perience saw the political advantages of de-emphasizing race and slavery in narratives of the war. Trying to build a unified nation that would sustain a global empire later generations abandoned the more honest and racially inclusive memories established by veterans. Gannon does not deny the increasing virulence of white supremacy in the postwar years but she is right to draw our attention to this previously unrecognized space within which black men, and some women, through the GAR’s Women Relief Committees, earned respect and shepherded the resources that allowed them to persevere over Jim Crow.

Gannon only occasionally explains her relation to the larger historiography, and her unusual narrative structure—thirteen short chapters in a 200-page text—does not convey her argument as powerfully as longer and deeper chapters might have. Nonetheless, Gannon’s innovative research method, the logical rigor of her argument, and the persuasiveness of her evidence make this an invaluable contribution to the literatures on the Civil War, emancipation, race, and memory. Thanks to her work, and that of scholars such as John Neff, William Blair, and Chandra Manning, we are starting to recapture the true complexity of the racial attitudes and behavior of Civil War participants—a long-delayed but worthy cause to be sure.

AARON SHEEIHAN-DEAN
West Virginia University


Larry M. Logue and Peter Blanck’s new book substantially advances our understanding of the health and welfare of African American soldiers during and after the Civil War. To do so, it relies heavily on the machine-readable data archives put together by Robert W. Fogel and his collaborators at the University of Chicago’s Center for Population Economics (CPE). Most important are the military and pension records for more than 35,000 white and roughly 6,000 African American recruits and reports on more than 95,000 medical examinations of pension applicants for the period between 1862 and the end of the nineteenth century. Inspired by the growing field of disability studies, Logue and Blanck use multivariate statistical methods (logistic regression and hazards analysis) to capture the complicated ways in which race and ethnicity shaped the experiences of Civil War veterans and the responses of the United States Pension Bureau to their requests for assistance. Particularly intriguing are Logue and Blanck’s discussions of variations over time. In 1862, Congress created what they refer to as the “general law,” a medical model of disability that shaped the allocation of pension benefits. Particularly important was the loss of a limb during battle. In the years that followed, white veterans applied for assistance in larger proportions than did black veterans; they also were more likely to have their requests granted. Logue and Blanck offer an insightful discussion of what they call the “moral economy of veteran benefits” (p. 23). Black soldiers were more often kept from the front lines of battle than their white counterparts and hence lost fewer limbs. They died at higher rates during the war, largely as a result of the spread of pneumonia, dysentery, and malaria in the disease-ridden Mississippi Valley. Finally, freedmen, in particular, experienced difficulty navigating the pension application process. Despite these multiple impediments, some black soldiers did apply, only to find themselves turned down by Pension Bureau reviewers and referees in disproportionate numbers. The darker the skin of pension applicants, the more likely they were to be rejected.

After 1890, the situation changed somewhat. Congress passed a bill that created a new kind of pension, one linked to the inability to support oneself rather than to a physical deficit rooted in the war experience. African American veterans then began to apply for pensions in roughly the same proportions as their white counterparts. Yet, they still did not reach pension parity. As the number of applications soared, so too did the frequency with which the Pension Bureau used race and ethnicity, rather than the merits of individual cases, to distinguish those awarded pensions from those denied. (Foreign-born veterans also were disadvantaged under this system, although to a lesser extent than the African Americans.)

The strongest feature of this book is the authors’ meticulous teasing out of interesting statistical patterns by race and ethnicity from the huge CPE data set, although they often have difficulty choosing between competing explanations. I hope that this book prompts others to dig deep into non-quantitative sources for answers to Logue and Blanck’s fascinating speculations.

ELLEN DWYER
Indiana University,
Bloomington


The title of Kate Masur’s original and widely ramifying study of post-emancipation struggles over equality in Washington, D.C., holds a double meaning. The phrase was Charles Sumner’s: exhorting black Washingtonians to challenge the exclusion of black children from white District of Columbia schools, Sumner noted that in so doing they would not only work for themselves but “set an example for all the land, and most especially for the South” (p. 189). The nation’s capital, Sumner and his African American and white radical allies understood, was a special case within the federal system. While the Constitution limited the federal government’s power in the states, it gave Congress all but unlimited authority over the District. The result, Sumner would later ob-