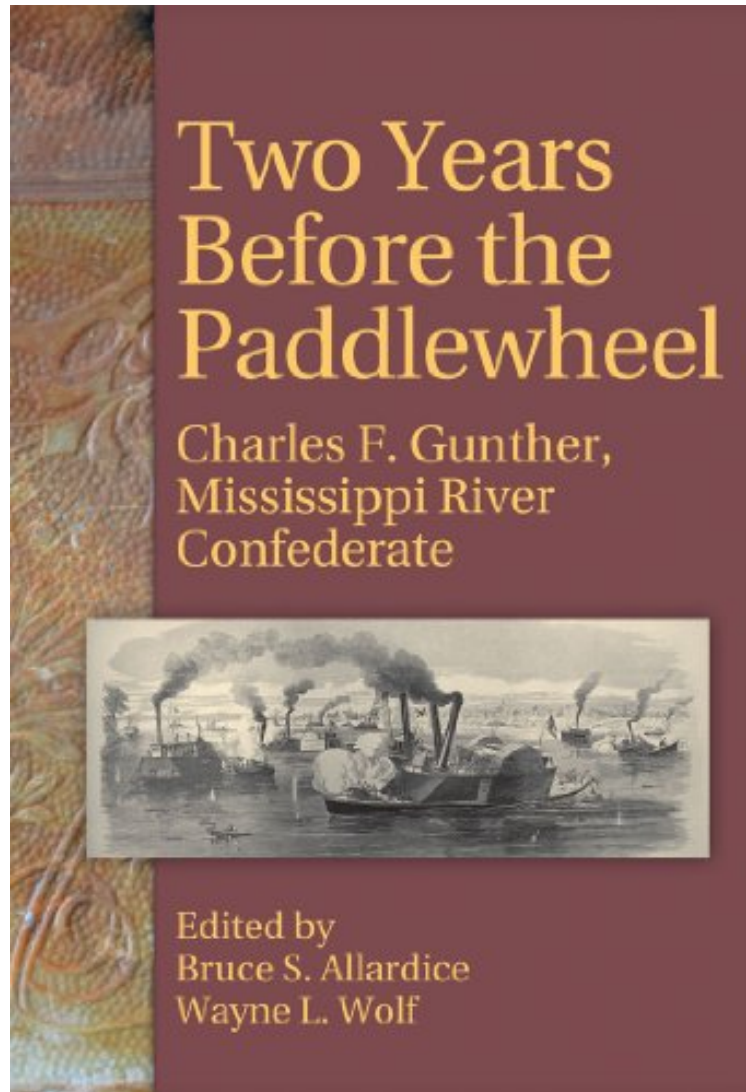


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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An Interesting PresentationBy william l hortonThe author used an interesting method to combine the original contents of a diary with inserted comments explaining historical references, places that are mentioned, many people who Gunther mentioned, and methods of doing business in the ice trade and as

purser on a steamboat. It is an enjoyable and informative read.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Two Years Before the PaddlewheelBy Mary Frances HodgesThis is the first book that I have seen on Confederate supply river routes. I for it specifically for information concerning Van Buren Arkansas, and It filled my need.2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating read and fills a gap in Civil War historyBy Leslie GoddardIf you know the Chicago History Museum's amazing Civil War collection, you know Charles Gunther. If you know Chicago candy history, you know Charles Gunther (was a king of caramels in Chicago in the late 19th c, with a lavish candy shop). This fascinating diary fills a gap in our understanding of who Gunther was before he became a wealthy confectioner and collector, not to mention giving us new insight into the world of Mississippi riverboating during the war. Gunther's days are often monotonous, sometimes filled with excitement. You feel as drawn as he is to news of a nearby battle or the discovery of a strange sight. A great read for riverboat enthusiasts, Civil War buffs, Chicago museum fans, and anyone wanting to know more about everyday life for a civilian during a tumultuous time period.

Charles F. Gunther is a Yankee ice peddler who is trapped in the South at the outbreak of the war. Presented here are two years of diaries of Gunther's experiences working on the steamboat Rose Douglas, ferrying Confederate troops and supplies. After the war, Gunther makes a fortune in the candy business across the street from Marshal Field's in Chicago, becomes a premier collector and preserver of Civil War artifacts and Lincoln memorabilia, endows the Chicago history Museum with its Civil War collection, and goes on to hold political office as an alderman and City Treasurer of Chicago. In *Two Years Before the Paddlewheel*, readers can follow the day-by-day survival of an ordinary ice merchant turned Confederate steamboat purser during the Civil War. Gunther's day-by-day account as a civilian in military service illuminates the economic, military, social, and personal side of America's Civil War.

A fascinating personal story of the experiences of a Northern businessman forced by the outbreak of the Civil War to work for the Confederacy through 1862. Gunther's situation was unique in many respects, and his diaries are a wonderful addition to the historiography of the Western Theater. Michael B. Ballard, coordinator, Congressional and Political Research Center at Mississippi State University, and Mississippi State University archivist