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The Pawnee Mission Letters, 1834–1851

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Book Reviews and Notices

Where the Bones Rest, by Roger Pavey. LeClaire, Iowa: Ablewise Books, 2011. 309 pp. \$11.95 paper.

Reviewer Patrick J. Jung is associate professor of history and anthropology at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. He is the author of *The Black Hawk War of 1832* (2007).

Where the Bones Rest is a respectable work of historical fiction about the Black Hawk War of 1832. It revolves around the first-person narratives of three persons who actually participated in the conflict: Namesa, a young Sauk mother; Dr. Addison Philleo, a newspaper editor and physician from Galena who fought under General Henry Dodge; and Rachel Hall, a white settler taken captive by the Indians. Like all good writers in this genre, Roger Pavey embellishes the story with fictional dialog and events that are nevertheless firmly grounded in factual history. There are a few errors. On page 2, Pavey states that Namesa's entire lodge belonged to the Osh-Kosh moiety of the Sauk tribe. That would have been impossible because membership in the two moieties was based on birth order. Thus, if a Sauk father was a Kish-co, his first-born child would be an Osh-Kosh, his second-born child a Kish-co, and so forth. Moreover, on page 27, Pavey states that General Henry Atkinson (whose name among the Indians was White Beaver) forced Black Hawk's followers to leave Saukenuk in 1831; in fact, it was General Edmund P. Gaines. These, however, are minor errors in what is otherwise a well-researched work of fiction. Black Hawk War buffs will certainly want to read this book, and its very readable text makes it accessible to younger readers (particularly those in high school) who will find it an excellent introduction to this fascinating Indian war that spanned the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa in the summer of 1832.

The Pawnee Mission Letters, 1834–1851, edited by Richard E. Jensen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010. xxxii, 676 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$60.00 paper.

Reviewer Bonnie Sue Lewis is associate professor of mission and Native American Christianity at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

She is the author of *Creating Christian Indians: Native Clergy in the Presbyterian Church* (2003).

With the publication of *The Pawnee Mission Letters*, Richard Jensen has provided historians of church and academy another valuable resource for the study of the complex relationships among Native Americans, U.S. government employees, and Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century. These pages, drawn primarily from unpublished missionary archives of the Houghton Library at Harvard and the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, reveal the often painful story of U.S. attempts to both “Christianize and civilize” peoples little understood and often misjudged.

The story of the embattled Pawnees was not uncommon. Caught between their traditional enemies — the Sioux — an increasing western migration, and the missionaries and Indian agents sent to “tame” them, the Pawnees were amazingly resilient until all three became a force too strong to withstand. Although the mission documents reveal much about Pawnee life through the eyes of the missionaries who traveled among and lived with the Pawnees for several years, the voices of the Pawnees themselves are missing. The voices of the missionaries and the government agents carry the story line. As the collection of letters, diaries, and depositions of the Pawnee missionaries and the Indian agents indicates, though, the greatest battles were among the missionaries themselves and between the missionaries and the government agents. In the end, neither church nor state was able to save the Pawnees from the devastation of invading wagon trains or Indian wars. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission closed the Pawnee mission within a dozen years of its opening; the Pawnees who escaped the advances of the emigrants and the marauding Sioux were eventually moved to Indian Territory, where their numbers continued to decline.

Within the nearly 600 pages of text, a story unfolds that includes intrigue, spirit, and the evolution of genuine friendships that made the breakup of the mission even more of a tragedy. The white community was torn apart by personality conflicts as well as conflicting views of theology, ideology, and practice. But the missionaries were also transformed by the experience. Even as their fury and frustrations with one another jeopardized their common goal of “uplifting” the Pawnees, they grew more attached to them. When wagon trains heightened hostilities with Indian tribes in the area, the Pawnees begged the missionaries to stay, even as the missionaries hid women and children, Pawnee and white, from raiding tribes. Most of the missionaries remained engaged with native peoples long after the mission closed.

Readers will find the brief subheadings for each entry, as well as the notes and bibliography, especially beneficial for research and understanding. *The Pawnee Mission Letters* is a welcome addition to the genre.

The Dubuque Shot Tower, edited by John Adelman. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2011. 224 pp. Illustrations, map, appendix. \$24.99 paper.

Reviewer David Walker is professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. He is working on several projects related to the history of Iowa Territory.

The 150-foot-tall Dubuque Shot Tower was constructed by local gunsmith George W. Rogers and opened for business in December 1856. Sixty-eight years earlier Julien Dubuque had refined lead ore in the Mines of Spain, stimulating a mining industry that brought white settlers to the tri-states area of Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Rogers's operation remained in business until sold to a competing St. Louis firm in July 1862, ending the tower's production. Surprisingly, there is no evidence that tower shot contributed to the Union army during the Civil War.

In 1931 the Dubuque Women's Club initiated an effort to preserve the structure, a cause that remained dormant for more than two decades until resurrected by the Dubuque Chamber of Commerce and the Dubuque County Historical Society. The Shot Tower was named to the National Register of Historic Places in October 1976, opening the door to funding from a variety of federal and state grants as well as private donors. Restoration work was completed in September 2010.

Many of the 48 relatively short essays in this book were written by American history and English students at Dubuque's Central Alternative High School. Based almost exclusively on local newspapers, the historical essays range from the impact of lead deposits on Native American communities to the present. Other contributions focus on interviews with local historians, experience conducting library research, class activities, student mentors, hands-on field work, and tourism. The publisher included numerous historical and contemporary illustrations that enhance the text; the appendix includes a valuable timeline. This is a superb example of engaging young students in the history of their community.