



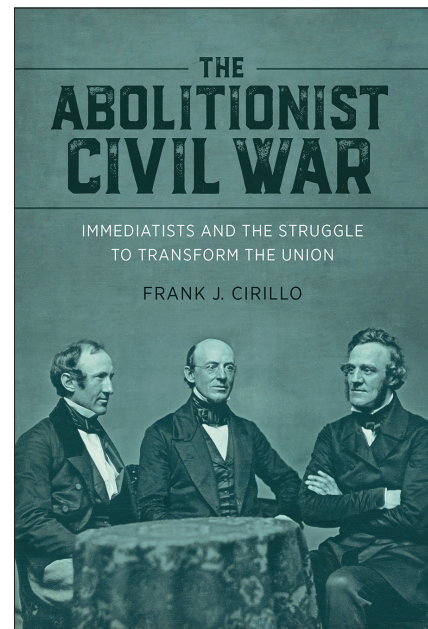
# The Abolitionist Civil War

Immediatists and the Struggle to Transform the Union

**FRANK J. CIRILLO**

The astonishing transformation of the abolitionist movement during the Civil War proved enormously consequential both for the cause of abolitionism in general and for the nation. Drawing on a cast of famous and obscure figures from Frederick Douglass to Moncure Conway, Frank J. Cirillo’s *The Abolitionist Civil War* explores how antislavery reformers, including those who supported the immediate abolition of the enslaved, contorted their arguments and clashed with each other as they labored over the course of the conflict to create a more perfect Union. Cirillo reveals that immediatists’ efforts to forge a morally transformed nation that enshrined emancipation and Black rights shaped contemporary debates surrounding abolitionism but ultimately did little to promote racial justice for African Americans.

**FRANK J. CIRILLO** is a historian of slavery and antislavery in the nineteenth-century United States. He has held positions at the University of Bonn, The New School, and the University of Virginia.



## PRAISE FOR *THE ABOLITIONIST CIVIL WAR*

“In compelling and captivating prose, *The Abolitionist Civil War* lays bare the internecine conflict that raged within abolitionism between 1861 and 1865. With a lively cast of characters, it reminds us that emancipation was not inevitable, nor had the Republican Party rendered abolitionists irrelevant. Perhaps most importantly, this war within a war helps explain why the American Civil War achieved so much and so little in the name of racial justice.”—*Caroline E. Janney, author of Ends of War: The Unfinished Fight of Lee’s Army after Appomattox*

“American abolitionists faced a perplexing dilemma: Could a war being waged to restore the Union be transformed into a war to abolish slavery? And even if so, how might the national scourge of anti-Black prejudice be overcome? William Lloyd Garrison accepted Abraham Lincoln’s flawed compromise—emancipation without equality. But Frank J. Cirillo applauds Wendell Phillips, Frederick Douglass, and Abby Kelley Foster, who kept striving to create ‘a multiracial democracy.’ This fine book untangles key aspects of the wartime struggle for freedom and equal rights. It shows what the abolitionists were up against—and how a prophetic vanguard refused to trim their sails.”—*Daniel W. Crofts, author of Lincoln and the Politics of Slavery: The Other Thirteenth Amendment and the Struggle to Save the Union*

**NOVEMBER 2023**

336 pages, 6 x 9

978-0-8071-7915-4

Hardcover \$45.00s, ebook available

Civil War / U.S. History / Abolition

Antislavery, Abolition, and the Atlantic World  
R. J. M. Blackett and Edward Rugemer, Series Editors  
James Brewer Stewart, Editor Emeritus



David Cirillo

338 JOHNSTON HALL | BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70803

225-578-6294 | FAX 225-578-6461 | Orders/Customer Service 800-848-6224 | [www.lsupress.org](http://www.lsupress.org)