sissippi" (p. xix), the connection remains largely unexplored. Instead, *Working the Mississippi* is something of an odds-and-ends collection of interesting tidbits that the author has collected over time and then organized by location and occupation. This work reads also at times as a "who's who" of these river towns—even if the person's river connection is somewhat minimal. Such anecdotes could have benefited from a historical structure with a sophisticated argument connecting the tales to a coherent narrative of river life. Without this, her work reads like so many of the nineteenth-century memoirs and travel accounts that the author uses—interesting in and of themselves for the stories they tell, but useful more for what they reveal about the attitudes of the authors than as actual documentation of life along the river. Stepenoff is a scholar, living along the river herself, who clearly knows and loves the river, and has created a work packed with stories about life within the riverside towns of the middle Mississippi.

Ann Ostendorf is Assistant Professor of History at Gonzaga University. Her research on Mississippi River topics includes her book, *Sounds American: National Identity and the Music Cultures of the Lower Mississippi River Valley, 1800-1860* (2011). She is currently working on a manuscript dealing with Roma lives and the Gypsy image in nineteenth-century America.

The Printer's Kiss: The Life and Letters of a Civil War Newspaperman and His Family

Edited by Patricia A. Donohoe

(Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2014. Pp. ix, 257. Illustrations, appendix, notes, selected references, index. $39.95.)

One way to understand the status of journalism at a particular time in history is to examine the life of a journalist. Often this is done with a major figure: the lives of Horace Greeley, Joseph Pulitzer, William Randolph Hearst, H. L. Mencken, Walter Lippmann, Edward R. Murrow, and Walter Cronkite come to mind as obvious subjects for such inquiry.

Yet we can also learn plenty about journalism from the lives of the less famous, and that is the case with Patricia A. Donohoe's *The Printer's Kiss*, which looks at the life of Will Tomlinson, who was born in northeast England, raised in Canada, moved to the United States as a teenager, learned printing at the *St. Lawrence Republican* in New York, and plied his trade as a journalist in Ohio. Married to a woman whose family had abolitionist leanings (as well as having produced the first president of Indiana

University, Andrew Wylie), Tomlinson was a War Democrat in a state that produced some of the Union Army's most decorated leaders. Although he was a Democrat, he was an unabashed supporter of Abraham Lincoln. The publisher-editor abhorred the Peace Democrats and tolerated the abolitionists, believing that reunion was the main reason for the war. Instead of just writing about the war, Tomlinson also participated in the war, raising a regiment in the spring of 1861 and then volunteering and serving during the first year of the conflict.

Donohoe tells Tomlinson's story through the articles he wrote and through the editor's letters to his wife Eliza and others, as well as Eliza's letters back to him and to others. As Donohoe observes, the permanent record left by the denizens of the nineteenth century offers scholars and the public excellent primary sources for reconstructing history. The only major difficulty is deciphering handwritten letters and notes, especially those written in pencil.

What do we learn about Tomlinson the journalist from all this correspondence and journalism? That change was a constant in the life of a mid-century journalist, and that he fell into the common pattern of "build, work, fail, and move on." Tomlinson started and ran four newspapers in Ohio before moving off to Iowa in 1854. There he briefly worked for Dennis A. Mahony, the firebrand Democratic editor of the *Dubuque Herald*. In 1855, Tomlinson moved to Des Moines and ran the *Iowa Statesman*. When it took a turn for the worse in 1857, Tomlinson sold the *Statesman*, and went on to become the associate editor of the *Iowa State Journal*. Unfortunately, Tomlinson also developed a reputation as an alcoholic. He fled back to Ohio, this time to Cincinnati, where he worked as a compositor.

At the start of the war, Tomlinson raised a regiment, with the enlistment effort starting with a meeting of printers in Cincinnati. Eliza proved to be a sympathetic supporter of Tomlinson's war fervor: "My prayers shall be with you," she wrote, "for the prosperity and success of your just and righteous cause. A God of justice—a God of power will not suffer the destruction of this noble fabric, purchased by the toil and privations and sacrifices of our forefathers" (p. 72). In the same letter, she asks Tomlinson to visit her before he heads off to battle. Tomlinson served for about a year, but was dismissed and went back to Cincinnati, occasionally writing a letter to the editor to the *Ripley Bee* and working as a compositor at the *Cincinnati Gazette*.

The editor of the book is the great-great-granddaughter of Tomlinson, but she makes that point clear, so it is no impediment in terms of its scholarship. On the contrary, Donohoe has found a treasure trove of letters from Tomlinson and his wife. Its discovery has spurred Donohoe to tell Tomlinson's story, not as a relative, but as a journalist at a crucial moment in American history, and this volume does that very well. It is a narra-

tive that moves along with a certain momentum that mirrors Tomlinson's journalistic life—all fits and starts, going somewhere yet barely going anywhere. In that sense, Donohoe's book succeeds in developing the nature and status of journalism during the American Civil War, through the words of an ordinary newspaperman and those of his wife. It was a time when almost all newspapers had small circulations, were located in small cities or towns, and had relatively short existences. Yet they were vital to the public discourse that brought the Civil War—and its major issues, especially slavery—to the forefront.

DAVID W. BULLA is Associate Professor of Journalism at Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Dr. Bulla does research on journalism during the Civil War era. His most recent book is *Lincoln Mediated* (2015), co-authored with Gregory A. Borchard.

Lincoln's Autocrat: The Life of Edwin Stanton

By William Marvel

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. Pp. xi, 466. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. $35.00.)

Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton is one of the most recognizable members of Abraham Lincoln's cabinet, his bespectacled face framed by a graying, chest-length beard. Although a cabinet member who wielded tremendous power in organizing and directing the Union war effort, Stanton has not been the subject of a major biography since 1962. William Marvel meets that need with *Lincoln's Autocrat*, a biography which presents Edwin Stanton in all his complexity, mendacity, and ruthlessness—a book that is certain to become the standard treatment of Lincoln's controversial war minister for years to come.

Obscurity surrounds much of Stanton's early life and antebellum career, making Marvel's ability to reconstruct both at length all the more impressive. Marvel charts the Ohio native's rise as a lawyer and Democratic Party loyalist. In the courtroom, Stanton played to emotion when law or logic were not on his side, a tendency on full display when Stanton joined the defense team in the sensational murder trial of Daniel Sickles, the New York congressman (and future Civil War general) who in 1859 shot to death his wife's lover. Following Simon Cameron's disappointing performance as Lincoln's first secretary of war, Stanton succeeded him in early 1862, inaugurating his transition from Breckinridge Democrat to Radical Republican, and from "fawning hanger-on" to "grasping bureaucrat" (p. 155).

Some biographers grow too close to their subjects and blind to their