

## Book Notices

*A Damned Iowa Greyhound: The Civil-War Letters of William Henry Harrison Clayton*, edited by Donald C. Elder III. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998. xiii, 231 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM B. FEIS, BUENA VISTA UNIVERSITY

William Henry Harrison Clayton, a native of Van Buren County, Iowa, joined the Nineteenth Iowa Volunteers in 1862 "to subdue this wicked rebellion" (130). In addition to wielding a musket, Clayton also took up a pen and left behind a remarkable collection of letters describing his experiences during the war. From the long hours in camp to the sheer terror of battle, Clayton's correspondence provides a glimpse into the world of the Nineteenth Iowa as it fought bugs, hunger, and rebels in the Western Theater. During ten months as a prisoner of war, he also experienced firsthand the desperate conditions in the South late in the war. Most interesting are the letters depicting the brutality of war, especially for civilians caught in its path, and those discussing wartime politics, including the regiment's reaction to the Emancipation Proclamation and their opinion of "Copperheads." Clayton takes the reader on an eventful and sometimes terrifying journey, but one that is worth the ride.

Clayton provides many fascinating insights into the war and does so with an easy narrative style that is enhanced by Donald Elder's judicious editing. A very readable and enlightening account, *A Damned Iowa Greyhound* is a welcome addition to the growing collection of published letters and diaries from the Civil War era. Each new discovery tells us a little more about the individuals for whom the war was reality, not merely an academic pursuit. *A Damned Iowa Greyhound* will be a welcome addition to the libraries of enthusiasts and scholars alike.

*Embracing Two Worlds: The Thorvald Muller Family of Kimballton*, edited by Barbara Lund-Jones and John W. Nielsen. Blair, NE: Lur Publications, 1998. xvii, 180 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$14.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY PETER L. PETERSEN, WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Thorvald and Mette Muller were Danish immigrants who early in this century settled in the small western Iowa town of Kimballton, near the

center of the largest concentration of Danish immigrants in the United States. Thorvald soon opened a grocery store, while Mette, a busy mother of six, found time to organize a Danish reading club and play an active role in the local Lutheran church. The Muller home was often the first stopping place for immigrants, as Thorvald and Mette assisted "greenhorns" in their initial adjustments to a new life in a new world. It is little wonder, then, that following the Danish custom of naming their house, the Mullers chose "Uroligheded," a Danish word meaning "constantly astrir."

The genesis for this engrossing book was an exhibit at the Danish Immigrant Museum at Elk Horn, Iowa. The book's editors, Barbara Lund-Jones, curator at the Danish Immigrant Museum, and John W. Nielsen, director of special projects of the Danish Immigrant Archives at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, have successfully met the challenge of turning a museum exhibit, essentially visual, into a book, essentially textual. Although the saga of the Muller family is at its center, the book is also an interesting oral history of life in an Iowa immigrant community. Like the Mullers, most early residents of Kimballton celebrated living in two worlds, one Danish, the other American. There is much to enjoy in this well-done study. Anyone who takes on the challenge of community history should consult it.

*Railroads in the Heartland: Steam and Traction in the Golden Age of Postcards*, by H. Roger Grant. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997. x, 181 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY PETER H. JAYNES, KIRKWOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Using postcard images, H. Roger Grant attempts to "illuminate the principal themes of railroading in the Midwest [defined as stretching from Ohio and the Ohio River to the Missouri River] during the early part of the twentieth century" (ix-x). The introductory section, which provides background for the brief captions accompanying the images, would be more effective if the points being made were supported by images and maps showing what was being explained. The rest of the book consists of sections looking at the "railroad landscape," "depots," "other railroad facilities," "people and the iron horse," and "electric interurbans." There are no images focusing on railroad rolling stock. The landscape chapter includes a variety of architectural as well as natural forms and structures associated with railroads. Images of "New England," "eastern," "prairie," and "western" styles of depots would have made the statements in that section clearer.

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