

general overview of tax buying in Iowa led him to some significant conclusions.

He counters the old Populist view that tax buyers were odious profiteers who preyed on poor, downtrodden farmers. He also rejects the idea that tax auctions were used primarily to force absentee landowners to surrender their speculative holdings. Instead, he contends that, rather than plaguing hardpressed yeomen or harassing land speculators, the system of tax buying mostly provided credit to economically stable farmers.

Solvent farm owners who wanted to expand their operations often could not afford to do so and to pay their taxes at the same time; they therefore withheld their tax payments. This allowed them to channel their limited monetary funds into desired expenditures, while tax buyers assumed their immediate tax obligations. Tax buyers, in turn, were mostly respected local residents who did not acquire tax liens to gain titles to farms. Investing their own money or acting as agents for outsiders, they sought to profit from the substantial interest charges on the tax liens, which were higher than usury laws permitted on conventional loans. These were relatively safe investments, as few delinquent taxpayers failed to remove the liens against their land. In general, tax auctioning benefited all of the parties involved, including local government, for taxes were paid. The process did change, however, in the 1880s when a more mature economy evolved. Able then to procure loans by more conventional means, Iowans had less need to neglect paying their taxes, and tax buying virtually disappeared.

This is a fine study, and if it has an inhibiting feature, it is the deluge of documentation and data which constitutes over one-half of the book. This wealth of material nevertheless testifies to the extensiveness of the research. And for those interested in the quantitative methodology, explanations of the various procedures are given in the appendixes. In all, this work exhibits the value of quantification and local history in questioning generalizations about economic endeavors on the frontier. Certainly Swierenga deserves praise for helping to put the function of tax buying into more judicious perspective while adding insight into the history of Iowa. Hopefully more studies of this nature are in the offing.

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An Army Wife on the Frontier: The Memoirs of Alice Blackwood Baldwin, 1867-1877, edited and with an Introduction by Robert C. and Eleanor R. Carriker. University of Utah Tanner Trust Fund, 1975. pp. 114. \$8.00.

This edition of Alice Blackwood Baldwin's memoirs appears to be part of the current rush to publish or reprint anything written by or about an American woman. This particular volume is a case of reprinting since Baldwin's memoirs first appeared in 1929 as the concluding section of her

husband's reminiscences. Here the editors essentially reproduce the original version, but have gone to great pains to add detailed and meticulous footnotes throughout.

There is no question that Baldwin's recollections present a lively tale of an army wife on the frontier after the Civil War. In an introductory note titled "My Ancestry" the reader learns that she was born in 1845 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, moved with her family to California ten years later due to her mother's failing health, and returned to Michigan with her sister in 1856 after her mother's death to be reared by relatives. She received a reasonably good education at the Albion Female Seminary where she also met her future husband, Frank D. Baldwin, when he visited his sisters there in 1863.

Alice and Frank's subsequent marriage in 1867 provided the real departure point for her memoirs. Baldwin details the move to their first home at Fort Harker, Kansas, which she describes as a "dug-out." She recalls that her "disgusted disappointment" at its "sordid interior" caused her to break into tears during the officer's mess honoring her arrival.

However, with the help of a "striker" (an army man assigned to household duty) she managed to survive and at times even to enjoy fort life during the next two years. After 1869, restrictive army policies, as well as the Baldwins' own financial problems, forced her and her daughter to spend much time with charitable relatives back in Michigan. This period is glossed over in the memoirs, which conclude with the family's reunion at Fort Keogh, Montana in 1877.

Baldwin is an alert, insightful commentator regarding many aspects of army life. Moreover, her memoirs combine humor and intelligence with a pleasant literary style. But she was not honest! Writing in 1917, her reminiscences were softened by the golden glow of time passed, by her newly-adopted positive stance towards the army's intrusion into her life, and by the necessity to produce a saleable book to bring badly-needed income into the family's depleted coffers. As a result, her memoirs are entertaining but devoid of introspection, criticism, or self.

In their Introduction, the Carrikers give a fleeting, but tantalizing view of what Alice Baldwin really thought and felt during those years by briefly quoting from letters to her husband Frank (which he did not burn after reading as she requested). These letters, now at the Huntington Library, expose a woman who was frequently lonely, sometimes petulant and selfish, and doggedly set on helping her husband win the promotion which she believed would solve all their problems.

Unfortunately, the Carrikers spend much of the Introduction lapsing into facile remarks regarding the ravaging effects of army life on women as compared to its lesser effects on men, Baldwin's development of a "womanly technique of reluctant consent," and her position as "the reluctant campaigner, the woman who waits at home." Since none of these views are supported by either the selections from her letters or the more highly polished memoirs, the editors might have provided a greater service to the field of Women's Studies by replacing these generalizations with additional excerpts

from her fascinating letters. In fact, the Carrikers might have produced a truly valuable and commendable book by reversing their method; in other words, by giving us a taste of the memoirs in the Introduction then presenting at length her revealing, and as yet unpublished letters.

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Henry A. Wallace and American Foreign Policy, by J. Samuel Walker.
Greenwood Press, 1976.

Henry A. Wallace was a complex man of inflexible attitudes and incurable optimism, a rich admixture of personality traits which contributed to the formulation of his basic beliefs of foreign policy. Imbued with an Iowa-bred, agrarian progressivism and bedrock religious convictions, Wallace viewed the turbulent twentieth century as a spawning ground for a "century of the common man" where world peace, prosperity, and personal freedom could, and would, be achieved if cooperation and mutual trust were stimulated and nurtured by all nations.

Wallace's international idealism of the post-World War II period sharply contrasted his earlier views. Wallace supported isolationism during the 1920s, hardly a novel position, but gradually embraced an "international path" during the 1930s. A bizarre encounter with mystic Nicholas Roerich enlarged Wallace's perception of an international brotherhood, while the horrors of World War II convinced him that colonialism, unilateralism, and power politics were obsolete remnants of a bygone era.

Unfortunately for Wallace, his commendable concern for a world order stimulated his proclivity for the Soviet Union; many Americans believed Wallace himself to be a Communist. Wallace inadvertently became an apologist for the Soviet Communists, and found himself in the uncomfortable position of defending the Soviet Union, regardless of how outrageous the action, and unwittingly planted the seeds of his devastating loss in the 1948 presidential election.

Wallace was truly a remarkable, multi-faceted man, and his eclecticism contributed to his rabid adherence to the promise of a rational world order free from want or hunger. Wallace was convinced that domestic prosperity, improved diplomatic relations, and not a little personal sacrifice would create a new world order based upon hope, reason, and common goals. Wallace's dedication to those beliefs blinded him to opposing, though equally legitimate, points of view, however, while his increasingly shrill denunciations of American "fascists," notably the military and big business, destroyed his support at home. By 1948, the Cold War was full-blown and Wallace's third party bid was annihilated, but his visionary idealism remained.

Inter-war uncertainties were eventually supplanted by the bone chilling nuclear fears of the post-war period which Wallace had labored

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