

Financing the Union Victory in the Civil War

A Preliminary Reading List Compiled by Preston E. Pierce
Regional Archivist, Rochester Regional Library Council
For The Conference of the Assn. of Public Historians of NY State
Buffalo, NY. April 18-20, 2010

[Ball, Douglas B.] *America, Money and War: Financing the Civil War*. New York. Museum of American Financial History. 1994.

Really an exhibit catalog, this short summary discusses the finances of both sides. It is accompanied by transparencies of documents as well as numerous illustrations in the catalogue itself.

Boutwell, George S. *Reminiscences of Sixty Years in Public Affairs*. 2 v. New York. McClure, Phillips and Co. 1902. [Reprint. New York. Greenwood Press. 1968.]

Boutwell was the first head of the Bureau of Internal Revenue during the Civil War. Boutwell's two volumes are currently available in several reprints according to Amazon.com. The last chapter in vol. 1 includes an entire chapter where Boutwell discusses his work as Internal Revenue Commissioner. A friend of Sec. Chase, Boutwell was not well liked by Lincoln and he makes that clear.

Chase, Salmon P. Letter to Horace Greeley. Nov. 19, 1867. Available on the Internet at: <http://www.sethkaller.net/catalogs/3-abraham-lincoln-catalog/588-salmon-chase-explains>

This letter is in the form of a typescript with an image of page 1 of six pages. It is really a detailed sales catalogue for a manuscript dealer. The web page contains a wealth of information on Chase and the context of this letter where he summarizes his Civil War financial policies for the publisher of the *New York Tribune*.

Doris, Lillian (ed). *The American Way in Taxation: Internal Revenue, 1862-1963*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Prentice-Hall. 1963. [Reprint. Buffalo, NY. William Hein and Co. 1994.]

The reprint of this book is fairly easy to obtain. The first ten pages of chapter two provide simplified explanations of the authorization and administration of the Civil War era tax laws. The books provides perspectives for both the *antebellum* years and the twentieth century.

Ellis, Elmer. "Public Opinion and the Income Tax, 1860-1900." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*. v. 27. Sep. 1940. pp. 225-242.

This older article is somewhat difficult to access. However, it is a good examination of the public attitudes toward the Civil War income tax. The full-text article is available from JSTOR, a membership database available to many libraries and colleges. Check your JSTOR access options on the Internet at: <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/archives/access.jsp> JSTOR is available to anyone with a "P" borrower's card from the New York State Library (on-line catalog).

Fox, Cynthia G. "Income Tax Records of the Civil War Years." *Prologue*. v. 18. Winter 1986. Available on the Internet at: <http://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1986/winter/civil-war-tax-records.html?template=print>

Prologue is the journal of the National Archives. The author describes the Civil War income tax records that are available and how to access them.

Geary, James W. *We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War*. DeKalb, IL. Northern Illinois Univ. Press. 1991.

Like Eugene Murdock's 1967 book (listed below), this publication discusses the impact of the bounty system on the Union draft.

Giroux, Gary and Sharon Johns. "Financing the Civil War: The Office of Internal Revenue and the Use of Revenue Stamps." [Texas A&M Univ.] Available on the Internet at: <http://accct.tamu.edu/Giroux/financingcivil.htm>

A rather esoteric discussion, as the title indicates, it concentrates on the use of stamp taxes. It includes useful information for the historian, but might be of most interest to a stamp collector or a historian with very specific interests.

Krooss, H. E. (ed). *Documentary History of Banking and Currency in the United States*. 4 v. New York. Chelsea House Publishers. 1969.

This comprehensive study has been reprinted several times. It is readily available at larger libraries and the NY State Library.

Internal Revenue Service. *IRS Historical Factbook: A Chronology, 1646-1992*. Washington, DC. Gov. Printing Office. 1993.

Mahler, M. *United States Civil War Revenue Stamp Taxes: a Compendium of Statutes, Decisions, Rulings, and Correspondence Pertaining to the Documentary and Proprietary Taxes*. Pacific Palisades, CA. Castenholz and Sons. 1988.

Known for his expertise on the subject, Mahler's book is quite specific in its study of the use of stamps and stamp taxes and is of interest to philatelists as well as historians. It is now held by the state library. According to the WorldCat database, the only New York state library with a copy is Cornell University. It is certainly available by Interlibrary loan.

Murdock, Eugene C. *Patriotism Limited 1862-1965: The Civil War Draft and the Bounty System*. Kent, OH. Kent State Univ. Press. 1967

This author is a recognized authority on the subject of the Civil War draft and the bounty system. The book is based on several articles he wrote and Kent State University Press is known for its publication of the journal, *Civil War History*.

Phisterer, Frederick (comp.). "Cost of the War in Money." *New York in the War of the Rebellion*. 1861 to 1865. 3 ed. Albany. J. B. Lyon Co. 1912. v. 1. pp. 93-94.

Phisterer was Adjutant General of New York at the time of publication of this classic five-volume summary of the Empire State's participation in the war.

Ransom, Roger L. "The Economics of the Civil War." Available on the Internet at: <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/ransom.civil.war.us>

This is a brief article that is very informative for historians looking for comprehensive summary information.

Schmeckebier, L. and F. Eble. *The Bureau of Internal Revenue*. Baltimore. Johns Hopkins Press. 1923. [Reprint: AMS Press, 1974.]

An older study of the Civil War agency that became the IRS, this book provides a sympathetic coverage for the establishment of the Bureau during the Lincoln administration. According to WorldCat, it is widely available in college libraries across upstate New York.

