
Book Reviews

This Wilderness of War: The Civil War Letters of George W. Squier, Hoosier Volunteer. Edited by Julie A. Doyle, John David Smith, and Richard M. McMurry. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998. Pp. xxx, 130. Illustrations, notes, maps, selected bibliography, index. \$30.00.)

In the fall of 1861 a thirty-year-old merchant from Allen County, Indiana, enlisted in the Union Army and began sending a remarkable series of letters home to his wife. George W. Squier joined hundreds of other northeast Indiana recruits in the 44th Indiana Volunteer Infantry and began a four-year odyssey through Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia. In the process they participated in some of the Civil War's bloodiest battles. The 44th Indiana, nicknamed the "Iron 44th" after a resolute stand against the Confederates on the first day of the Battle of Shiloh, saw action at the siege of Fort Donelson and the battles of Stone's River and Chickamauga. Squier served with the regiment in nearly all of these battles and was mustered out in September 1865 with the rank of captain.

The University of Tennessee Press has focused attention on the service of the 44th by publishing dozens of Squier's letters. A perceptive and talented writer, Squier kept his wife, Ellen, informed of his experiences in battle, in camp, and on the march. In addition, the young Hoosier willingly shared his opinions on a variety of topics, including slavery, superior officers, the vices of his comrades, and the prosecution of the war. Squier's final letters, written in the summer of 1865, offer an interesting look at one Union soldier's uncertainty about the future of the freed slaves, even after he had suffered so long to crush slavery and save the Union.

His candid and detailed descriptions of the bloodletting at Shiloh and Stone's River are particularly fascinating. After the fighting ceased, having walked over the latter battlefield, Squier described the suffering of wounded men begging for blankets to keep from freezing to death, including thirty "poor wretches" who had dragged themselves to a fire and lay "as close as they could be packed" (p. 43). He noted that the pockets of dead Confederates had been searched for valuables, a practice Squier himself participated in as he "liberated" an ink stand and a pair of gloves from an enemy corpse.

The only disappointment in *This Wilderness of War* is a minor one. Although Squier participated in some of the most important campaigns in the war's western theater, he missed the fight at Fort Donelson due to illness, and his regiment was not actively involved in any major campaigns after the Battle of Chickamauga. In late 1863, the 44th was relegated to garrison duty in Chattanooga and languished there for the remainder of the war. One can only imagine the fine letters Squier might have penned if the 44th had taken an

active role in the Chattanooga or Atlanta campaigns or Sherman's "March to the Sea." Despite this longing for more, we should be grateful that Squier saw as much of the war as he did, and that his letters survived.

The editors have provided numerous detailed notes to aid the reader, including background material on Squier's personal life and an excellent introductory history of the 44th Indiana. The University of Tennessee Press can be proud of adding another fine work to its "Voices of the Civil War" series.

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New Englanders on the Ohio Frontier: The Migration and Settlement of Worthington, Ohio. By Virginia E. McCormick and Robert W. McCormick. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1998. Pp. xi, 356. Illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, selected bibliography, index. \$39.00.)

Town and community studies continue to make important contributions to understanding the settlement of the Midwest. Worthington, Ohio, settled in 1803 predominantly by Episcopalian families from Granby, Connecticut, makes an ideal case study in this genre. The Granby settlers were organized as the Scioto Company in 1802 under the leadership of James Kilbourn, an ambitious would-be entrepreneur and Episcopal lay preacher. After the company bought 16,000 acres of land along the Olentangy River in central Ohio, all forty shareholders and their families moved to Worthington by 1803.

Virginia E. McCormick and Robert W. McCormick have written a lively, detailed, and appropriately documented account of Worthington from these Connecticut origins to the mid-1830s. At its best, this local history makes a valuable contribution to the panorama of early Ohio and midwestern history. Nevertheless, its celebratory framework limits the possibilities of exploring some significant historical issues in greater depth. The McCormicks sought to explain why an apparently "old New England village" now lies surrounded by the suburbs of greater Columbus, but they did not question the common lore about the town. They accept at face value, for example, the assumption that the superficial New England appearance of present-day Worthington (named in honor of a prominent Virginia land speculator, by the way) is evidence that the original proprietors intended to transplant New England culture to the Ohio frontier. That misleading premise colors the whole work.

The main problem is that Kilbourn and the Connecticut Scioto Company investors were not stereotypical Yankees. They were Episcopalians and thus outsiders in a state dominated by a Congregational standing order. It is doubtful that the Worthington settlers