

(198). In the concluding essay, Stowell discusses the issues of adultery and divorce by examining the interesting case of Clarissa Wren, a woman convicted of adultery and divorced who persisted in having her "day in court" and seeing her dower rights restored after the death of her husband. The story proves an effective conclusion to the volume by revisiting and summarizing how gender roles inserted themselves into the courtroom and helped to shape the laws of a society moving away from its frontier origins.

This is a significant and accessible work that will be of value to anyone with an interest in the development of American law and society, especially in the antebellum Midwest. If available in paperback, it would be of considerable value in the classroom as well.

Love Amid the Turmoil: The Civil War Letters of William and Mary Vermilion, edited by Donald C. Elder III. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003. xiv, 391 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliographical note, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Jennifer L. Weber is a Ph.D. candidate at Princeton University. Her dissertation, under the direction of James McPherson, is on the Civil War—era Copperheads.

Published collections of letters are always a welcome addition to the literature. They are a ready primary source, one available to historians without having to travel to an archive. They can vary in quality, of course, but one can almost always find something useful in them.

Love Amid the Turmoil is an unusually valuable contribution. Unlike most collections of letters, this one includes letters from home to a soldier in the field. In most collections, including original archival manuscripts, wartime correspondence consists mostly or entirely of the soldier's letters. This is partly because a family, stationary, could easily keep and collect a soldier's missives, while soldiers on the march were committed to traveling light and therefore destroyed many letters from home shortly after they answered them. For years, too, archives were not interested in the homefront and focused their collections on what happened to the men in the field.

William Vermilion, a doctor from Iconium, in Appanoose County, Iowa, left for the war in October 1862 as a captain in the 36th Iowa. He sent his wife, Mary, to Indiana to stay with his family. Although both husband and wife had been born in the South, they were committed to abolishing slavery. Thus it came as a shock to Mary that not only were many of the residents in Indiana opposed to the war, but her own in-laws were staunch Peace Democrats. Shocked, she alerted her hus-

band to what she considered his family's treachery. "They are an 'abomination' in my eyes, and I want to get out of sight and hearing of them," she informed William (47). William, whose letters are considerably shorter and less engagingly detailed than his wife's, swore off his family. "I know they think me an 'unhallowed abolitionist,' and that I have turned you against them," Mary reported before adding defiantly, "I acknowledge the *abolition* part!" (120). With his family hostile to her political leanings and blaming her for the break with their son, Mary returned to Iowa in April 1863 only to find that the Copperhead movement had taken hold there as well. Much of the rest of the book comprises her letters describing the political situation in Iowa.

The descriptions of Copperhead activities are the great contribution of this book. Indeed, it is the most comprehensive published primary account that I can think of on the subject of the Peace Democrats. For too long, historians have overlooked the deep divisions among northerners over the Civil War and the immense strains it placed on families and communities. These issues are at the heart of *Love Amid the Turmoil*. Military matters are present as well for those who are more interested in first-person accounts of military campaigns. But the real value of this work lies in its story of the political ruptures in the North and what happened by the hearth rather than by the campfire.

Sacred Debts: State Civil War Claims and American Federalism, 1861–1880, by Kyle S. Sinisi. New York: Fordham University Press, 2003. xvi, 208 pp. Appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$50.00 cloth.

Reviewer Allan G. Bogue is Frederick Jackson Turner Professor of History Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. His books include *Money at Interest: The Farm Mortgage on the Middle Border* (1955) and *The Earnest Men: Republicans in the Civil War Senate* (1981).

In *Sacred Debts*, Kyle Sinisi describes "state attempts to recoup the costs of fighting the Civil War," a neglected story, but one providing "a window into the even lesser known administrative operations of U.S. federalism from 1861 to 1880" (xi). The collection of state claims for military expenses was the most sustained and costly state-federal interaction during the postbellum period. Its study provides an excellent opportunity to describe federalism at work and the factors involved in successful state action.

In the confused initial war effort—and sometimes later—the northern states mobilized troops in the expectation of reimbursement from Washington. Sometimes the states obtained advances against outlay, but often their executives looked forward to future payment. In July

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