

of blacks in small-town Indiana. Coy D. Robbins sets a very difficult task for himself but has managed to do it very well.

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The Alford Brothers: "We All Must Dye Sooner or Later." Edited by Richard S. Skidmore. (Hanover, Ind.: Nugget Publishers, 1995. Pp. 356. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. Paperbound, \$23.95. Order from: The Nugget Publishers, 2146 S. Logan's Point Drive, Hanover, IN 47243.)

Fire Within: A Civil War Narrative from Wisconsin. By Kerry A. Trask. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1995. Pp. xiii, 279. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00.)

Kerry A. Trask's goal in *Fire Within* is to describe the experiences of the inhabitants of Manitowoc, Wisconsin, during the Civil War. He tells the stories of the men who fought and of the people who remained on the home front. Manitowoc was a port town located on the western shore of Lake Michigan. It was founded in 1837, but it was not until the 1850s that it and the surrounding county passed beyond the frontier stage and experienced rapid population growth, the expansion of its lumber milling operations, and the development of shipbuilding and other new manufacturing activities. The town's 1860 population of 3,065 consisted primarily of Yankees and a large number of foreign immigrants.

While Trask draws on a rich and varied collection of letters, diaries, newspapers, and local histories, there are two sources that are central to the book. One consists of the letters and diary of James S. Anderson, who was a member of Company A, Fifth Wisconsin Volunteers, the first company raised in Manitowoc. Trask follows Anderson through training camp, his journey to Washington and the eastern front in Virginia, his experience of camp life, and his participation in virtually all of the major battles in the east from those of the Peninsular Campaign in 1862 to the Battle of Cold Harbor that was fought shortly before Anderson's enlistment ended in July, 1864. Trask's other major source is the diary of Rosa Kellner, a serious, sometimes melancholy, young woman in her late teens. Kellner worked at a hotel located in the middle of Manitowoc and owned by some of her relatives. The Williams House Hotel was an excellent vantage point from which to observe the life of the town, the comings and goings of its inhabitants, the political battles over war policy, and the public ceremonies surrounding recruiting and burials, observances in which the townspeople tried to make sense of the war and its meaning.

General readers and Civil War buffs will probably find this book to be quite engaging and enjoyable. Trask consciously adopts a

story-telling literary style. Historiography is relegated to the footnotes, demographic and electoral statistics are unobtrusively woven into the narrative, analysis rarely interrupts the flow of the story, and human drama permeates the lives of the book's main characters. Academic historians will find the book's concept of telling the wartime story of an entire community to be fascinating and potentially rewarding but will probably be somewhat frustrated by the way in which the author carries out his task. Trask tantalizes the scholarly reader with passing notice of ethnic tensions, socioeconomic divisions, and political conflicts but refuses to abandon his narrative long enough to provide the kind of analysis necessary for such readers to understand fully what was going on in Manitowoc and relate it to other mid-nineteenth-century community studies.

The Alford Brothers is a collection of 196 letters written primarily by the members of the family of Franklin Alford during 1861 and 1862. The Alfords lived in southeast Daviess County near the town of Alfordsville, which had been founded by Franklin's father when he immigrated to the state from Virginia. The Alfords were an affluent, market-oriented farm family who were prominent and pious members of the local Christian church.

Franklin Alford's three oldest sons volunteered for military service. Warren, the eldest, joined the Fourteenth Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment in May, 1861, while Wayne and Lafayette enlisted in the Sixth Indiana Volunteer Infantry Regiment in October of the same year. Warren's regiment went to Camp Vigo, near Terre Haute, for training and then was sent into action in western and then eastern Virginia. The other two brothers fought in western Kentucky and Tennessee. Lafayette became ill just before the Battle of Shiloh and died at home in May, 1862. Wayne became ill after Shiloh and died in June, 1862. Warren died in September, 1862, of a bullet wound he received during the Battle of Antietam.

Because this collection includes letters going to as well as coming from the front, the reader not only learns about army life but also about life in rural Indiana in the 1860s. The collection contains information on the resistance to the war by some Daviess and Martin county residents, in-fighting between members of the local church, the efforts of Franklin to get a relative committed to the state mental asylum, plowing and planting, harvesting crops and slaughtering hogs, market conditions, borrowing from and lending money to neighbors, illness and death, the schooling of the younger children, and the ways in which the family's political and religious values shaped its reactions to the loss of three of its members.

Like Trask's work, the Alford letters, albeit on a more limited scale, tell the story of a community and its soldiers. Because the collection contains letters to and from home, it portrays the interplay of soldiers and the family and friends they left behind in a more

intimate and profound way than Trask's sources allow him to do with any of his book's major characters.

Skidmore divides the letters into five chapters. Each chapter includes a background essay, maps, and numerous photographs of people, places, and things germane to the letters in the section. The essays are based on government records, local history sources, a wide array of secondary sources, and manuscript collections of soldiers who served in the same units as the Alford's. Most of the letters were penned by Franklin's nuclear family, but some were written by family friends and extended kin. The editor has retained most of the original spelling in his transcriptions. Individuals, places, and other references in the letters with which the reader might not be familiar are identified by parenthetical remarks within the text.

While scholars might quibble with some of Skidmore's interpretations, they and general readers alike will delight in the informative detail he provides on everything from Union army tents to the logistics of the mailing of letters to and from the army. The book's 120 photographs have not been reproduced very well, but Skidmore's industry in locating so many pictures from so many different sources is impressive.

For years the mountains of Civil War letters and diaries have been productively mined by military historians. What both of these works suggest is that social historians may very well profit by going prospecting in these same hills.

THOMAS E. RODGERS is the author of "Liberty, Will, and Violence: The Political Ideology of the Democrats of West-Central Indiana during the Civil War," which appeared in the June, 1996, issue of the *Indiana Magazine of History*.

A More Perfect Legacy: A Portrait of Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, C.S.C., 1888–1978. By Brother Philip Armstrong. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995. Pp. xxii, 402. Illustrations, notes, index. \$29.95.)

The legacy of Brother Ephrem O'Dwyer, CSC, lives on in *A More Perfect Legacy* by Brother Philip Armstrong, also a member of the Brothers of the Holy Cross. The author, former assistant general of the Congregation and provincial of the Midwest province, is a step ahead of any other member of the CSC community who would attempt to write this book. The biography is one of the several publications commemorating the sesquicentennial of the Congregation.

The methodology used by the author also serves as a guide to the records created by Brother Ephrem in directing the community's affairs from 1931 to 1956. Brother Philip relies heavily on the provincial correspondence and quotes extensively from these documents. Another facet of the author's research is his use of inter-