

Here You Have My Story: Eyewitness Accounts of the Nineteenth-Century Central Plains

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Here You Have My Story: Eyewitness Accounts of the Nineteenth-Century Central Plains, edited by Richard E. Jensen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009. xi, 387 pp. Tables, notes, bibliography, index. \$30.00 paper.

Reviewer Michael L. Tate is professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is the author of *Indians and Emigrants: Encounters on the Overland Trails* (2006).

Richard Jensen has assembled 23 reminiscences by as many authors to recreate a sense of what life was like in Nebraska and surrounding states during the nineteenth century. These were selected from a larger slate of articles that originally appeared in the *Nebraska State Historical Society's Proceedings and Transactions and Reports* between 1885 and 1919. The selections are organized in four topical categories — Indian Country, Military Campaigns and Army Life, Overland Freighting, and White Settlement — and are reprinted in their entirety.

The editor has chosen wisely from the larger selection of articles that were available to him, but he cautions the reader to consider two matters before taking the recollections at face value. First, they were written exclusively by white men and women. These members of the pioneer generation conveyed the standard prejudices of the day, especially in relating their ethnocentric feelings about American Indians and other racial minorities. Second, the 23 authors were often living decades beyond the events they described. Thus memory lapses and subjective vantage points sometimes led to inaccuracies and biased information in the recollections. Like all historical records, they must be evaluated against corroborating and contradictory evidence found in other sources. To correct some of these inaccuracies and to refer readers to other valuable materials for comparison, Jensen has assembled 30 pages of valuable explanatory endnotes.

Persons interested in Iowa history, as well as in the pioneer period on the Great Plains, will benefit from reading these reminiscences. More extensive introductions to each of the selections and a range of relevant maps would have enhanced the otherwise worthy package.

Barbed Wire: The Fence that Changed the West, by Joanne S. Liu. Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing, 2009. viii, 141 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendixes, chronology, glossary, bibliography, index. \$14.00 paper.

Reviewer Ginette Aley is the Carey Fellow in the History Department at Kansas State University. Her research and writing have focused on nineteenth-century rural and agricultural history, particularly of the American Midwest.