

Book Notices

German Settlement in Missouri: New Land, Old Ways, by Robyn Burnett and Ken Luebbering. Missouri Heritage Readers Series. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996. xi, 124 pp. Illustrations, maps, suggestions for further reading, index. \$9.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY JON W. STAUFF, ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY

This book, one of a series of books designed to introduce "adult new readers" to the cultural and social history of Missouri, explores that state's German heritage from the earliest German settlements in the St. Louis area in the 1830s to the experiences of German-Americans during World War I. Each of the twenty-seven chapters presents a snapshot of everyday life in Missouri's German-American communities, including life in log cabins, Civil War service, women on the frontier, the Lutheran church, eating and drinking customs, and arts and leisure.

Students seeking more scholarly accounts about the Germans in Missouri should consult the short annotated bibliography in this volume for guidance. (Linda Pickle's recently published *Contented among Strangers: Rural German-Speaking Women and Their Families in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* [1996] will interest students of Iowa history. The authors also cite the work of David Detjen, Audrey Olson, and Walter Kamphoefner.) *German Settlement in Missouri* would be appropriate for school media centers and public libraries, as it provides an accurate overview of the German experience in Missouri and enhances a general knowledge of American history.

The Diary of Elisabeth Koren, 1853-1855, translated and edited by David T. Nelson. Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1955. Reprint. Decorah: Vesterheim, the Norwegian-American Museum, 1994. xviii, 381 pp. Maps, illustrations, index. \$12.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY VICKIE LOCK, MIDDLE AMANA, IOWA

The account of Elisabeth Koren's journey from her home in Larvik, Norway, to the Iowa frontier in 1853 is exceptionally rich in detail. A bride of three weeks, Elisabeth left the sheltered, comfortable life of her youth and accompanied her husband, Ulrik Vilhelm Koren, to his first Lutheran congregation in northeast Iowa, near present-day Decorah.

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

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