Secretary of the Treasury. *Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of Finances*. Annual issues for 1862-1866. Washington, DC. Gov. Printing Office. 1862-66.

A good primary source collection. This series of US Government documents is difficult to obtain locally. Search first in a Government Depository Library (there is at least one in each Congressional district), then seek access through Interlibrary Loan.

Tax History Museum. Tax History Project. "1861-1865. The Civil War." Available on the Internet at: <http://www.tax.org/museum/1861print.htm> and <http://www.taxhistory.org/>

This site provides concise information and images of historical documents that can be downloaded and used.

Terrell, Ellen (comp). Business References Services. Library of Congress. "History of the US Income Tax." Available on the Internet at:
http://www.loc.gov/rr/business/hottopic/irs_history.html

This site provides links to other sites and recommended reading published by both government and non-government agencies. It also includes useful downloadable images.

Some final thoughts:

While specific encyclopedia type articles are too numerous to list here, it should be noted that there are a great many entries about Civil War finance, monetary issues, taxation and bounties on the Internet using search engines like Google and Yahoo.

Books and magazines for coin collectors often have specific information about the coins and currency of the Civil War period.

In some cases local and county histories contain information on the bounty system and the draft in particular. It was common for local groups to publish local military histories after the Civil War and they are a good source of information. Only a few published information on the bounty system, listed substitutes, and detailed the draft results.

Actual bounty bond records may be found in several obscure series of county records. However, they take persistence to locate. They are most often part of the records of the County Treasurer or the Board of Supervisors. Bounty bonds were issued pursuant to resolutions of a county Board of Supervisors and researchers should start their local searches with those records, often called "Proceedings."

County supervisors' proceedings were usually published in local newspapers which can serve as a stand-in if the actual documents are difficult to locate, common for the mid 19th Century. Digital collections of local newspapers are available in several parts of New York. Many of them are searchable on line.

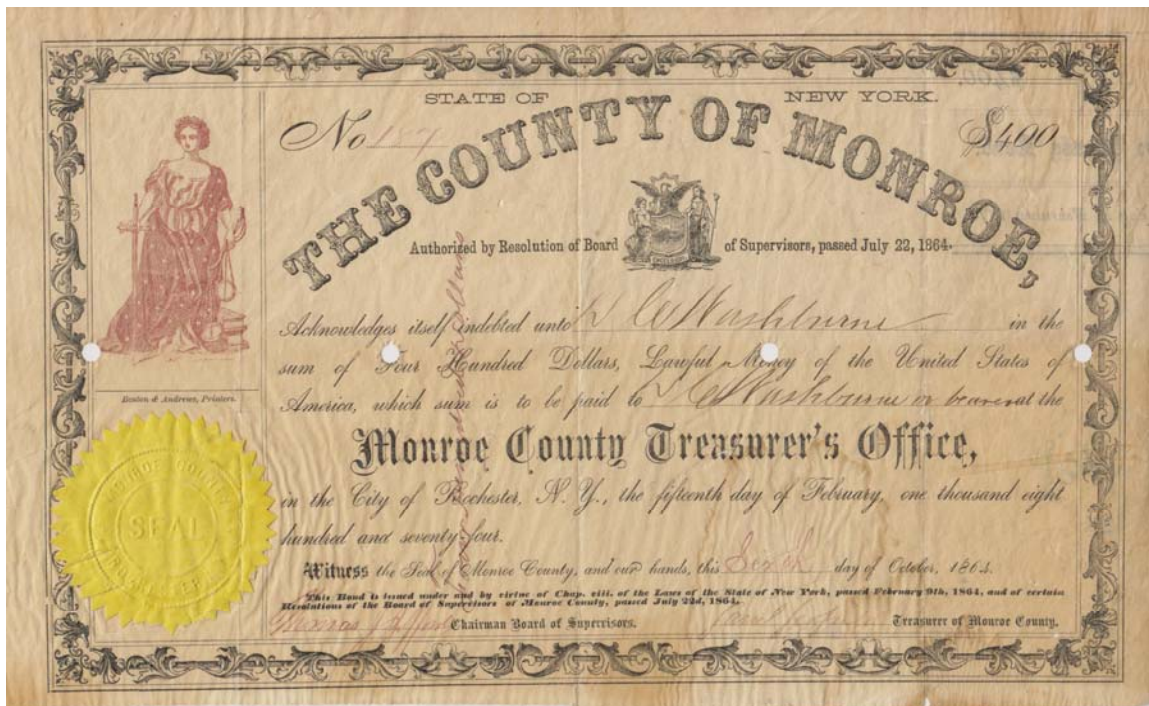
Articles in academic journals, like the *Journal of American History* (formerly *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*) are often available in hard copy or microform at

college and university libraries. Increasingly, they are available in digital format from Internet sites such as JSTOR (www.jstor.org). Many of those sites require memberships, but the memberships are often held by local educational institutions and libraries. Anyone with a "P" card can access JSTOR articles on-line from the New York State Library.

Books not readily available locally can usually be located by using the on-line catalogues of the New York State Library, the Library of Congress and other public and college libraries. Virtually every book or article can be obtained through Interlibrary Loan. Contact your local school, college, or public library for information about that service.

A readily available search engine is WorldCat. It will indicate the location of book within a specified range of miles from your search location (zip code). WorldCat can be accessed at: <http://www.worldcat.org/>.

County bond certificates can often be found for sale on Internet auction sites like eBay. Images and information about coins and currency of the period can be obtained from numismatic organizations and dealers who often post illustrations on the Internet.



Bounty bond certificate for Monroe County, NY. Obtained March, 2010 through the Internet auction site, eBay.