

them considerable autonomy in battle. Frank and Luther North were important liaisons between the Pawnees and the U.S. Army, and the Pawnees obeyed them so long as their orders were consistent with Pawnee interests.

The Pawnee scouts served at the height of the Plains Indian Wars. During the Powder River Campaign of 1865, the scouts saw action against Arapahos, captured hundreds of horses, and saved the lives of American soldiers who had gotten lost on the northern plains. In 1867–1868, Pawnee scouts guarded railroad workers surveying and laying track for the Union Pacific. In spite of opposition from the Quaker administrators on their reservation, the Pawnee scouts saw action in the Red River War (1874) and in the second Powder River campaign in 1876–1877.

Although a few Pawnees continued to find employment as scouts in the late 1870s and 1880s, the Powder River campaign was the last time they operated together in an all-Indian unit. A few joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show or other business pursuits, while the remainder settled down and adjusted to life in Indian Territory. Despite their honorable service, the Pawnees did not escape reservation allotment and the federal government's assimilationist agenda. Nevertheless, the Pawnees continue to celebrate the heroic example of the scouts, who remain a source of pride and inspiration to the present.

*Frontier Feminist: Clarina Howard Nichols and the Politics of Motherhood*, by Marilyn S. Blackwell and Kristen T. Oertel. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010. xi, 344 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

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Well known in suffrage and reform circles during her lifetime, Clarina Howard Nichols (1810–1885) remained overlooked and underexplored for more than a century until the publication of Diane Eickhoff's *Revolutionary Heart: The Life of Clarina Nichols and the Pioneering Crusade for Women's Rights* (2006) and now *Frontier Feminist*. The long silence about Nichols's role in the nineteenth-century movement for women's rights resulted, in part, because of her residence on the geographical periphery of the East Coast-dominated suffrage movement, and also because her rhetoric lacked sensational appeal and was overshadowed by such colorful activists as the free lovers Mary Gove Nichols and Victoria C. Woodhull. Indeed, when I was a doctoral student just beginning my

study of the nineteenth-century women's rights movement, I gravitated to more overtly dynamic women in the movement and dismissed Clarina Nichols as bland, ordinary, and even colorless. When placed in the context of the times in which she lived, however, her life is anything but that. Blackwell and Oertel's carefully crafted and well-researched biography offers numerous insights into the politics of women's rights activism in the nation's heartland and into the complex factors shaping and circumscribing the strategies nineteenth-century female reformers employed.

Born in Vermont in 1810, Clarina Howard's privileged childhood and educational opportunities prepared her to become a teacher, lecturer, and journalist. The author's thoughtful consideration of her disappointing marriage in 1830 to Justin Carpenter confirms that it became the crucible from which her commitment to married women's property rights emerged. Unable to reconcile her visions of marriage as a form of spiritual companionship with her husband's shiftlessness and inability to provide for their family, she returned to her parents' home in 1839 with three children in tow. Despite the negative stigma associated with marital failure, the young mother petitioned for divorce and attempted to redeem her reputation by immersing herself in benevolent work and moral reform. In 1843, one month after her divorce became final, she married George Washington Nichols, a father figure 25 years her senior who was editor and publisher of the *Wyndham County Democrat*. His evident respect for his wife's intellect, combined with his illness, created opportunities for Clarina Nichols to use the paper as a platform for claiming her voice. Grounding her moral authority in what the authors of this book have termed "the politics of motherhood" (3), she rendered articulate and well-modulated views on the causes of antislavery, temperance, Free Soil, and woman suffrage that soon earned her national recognition.

Clarina Nichols's idealism and optimism, combined with her family's support of the Free Soil movement, led them to migrate to Kansas in 1854 as part of the Free State movement. George Nichols's death the following year slowed but did not deter her efforts to ensure that Kansas would enter the Union as a free state, one in which women possessed equal rights. Throughout the campaign for a free Kansas, Nichols strived to keep her personal and professional life separate, but the two merged when she befriended Lydia Peck, a fugitive wife seeking custody of her children. That incident, Blackwell and Oertel convincingly contend, jettisoned Nichols "from benevolent reformer to fearless political activist" (201). Her subsequent lobbying, involvement in the Kansas Suffrage Association, and lecturing on behalf of the Republican

Party resulted in the passage of a limited school suffrage bill in 1861, the year Kansas achieved statehood. Pragmatically anchoring her activism to motherhood, Nichols knew she would be more effective in reaching politicians if she appeared to be morally upright and genteel (she knitted her way through many contentious legislative sessions and employed flattering rhetoric when speaking to male-dominated audiences). Moving her son to California in 1871, Clarina Nichols remained intellectually engaged in the work of social reform until her death in 1885, publishing essays in which she subtly shifted from a mother's rights defense to one emphasizing women's equal citizenship in marriage.

Although not a trailblazer in the traditional sense (she was not the first to lecture publicly, nor did she utter the boldest statements), Clarina Nichols clearly played an important role in building a collective women's rights consciousness in Kansas and other states where her ideas circulated. Blackwell and Oertel are to be commended for their efforts to decode her carefully constructed life, and for shedding further light on the complexity and contradictions of the nineteenth-century movement for women's rights. Scholars of Iowa women's history, along with other readers, will find this portrayal of Nichols's path to political engagement of interest as a model for investigating the personal and public lives of Iowa activists.

*The Methodist Experience in America: A History*, volume 1, by Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt. Nashvile: Abingdon Press, 2010. xx, 699 pages. Notes, index. \$50.00 paper.

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When the author of Ecclesiastes wrote that of the making of books, there is no end, she or he probably had in mind books on American Methodism. Every anniversary, schism, or reunion brings another spate, as is the way of denominational histories. Denominational histories are out of fashion, deservedly so, as social history, "lived religion," and more topical subjects seem more compelling, and denominational histories have usually suffered from lack of context — the extreme example being William Harsha's *Story of Iowa*, which despite its title is about Presbyterians in Iowa (although he was ecumenical enough to include United Presbyterians).

Richey, Rowe, and Schmidt laudably build on social history and are always aware of the larger American and ecumenical contexts.