

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

Roosevelt's time in the badlands of Dakota Territory and "Portugee" John Phillips's ride in minus 30-degree temperatures from Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie in December 1866, are well known to fanciers of western lore. Others are not. Dary recounts the James Philly family's overland trail experience with their cat Jip as well as a history of singing cowboys. All in all, this is an entertaining collection readers will enjoy.

American Indian Nonfiction: An Anthology of Writings, 1760s-1930s, edited by Bernd C. Peyer. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007. ix, 401 pp. \$26.95 paper.

Reviewer Lee Schwenger is professor of English at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. His most recent book is *Listening to the Land: Native American Literary Responses to the Landscape* (2008).

In this anthology Bernd Peyer gathers four dozen pieces of nonfiction, spanning almost two centuries, by 36 different American Indian writers (including six women), many of whom will be familiar to students of American Indian literature. One of the strengths of the collection, though, is that there are many more authors whose names are not so well known but whose contribution to American Indian literature is also valuable. Another of the collection's strengths is that a concise bibliography of primary and secondary sources and a brief biography follow the prose selection(s) of each author, making the anthology ideal for scholars and for American Indian literature survey courses.

In an introduction, Peyer contextualizes the writings by providing a geographical-chronological overview of American Indian history, suggesting how the selected writers participated in and responded to that history. He is willing to make a few generalizations, arguing, for example, that although educated in English-speaking missions or schools, most of the authors remained in contact with and committed to their communities, most spoke their native languages, and most were familiar with and wrote about tribal matters. Herein lies what is perhaps most valuable about the collection: The cumulative effect of the essays suggests an American Indian literary tradition in English with a very long and complex history of intercultural awareness and insight wherein these writers address important issues concerning religion, culture, and politics, as well as other Indian and non-Indian relations.

In that the anthology includes writings only through the 1930s, it begs for a second volume.