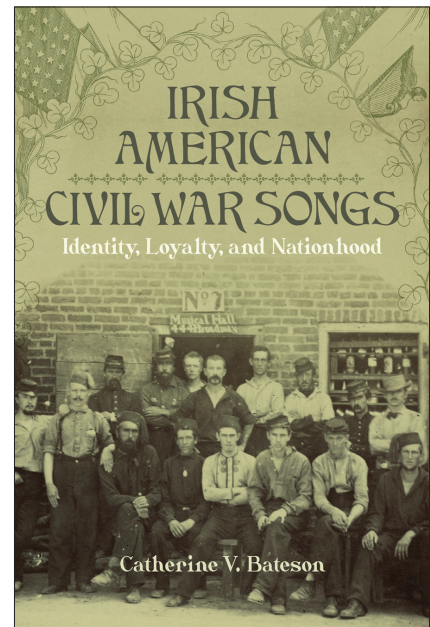
**CATHERINE V. BATESON**

Irish-born and Irish-descended soldiers and sailors were involved in every major engagement of the American Civil War. Throughout the conflict, they shared their wartime experiences through songs and song lyrics, leaving behind a vast trove of ballads in songbooks, letters, newspaper publications, wartime diaries, and other accounts. Taken together, these songs and lyrics offer an underappreciated source of contemporary feelings and opinions about the war.

Catherine V. Bateson's *Irish American Civil War Songs* provides the first in-depth exploration of Irish Americans' use of balladry to portray and comment on virtually every aspect of the war as witnessed by the Irish on the front line and home front. Bateson considers the lyrics, themes, and sentiments of wartime songs produced in America but often originating with those born across the Atlantic in Ireland and Britain. Her analysis gives new insight into views held by the Irish migrant diaspora about the conflict and the ways those of Irish descent identified with and fought to defend their adopted homeland.

Bateson's investigation of Irish American song lyrics within the context of broader wartime experiences enhances our understanding of the Irish contribution to the American Civil War. At the same time, it demonstrates how Irish songs shaped many American balladry traditions as they laid the foundation of the Civil War's musical soundscape.

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**SEPTEMBER 2022**

320 pages, 6 x 9, 9 halftones

978-0-8071-7793-8

Hardcover \$45.00s, ebook available

Civil War / U.S. History / Music

Conflicting Worlds: New Dimensions of  
the American Civil War

T. Michael Parrish, Series Editor

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