

in a variety of endeavors include Clarina I. H. Nichols, Mary Ann Bickerdyke, Mary Elizabeth Lease, Kate Richards O'Hare, Marcet Haldeman-Julius, and Esther Brown. Authors include Charles M. Sheldon (who was also a minister), newspaper publisher William Allen White, book publisher Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, artist of many talents Gordon Parks, and ecologist Wes Jackson. Samuel J. Crumbine was a crusader for public health, and John Steuart Curry made his reputation as a regionalist artist.

The 10- to 12-page chapters are models of concision. While including basic biographical information about their subjects, including date and place of birth, education, and so forth, their real forte lies in the interpretive focus they all strive to achieve. Some essays, such as Marjorie Swann and William M. Tsutsui's on Curry, are strongly opinionated or one-sided, but most are balanced and judicious. That does not mean that they are dull or boring. Roger Grant's chapter on Fred Harvey's string of restaurants and hotels demonstrates why their creator was indeed "a remarkable entrepreneur." Bruce Kahler's piece on "Mother" Bickerdyke recreates the atmosphere in which thousands of men after the Civil War revered the contribution made by the angelic wartime nurse. M. H. Hoeflich relates the unique partnership that enabled the Haldeman-Julius husband-wife team to crank out 2,000 titles that sold more than 500 million copies during the mid-twentieth century.

I hesitate to single out any of the chapters, because they are uniformly well written. Those about some of the more obscure figures perhaps stand out most in my mind, because their stories are less familiar. The editor, the authors, and the publisher are to be commended for this fine collection, whose main contribution will be to whet readers' appetites for reading more deeply in Kansas biography.

Marching with the First Nebraska: A Civil War Diary, by August Scherneckau; edited by James E. Potter and Edith Robbins; translated by Edith Robbins. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. xxxi, 335 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Paul Fessler is professor of history at Dordt College. His research and writing have focused on the Civil War, immigration and ethnicity (especially German Americans), and public education.

This diary by August Scherneckau, a young German immigrant from Grand Island, Nebraska, provides evocative descriptions of the trans-Mississippi theater of the Civil War. Enlisting in the First Nebraska Volunteers in September 1862, Scherneckau spent much of the early part of his service in light duty in southeastern Missouri, particularly

in the St. Louis area. Wounded in a friendly fire incident, Scherneckau recuperated at home before being recalled near the end of the Civil War to deal with Indian uprisings in Nebraska.

Extensive explanatory footnotes helpfully place Scherneckau's insights within the cultural and political context of the Civil War in the Midwest. This volume is also a valuable contribution to the study of immigrant perspectives on the Civil War. Although Scherneckau subscribed to the German-language newspaper the *St. Louis Westliche Post* and occasionally attended events at the local Turner Hall, he spent much of his time in the army around English-speaking midwesterners. His time in the military began Americanizing him. "Germans have sometimes annoyed me," he wrote, "when they so distorted our language with bits of English, but now I am almost doing the same thing" (169). Viewing himself as more educated and sophisticated than most of his comrades, Scherneckau repeatedly complained about the moral laxity (especially drunkenness) of officers and enlisted men behind the lines. This diary provides a useful and highly readable account of such overlooked Union activity in the trans-Mississippi Civil War through the eyes of a German immigrant.

True Tales of the Prairies and Plains, by David Dary. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007. xii, 248 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$24.95 cloth.

Reviewer J. Thomas Murphy is associate professor of history at Bemidji State University. His dissertation (University of Illinois, 1993) was "Pistols Legacy: Sutlers, Post Traders, and the American Army, 1820-1895."

"One of my men was once bitten on the hand by a big rattler," David Dary quotes Kit Carson as saying. "I cut it open, flashed powder on it three times, and that afternoon he killed and scalped two Injuns" (155). This yarn appears in a chapter about "Legless Critters" and is the kind of Old West story that has fascinated readers since the days of dime novels. Dary has won numerous awards, including one for lifetime achievement from the Western Writers of America, and he has three other "True Tales" collections among the 15 books he has written about frontier life. Here, he presents 39 accounts about life on the Great Plains, particularly in Kansas and along the Santa Fe Trail.

Relying on newspapers and a variety of firsthand and secondary materials, Dary offers a slumgullion of the usual topics: cowboys and cow towns, buffalo and buffalo hunters, lawmen and outlaws, the famous and less so. The stories are straightforward, lacking embellishment and without analysis. Dary, quoting his principal characters whenever possible, simply tells his stories. Most, such as Theodore