

---

## Review Notices

*Army Life of an Illinois Soldier; Including a Day-by-Day Record of Sherman's March to the Sea: Letters and Diary of Charles W. Wills.* Compiled by Mary E. Kellogg. (1906; reprint, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996. Pp. xii, 383. Illustration, notes. Paperbound, \$14.95, plus \$3.50 postage and handling.) Originally published in 1906, *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier* consists of the Civil War letters of Charles W. Wills, Canton, Fulton County, Illinois, to his sister combined with the diary that he kept during his service with General William T. Sherman from the spring of 1864 to May, 1865. More than a story of the Civil War, this volume chronicles the growth of a twenty-one-year-old private into a twenty-four-year-old major during a bloody war. From an ingenuous, idealistic, ambitious recruit Wills matured into a war-weary officer who was a keen observer of his world. After helping to repel an attack by the Georgia militia in November, 1864, he described the dead and dying as "old grey-haired and weakly-looking men and little boys, not over 15 years old . . . I hope we will never have to shoot at such men again. They knew nothing at all about fighting . . ." Wills entered the war to save the Union; his early comments about slaves "lacked sympathy, even decency" (p. ix). Even his eventual acceptance of emancipation and black soldiers probably resulted from the increased opportunities for white officers to command black regiments. Nonetheless, he was bothered by the anomalies of the slave society. Unlike many of his contemporaries whose Civil War experiences have been published, Wills was a witty, talented writer. His letters and diary are not only highly informative but fascinating as well. Described as a "neglected classic" (p. vii) and "one of the finest collections of Civil War letters ever published" (Peter Cozzens, *The Terrible Sound*, 1992), this volume certainly merited reprinting. Lorna Lutes Sylvester, *Indiana University, Bloomington*.

*New Ulm in Word and Pictures: J. H. Strasser's History of a German-American Settlement (1892).* Translated and edited by Don Heinrich Tolzmann and Fredric R. Steinhäuser. (Indianapolis: Max Kade German-American Center, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis and Indiana German Heritage Society, 1997. Pp. x, 79. Appendices, notes, sources, illustrations. Paperbound, \$9.00. Order from NCSA Literatur, 430 Kelp Grove Rd., Nashville, IN 47448.) In 1892 J. H. Strasser, a newspaper editor in New Ulm, Minnesota, published a history of his town. New Ulm had been settled by Germans in the 1850s and forty years later still proudly retained its ethnic identity. Strasser and other contributors told of

the devastations wrought by the Sioux uprising of 1862 and by natural disasters such as locust plagues and tornadoes; they also wrote glowingly of the schools, industries, businesses, and general prosperity of their town. Strasser portrayed New Ulm as a shining example of "German enterprise, German steadiness, and German success" with "amazing" growth, "outstanding" new buildings, and "hard-working, decent, easygoing, honest" citizens (p. 22). As a fine example of late nineteenth-century civic boosterism with a strong ethnic element, this document should be of considerable interest to scholars of nineteenth-century immigration and ethnicity. *Dawn Bakken, Indiana University, Bloomington.*

*Maps of the Shaker West: A Journey of Discovery.* By Martha Boice, Dale Covington, and Richard Spence. (Dayton, Ohio: Knot Garden Press, 1997. Pp. x, 140. Illustrations, maps, notes, appendices, further reading, index. Paperbound, \$19.95, plus \$2.50 shipping. Order from Knot Garden Press, 7712 Eagle Creek Dr., Dayton, OH 45459.) For all the books currently in print about the Shakers, there is still relatively little published information about the western communities. Sites, and the remainders of sites, are scattered through Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana, but less than a handful are well-known enough to attract much tourism. Boice and her coauthors seek to remedy this situation with a series of maps and essays on the major sites of western Shaker settlement. The essays themselves, reflecting the book's multiple authorship, are of varying length and degree of detail. As the title indicates, however, the detailed site maps will probably be of primary interest, both to historians and tourists. *Dawn Bakken, Indiana University, Bloomington.*