

Civil War Arkansas 1863: The Battle for a State, by Mark K. Christ. Campaigns and Commanders Series 23. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. xii, 321 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Terry L. Beckenbaugh is assistant professor of military history at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His Ph.D. dissertation (University of Arkansas, 2001) was "The War of Politics: Samuel Ryan Curtis, Race, and the Political/Military Establishment."

Mark Christ's *Civil War Arkansas 1863* is a long overdue work of narrative history and an excellent addition to the University of Oklahoma Press's Campaigns and Commanders Series. Christ chronicles the military operations for control of the Arkansas River valley during the American Civil War in 1863. The fighting along the river valley in 1863 finally has a good history for scholars and lay readers to refer to.

The book is a straightforward, chronologically arranged monograph. It starts with a brief summary of secession in Arkansas, followed by a cursory examination of the war up to the start of 1863. According to Christ, the key to Arkansas was control of the rich Arkansas River valley, which was crucial to Arkansas's limited economic infrastructure, but was also pivotal to the control of Missouri and the Indian Territory. Christ devotes chapters to the specific military operations in the Arkansas River valley: the Battle of Arkansas Post, January 9–11, 1863 (chap. 2); the Helena campaign and battle, mid-June through July 4 (chaps. 3 and 4); the Federal campaign to capture Little Rock, mid-July to September 11 (chap. 5); the Battle of Honey Springs, Indian Territory, July 17, and the capture of Fort Smith, September 1 (chap. 6); and the Battle of Pine Bluff, October 25 (chap. 7). Christ then wraps up the book with a brief epilogue.

The narrative is easy to follow considering that there are operations going on at both ends of the Arkansas River valley throughout most of 1863. Christ handles this potentially confusing activity adroitly, focusing on the more important operations near the mouth of the Arkansas River before moving west to discuss operations further upstream. If there is a flaw in Christ's analysis — and it is more an issue of degree than omission — it is that he does not emphasize the importance to Missouri of operations in the Arkansas River valley. That is understandable because the book is titled *Civil War Arkansas 1863*, but Missouri was always on the minds of the Trans-Mississippi planners on both sides in the Civil War. Christ certainly does not ignore the influence Missouri had upon the planning of operations, but it should be stressed to a greater degree. This is a minor criticism, however. Christ makes a minor mistake when he states that Major General Frederick

Steele, Federal commander of the Little Rock Expedition, was a veteran of the Battle of Pea Ridge (155).

Civil War Arkansas 1863 is the first modern attempt at a monograph of operations in the Arkansas River valley. The book makes a significant contribution to Iowa Civil War historiography, as most of the Federal units that participated in the campaigns discussed are from the upper Midwest, mainly Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri. Iowa troops played key roles in all of the major campaigns in Arkansas, but especially at Arkansas Post and Helena.

Prairie Republic: The Political Culture of Dakota Territory, 1879–1889, by Jon K. Lauck. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. xx, 281 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliographical note, index. \$32.95 cloth.

Reviewer David A. Walker is professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa and regularly teaches courses on the American West. He is a coauthor of the *Biographical Directory of American Territorial Governors* (1984).

The tone of early twenty-first-century partisan political action and commentary is frequently in the background of this study of late nineteenth-century political culture. Jon Lauck has a personal stake in the topic: raised on a farm near Madison, South Dakota, he left the state to earn a Ph.D. in history from the University of Iowa and a law degree from the University of Minnesota, and then returned to practice law and teach at South Dakota State University. Lauck is currently senior advisor to U.S. Senator John Thune (R-SD).

The author's clearly stated intention is to counter the new western history's focus "on episodes of terror and destruction and images of conquest and savagery" (5). A Turnerian, Lauck argues that there is a "collective need to take American democratic institutions more seriously" (xvi). He seeks to provide balance and complexity to the story and to gain recognition of a genuinely democratic movement in Dakota Territory. His settlers "vigorously embraced American democratic practices and centuries-old republican tradition . . . personal virtue . . . commonwealth over personal gain, . . . and the agrarian tradition" (5).

The central theme repeated through the book is that southern Dakota Territory east of the Missouri River (he uses the broader term Dakota Territory despite differences from the northern and western sections) was fundamentally an extension of the Midwest, the major source of Dakota immigrants. Dakota Territory's founders were agents of civic responsibility (republicanism) and Protestant Christianity influenced by the American Revolution and Civil War. Following the massive immigration of the Dakota Boom, fully under way by 1883,