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History of the 33D Iowa Infantry Volunteer Regiment, 1863-1866

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fluctuations. While demonstrating a general rise in the wages studied from 1820 to 1860, Margo documents fluctuations so uneven and volatile that some wages possibly even declined in certain places for a time.

There are some problems in this useful exercise. Margo's discussion of the effectiveness of the labor market seems to lack a legitimate point of comparison to anything the labor markets did not themselves do; in the same sense that one's legs might be long enough to reach the ground, antebellum labor markets were sufficiently effective to move the work force and the economy where it went. More deeply, many historians may share my skepticism of the modeling preoccupations of the social sciences, which often fail to consider matters unimportant to the modeling but vital to understanding past experience. While modeling wild fluctuations in earnings, Margo largely ignores the mechanisms essential to such fluctuations. Insufficient attention is paid to the role of child and female labor—and their shifting importance relative to adult or male labor—or the shift from skilled to unskilled workers in the wider labor market. Finally, fluctuations reflected the seasonal and transient nature of work and employment and the ongoing and localized renegotiations that framed the exact nature and length of that season.

In the end, nonspecialists uninterested in number crunching will find an understanding of *Wages and Labor Markets* elusive and the effort frustrating. However, a specialist with some statistical training will find Margo's book usefully suggestive in that it raises a series of sound questions in the course of addressing its central concern.

History of the 33d Iowa Infantry Volunteer Regiment, 1863–1866, by A. F. Sperry, edited by Gregory J. W. Urwin and Cathy Kunzinger Urwin. Civil War in the West Series. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999. xxx, 360 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, appendixes, index. \$38.00 cloth, \$22.00 paper.

Reviewer Terry L. Beckenbaugh is assistant professor of history at McNeese State University. His primary area of research is Union Major General Samuel Ryan Curtis and the Civil War in the trans-Mississippi region.

Civil War regimental histories must be evaluated with a critical eye. Some were written many years after the events they describe, when memories had softened and faded. They are little more than a mythic storytelling of a particular unit's invariably heroic exploits. Thankfully, Andrew Sperry's *History of the 33d Iowa Infantry Volunteer Regiment* does not fall into that category. Sperry wrote the regimental history in 1866, while the memories of the war were still fresh. He depicts the

33d Iowa at its best and worst. The 33d Iowa campaigned in the western and trans-Mississippi theaters, mainly in Arkansas. It fought most notably in the Battle of Helena and participated in the Arkansas portion of the disastrous Red River Campaign.

Sperry served the duration of the war with the 33d Iowa as regimental fifer, then chief musician. His depiction of the drabness of army life, the harsh treatment southern civilians sometimes received, and the cruelties generated by guerrilla warfare all resonate with the reader. The Urwins' lavish endnotes and appendixes make this an excellent addition to published primary sources of Civil War and Iowa history.

Iowa Railroads: The Essays of Frank P. Donovan, Jr., edited by H. Roger Grant. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2000. 330 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$44.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Reviewer John Lauritz Larson is professor of history at Purdue University. He is the author of *Bonds of Enterprise: John Murray Forbes and Western Development in America's Railway Age* (reprinted by the University of Iowa Press in 2001) and *Internal Improvement: National Public Works and the Promise of Popular Government in the Early United States* (University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

Frank P. Donovan Jr. wrote history for a living without the security and benefits of an academic sinecure. (These days not even Roger Grant, an extraordinarily prolific author of 19 books and editor of this volume, works "without a net" the way Donovan did.) In the 1950s and 1960s Donovan produced a series of popular essays on Iowa railroads for *The Palimpsest*, a glossy monthly publication of the State Historical Society of Iowa. Regardless of Donovan's desire to write on other things (which he expressed time and again), society superintendent and editor William J. "Steamboat Bill" Petersen virtually ordered him to study the railroads—and so he did. Donovan always hoped to see these pieces published in a separate volume, a hope frustrated in his lifetime by Petersen (for reasons delicately suggested by Grant). Long deferred, that collection appears at last from the University of Iowa Press. Iowa localists, rail fans, and midwestern "nostalgians" of all kinds will find much to enjoy in these reprinted essays, made all the more useful by scholarly apparatus supplied by Grant.

Donovan wrote a popular style of railroad history once familiar to all historians but now rapidly disappearing from professional journals and bookstalls. At least for the long century between 1850 and the mid-1960s, American railroads enjoyed a natural status as autonomous subjects of history—almost like small countries. Railroad histo-

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