
REVIEWS

Civil War on the Missouri–Kansas Border

by Donald L. Gilmore

384 pages, photographs, notes, bibliography, index.
Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Co., 2006, cloth \$29.95.

Donald L. Gilmore intends to counter more than a century of northern propaganda that he claims has stigmatized Missouri's role in the Civil War. While ignoring the crimes committed by Kansas against Missouri, historians have labeled Missourians as Border Ruffians and bushwhackers. Gilmore contends that Missourians were merely retaliating for the depredations Kansans committed. Southern guerrillas such as William Anderson and William Clarke Quantrill (despite Anderson's sobriquet of "Bloody Bill") were not merciless butchers, but men driven to psychopathic behavior by the cruelties of the federal army. To support his argument, Gilmore provides an overview of the fighting in territorial Kansas and in Missouri and Kansas during the Civil War.

In a book that finds Missourians capable of few mistakes, it is refreshing that Gilmore freely admits that the Civil War was about slavery. Slaves were worth a great deal of money, and Missourians were quite sensibly reluctant to see that wealth vanish at the hands of slave-stealing Kansans or Republican presidents. Gilmore admires the "southern culture" Missouri represented: "an affluent area ruled by a sophisticated, relatively educated elite class, a number of whom lived on plantations and in fine antebellum mansions" (p. 31). This culture was, of course, made possible by the labor of slaves. Gilmore argues that trouble started when abolitionists moved into Kansas Territory threatening that slave property, forcing Missourians to intervene in the lawless territory.

Gilmore concedes that Kansas raids into Missouri starting in 1858 were in response to the earlier incursions Missourians had made into Kansas Territory. But, Gilmore argues, Kansans' response was totally out of proportion to what Missourians had done. This is arguable. Since Gilmore glosses over the development of the free-state movement in Kansas, it is hard to gain any understanding from his account of what motivated Kansans to invade western Missouri, loot, and liberate slaves. Moreover, the most infamous of these incidents occurred when Kansans under Jim Lane burned Osceola in September 1861. One Missourian died. The loot from Osceola made its way to Lawrence, justifying to Missourians the 1863 attack on Lawrence that killed 150 people. But surely if Osceola was out of proportion for what Kansans had suffered in 1856, the death of 150 men and boys at Lawrence was out of proportion for what Missourians had suffered at Osceola. Gilmore thinks not. "[I]f the raid is placed with-

in the context of the depredations suffered by Missouri civilians from 1858 onwards, Quantrill's opinion that 'Lawrence had it coming' makes considerable sense from the Missourians' perspective" (p. 250).

Even if one accepts that the Missouri guerrillas were driven to their actions by Unionist outrages, Gilmore cannot make this assertion fit the northerner Quantrill. Gilmore never adequately explains why Quantrill went over to the South. The justification Quantrill claimed—that Kansas jayhawkers murdered his brother—is entirely fictitious. By Gilmore's own account, Quantrill was a mere petty thief and criminal before joining the Southern cause.

Citations are lacking. Gilmore repeatedly quotes Sara Robinson as having derisively referred to Missourians as "de po' white folk," but there is no footnote for that reference. In other places, Gilmore's choice of sources is odd. He does not consult the 1856 testimony of the congressional investigation on Bleeding Kansas or the Pottawatomie Massacre. Gilmore also uncritically accepts the work of John N. Edwards, the ex-Confederate who did much to burnish the guerrillas' reputation. It was not convincing in the nineteenth century and it is not convincing now.

Reviewed by Nicole Etcheson, Alexander M. Bracken professor of history, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana.

*Outrage, Passion & Uncommon Sense:
How Editorial Writers Have Taken on the
Great American Issues of the Past 150 Years*

edited by Michael Gartner and the Newseum

224 pages, photographs, illustrations, bibliography, index.
Washington, D.C.: National Geographic, 2005, cloth
\$30.00.

In *Outrage, Passion & Uncommon Sense*, journalist Michael Gartner and his colleagues at the Newseum pledge to present a collection of the "the most important—or most interesting, or most spiteful, or most eloquent—editorials ever written." Sponsored by the Freedom Forum foundation, the Newseum is a museum seeking to promote better public understanding of the news media and the First Amendment, and it is clear that this work hopes to stimulate wider appreciation of the benefits of untrammelled debate.

Ever since Horace Greeley created the editorial page in the 1850s to separate expressions of opinion from "straight" reporting, the editorial has been an important area for open and lively discussion. To illustrate, and undoubtedly to make for entertaining reading, Gartner offers far more examples here of outrage and passion than of sober common sense. A reader who has known only American newspapers of the past few decades might be shocked by the contentiousness, even viciousness, of many of the editorials included here. It is a useful reminder that political polarization and lack of civility are hardly new to American public life. To drive home the point that free speech extends even to mistaken opinions, some pieces express positions that few today would agree with, such as support for the 1857 Supreme Court decision upholding slavery or the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II or segregation in the 1960s South.

But there are far more examples of eloquence. At the outset Gartner identifies "the four greatest editorial writers in the history of this nation," men who "reported thoroughly, wrote gracefully and argued passionately": Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune*, Henry Watterson of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, William Allen White of Kansas's own *Emporia Gazette*, and Vermont Royster of the *Wall Street Journal*. (If for nothing else, this writer would be indebted to this volume for bringing back into print White's profoundly moving 1921 obituary of his teenage daughter, Mary.) Gartner offers numerous examples of the work of each of these men as well as many other writers, grouped by broad categories representing staple journalistic subjects (politics, war, death, race) and emotional appeals (Christmas, "passions") as well as favorite issues of the industry ("newspapering" and "freedoms").

Charmingly designed and lavishly illustrated, *Outrage, Passion & Uncommon Sense* makes for entertaining reading. Because it is clearly intended to appeal to a broad public it might seem inappropriate to evaluate the work in scholarly terms. But even on its own terms, the book's self-congratulatory treatment of its subject claims more than it proves. Gartner's introductions to each section are evocative but less substantive than many of his examples. Much is claimed for the power of editorials, but aside from the statement that it "is the soul of the newspaper," little is said about precisely what an editorial does or should do. As is often true in treatments of journalism by its practitioners, the book vacillates between claims that the press wields tremendous influence and pleads that it is only a faithful reflection of its environment.

The work makes clear, however, that the single most important quality of a good editorial—right- or wrong-headed—is passion. Gartner repeatedly laments the decline of passion in recent years, attributing it primarily to the fact that most papers are now owned by large corporate chains and staffed by writers with little stake in their communities. "You can't write knowingly—let alone passionately—about your town if you are an itinerant writer or if you fear your absentee bosses," Gartner notes. That might well be, but there is another change that today's professional journalists prefer to ignore: the breaking of once-intimate ties between the press and political parties. Professional norms today emphasize nonpartisanship and disparage the bad old days of a party press, but it is no coincidence that three of Gartner's four paragons were intensely political animals. They wrote to persuade readers, not according to some abstract notions of good government but prevailing positions of their respective parties. Lack of strong political commitment has drained the passion from mainstream journalism, and it is no accident that today Internet blogs have become the new home of outrageous and passionate writing.

Reviewed by Sally Foreman Griffith, independent historian, Havertown, Pennsylvania.

America's Historic Stockyards: Livestock Hotels

by J'Nell L. Pate

xiv + 225 pages, appendices, notes, glossary, bibliography, index.

Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 2005, cloth \$29.95.

One of my favorite childhood memories is of going to the Wichita stockyards to sell cattle, which we usually did two or three times a year. If my father had just a couple of head to sell, he'd usually haul them to the community sale at El Dorado or in later years to the livestock auction at Emporia. But during the 1950s his market of choice was Wichita. We had a one-ton GMC that would hold half a dozen or so steers (depending on how big they were) or a dozen calves. Stock trailers were twenty years in the future, so the unloading area was set up for both semis and for farm trucks like ours. As we unloaded, a man with a notepad would ask who was getting the cattle, meaning which commission firm were we patronizing, which, if I remember correctly, was Southwest. While the commission men, Marion Ray and Emmet Gifford, sought a buyer, we would wander around the yards to check out the other cattle, then go into the Exchange building, a colorful place with well-used spittoons scattered here and there and the co-mingled odors of cigar smoke and cow manure wafting to the high ceiling. The characters who frequented the Exchange—cattle buyers, ranchers, commission men, livestock traders, truckers—were as colorful as the building itself. I learned words there I never heard at home, even from the ornery town kids at recess time.

These memories, pleasant ones, were brought back to mind when I read J'Nell Pate's illustrated survey of major American terminal markets. After a brief history of livestock marketing from colonial times to the present, Pate devotes a short chapter to each of two dozen of the most important stockyards, including Wichita. The earliest of these sale yards, naturally enough, were east of the Mississippi: Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Cincinnati; Louisville; St. Louis; and Chicago. With the advent of the big cattle drives from Texas to Kansas following the Civil War, Kansas City and St. Joseph gained prominence, as, during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, did eleven others, the majority of them (Milwaukee, Peoria, Indianapolis, Omaha, Sioux City, St. Paul, and Sioux Falls) in the Midwest. Only the yards at Denver, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Wichita could fairly be considered to be in the West. Still later in the twentieth century, however, especially as trucks began to replace trains as the primary transport for cattle, half a dozen other markets

gained prominence, all but one (Joplin) in the West (Portland, San Francisco, Oklahoma City, Ogden, and Houston).

Pate works in a surprising amount of pertinent information in her brief vignettes of each market, including the important role played by meat-packing firms in the establishment and success of various stockyards, the intricacies of ownership, and crucial legislation. She also touches on the effect of catastrophes, such as fires and floods, on various stockyards. She notes the assorted claims to being the world's largest market as the title shifts around among Chicago, Omaha, and Kansas City during the glory days. As feedlots and packing plants moved west, however, and as trucks and stock trailers replaced railroad stock cars, the big markets went into decline. Another influencing factor was the rise of regional livestock auctions, including those in such Kansas towns as Dodge City, Manhattan, Pratt, and Emporia. Most of the two dozen major terminal markets, including the three giants mentioned above, are now defunct. Some, however, such as the Oklahoma City market, which lies west of the urban area and subsumed the role of a regional livestock auction, have not only survived but prospered.

As with the majority of the others, the Wichita stockyards, which had its inception in 1887, began a steep decline in the 1960s and finally closed for good in 1980. In my memory, however, I can still smell the cigar smoke in the Exchange building, and I can still hear the nasal twang of livestock reporter Bruce Behymer intoning each morning and each noon the same words, day after day: "Wichita's hog market today. . ."

Reviewed by Jim Hoy, professor of English, Emporia State University.

While in the Hands of the Enemy: Military Prisons of the Civil War

by Charles W. Sanders Jr.

x +390 pages, photographs, notes, bibliography, index.
Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005, cloth \$44.95.

Charles W. Sanders Jr., a professor of history at Kansas State University, has accomplished something quite rare in modern Civil War scholarship. He has convincingly overturned conventional wisdom on an understudied aspect of the war. In *While in the Hands of the Enemy*, Sanders examines the prison systems of North and South. He spares no words in damning both Confederates and Union men for their shameful treatment of prisoners over the course of the war. Such scathing criticism is earned because Sanders demonstrates that the treatment prisoners received from both sides worsened during the war as a result of deliberate policies by both governments. Sanders composes an effective dissent from scholarly consensus that the cruelty of Civil War prisons was the result of forgivable accidents rather than cold calculation. With a heavy reliance on government records, reports of conditions, and prisoners' experiences, Sanders convincingly backs up his thesis.

As Sanders rightly argues, Civil War historians do not pay much attention to prisons. Most Americans today admire much about the Civil War and prefer not to think about the uglier aspects of it; the fate of prisoners of war is an uncomfortable subject even today, long after the fact. Understandably, at the beginning of the war, both armies and governments were completely unprepared to care for captives taken in battle. Since Union and Confederate leaders alike expected a brief war before First Bull Run, neither side put much thought into what to do with POWs. After the opening engagements of the war, however, each side had to develop a policy to deal with prisoners. Here Sanders shows how prisoners fared in each of America's previous three major wars (the Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican War). He also details the institutions the North and the South developed to house and care for prisoners in the early months of the war. Indeed, on many occasions, commanders paroled prisoners (sending them home with a pledge not to fight in the war unless properly exchanged) rather than try to confine them because of the lack of a system for incarcerating prisoners.

The larger-than-expected number of prisoners, Sanders asserts, led each side to seek to exchange prisoners to reduce the expense incurred by housing them. Sanders explains the origins of the prisoner-exchange cartel agreed to in 1862 and explains how it began to break down. His main contention is that neither

government sincerely wished for humanitarian reasons to exchange prisoners; each side was using the issue to score political points with their publics. Because of the lack of sincerity involved, both sides looked for the system to fail and positioned themselves to blame their opponents for its demise. Once the exchange cartel lapsed and attempts to revive it fizzled by the middle of 1863, both Confederate and Union officials experienced a sharp rise in the number of prisoners on hand. In the last year and a half of the war, Sanders argues, both governments adopted policies of deliberate cruelty to captives. Using primary sources from government archives, Sanders effectively demonstrates that mistreatment of prisoners in infamous places such as Andersonville, Elmira, and Richmond's Libby Prison was not the result of a lack of resources or inefficient administration. Governments quite consciously chose cruelty over humanity. Both Sanders's descriptions and the few photos included with the book illustrate in disturbing detail the result of these policies.

At the end of the book, Sanders sums up his main argument by blaming the humanitarian disaster of each side's prison system directly on Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. Both knew of the conditions, he concludes, and chose to do nothing about them when they had the resources available to be humane. Certainly the North did, but Sanders shows that the South did as well. Here Sanders displays an outstanding feature of this work: fairness. He justifiably blames North and South. With this conclusion, Sanders overturns the accepted view of Civil War prison cruelty as unavoidable tragedy. Both governments were intentionally cruel, using the suffering of their own men as well as the enemy to try to win the war. Few fans of the Civil War will like hearing that conclusion, but it is a necessary one. General William T. Sherman said war was hell; the prisons of Elmira, Rock Island, Andersonville, and Salisbury show that the general may have underestimated the situation.

Reviewed by Christopher M. Paine, instructor of history, Lake Michigan College, Benton Harbor, Michigan.

A Nation of Statesmen: The Political Culture of the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans, 1815–1972

by James W. Oberly

xv + 336 pages, maps, tables, notes, bibliography, index.
Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005, cloth \$34.95.

This book begins poorly. In the first paragraph of chapter one, the author makes four factual errors, one interpretative error, and several significant typos.

James Fenimore [sic] Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* and the films of the same name brought the Mohican Indians to the attention of the American public. Cooper's 1828 [sic] novel featured the exploits of a white frontiersman, Hawkeye, and his two Mohican companions, Chingachook [sic] and his son, Uncas. The novel is set in colonial New York against the grand events of the English surrender of Fort Ticonderoga [sic] to combined French-Indian forces. Hawkeye and the two Mohicans manage to safeguard the lives of two English [sic] maidens, Alice Munro and Corinne [sic] Munro. Chingachook [sic] and Uncas are portrayed as men of few words, as simple "children of the forest" or "noble savages," in contrast to some of the Iroquois and mixed-race characters in the book. At the book's conclusion, Chingachook [sic] dies [sic].

James Fenimore Cooper's 1826 novel, the first truly American novel and one of the five Leather-stocking Tales, attempted, as did those of Scottish and English compatriots Sir Walter Scott and Alfred Lord Tennyson, to create mythological truths against historic backdrops. Natty Bumppo, the first truly American fictional character, and his Mohican brethren rescue and guide the two daughters of a Scottish officer, Alice and Cora (the latter by an Afro-Caribbean mother); an English officer from the American southern colonies, Duncan; and a Reformed Evangelical Psalmist named David from the English disaster and massacre at Fort William Henry. Toward the end of the novel, Uncas and Cora heroically accept martyrdom in the finest tradition of western civilization so that the larger whole (the *res publica* of virtuous citizens) can be saved. *Chingachook*, a rather complex and nuanced figure, especially when considered in the whole of the Leather-stocking Tales, laments his son's death at the end of *The Last of the Mohicans*. Far from being merely a catalyst to make Natty a true American, Chingachook plays a vital role in the five Leather-stocking Tales. Indeed, he may be one of Cooper's most interesting and complex characters.

One wonders how such a terrible introductory paragraph could get by the editors. Perhaps the editors themselves demanded an introduction dealing with *The Last of the Mohicans*, as this is what the average book buyers might recognize. Of course,

the author and editor should hope that the reader does not know his Cooper well, or this book will be rejected out of hand. In all fairness, the author probably wrote the introduction hastily toward the end of the publishing process. Still, the errors mar the book considerably, and one hopes that a second edition or printing will correct these problems. While this might seem like the pure picking of nits (and admittedly, Cooper is a figure close to this reviewer's heart), it does force any reader to call into question the veracity of the two-hundred-some pages of text following the introduction to *A Nation of Statesmen*.

Despite an inauspicious beginning, the book improves dramatically as one reads on. In 1997 the Stockbridge-Munsee Indian community of Wisconsin asked James Oberly, a well-known and well-respected historian of nineteenth-century U.S. land policy, for his opinion on a legal issue involving a property dispute. Oberly soon found himself presenting the case for the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans as an expert witness. *A Nation of Statesmen* serves, for all intents and purposes, as the fruit of these proceedings and Oberly's testimony. In his preface, Oberly acknowledges that this book should give expression to his views presented in court, and, further, that he desires to "air the voices of the Mohicans themselves" (p. xii). By the lights of his clients, he must have succeeded, as the "Stockbridge-Munsee Community," not James Oberly, owns the copyright of this work. And, the results of these court proceedings are now volume 252 in the *Civilization of the American Indian Series*, a series that has produced some of the finest works available on American Indian history. R. David Edmunds's brilliant *The Potawatomis: Keepers of the Fire* reminds us of the excellence of this series.

