

sonal campaign vehicle in his unsuccessful bid for a seat in Congress. He also invested in a gold mine, as well as an early Indiana railroad, and he owned a large farm near West Lebanon. He established the Purdue Rifles, a military unit that saw Civil War action under a 100-day commitment.

Following the end of the war and his temporary residency in New York City, where he bought pork to sell to the Union military forces, he returned to Lafayette, where a Purdue-for-Congress movement sprang to life. Persuaded by his friends, Purdue ran for Congress, though his naiveté in mat-

ters political was monumental. Kriebel documents Purdue's accomplishments and portrays his personality as well.

For the student of Indiana history, *The Midas of the Wabash* is must reading. To ignore John Purdue's life is to miss an essential chapter of Hoosier history.

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Ambrose Bierce
Tales of Soldiers and Civilians
Edited by Donald T. Blume

(Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2004. Pp. xxxii, 222. Appendix, notes. Clothbound, \$30.00; paperbound, \$20.00.)

A Much Misunderstood Man
Selected Letters of Ambrose Bierce
Edited by S.T. Joshi and David E. Schultz

(Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2003. Pp. xxvi, 258. Notes, bibliography, index. \$74.95.)

American writer Ambrose Bierce holds particular interest for students of Indiana history because, while he was born in Ohio, he was living in Elkhart, Indiana, when the Civil War broke out. He joined the 9th Indiana Volunteer Infantry and saw action in many of the major battles of the war—Chickamauga, Pickett's Mill, Missionary Ridge, Shiloh. His expe-

rience earned him fifteen commendations and, arguably, a career. After the war he became a journalist and made his reputation, in part, by writing disagreeably, but honestly, about his experiences as a soldier and as a civilian. Bierce was one of the few American writers to have served in active combat, and he was one of an even smaller number who refused to

glorify, romanticize, or in any way extol what had been a bloody, often barbaric war.

It was after he was snapped up by William Randolph Hearst to be a regular columnist for the *San Francisco Examiner* that Bierce's reputation for moralistic invective and political satire became legendary. While his greatest legacy remains his first-hand accounts of the horrors of war—horrors so grievous that they meld into tales of the supernatural—he is today most remembered for a single short story, “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” that continues to appear in literary anthologies, including most recently *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians*, edited by Donald Blume (2004).

Readers at all familiar with Bierce might wonder why another publication of these particular tales is necessary. A collection of this name has been published several times, including a 2000 edition that included other stories. The answer lies almost exclusively in Blume's introduction. The editor writes of his efforts in reassembling these nineteen tales that “In the preparation of this edition, for each story six physical texts were considered: the original newspaper text, the edited paste-up copytext to the 1892 text, the 1892 text, the 1898 text, the edited copytext to the 1909 text, and the 1909 text.” Blume feels that he has made a thorough study of Bierce's intentions and has thus provided readers with the definitive version of the original collection. Given that the 1898 version included extra stories

(for a total of 22), and the 1909 version contained 26, the fact that Blume has reverted to the original 19 is commendable. Blume's edition also surpasses the 2000 edition, published by Penguin Classics, by including an original story that was excluded in the latter. All to the good. Where Blume will lose the general readership, however, is in his heroic but excruciating attention to the smallest details of grammar and punctuation. For example, “Again seeking to follow Bierce's intentions, many more colons appear in this edition than in the 1892 and later collections” (p. xxviii).

But then, the general reader is not Blume's intended audience. In his introduction he comments in detail upon Bierce's “artfully constructed plots that function on two different levels for two different groups of readers, which we can denote the informed and the uninformed.” Presumably, those in the latter category will miss the nuances of this new collection. And so, although Blume's introduction is useful to serious students of Bierce, this volume has a limited audience, and whether it fills any “void in American literature,” as the cover claims, is debatable.

Similarly, the casual reader will find little of interest in *A Much Misunderstood Man, Selected Letters of Ambrose Bierce*. Editors S. T. Joshi and David E. Schultz have selected slightly more than 200 letters from among Bierce's prodigious correspondence. The problem is that, while the editors

have provided voluminous notes that make the otherwise indecipherable letters decipherable, they are not made entertaining or informative for any but the most ardent student of a brief period in San Francisco literary history. The letters in this collection address and/or discuss, almost exclusively, minor regional authors such as George Sterling, Charles Warren Stoddard, and Herman Scheffauer. While there are half a dozen or so letters addressed to the likes of William Randolph Hearst and H. L. Mencken, they do not suffice to interest any but the most limited audience. Furthermore,

most readers will find the subject matter of the letters to be rather prosaic. As the editors themselves admit, "it is disappointing how infrequently Bierce discusses his fiction in his letters." Given that Bierce is best known, and loved, for his short fiction, this is indeed problematic. However, someone out there knows and cares about the minutiae of San Francisco letters at the turn of the century. This is his/her book.

JEANETTE VANAUSDALL is author of *Pride and Protest: The Novel in Indiana* (2000).



Notre Dame vs. the Klan
How the Fighting Irish Defeated the Ku Klux Klan
 By Todd Tucker

(Chicago: Loyola Press, 2004. Pp. xxiii, 261. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$24.95.)

The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s attained its greatest strength in Indiana, but the state was relatively free of the violence that sometimes accompanied the rise of the Invisible Empire elsewhere. The rowdy confrontation that took place between robed Klansmen attending a tristate gathering in South Bend and aroused Notre Dame students was an exception. The skirmishes that occurred on May 17 and 19, 1924, resulted in a few minor injuries and arrests but a large number of bruised egos on both sides.

Todd Tucker, a professional writer whose work has appeared in several

national magazines, has put together an engaging account of this South Bend "riot." He succeeds in placing the event in a broad framework that includes the origins and development of both the Klan and Notre Dame. He provides absorbing biographical sketches of Notre Dame founder Father Edward Sorin; Father Matthew Walsh, Notre Dame president at the time of the disturbances; the university's legendary football coach Knute Rockne; and David C. Stephenson, the infamous Grand Dragon whose unbridled lust culminated with the death of Madge Oberholtzer, leading to his homicide conviction and the