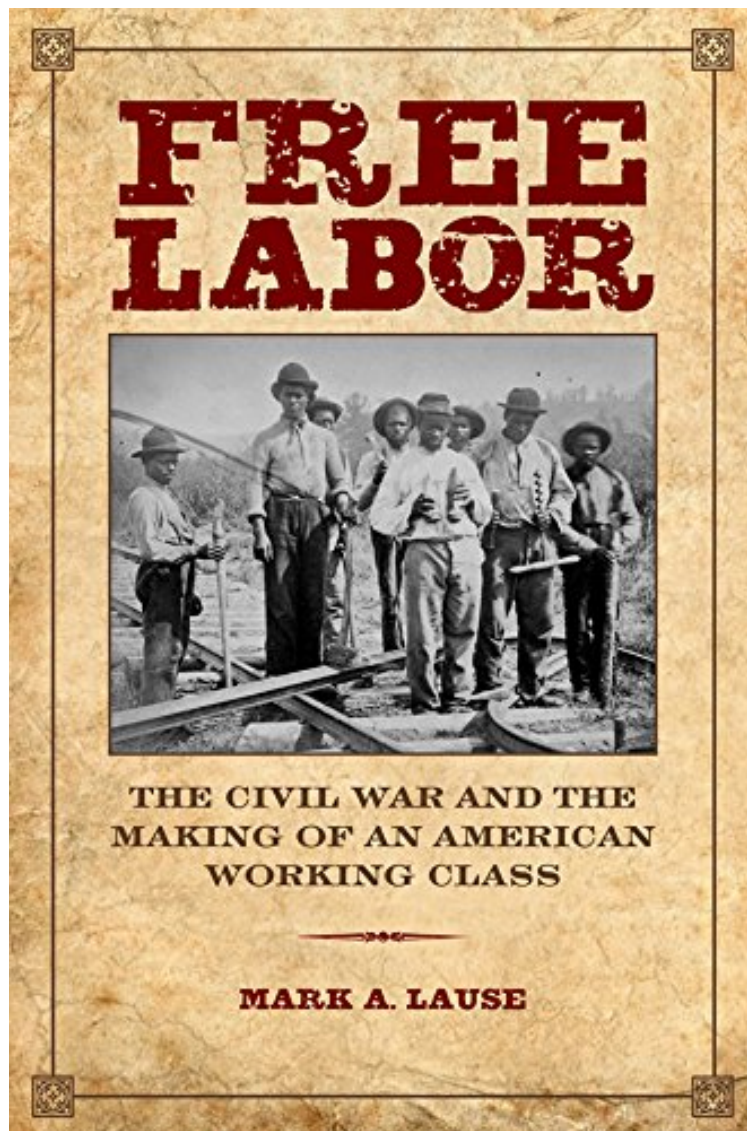


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Free Labor: The Civil War and the Making of an American Working Class (Working Class in American History)

Mark A. Lause

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic! Mark Lause is the real deal By Customer Fantastic! Mark Lause is the real deal, and this book deserves all the prizes possible. He understands the links between the Civil War

and the labor movement, and I learned much as a result.

Monumental and revelatory, *Free Labor* explores labor activism throughout the country during a period of incredible diversity and fluidity: the American Civil War. Mark A. Lause describes how the working class radicalized during the war as a response to economic crisis, the political opportunity created by the election of Abraham Lincoln, and the ideology of free labor and abolition. Grappling with a broad array of organizations, tactics, and settings, Lause portrays not only the widely known leaders and theoreticians, but also the unsung workers who struggled on the battlefield and the picket line. His close attention to women and African Americans, meanwhile, dismantles notions of the working class as synonymous with whiteness and maleness. In addition, Lause offers a nuanced consideration of race's role in the politics of national labor organizations, in segregated industries in the border North and South, and in black resistance in the secessionist South, creatively reading self-emancipation as the largest general strike in U.S. history.

"A major contribution in tying together the disparate labor movements throughout the United States in the Civil War years and in showing the continued strength of antebellum labor radicalism tied to abolition." --Gerald Friedman, author of *Reigniting the Labor Movement: Restoring Means to Ends in a Democratic Labor Movement* "Lause's book presents an impressive array of original scholarship. The immense detail he provides on little-known aspects of the Civil War-era labour movement will prove especially valuable as a resource to future researchers; by joining the history of the labour movement and the history of the war, Lause has filled a long-neglected gap in the literature on the mid-19th-century United States." --*Labour/ Le Travail*