

The Korens were not homesteaders. Their survival in the Iowa settlement depended on the support of the congregation. Members provided the couple with food, housing, transportation, and house-keeping help. As Elisabeth describes the network of support from their Norwegian neighbors in detail, readers get a firsthand account of rural community interaction.

Elisabeth's keen interest in gardening and her love for daily walks around the area provide insight into the flora and fauna of the Iowa prairie in 1854. Her fascination with Iowa's wild flowers mingled with her longing for the domestic plants of her homeland. In her eloquent descriptions of her first year on the prairie, Elisabeth captured her visual and emotional response to the Iowa frontier. At times she is lonely, homesick, frightened, angry, and discouraged, but most of the time she faces her life with courage, ingenuity, humor, and grace.

By providing the first reprinting since 1955, Vesterheim has once again made the diary accessible to a broad audience. David Nelson provides contextual background about the voyage across the Atlantic, and his notes add essential details about the people Elisabeth meets along the way. The inclusion of letters written to her family in Norway brings closure to the story.

Scholars of the frontier, community experience, ethnic settlement, women's experience, Iowa history, and religious history will find that this text adds dimension to their work. In addition, the diary tells an intimate story in elegant language and will be equally appealing to many readers.

Voices from Vietnam, edited by Michael E. Stevens. *Voices of the Wisconsin Past*. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1996. xiv, 255 pp. Map, illustrations, glossary, bibliography, index. \$24.95 cloth, \$12.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY KEVIN B. BYRNE, GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

Voices from Vietnam is a superb book. Consisting primarily of more than one hundred letters and diary entries, it presents the "voices" of 92 Americans with some connection to Wisconsin who served in the Vietnam War in a wide variety of roles: "grunts," officers, a prisoner of war, participants in the ground, air, and naval wars, combat soldiers, Red Cross personnel, and people stationed in the rear. Eight topical chapters move from basic training through "The Costs of War." Michael Stevens opens each with a concise introduction to establish context, as he does in a more precise way for each entry. Brief biographies of the contributors and occasional photographs help personalize

the selections. The volume concludes with a glossary to translate military jargon and an index.

The introductory passages themselves constitute an excellent primer on the war's history and military life. Even so, the "voices" command center stage. Beginning with chapter three, "Combat," the selections become especially intense. Often emotionally raw and profoundly moving, they expose the pain of soldiers supporting the war, opposing the war, bored or frustrated or confused or angered by it, soldiers sometimes horrified by what they saw and did and what they endured and sometimes uplifted by insights they gained into human nature and themselves. Although Wisconsin's participants, like Iowa's, did not represent a precise cross section of Americans who served in Vietnam, *Voices from Vietnam* is one of the best collections of its kind available. Anyone seeking a deeper understanding of the American military experience in Vietnam and the real costs war exacts from the people involved in it should take a look.

When the Waters Recede: Rescue and Recovery during the Great Flood, by Dan Guillory. Urbana, IL: Stormline Press (distributed by Iowa State University Press), 1996. 110 pp. Illustrations. \$14.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY CHARLES K. PIEHL, MANKATO STATE UNIVERSITY

Several times Dan Guillory states that his purpose is not to recite the torrent of statistics that emerged from the Great Flood of 1993. "To make this welter of information meaningful again is the primary goal of this book, and the methodology is to seek small but telling truths from the mouths of individual survivors in four carefully chosen communities" (26). This goal ultimately is not met. Considering his objective, Guillory directs inordinate attention to a very factual overview of the flood and its background. Not until halfway through (p. 45) does he begin to fulfill his promise of examining specific towns and individual survivors of the flood along the Mississippi River. Moreover, we never learn why he selected the communities, which include Hull, Hardin and East Hardin, and Valmeyer in Illinois and several towns surrounding historic Kaskaskia in both Missouri and Illinois. The book is at its best when the author introduces the reader to individuals who live in these generally obscure places. However, he takes far too long to get to what he has promised us, taking circular and sometimes questionable excursions into topics that do not achieve his stated goals.

The book also suffers from a number of errors. Fairmont, Minnesota, for example, is identified as Fairmount. Also, the U.S. Army

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