

very well. A cavalry force of 1,000 horses required seven tons of hay and six tons of grain every day.

Iowa readers may be particularly interested in the impact of the war on pork production in the Confederacy. The staple of the Southern diet became dear as the war dragged on with 70–80 percent declines in the pig population. In the wake of war, the South became dependent on midwestern pork imports. Iowa hogs that were raised on corn had a higher fat content than the lean free-range hogs of the pre-Civil War South. This prompts the authors to speculate, “the Civil War might be partly responsible for the comparatively high rates of obesity, high blood pressure, stroke, and heart disease in the South” (192). The war also illustrated the deficiency of veterinary knowledge in the country, which prompted both the army and many land grant colleges to begin the systematic study of animal health. In 1879, Iowa State College established the nation’s first college of veterinary medicine.

Near the end of their volume Browning and Silver argue that the Civil War brought about a profound change in America’s relationship with its environment. Proving that, however, will be the task of another volume. What they do accomplish is to enrich our understanding of the agency of microbes, animals, and landscape on the military history of the war.

Peppermint Kings: A Rural American History, by Dan Allosso. Yale Agrarian Studies Series. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. xvi, 296 pp. Notes, index. \$38.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Jeff Bremer is associate professor of history at Iowa State University. He specializes in the social and economic history of the American Midwest and is the author of *A Store Almost in Sight: The Economic Transformation of Missouri from the Louisiana Purchase to the Civil War* (2014).

Peppermint oil is not just a niche product at your local organic food store. It has a long history as a commercial item in the United States, a story which is meticulously surveyed in historian Dan Allosso’s unconventional book *Peppermint Kings: A Rural American History*. It traces the history of three different families who were involved in the production and distribution of peppermint oil. Allosso’s story is one of agricultural entrepreneurs, sometimes odd but always driven, who sought to make their fortunes selling something that the modern world has little use for, other than as a flavoring. But peppermint oil, made by boiling the plant in stills like whiskey, had wide appeal in the nineteenth century. It

served a medicinal purpose in a world that existed before modern medicine and was usually sold by peddlers before the Civil War. After the war, it became a branded international product. This story, while often dense, is the history of an industry and its evolution from the early republic to the Great Depression.

Peppermint was always a commercial crop and its sale ensured that producers took part in the emerging market economy of the early United States. The Ranney family were the first peppermint kings, based in the American Northeast. Peppermint was first grown in the U.S. in Massachusetts and New York and then later shipped eastward along the Erie Canal to new markets. The crop was more labor-intensive than wheat, but more profitable. The center of production then shifted to Michigan in the mid-nineteenth century. One family, the Hotchkisses, dominated the trade in the decades around the Civil War. They ran an international business that bought peppermint from farmers, then distilled it and finally marketed it. Their goods were distinctively packaged and branded in one of the first such efforts in the country.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Todd family, also based in Michigan, was the most important of the peppermint producers. They earned international awards and American patents for their oil. Albert Todd, an important local business leader, was elected to Congress in the late 1890s, supporting populist legislation to rein in the power of large corporations. By about 1910 Todd's company dominated the American and international peppermint business, producing most of the peppermint in the United States. They provided peppermint and spearmint oil for use in toothpaste and gum. By 1920 Albert was often referred to as "Peppermint Todd." The A.M. Todd company, which still produces mint, is now owned by Archer Daniels Midland, an agricultural conglomerate.

Peppermint Kings is not a book with any connection to Iowa. But its history of agriculture, production, and marketing would be familiar to most readers. The story is focused on rural people and their engagement with a more urban or distant population; it is also the story of families and kinship and their importance for business. Allosso's study does a good job of placing these family interactions with a growing capitalist world in the context of American economic development. The Hotchkiss family established their own banks and printed their own money, while the Todds were capitalists who hated the excesses of the Gilded Age. Allosso's history of a forgotten product and a neglected business serves as an example of how historians can explore forgotten topics. *Peppermint Kings* is a book written for academics and historians of agriculture and rural America. They will find its unusual story and

intriguing characters, as well as its business history, of interest. Non-specialists will find large parts of the book overly detailed and tough reading though.

Theodore Roosevelt, Naturalist in the Arena, edited by Char Miller and Clay S. Jenkinson. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2020. xxiv, 234 pp. Illustrations, photographs, index. \$24.95 paperback.

Gregory A. Wynn is a retired U. S. Marine Corps officer and Vice President of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, which was chartered by Congress in 1920.

Theodore Roosevelt, Naturalist in the Arena is a book about small things. This is good. In the immense scholarship of Theodore Roosevelt (over a thousand books and counting), the small things have often been overlooked. Editors Char Miller and Clay S. Jenkinson have done fine work knitting together a compendium of these small things—chance acquaintances, wildlife encounters, and political collaborations—which brings to mind Bruce Springsteen’s song “From Small Things (Big Things One Day Come).” It is good for us today that these small things resulted in something big: the protection of our natural and wildlife treasures and efforts to educate the nation about them. It is the small things that remind us that the grand arc of history is not pre-ordained. Sometimes history turns on the small things.

This is not a scholarly book, which is not a criticism. It is a collection of easily consumed essays casting a light on the origins and maturation of Theodore Roosevelt’s conservationist ideals, as well as those men and women he befriended and who consequently shaped his (and their own) thinking over a period of four decades. It is also a study of political power, personal relationships, and the impact of intellectual idealism. It reveals how small things like chance encounters and youthful enthusiasms led to the resultant big things of protecting over 200 million acres of national treasure.

The essays reveal interesting insights, many worth deeper studies. For example, in their piece on Roosevelt’s writing about his experiences in North Dakota, contributors Thomas Cullen Bailey and Katherine Joslin observe that with his unique blend of narrative and field naturalist expertise, TR “worked to create a literary genre almost of his own making” (24). Ian Tyrrell, a professor at the University of New South Wales, contributes a provocative piece on the mutual shaping of European conservation