Although by no means objective in any scholarly or traditional academic sense, Oberly does write a fascinating book dealing with the political culture of one native people in its struggles with various turmoils of the American Republic from the chaos and shame of the War of 1812 to the chaos and shame of the Nixon administration. Oberly is especially good when dealing with the role of the Christian religion in the history of the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans. Further, Oberly does a good job of discussing the meaning of the word "nation" for this people, who embraced the term in its ethnographic, nineteenth-century sense rather than its twentieth-century sense of nationalist wars and ethnic cleansing. Finally, Oberly masterfully captures the ability of the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohicans to engage larger American political culture. Additionally, the press should be commended for producing a beautifully bound book with fine maps and a wealth of vital information in the appendices.

Once one gets past the error-filled introduction, the book and its author demonstrate some serious academic prowess.

Reviewed by Bradley J. Birzer, Russell Amos Kirk Chair in History and director of American studies, Hillsdale College, Michigan.

*Captain Jack and the Dalton Gang:
The Life and Times of a Railroad Detective*

by John J. Kinney

270 pages, illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index.
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005, cloth \$35.00;
paper \$17.95.

Some years ago I was discussing old-time American railroads with a dedicated "buff" who, like myself, had a great affection for the early 4-4-0 wood-burning high-stacked locomotives which have since been featured in many Western movies. The subject changed rapidly when he said: "What do you know about the cinder dicks?" Fortunately, I knew something about them—the railroad police whose job it was to protect both passengers and the railroad, although some of them had an unenviable reputation for sometimes violent actions against hobos and others who stole rides on freight trains.

I was reminded of that conversation when I looked at this present volume, for as its title suggests, it is the story of a "cinder dick" although one suspects he would not have seen himself in such a light.

However, the Captain Jack in this instance was John Joseph Kinney, for many years a Pinkerton agent and railroad detective. The fact that he was the great grandfather of the author is an additional facet of an interesting story—how many of us who write books about the Old West and its myriad characters can claim kinship to the subject under discussion?

Kinney's involvement with the Dalton Gang took place when they robbed a Missouri, Kansas & Texas train (immortalized as the Katy railroad) at a place called Adair, in Indian Territory (which later became Oklahoma) in July 1892. Unfortunately, the author has not produced a blow by blow or shot by shot account of that incident. Rather, he relies a great deal upon published sources, many of them contemporary news reports, which means that while one gets a good overview of the events surrounding both the raid and the later career and demise of the Daltons, one does not learn as much about John Kinney as one might wish. In fact, the suggestion in the Introduction that Kinney was a "Pinkerton agent or a railroad detective (nobody was quite sure which)" should have alerted the author to the fact that efforts should have been made to examine the records of the Pinkerton Detective Agency and the various railroads that employed Captain Jack. Had this been done, one suspects that much more might have come to light about Kinney's involvement with the Daltons and others engaged in train robbery. Agents for both organizations would have submitted detailed reports, and civil law enforcement, both county and local, would

have done the same. Instead, we are left with too many gaps and little substance. This is unfortunate, for it is evident that there was much more to John Kinney than is revealed here.

The author has, however, and perhaps unwittingly, provided one of the best source materials that I have seen in years—his notes are a gem, for they are often detailed and informative containing material unconnected with the narrative yet interesting in their own right. Similarly, in the text he sometimes goes to great lengths to describe events or facets that may not appeal to all—such as the expertise required by hangmen to launch someone into eternity in as painless a manner as possible. The author displays a "gallows" sense of humor when discussing the art of hanging by experts (notably George Maledon "Hanging Judge" Parker's executioner). However, on one occasion another hangman accidentally jerked his lever and the condemned man, accompanied by two burly lawmen, all went through the trap together.

The author also provides material relative to railroad management, the protection of stock and the public, and the effect railroads had upon civilization at the time. Despite its shortcomings, the book should appeal to a wide audience.

Reviewed by Joseph G. Rosa, The English Westerners' Society, London.

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p. 227, column 1, last line: H. Roger Grant, Centennial Professor at Clemson University, was incorrectly (and prematurely) identified as professor emeritus; p. 273, column 1, line 6: *Comanche County Clipper* should be *Clark County Clipper*; p. 290, column 2, line 30: L. Marie Haywood's maiden name is Stephenson, not Anderson.