

This exemplary volume appraises a seriously overlooked but important chapter in American history—the contributions made by African-Americans in developing the nation's antebellum frontier. Those especially interested in black history and frontier history will find *Free Frank* a useful addition to their collection.

Indiana Historical Society Library,
Indianapolis

Donald West

A German in the Yankee Fatherland: The Civil War Letters of Henry A. Kircher. Edited by Earl J. Hess. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1983. Pp. xi, 169. Illustrations, notes, maps, bibliographical essay, index. \$19.50.)

The collective experiences found in the countless extant Civil War letters and diaries continue to be an invaluable source for understanding that great conflict. Over the years many of these documents have found their way into print. The Civil War letters of Henry A. Kircher, edited by Earl J. Hess, are a welcome addition to this genre in that they present a view of the war through the eyes of an articulate, often witty, nineteen-year-old German-American from Belleville, Illinois.

Kircher was born in 1841, one of ten children of Joseph and Augusta Kircher, German natives who migrated to western Illinois in the 1830s. Kircher grew up in a closely knit family and attended Oakfield Academy, near St. Louis, one of the first German-American schools west of the Mississippi. He became a machinist by trade and was working in his hometown when the first shock waves of Sumter reached Illinois.

Kircher and several of his German friends first joined the 9th Illinois as three-months recruits, but he quickly became disillusioned by the political infighting that he visualized would be a barrier to his advancement in the regiment. Because of this disillusionment and the antagonism that developed between the Germans and Americans, he and his Belleville neighbors decided to cross the Mississippi and join the newly formed 12th Missouri, where in time 84 percent of the regiment would be made up of German-Americans. Kircher, who eventually rose to the rank of captain, and the men of the 12th Missouri took part in several important campaigns during their three years service, including Pea Ridge, Chickasaw Bluffs, the siege of Vicksburg, and finally Lookout Mountain. Kircher's letters, most of them written to his mother, end abruptly in November, 1863, following the battle of Ringgold, Georgia, where he received wounds that caused him to lose both an arm and a leg. Following the war Kircher returned home a hero and despite his handicap became one of Belleville's

leading citizens in business and politics, eventually serving two terms as mayor. Kircher was married in 1880 to Bertha Engelman and had three children. He died on May 1, 1908.

The sixty-four letters reproduced in the book, transcribed from the old German script, reveal an intelligent, ambitious, and perceptive young man who saw a duty to serve his fatherland. In doing so he comes of age through the rigors of the battles and the boredom that challenge him during his thirty-one months of campaigning in the war's western theater. Although the letters add little new information to an understanding of the daily life of the Civil War soldier (except perhaps for the period in late 1862 and early 1863 when the regiment served as sharpshooters on Union gunboats during the Yazoo Pass Expedition), as source material they do touch on a historically neglected view of the ethnic soldier in the Union army. "Contrary to popular belief concerning the war as a melting pot, Kircher's letters help suggest that a sense of separateness remained strong throughout the conflict" (Preface). This latter point is the basic theme of the Hess publication.

Information found in Kircher's diaries helps fill out the gaps in the letters and provides the needed source material for Hess's narrative that serves as a link between each letter. The book is well annotated and contains photographs, maps, and a bibliographical essay. All in all it will be a fine addition to any Civil War library.

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Thomas K. Krasean

The Saloon: Public Drinking in Chicago and Boston, 1880-1920.
By Perry R. Duis. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983.
Pp. 380. Illustrations, maps, comments on primary sources,
notes, index. \$24.95.)

This valuable book rests on prodigious research in obscure sources to give a comprehensive view of the saloon in Chicago and Boston. Perry R. Duis mined local newspapers, scattered manuscript sources, and little-known trade publications produced by branches of the liquor industries. The two cities had very different regulatory policies. Chicago was wide open, with ubiquitous saloons, once reaching a ratio of about one saloon for each 150 persons. Boston used its licensing powers to limit the number of saloons and restricted them to the city's hub. The result was a different pattern within a common theme.

The author explains the saloon as a semipublic institution in urban milieus that were increasingly becoming privatized. Saloons were private businesses, sometimes small and sometimes,