

prised themselves by exerting their own energy against complete domination" (187).

That certainly was the case for the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, known commonly as the BVM Sisters. Butler briefly touches on the diplomatic relations between Mother Mary Frances Clarke, the founder of this Dubuque-based congregation, and the order's spiritual director, Reverend Terence J. Donaghoe. Although Clarke had organizational authority over her sisters, Donaghoe controlled the order's financial resources. Clarke never challenged Donaghoe's authority, but she did use the priest's death as the opportunity to seize her order's financial assets, file articles of incorporation with the state, and assume full control of the congregation.

Butler refers to the working relationships between nuns and their male superiors as contests for control. "From those contests," she adds, "sometimes won and sometimes lost, nuns and sisters broadened their life selections, enlarged their expectations, and found ways to forge a convent life that complemented the realities of the American West" (189). These women understood that they were not members of a democratic church; in fact, they believed in rules and a hierarchy of authority. And yet, these women also responded to particular circumstances and, like Mother Clarke, seized authority when it was opportune.

The women religious of the American West have found their voice in this book. Based on research in dozens of congregational archives, *Across God's Frontiers* is an exceptional work of research and analysis. One can only hope—perhaps pray is a better word—that the history of women religious in other regions of the country will find a scholar as diligent and thoughtful as Anne Butler.

The Tribunal: Responses to John Brown and the Harpers Ferry Raid, edited by John Stauffer and Zoe Trodd. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012. lix, 570 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 hardcover.

Reviewer Galin Berrier is a retired high school and community college history teacher. He is the author of "The Underground Railroad in Iowa," in *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838–2000* (2001).

The Tribunal derives its title from one of John Brown's letters from prison in Charlestown, Virginia, November 28, 1859: "I leave it to an impartial tribunal to decide whether the world has been the worse or the better of my living and dying in it" (69). This anthology of letters, speeches, newspaper articles, poems, and songs seeks to answer that question.

After an extended introduction in which the editors briefly sketch Brown's life and characterize his raid on Harpers Ferry as a military failure but a political success, their anthology consists of five parts: (1) John Brown in his own words; (2) Northern responses; (3) Southern responses; (4) international responses; and (5) Civil War and postwar U.S. responses. The last entry dates from 1889, exactly 30 years after the Harpers Ferry raid, "when [John Brown] becomes a marginalized figure in American culture, embraced only by blacks and radical Northern whites" (xxi).

In an earlier, briefer anthology, *Meteor of War: The John Brown Story* (2004), Stauffer and Trodd used a similar approach, trying to understand John Brown through the metaphor of a fiery meteor so often employed by literary figures of his time. Nearly all of the entries in part one of *The Tribunal* also appeared in *Meteor of War*, as did such well-known literary tributes as Henry David Thoreau's "A Plea for Captain John Brown" (105–9) and John Greenleaf Whittier's "Brown of Ossawatimie" (190–91).

As the editors point out, however, "this is the first book to distinguish between Northern and Southern responses to Brown's raid, and the first to gather international responses" (xxi). African American voices are represented not only by Frederick Douglass and Henry Highland Garnet, but also by the lesser-known John Sella Martin, an escaped slave who became a pastor in Boston and New York, and the black journalist and abolitionist Thomas Hamilton. The Southern responses include letters and diary entries of ordinary people as well as the famous. The international responses are mostly from Britain, Canada, and Western Europe, but also include a Polish poet and a Haitian newspaper editor.

An introduction to each selection identifies its author, gives the selection's context, and connects it with the overall narrative. Numerous endnotes identify allusions to events in ancient, European, or British history and to verses in the Bible. John Brown's prison letters in particular are full of references to scripture, reminding us of his remarkable ability to memorize Bible verses as well as the stern religious faith that animated so much of his behavior.

Stauffer and Trodd assume that readers of *The Tribunal* are already reasonably familiar with the 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry and the trial of John Brown that followed. Those who want a clear and readable narrative of those dramatic events may wish to consult the recent account by Tony Horwitz, *Midnight Rising: John Brown and the Raid that Sparked the Civil War* (2011).

Iowans will find but a single reference to their state. John Brown's letter to "Mr. Henry L. Stearns," the 12-year-old son of one of Brown's "Secret Six" financial backers, abolitionist George Luther Stearns, which contains a brief biographical sketch of his early life often mined for psychological insights by Brown's biographers, was written from "Red Rock, Iowa, 15th July, 1857" (20). In the editors' introduction, the Missouri raid and subsequent trek across Iowa with 12 liberated slaves in February 1859 merits only a single paragraph, and Iowa is not mentioned (xxx).

Few of the sources in *The Tribunal* reflect opinion in letters, diaries, or newspaper editorials from the Midwest. Here is one of many possible examples that might have been included, drawn more or less at random from the Underground Railroad files at the State Historical Society of Iowa in Des Moines: "The old man [Brown] would divide his last crust of bread with suffering humanity; and the very men who were the first to feel his power in the recent fray, ascribe to him all the attributes of a lion-hearted, pure minded, but misguided man" (*Iowa Weekly Citizen* [Des Moines], November 2, 1859). Might other examples reveal a similar ambivalence? Would they differ from eastern sources in any significant ways?

Stauffer and Trodd believe that "Harpers Ferry altered the course of American history and that [John] Brown is a testimony to ordinary individuals' potential to transform themselves and their world" (xxii). We cannot know if the Civil War would have occurred had John Brown not raided Harpers Ferry, but we do know this: as to the verdict of "the tribunal" of public opinion, the jury is still out.

A Punishment on the Nation: An Iowa Soldier Endures the Civil War, edited by Brian Craig Miller. Civil War in the North series. Kent: Kent State University Press, 2012. xii, 228 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$45.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Donald C. Elder III is professor of history at Eastern New Mexico University. He is the editor of *Love Amid Turmoil: The Civil War Letters of William and Mary Vermilion* (2003) and *A Damned Iowa Greyhound: The Civil War Letters of William Henry Harrison Clayton* (1998).

During the course of the Civil War, Iowa furnished the Union with 47 regiments and one battalion of volunteer infantry for military service. In addition, one regiment of African Americans represented the state. A number of these units saw extensive action during the conflict; others served primarily in a support role. Much has been written about Iowa units that were heavily engaged in major battles; others