

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

that rarely sniffed the gunsmoke of battle have received shorter shrift. If these relatively non-bloodied regiments had few members who left behind diaries, letters, or memoirs, it was almost a certainty that their service to the Union would gradually fade from historical consciousness.

One unit that suffers from this lack of historical visibility is the 27th Iowa Infantry. It participated in the Red River Campaign, fought in the Battle of Nashville, and took part in the assault on Fort Blakely. Yet only 24 of its members were killed in action, indicating that the 27th Iowa's battlefield contributions to the Union's military triumph were limited. Moreover, until recently it seemed that only one person in the regiment had left an account of his military service. Fortunately, it turns out that the correspondence of at least one other member of the unit had been saved for posterity. Silas W. Haven, a resident of Floyd County, wrote almost 200 letters to his friends and relatives in the Hawkeye State during his years of military service. Haven's descendants made these documents available to Brian Craig Miller. In *A Punishment on the Nation*, Miller has done an outstanding job of editing Haven's letters. In the process he has brought Haven's, and the 27th Iowa's, stories to light.

Haven, like many of the adult residents of northern Iowa at the start of the Civil War, was by birth a New Englander. A bit unusual among Iowa volunteers during the Civil War, he was married and in his mid-thirties when he enlisted. In another way, however, he was typical of most of his compatriots: he suffered from a number of maladies during the war, infirmities that kept him from participating in a number of his regiment's battlefield engagements. But Haven's mates in the 27th Iowa made him aware of their activities, and he faithfully passed along detailed accounts of the regiment's engagements in his correspondence. Haven also proved to be a keen observer of politics, and his letters give readers a sense of how the attitude of a Union soldier about northern leadership played out in real time. Finally, although he never explicitly states his reason for enlisting, Haven's correspondence suggests a strong conviction that the Union cause was a moral and just one. Thus, *A Punishment on the Nation* provides an interesting glimpse into the thinking of a Civil War combatant about the true meaning of the nation's bloodiest war.

An excellent work, the book does suffer from a few flaws. Miller identifies the Democratic candidate for governor of Iowa in 1863 as Marcus Tuttle (his actual name was James Madison Tuttle). He also states that the Union commanders at the Battle of Westport were Samuel Curtis and John Marmaduke; Marmaduke was, in fact, a Confederate general. A map of the northeast quadrant of Iowa would have

helped readers not familiar with that region visualize the location of the communities that Haven refers to in his letters. But these imperfections should not deter potential readers of *A Punishment on the Nation*. It will be a valuable source of information for anyone seeking a greater understanding of the life of a Union soldier.

Standing Firmly by the Flag: Nebraska Territory and the Civil War, 1861–1867, by James E. Potter. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012. xxi, 375 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 paper.

Reviewer Kurt Hackemer is professor of history at the University of South Dakota. He is working on a history of the Civil War in the Dakota Territory.

Does the historical profession really need yet another book on the Civil War? After all, what more could possibly be said? In this case, the answer is a resounding “yes,” for James Potter has broken significant historiographical ground with his narrative of Nebraska Territory’s experience during this pivotal period in American history. The end result is informative and convincingly makes the case that much more remains to be done in connecting the Civil War to the people and places that occupied the country’s western periphery.

Potter tells his story chronologically, with chapters devoted to each of the war years, plus two additional chapters that take readers up to Nebraska Territory’s admission to the Union in 1867. Nebraska had been at the center of issues that were pivotal to the Civil War ever since the 1854 act that opened the territory for settlement and connected popular sovereignty to the ongoing national debate over slavery. Those issues, and the constant threat of conflict associated with them, are a consistent theme running throughout the book.

From the moment formal hostilities began with the firing on Fort Sumter, Nebraskans linked their concerns about internal security to the larger national context. The southeastern corner of the territory, where Nebraska abuts Missouri and Iowa, was particularly volatile, prompting the raising of the First Nebraska Cavalry (with many Iowa volunteers) as a counter to bushwhackers and potential secessionists. However, the regiment was quickly requisitioned by the federal government for service elsewhere, creating serious consternation that only grew over time as the threat expanded to include Native Americans who attacked the Anglo settlers threatening their way of life. This created an interesting dichotomy in Nebraska’s Civil War experience that is echoed in the way Potter has structured his story, which covers those who remained in Nebraska as well as the territory’s soldiers who confronted Confederates in Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas.