

intendent, which was perhaps the key strategic post for nineteenth-century Methodist churchmen, Graham served twice, 1853–1857 and 1867–1874. Graham divulges little about his exercise of the office, how appointments were made, what he and other presiding elders did when huddled with the bishop. Indeed, seldom in the *Memoirs* does he permit himself introspection (he does not, for instance, say much about slavery). Graham played other important roles, about which he also reflects little—twice member of general conference, booster of Methodist colleges (trustee, visitor, agent), board member of conference and national agencies, on the publishing committee of the *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, and conference secretary. Not an astute analyst of his own actions, Graham nevertheless was a good observer and commentator on the roles of others and of their exercise of authority and power. And it is this that makes the book such a helpful window on Methodism in evolution.

I commend the book highly.

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*Giants in Their Tall Black Hats: Essays on the Iron Brigade.* Edited by Alan T. Nolan and Sharon Eggleston Vipond. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. Pp. xii, 238. Illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.95.)

This book is a collection of ten essays on various aspects of the history of the Iron Brigade, which consisted of the 19th Indiana Regiment of Volunteers and three regiments from Wisconsin until October 1862, when a regiment from Michigan was added. After its heavy losses at Gettysburg, the brigade lost the distinction of being the only all-western brigade in the Army of the Potomac when various eastern units were added to it during several reorganizations. Throughout the war, but especially during its all-western phase, the unit's courage and discipline earned it the sobriquet of Iron Brigade. Its exploits have inspired numerous books and articles by both academic and amateur historians.

The editors of *Giants in Their Tall Black Hats* “focus on stories—told in the words of the men who fought and suffered . . .” (p. xii). They present narrative treatments of battles (Brawner Farm, South Mountain, Antietam, Gettysburg, Fitzhugh's Crossing, and the Wilderness), officers (the role of General John Gibbon and of General John F. Reynolds), bystanders (Virginia tenant farmer John C. Brawner's efforts to get compensation for alleged damages to his property), the uses of the brigade's battle flags after the war, the brigade's long relationship with fellow-unit Battery B of the Fourth U.S. Artillery, and the experience of combat.

The strengths of the book's essays are those characteristic of Civil War scholars who work outside of the academy, as do the authors represented in this volume: an extensive familiarity with primary sources and strong narrative writing. Despite these strengths, even the Civil War buffs who seem to be the book's intended audience may be disappointed because there is little that is new in most of these essays. And Hoosier readers may be especially disconcerted by the book's heavy emphasis on Wisconsin materials: many of the articles use few or no primary sources from the men of the 19th Indiana, and the bibliography cites few Indiana secondary or governmental sources. The authors virtually ignore the literature on common soldiers by James M. McPherson, Reid Mitchell, Earl J. Hess, Joseph T. Glatthaar, and Gerald Linderman.

There is new material in the first and last essays: Alan T. Nolan's "John Brawner's Damage Claim" and Richard H. Zeitlin's "In Peace and War." Both of these articles have tantalizing possibilities, but neither author fully develops them.

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*The Country Contributor: The Life and Times of Juliet V. Strauss.*

By Ray E. Boomhower. (Carmel: Guild Press of Indiana, Inc., 1998. Pp. xxiv, 160. Notes, illustrations, appendices, select bibliography. \$24.95.)

When author Juliet Strauss died at her home in Rockville, Indiana, in 1918, she was well known, both in Indiana and in the nation; her "Country Contributor" column was regularly published in the *Indianapolis News*, and her column in the *Ladies Homes Journal*, "The Ideas of a Plain Country Woman," was read by approximately one million readers each month. Today she is scarcely remembered: her only book is out of print, and her role in saving the woodlands that became Turkey Run State Park is largely unknown.

Ray Boomhower, in writing a well-researched and very readable biography of this woman, rescues her memory, and the excerpts from Strauss's writings in the book's appendices give a feel for both her style and her basic convictions.

In 1863 Juliet Humphries was born in Rockville, where she lived her entire life. After her father's death when she was four, Juliet and her three siblings were reared by their mother, who provided books and a happy home, though they were poor.

At the age of seventeen Juliet married a local boy who later became the editor of the Rockville *Tribune*, and she became a full-time homemaker and mother of two daughters. In 1893, the first of the weekly columns she was to write for twenty-five years appeared in