

letter writers and keepers of diaries, and their words have been respectfully handed down through the generations.

Dear Catherine, Dear Taylor is a valuable addition to the many edited collections of Civil War letters. It is valuable for two reasons. First, it is one of the few collections that contain both sides of the marital correspondence. Letters from wives of Civil War soldiers are rare; those from their children are rarer still. This collection has all three, the husband/father off at war, and a wife and daughter writing to him from Iowa. Second, the soldier, Taylor Peirce, served in the 22nd Iowa Volunteer Infantry, one of the few Iowa units to serve in Virginia. Iowa readers will especially enjoy the sense of Iowa pride and western swagger expressed in a letter written aboard a Virginia steamboat (in July 1864) when the 22nd Iowa is transferred east to serve in the famous Army of the Potomac. "I am glad I do not belong to an eastern Regt. The soldiers get no better treatment than brutes. Their officers are generally pimps and Saloon keepers. . . . They had one of our men up for some trifling offense the 1st morning after we went on board and as the Iowa boys were not used to that kind of treatment we turned in and compelled them to release him. . . . So they have been quite civil to us ever since and when they see any of the Iowa boys coming they stand aside and let us pass" (242-43).

Editor Richard L. Kiper, best known for his biography of General John A. McClernand, a much maligned Civil War figure in need of a biographer, has done a thorough job of research and placing the letters in an understandable context. His introduction is so thorough that the letters almost become endnotes. (He might have let readers discover a few things for themselves.) His work, which complements the transcription by Donna B. Vaughn, helps to make this book a must for those who want the words of ordinary family members caught up in the great struggle.

The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901, by Heather Cox Richardson. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001. xvi, 312 pp. Notes, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Wallace Hettle is associate professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. He is the author of *The Peculiar Democracy: Southern Democrats in Peace and Civil War* (2001).

Heather Cox Richardson has written an engaging and important book. In *The Death of Reconstruction*, she examines sources reflecting northern public opinion in order to examine the ideological underpinnings of Reconstruction's demise. While Richardson never minimizes the im-

portance of race in the story of Reconstruction, she breaks new ground in illuminating the manner in which northern class anxieties hastened that region's retreat from Reconstruction.

Northerners examined the freedpeople through the prism of their own assumptions about labor, Richardson maintains. In the idealistic 1860s, that meant that northern politicians and writers viewed slaves through the prism of a free labor ideal that valued independence and individual striving. Richardson cites many instances in which the northern press viewed blacks as seemingly ideal laborers embodying the American dream of upward mobility and independence. Yet in an important sense, the free labor ideal, which placed agricultural labor in a central place in republican society, became obsolete in a booming postwar economy. As immigration and industrialization proceeded, Republican elites became increasingly worried about the possibility that European-style labor radicalism, exemplified by the Paris Commune, could gain a foothold in the United States. In an especially compelling chapter on South Carolina's freedpeople and the northern press, Richardson suggests that increasing northern skepticism about blacks and Reconstruction was fed by anxiety about the role of labor in a republican society. To northern elites, black South Carolinians looked nothing like the embodiment of an agrarian ideal of free labor, resembling instead fractious workers in the North and Europe who could use suffrage to undermine the interests of business.

Although Richardson displays a remarkable mastery of the secondary sources, her primary source base of prominent northern newspapers, magazines, cartoons, and pamphlets is relatively thin. Except for a few quotations from the *Chicago Tribune*, most of Richardson's evidence comes from newspapers and magazines published on the East Coast. Further research in local newspapers and archival materials, particularly in the Midwest, will be needed to determine whether the ideological retreat from Reconstruction, revealed here in relatively elite sources such as *Harper's* and *The Nation*, can be linked to opinion among officeholders and voters in local Republican strongholds such as Iowa.

In fact, Richardson's thesis, that elites linked blacks in the South to the threat of labor radicalism in the North, might not hold true in Iowa. It is by no means clear that leaders in an agricultural state with a relatively quiescent labor movement during the late nineteenth century's Gilded Age would view southern laborers in the same fashion as opinion leaders in the East. Iowa historians may well want to examine Richardson's thesis in the light of sources in our state.

Although Richardson has not examined all the evidence and may not have all the answers, she asks the right questions. Further, she answers them eloquently. In doing so, she adds a new dimension to our understanding of a perennial issue in the historiography of the Civil War era: the story of Reconstruction's demise. This book will provoke argument in a relatively moribund field, and provide a useful supplement to Eric Foner's classic, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution* (1988).

The Chicago & Alton Railroad: The Only Way, by Gene V. Glendinning. Railroads in America Series. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002. viii, 274 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95 cloth.

Reviewer James Beranek lives in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He is engaged in a study of railroad structures along Iowa's Rock Island line.

The Chicago & Alton Railroad was chartered in 1847 to connect Alton, Illinois, on the Mississippi River, with Springfield (Abraham Lincoln was an early stockholder, lawyer, and passenger). Gene V. Glendinning recounts the difficulties the railroad's backers had raising construction money, dealing with the Illinois legislature, and fending off corporate vultures. Despite these challenges, the road was completed to Springfield and extended to Chicago in 1854 and to East St. Louis in 1858.

This tumultuous phase in the line's history ended in receivership the following year. Thanks to the efforts of its longtime president, Timothy Blackstone, however, the road was rebuilt into one of the most prosperous and best-maintained railroads in the Midwest. It built west to Kansas City, and in the hotly competitive Chicago–St. Louis passenger market it was the majority carrier. Conservatively managed, the Alton Road turned profits even during the Panics of 1873 and 1893.

Glendinning argues that this conservatism was both the Alton's strength and its fatal weakness; its focus on serving its local territory led it to pass up opportunities to expand further or to merge with a larger railroad. Dissatisfied stockholders removed Blackstone in 1899, launching the Alton on a 50-year odyssey of increasing debt, declining profits, and multiple owners. Finally, after a third receivership, the Chicago & Alton merged with the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio in 1947, ending its corporate existence.

The Chicago & Alton Railroad contains everything you would want to know about its namesake. Always in control of his material, Glendinning covers not only financial, political, and construction history but also the nitty-gritty of equipment, structures, and operations, all

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