

Book Notices

Dark Days of the Rebellion: Life in Southern Military Prisons, by Benjamin F. Booth and Steve Meyer. Garrison, Iowa: Meyer Publishing, 1996. xix, 261 pp. Illustrations, appendix, references. \$24.95 cloth.

REVIEWED BY JOHN Y. SIMON, SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, CARBONDALE

Benjamin F. Booth of the Twenty-second Iowa Volunteers, along with others in his regiment, was captured at the battle of Cedar Creek on October 19, 1864. Booth was taken briefly to Libby Prison in Richmond, then to Salisbury in North Carolina, where he languished until released on parole shortly before the close of the Civil War. A healthy 181 pounds when captured, Booth lost more than half of that weight on prison rations and nearly died on his way back to Iowa. A diary scrupulously maintained during his captivity served as the basis for a narrative he completed during 1865. Booth himself finally published the book in 1897. His bitter hatred of his captors remained but had lost appeal to potential readers. According to family tradition, he eventually stoked his stove with unsold copies of his book. Its consequent rarity led Steve Meyer to republish it, embellished with explanatory sidebars and introductory narrative.

While providing a rare and interesting example of Civil War prison literature, especially valuable as a contemporary diary, Meyer exacts a toll. He has, he writes, "modified the original text to add clarity" (viii), without indicating specifically where he has made such alterations. Since Meyer has become coauthor, readers may confuse Meyer's additions with Booth's text. In resetting the text, a mortar battery that Booth described as "shotted" is now incorrectly "shorted." Some scholars may therefore insist on using the original, recently reproduced on microfiche, but others will welcome Meyer's useful addition to Iowa Civil War bookshelves.

Rain Follows the Plow: Homesteading in Hayes County, Nebraska, the Story of Warren and Ada Clark, by Robert D. Clark. Lincoln: Foundation Books, 1996. xix, 326 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography. \$17.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY PAULA M. NELSON, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-PLATTEVILLE

Robert D. Clark is a lucky man. He located a gold mine of diaries and letters written by his grandparents, Warren and Ada Clark—enough to write a detailed history of their lives and their migration from up-

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