

of Lars Aaker, one of Knud's sons who also served in the Union army and was a Minnesota legislator for a time.

Many of the letters are personal, private exchanges dealing with such things as births, marriages, deaths, diseases, jobs, farm conditions, religious concerns, schools, and the like. Although some readers might desire a broader perspective than that of one family, the letters do relate to a period of important developments in the upper Midwest, and they provide insights into "the process of immigration and immigrant life and activities in the 'Promised Land'" (viii). The book includes a helpful introduction by a retired member of the Aaker family.

While God Is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers, by Steven E. Woodworth. Modern War Studies. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001. xii, 394 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

Reviewer Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr. is a lecturer in the history of Christianity at Andover Newton Theological School and the author of *A Shield and Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies* (1987). His research focuses on religion and American culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

At the beginning of the Civil War, the citizens of many American towns equipped their sons for the rigors of military service by arming them not only with rifles, revolvers, and bayonets, but also with Bibles, pocket editions of the New Testament, and other forms of inspirational literature. Despite these efforts, many of the soldiers soon wondered whether the books they carried were sufficient to overcome, not the physical terrors of combat, but the more insidious influences of everyday life in camp. Cyrus Boyd of the Fifteenth Iowa regiment, for example, was appalled by the irreligious tone and general wickedness he witnessed in the Union army. Drinking, swearing, and card playing were commonplace, he claimed, while prostitutes appeared to outnumber chaplains in most brigades. "There seems to be no God here," he observed with dismay, "but more than the average amount of . . . Devil" (179).

In this informative study of the ideas of Union and Confederate soldiers, military historian Steven Woodworth examines the thinking of several hundred men who, like Boyd, expressed strong religious beliefs during the war. Woodworth stresses, on the one hand, that he is interested in the views of ordinary men rather than in religious organizations or formal theological doctrines. As a result, he disregards the extensive writings of chaplains and civilian clergy in favor of the less polished spiritual musings of common soldiers. On the other hand, Woodworth adheres to Stonewall Jackson's pious wish that the army

should be a place where "squabbles between varying beliefs" (162) were ignored. Thus, rather than exploring the many diverse expressions of American religiosity, Woodworth intentionally streamlines his narrative by giving attention only to what he calls "mainstream religion" (ix) or "orthodox Christianity" (107).

Woodworth's approach to this subject matter is exceptionally clear and well organized. In the first part of the book, he introduces beliefs professed by most American Protestants in the mid-nineteenth century: the sovereignty of God, salvation through Jesus Christ, the hope of heaven, and the necessity of leading a moral life on earth. In the second part—the longest and by far the most useful section of the book—Woodworth divides his narrative both chronologically and regionally, and he analyzes the differing ways northern and southern Christians interpreted events at key stages in the conflict. He also briefly discusses the clergymen who served as regimental chaplains and the evangelists, lay as well as ordained, who ministered to the troops. Woodworth concludes that, despite the immense bloodshed and suffering engendered by the conflict, very few soldiers became spiritually embittered as a result of their wartime experiences. In fact, some men came out of the war with their beliefs significantly strengthened, while the average soldier returned home with his religious convictions intact, confidently affirming "a faith that gave meaning to life and death . . . and held out hope beyond the grave" (292).

The scope of Woodworth's historical research and the clarity of his presentation notwithstanding, this book does have one significant flaw: the author's rather narrow focus on "orthodox Christianity," which he equates with what historians of religion usually call evangelical Protestantism. Although it would certainly be correct to say that large numbers, perhaps even a majority, of Civil War soldiers were evangelical Protestants, there were still thousands of believers in the army who considered themselves "orthodox," but who were either not Protestant or not evangelical. Those men—Roman Catholics, high-church Episcopalians, confessional Lutherans, and some German Reformed (not to mention Unitarians, Universalists, Jews, atheists, and others who did not claim to be "orthodox" Christians)—all contributed in significant ways to the formation of "the religious world" that Woodworth purports to study. The use of the term "orthodox Christianity," moreover, not only reflects an unwarranted theological judgment on the author's part, but also interferes with the reader's understanding of the complexities of religion in Civil War America. As historians such as Jon Butler, Nathan Hatch, and Christine Leigh Heyrman have recently demonstrated, the religious beliefs and practices of nine-

teenth-century Americans were extraordinarily diverse and dynamic. Thus, when Woodworth refers to civil religion as "a twisted version of Christianity" (107), or when he dismisses the southern Presbyterian emphasis on the spirituality of the church as "an aberration within . . . the entire Christian tradition" (125), his own theological assumptions obscure rather than illuminate his historical subjects. If those religious ideas were as marginal as Woodworth suggests, how are we to account for their remarkable power in inspiring abolitionist and slaveholding Christians to wage war so fiercely against each other?

Nonetheless, Woodworth's book serves an important function. Since the role of religion has often been omitted in standard accounts of the Civil War, Woodworth fears that the beliefs of past generations are in danger of being forgotten by those engaged in the study of this critical period in American history. Given the breadth of the research conducted in the preparation of this book, Civil War historians will now be much less likely to overlook such an important topic.

Houses from Books: Treatises, Pattern Books, and Catalogs in American Architecture, 1738–1950, A History and a Guide, by Daniel D. Reiff. University Park: Penn State University Press, 2001. xi, 412 pp. 734 black-and-white illustrations, 12 color plates, 8 appendixes, notes, bibliography, general index, geographical index. \$75.00 cloth.

Reviewer Fred W. Peterson is professor emeritus of art history at the University of Minnesota, Morris. He is the author of books about balloon frame farmhouses in the upper Midwest and German Catholic vernacular architecture in a rural Minnesota parish.

Daniel D. Reiff's *Houses from Books* is an excellent reference work that provides an accurate and comprehensive guide to house designs and domestic architectural styles in America from the 1730s to the 1950s. The handsome, profusely illustrated quarto volume presents analyses of the theoretical literature that stimulated and supported each phase of domestic architectural history, provides abundant examples of actual houses in relation to their printed elevations and plans in architectural pattern books and house catalogs, and explains materials and methods of construction used by local builders and carpenters to realize actual houses. Reiff supplies essential visual information through high-quality photographs, floor plans, elevations, and exterior/interior detailing of individual structures.

Houses in Iowa were not included in Reiff's fieldwork, but the contents of the study will clarify and explain the architectural landscape of residential areas of towns and cities in the state. Reiff's his-

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