

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

Sherman's March, by Richard Wheeler. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, Publishers, 1978. pp. 241. Photographs, appendix, bibliography, index. \$11.95.

As a belated sign of his greatness, the faculty and administration at Louisiana State University have agreed to consider naming a building after William Tecumseh Sherman who was the first superintendent of that school when it was founded shortly before the Civil War at Alexandria, Louisiana. This act might well be interpreted as symbolizing the end of the Civil War. "*Gone With the Wind* devotees," however, have preserved the memory of Sherman as a savage who practiced the first deliberate methods of total destruction in his quest for victory in war. Such an estimate of the man could not be further from the truth. Actually, Sherman was an individual who first recognized the cruelty of modern war and its horrendous impact on the people involved, as have few military leaders in history. Indeed, in his practice of leadership seldom has a military leader been more committed to his duty than was William Tecumseh Sherman. He realized that warfare had changed and would, in the end, because of technological advancements, be mutually destructive to all people involved.

Moreover, Sherman should be remembered as a general who tried in the tradition of eighteenth century warfare to avoid battle as much as possible. He attempted to outflank his enemy rather than fight in open field battle because of his realization of how much more killing power each side had as a consequence of the new weapons of war that had evolved in the nineteenth century.

This book, written by a man who has authored prior works related to the Civil War, based on the remembrances of participants, is described as an eyewitness account of Sherman's campaigns in Georgia and the Carolinas. It is a work that is pieced together in a rather disturbing and puzzling style until you realize the author's intent on binding together quotations from the observers with the passages he employs to hold together their remembrances of things past. The style would be vastly improved had the author footnoted the quotations from the works published by those who were observers, to enable the reader to recognize the differences between the italic passages that constitute Wheeler's text and the passages that form the quotes. Instead, in a most contradictory manner the author says, "The quotes have been selected, researched, and linked together in such a way as to present a narrative that stresses historical veracity." The reader then experiences a complete reversal when he states, "At the

Book Reviews

same time, however, the book is aimed at the general reader rather than at the student of history."

Wheeler then continues, "Being unwilling to clutter the narrative with numbers I have not specified the sources of historical quotes." And then in an earlier passage he indicates that he is obviously attempting to provide a sop for women when he notes, "A feature I have found of particular satisfaction is that, as with my previous book, *Siege of Vicksburg*, I've been able to include numerous accounts by women."

This work, while interesting to read and filled with excellent illustrations, maps, and other important data, would be much more valuable had the author employed the traditional historical approach in compiling such a study. Most assuredly Sherman is deserving of better treatment than that afforded by Wheeler despite the fact the author is a hero-worshiper of the man who might be regarded as the one most responsible for the North winning the Civil War.

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Stop the Evil: A Civil War History of Desertion and Murder, by Robert I. Alotta. San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1978. pp. xvi, 202. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. \$14.95.

Desertion was a major problem facing the Union army during the Civil War. *Stop the Evil* is the story of William H. Howe, a Union deserter who was executed by the Federal government for his crime. Howe, of Pennsylvania German background, uneducated, and simple in lifestyle, enlisted in the 116th Regiment, Company A, of the Pennsylvania Volunteers in August 1862 to avoid the draft. The young Pennsylvania farmer adjusted to the rigid army life and even to the fact that he was one of the few German Protestants in an Irish brigade.

However, by the late fall of 1862, conditions had changed drastically for the Pennsylvanians. Most of the 116th Regiment was killed at the Battle of Fredricksburg, Virginia, and Howe was shocked by the massacre. In addition to the horrible loss of lives, the remaining members of the regiment, including Howe, were stricken with dysentery. The disease, caused by a lack of proper sanitation and food, killed twice as many Union soldiers as did Confederate bullets. By late December 1862, Howe and several other members of the regiment

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