life, which is helpful to the reader. Some parts of the book could have benefited from additional contextualizing. Even though Swisshelm avoided other reformers and developed her own ideas about women's rights and antislavery, it would be helpful to learn more about other contemporary reformers. We get a hint about how contentious she was, but I would like to know about how she was perceived more generally. Such background might have helped the author construct an even more balanced view of this cantankerous woman who slandered local Dakota Indians in Minnesota even as she called for racial equality for African Americans.

Those interested in the history of Iowa and the Midwest will find this biography particularly interesting in relation to Swisshelm's years in frontier Minnesota. Hoffert shows how the complicated politics of frontier life affected Swisshelm's ability to start a newspaper and highlights the significant influence she wielded as the only publisher in the area. The book is a must-read for anyone interested in women's history, nineteenth-century reform, or the history of journalism. More broadly, its smooth, readable format will make it an enjoyable read for anyone interested in American history in general.

"Circumstances Are Destiny": An Antebellum Woman's Struggle to Define Sphere, by Tina Stewart Brakebill. Civil War in the North series. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2006. vii, 255 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Joanne Passet is professor of history at Indiana University East. She is the author of *Sex Radicals and the Quest for Women's Equality, 1853–1910* (2003) and "Yours for Liberty: Women and Freethought in Nineteenth-Century Iowa," in the *Annals of Iowa* (2004).

In "*Circumstances Are Destiny,*" Tina Stewart Brakebill explores the intellectual life of an antebellum midwestern woman as she struggled to reconcile her personal identity with that of prevailing and often constraining ideologies defining nineteenth-century woman's sphere. Celestia Rice Colby's life outwardly resembled that of many other white females of the era: marriage and motherhood set in the context of a dairy farm, punctuated by reading, reform sentiments, and writing for private and public consumption. In reality, however, her life defied categorization.

In part one, "An Expected Life," which spans the years 1827–1857, Brakebill examines the antebellum ideologies and northeastern Ohio culture that dominated Colby's formative years. As the daughter of a New England family that settled in an area known as the Western Re-

serve, Colby was steeped in Calvinism. In addition to a strong work ethic, she embraced education, which served as a source of both satisfaction and discontent. Her childhood religious teachings left Colby struggling with feelings of spiritual and personal worthlessness, but subsequent encounters with Friends of Human Progress (also known as Progressive Friends) led to a gradual move away from doctrinal beliefs and to an advocacy of freedom within acceptable boundaries. After her marriage to dairy farmer Lewis Colby in 1847, she became more keenly aware of the pull of prescriptive literature as she attempted to balance her desire to write with the demands of farm work and motherhood. A resourceful Colby fought rural isolation by exchanging her essays for subscriptions to newspapers and reform periodicals, most notably those devoted to temperance and antislavery. Her early essays, however, often "substantiated the idea of a true womanhood" (44).

Part two, "The Battle to Change Expectations," covering the years 1857–1862, constitutes the bulk of the biography. This in-depth exploration of Colby's intellectual and emotional life draws on her introspective journals, which are held in the Colby Collection at the Illinois State Archives. During this period, her public writings assumed a more radical tone, but she lacked adequate support in her private life to make a complete break from orthodox beliefs. Indeed, one of her greatest frustrations was her inability to find someone to share and encourage her views. For a time, her deepening friendship and intellectual companionship with a like-minded sister-in-law, Annie Colby, offered the promise of a soul mate, but geographical distance and the demands of Annie's marriage proved insurmountable. Colby sank into despair in the 1850s as she contended with the realities of giving birth to five children, the rigors of dairy farming, and a deepening sense of isolation. Unlike dress reformer Amelia Bloomer and water-cure physician Juliet H. Severance, who both made their homes in Iowa, Colby remained unable to transcend the idea of separate spheres and allowed it to dominate her daily life.

The final brief section of the book, "Expectations Stagnate: Acceptance or Defeat?" spans from 1862 until Colby's death in 1900. Fewer journals survive to document the unhappiness and dissatisfaction she experienced until the early 1880s, when Colby and her husband separated. Blossoming from that time forward, she resumed writing for publication, became involved in the women's club movement, and watched her children realize educational and professional achievements that had remained beyond her reach.

The history of American women is peopled by such bold and radical individuals as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Victoria Woodhull, and Iowa's Annie Savery, as well as countless individuals who shared their sentiments but could not act upon them. Brakebill's study sheds important light on the life of one, a midwestern woman who yearned to transcend the limits of her rural environment but lacked the necessary personal and external resources to surmount the powerful ideologies governing antebellum women's lives. Brakebill effectively documents the discrepancies between Colby's public writings about women's rights and the "dull round of duties" that claimed her time as a farm woman (176). Lacking a supportive network of family members and friends, she succumbed to negative thinking and never fully realized her potential as a writer or reformer. Colby's is not a unique story, but it is one that has remained relatively unexplored until now. Brakebill excels in placing Colby in the larger context of the northeastern Ohio farm economy, but due to large gaps in the journal entries, critical details about her early and later life remain elusive. For a book that is part of the Civil War in the North series, the discussion of the war years is disappointing. Ultimately, however, this richly researched work is to be savored for the glimpse it provides into one midwestern woman's struggles to define her identity.

Traveling between Worlds: German-American Encounters, edited by Thomas Adam and Ruth Gross. The Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lectures 36. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2006. viii, 190 pp. Illustrations, table, notes, index. $29.95 cloth.

Reviewer Eleanor L. Turk is professor of history emerita at Indiana University East. She has published books and articles on German and German American history.

Traveling between Worlds includes six essays from the Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lecture series in 2003. Christof Mauch (German Historical Institute) introduces the volume's central theme, the "intercultural transfer" between Germany and North America, and briefly profiles the contributors. The first three essays—by Eberhard Brüning (University of Leipzig), John T. Walker (Fullerton College), and Thomas Adam (University of Texas–Arlington)—present perspectives of American elites who traveled in Germany during the nineteenth century. They produced writings full of ideas gained and resultant suggestions for improving American society and institutions. Brüning offers an interesting and comprehensive list of these eminent Americans who visited the German provincial courts and universities. They were impressed by the education and culture of the aristocracy and