

A particularly intriguing aspect of this diary is Beadle's revelation of the personalities of the individuals he encounters. Unlike many diarists, he includes women and children in his descriptions. "Aunt has been a very intelligent woman for her time . . ." (p. 4); "Mrs. Leavett is one of the fire brands of the freestates party" (p. 11); "Little Augusta Manages her pony like a skillful rider as she is. She is the smallest girl I ever saw ride a horseback" (p. 33).

Throughout his adventure, Beadle continually mentions how he longs for his wife, whom he refers to as Mate, and his children. When letters from home do not arrive he is acutely disappointed. Yet, he remains optimistic and is awed by the natural beauty of the Plains. "The wild ducks came up within ten feet of me and fed along the bank" (p. 43); "We had the finest sunset this evening I ever beheld" (p. 71). And he takes an interest in the political scene: "The Ballot Box was an old sugar box. . . I had the great honor of casting the first vote that was ever cast in the pappillion district" (p. 102). He also comments on the conditions of the Omaha Indians and the Pawnee: "The Indians have been greatly wronged" (p. 57).

Although Beadle talks of building a cabin and anticipates the arrival of his family, his entries begin to provide hints that all is not well. Rather abruptly he is on his way home to New York. Beadle does not give the details of his decision to return. His adventure obviously was a financial failure, but his diary leaves an unexpected legacy of great value, providing an insight into the lives of those who dreamed of what for many became impossible.

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*In the First Line of Battle: The 12th Illinois Cavalry in the Civil War.*

By Samuel M. Blackwell, Jr. (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2002. Pp. xviii, 222. Maps, illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00.)

As a history graduate student at Northern Illinois University, Samuel M. Blackwell, Jr., discovered that a regimental history of the Twelfth Illinois Cavalry did not exist. Thus began his Ph.D. dissertation. Blackwell has thoroughly examined many surviving primary sources for the regiment, including some in private hands. These materials include muster rolls, company reports, pension records, diaries, and soldiers' letters to family, friends, and hometown newspapers. Regrettably, the depth and scope of these sources all too often hindered the author's ability to provide substantive analysis. The prose is occasionally lively and engaging but reads like a dissertation influenced more by an understanding of modern combat than of nineteenth-century tactics. The author describes skirmishes as "firefights" (p. 152) and has the

men of the regiment engaging in operations "to win the hearts and minds" (p. 132) of southern civilians.

Blackwell has a good command of the overall military and political background in which the Twelfth Illinois Cavalry served. The unit was Illinois's only cavalry regiment to serve in three theaters during the Civil War. It was mustered into the service for three years in early 1862 and completed service as a veteran regiment in June 1866. The group's experience was, in many respects, typical of federal cavalry, although a few of the unit's exploits were extraordinary. The regiment narrowly escaped capture at Harper's Ferry in September 1862 and was with Gen. John Buford at Gettysburg when the first shots were fired. Interestingly, the Twelfth counted among its members Pvt. Fred Usher, the first Union soldier killed in the battle.

All too often, Blackwell engages in speculation. About an ammunition train that the regiment captured on September 15, 1862, he writes, "If Longstreet had been in possession of that extra ammunition, the attack would have been launched, and the Confederacy just might have been victorious that late afternoon in mid-September. A Confederate victory at Antietam would have altered the course of American history" (p. 37). Blackwell later notes that the unit detected and reported J. E. B. Stuart's column at the commencement of the Chambersburg Raid and concludes that, "If its warnings had been heeded, Stuart might have been forced to turn back and McClellan's dismissal might have been postponed" (p. 42). In yet another passage the author writes, "If the 12th Illinois or their Western brothers from Indiana [the Third Indiana Cavalry] had broke [*sic*] and run, or if they had expended their ammunition less frugally, the 3rd Division might well have been captured, and the Battle of Gettysburg would have ended differently" (p. 104). These speculative remarks are unnecessary and irregular for a scholarly regimental history. A more careful revision of the work prior to publication could have removed the speculative analysis.

*In the First Line of Battle* contributes very little new information to the body of scholarship for Union cavalry in the Civil War. It is a credible, though flawed, addition to the history of Illinois's Civil War regiments.

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*The Rule of Justice: The People of Chicago versus Zephyr Davis.* By Elizabeth Dale. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001. Pp. vii, 158. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth-bound, \$60.00; paperbound, \$23.95.)

This is a creative effort to demonstrate how much popular, or mass-level, pressure in late-nineteenth-century Chicago could prevail