

in the modern era. Historians mostly ignored the battle until the 1980s, but the National Park Service has helped resurrect the battle in modern memory through film, museum exhibits, and the Mississippi African American monument at Vicksburg National Military Park.

Readers interested in Iowa history will benefit from a lengthy discussion of the Twenty-third Iowa regiment, which participated in the battle. The author criticizes Union Commander Ben McCulloch's claim that the Iowans did not exhibit any courage during the battle. The appendixes include a list of casualties for the regiment and a brief biographical sketch of the unit.

The book is an excellent example of the importance of persistent research, following every lead and overturning every stone where an important fact might be hidden. The author admits that more work remains to be done on Milliken's Bend, but her book serves as a benchmark reminding us of the loss incurred by forgetting critical moments in history.

This Wicked Rebellion: Wisconsin Civil War Soldiers Write Home, edited by John Zimm. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2012. xii, 224 pp. Illustrations, index, bibliography. \$22.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Patrick G. Bass is professor of history at Morningside College. His research and writing have focused on the Civil War.

In 1867 the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS), courtesy of collector Edwin B. Quiner, came into the possession of ten scrapbooks full of clipped letters sent to Wisconsin newspapers from soldiers and others at the front. In 2010 the society digitized these approximately 10,000 missives, making them available gratis online. As indicated in WHS Deputy Director Michael Edmonds's able foreword to *This Wicked Rebellion*, the original set of sources is tantalizing, much used—and problematic: no one knows how much different newspapers altered these 10,000 letters before printing them.

This Wicked Rebellion is a print selection of these letters, edited and organized by John Zimm, a WHS employee. Zimm has arranged his chosen subset by six primary themes, interspersed with subthemes, with a slight emphasis on the darker sides of the conflict. Zimm's stated criteria for selection are laudable: he includes lesser known letters, offer divergent views, shorn of flowery prose, revealing the variety of experiences of the people of Wisconsin during the Civil War. In particular, his chapter devoted to Wisconsin letters about slavery, emancipation, and race is interesting and well ordered; the chapter titled "War is Hell," about wounds and sickness, is also gripping.

Yet there are frustrating elements to Zimm's collection. The intended audience is unclear: the editor explains words and situations that scholars understand, but leaves underexplained other matters that popular audiences may misunderstand. His editorial remarks are enlightening when provided, but too often he leaves the contexts surrounding the letters vague, perhaps because those contexts are virtually unknowable. Some newspapers redacted letters more thoroughly than others, removing individual names, place names, unit designations, and the like for reasons that are unclear now. Some discussion of these newspaper variations and their origins would have been useful. Almost always, readers are left wanting more information. I also wished that the editor would have followed more closely one of his stated selection criteria: the emergence of a distinct Wisconsin identity in the selected letters. Indeed, although many letters refer to particular places in the state, and the Iron Brigade makes many appearances, the bulk of the letters lack a noticeable midwestern flavor, and most could have originated from almost any Northern state. Letters that include ideas and attitudes showing stronger local perspectives about national affairs, or about surrounding states and their denizens, or about Wisconsin state partisan political dynamics, would have added much.

Despite these frustrations, *This Wicked Rebellion* provides a model that scholars in all states, including Iowa, should pursue: the construction of a large set of Civil War letters drawn from one state arranged by well-chosen themes that would reveal the nature and evolution of local ideals, priorities, prejudices, and attitudes about major issues between 1860 and 1865.

Dakota: The Story of the Northern Plains, by Norman K. Risjord. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012. xi, 269 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$25.00 paperback.

Reviewer Jon K. Lauck is the author of *Prairie Republic: The Political Culture of Dakota Territory* (2010) and the forthcoming *The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History*.

Historians, to a much greater extent than other scholars, tend to get better with age. Decades in the archives and accumulated learning and research often yield insightful and broadly gauged works from historians working late in their careers. Such is the case with Norman K. Risjord, who specialized in early American history for decades at the University of Wisconsin. In later years Risjord turned with special vigor to the American midlands. He has now made a major impress-