

revealing letter to copper czar Marcus Daly, Hill wrote in 1886, "When our lines are completed through to your place [Butte, Montana], we hope to be able to furnish you all the transportation you want, at rates as will enable you to largely increase your business." He added, "What we want over our low grades is heavy tonnage, and the heavier it is *the lower we can make rates*" (126, his emphasis).

James J. Hill did possess characteristics that made him almost indistinguishable from other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century business leaders. He was a builder and not a wrecker of railroads. Although Hill took advantage of public largesse, including some substantial federal land grants to a Great Northern predecessor road, he did not loot state and national coffers, nor did he manipulate stock prices. The "Empire Builder," moreover, showed concern for the people and communities his carrier served; for example, he generously supported a variety of public and private educational institutions. And Hill was a family man. He doted on his wife and their brood of children, especially Louis, his successor on the Great Northern.

Michael Malone has written a fine study of Hill. Although Albro Martin penned a more comprehensive book, *James J. Hill and the Opening of the Northwest* (1976), Malone offers a more balanced treatment. He views Hill as a business genius who also possessed some less-than-attractive qualities. This hard-nosed pragmatist willingly employed tactics that he felt were necessary to accomplish his agenda, although he fell far short of entering the "robber baron" category. Like Martin, Malone has done an excellent job of research, incorporating an array of secondary sources. He has crafted a biography that deserves a wide readership.

My Ever Dear Daughter, My Own Dear Mother: The Correspondence of Julia Stone Towne and Mary Julia Towne, 1868-1882, edited by Katherine Redington Morgan. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996. xi, 316 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$32.95 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY KATHY PENNINGROTH, A & P HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Correspondence exchanged by Julia Stone Towne and Mary Julia Towne, mother and daughter, between 1868 and 1882 affords a window on the day-to-day lives and concerns of these nineteenth-century women. Katherine Redington Morgan, great-great-granddaughter of the first and great-granddaughter of the second, both

selected and edited the letters and conducted extensive background research into the factors—families, communities, and more—that shaped her correspondents' thoughts, feeling, and activities.

While the ties between mother and daughter were close and deeply felt and valued, the differences in their lives provide interesting juxtapositions of generations and experiences. Through Julia, we see the concerns of a wife and mother in mid-life coping with her children leaving home and facilitating productive and rewarding futures for them, while maintaining the family home in rural, small-town Topsfield, Massachusetts. Her letters recount a daily round of household duties—cleaning, cooking, processing produce and meat, sewing the family wardrobe—along with helping with her husband's farming chores, overseeing and contributing to the precarious family finances, and maintaining contact with close and more distant family members through visits and correspondence. Julia's social life revolves around her church, and even though she provides some wonderfully acerbic views of church community "politics," her Christian commitment is the bedrock of her existence.

When the letters begin in 1868, Mary has relocated to Chicago seeking employment to reduce a debt to her uncle and help with family finances. After taking a qualifying examination, she soon acquires a teaching position with the Chicago school system, where she continued to teach until her marriage in 1882, with the exception of 1871–72 when she taught in Keokuk, Iowa, in the wake of the Great Chicago Fire in October 1871. Thus, we have insights into the organization and workings of an urban school system as well as one in a smaller, yet thriving, community. And while Mary's story is that of an independent middle-class professional woman, it is also a story of her communities. She writes in detail of her supportive family ties in Chicago, her varying boarding experiences in Chicago and with a family in Keokuk, and the social and cultural activities that both communities provide.

Because the letters encompass the rich texture of life in the late nineteenth century, they are a valuable source of primary information touching upon a myriad of subjects—personnel decisions and interactions in public school systems, pedagogical theories and techniques, the cultural milieu of urban and small-town communities, the financial and living circumstances of single, middle-class women, female clothing fashions, illness and self-remedies, household and family finances, and, through Mary's brother, Charles, the exigencies of life on the Nebraska frontier. These essential nuggets of knowledge, particularly from women, are difficult to come by, and it is in-

deed fortunate to have them in the public realm. However, the correspondence between Julia and Mary is more than useful historical information; it is also a story of human interactions and personal development.

Morgan has chosen to frame the book as a psychological study of nineteenth-century women's lives and development, drawing on the insights of Carroll Smith-Rosenberg in *Disorderly Conduct* (1986). In addition, she characterizes the letters as a multiform literary genre, both autobiography and dramatic dialogue, placing the authors within a broadly defined category of women writers. Morgan's viewpoints are apt and appropriate, for the letters reveal the personalities of the two women within a largely female world and demonstrate the relationships between the two. Julia's personality is perhaps more well defined, with concerns for her daughter's welfare alternating with hortatory statements about employment decisions, behavior, and religious outlook. Over time, Mary's letters provide a fascinating look at a young woman gaining in independence and confidence, particularly in her position as a competent and professional teacher.

Morgan's theoretical framework influenced her decisions as editor. She chose to present the extant letters in their entirety with few editorial intrusions except for one period of time when only Julia's letters survive. As a reader, I would have preferred to have more of the explanatory material interspersed in the text rather than relegated to the endnotes. And I occasionally became mired in Julia's style of writing and the confusing array of relatives and acquaintances present in her letters. More ellipses would have been welcome at times.

However, these minor concerns pale in comparison to Morgan's contribution to our knowledge of women and their lives in the matrix of nineteenth-century culture through making her grandmothers public, and therefore accessible, figures. *My Ever Dear Daughter, My Own Dear Mother* joins Judy Nolte Lensink's "A Secret to Be Buried": *The Diary and Life of Emily Hawley Gillespie, 1858-1888*; Mary Hurlbut Cordier's *Schoolwomen of the Prairies and Plains: Personal Narratives from Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, 1860s to 1920s*; and Suzanne L. Bunkers's "All Will Yet Be Well": *The Diary of Sarah Gillespie Huftalen, 1873-1952* in giving us the self-told stories of Iowa women and women educators in Iowa and elsewhere.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.