

# Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska Civil War Veterans: Compilation of the Death Rolls of the Departments of Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska, Grand Army of the Republic, 1883–1948

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*Wilson's Creek, Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove: A Battlefield Guide, with a Section on the Wire Road*, by Earl J. Hess, Richard W. Hatcher III, William Garrett Piston, and William L. Shea. This Hallowed Ground: Guides to Civil War Battlefields series. Lincoln: Bison Books, University of Nebraska Press, 2006. xviii, 284 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendix, notes, bibliography. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewer Terry Beckenbaugh is assistant professor of history in the Department of Military History at the U.S. Army Command & General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His dissertation (University of Arkansas, 2001) was on Samuel Ryan Curtis, who commanded the Federal Army of the Southwest at the Battle of Pea Ridge.

This guide to the battles at Wilson's Creek, Pea Ridge, and Prairie Grove is part of the University of Nebraska Press's Hallowed Ground: Guides to Civil War Battlefields series. The series, as a whole, is excellent and has focused on larger battles in both the eastern and western theaters. The guides are for a wide range of readers, from the tourist who wishes to grasp the major events leading up to and taking place at the battle to the scholar seeking a more thorough understanding of a particular fight by visiting the site. This is the first guide to battlefields in the trans-Mississippi West, and it is done by the authors of the best recent histories of the respective battles.

This superb volume compares favorably with the previous guides in the series. Those interested in following the actions of Iowa's regiments at Wilson's Creek, Pea Ridge, and Prairie Grove can do so by using this guide. As evidenced by the title, the guide also contains a section on the Wire Road, along with stops, that is crucial to understanding why the fighting took place at those sites. Furthermore, conflicts leading up to the battles, such as the fight at Cane Hill, Arkansas (November 28, 1862), prior to the Battle of Prairie Grove, are also detailed. Visitors to any of the above-mentioned battlefields would be well advised to secure a copy of this guidebook prior to visiting those hallowed sites.

*Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska Civil War Veterans: Compilation of the Death Rolls of the Departments of Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska, Grand Army of the Republic, 1883-1948*, by Dennis Northcott. St. Louis: NG Publications, 2007. xi, 658 pp. Appendixes. \$30.00 paper.

Reviewer Kenneth L. Lyftogt is a lecturer in history at the University of Northern Iowa. He is the author of several books on Iowa and the Civil War, including *Iowa's Forgotten General: Matthew Mark Trumbull and the Civil War*.

*Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska Civil War Veterans* is Dennis Northcott's third compilation of death rolls from the Grand Army of the Republic; the

first was from the Illinois rolls and the second from Indiana, with a fourth from Pennsylvania “coming next.”

One of the key questions that concern scholars of the Civil War is, What happened to the soldiers after the war? Northcott looks to the records of the Grand Army of the Republic for some of the answers. In the book’s introduction, he gives a brief history of the organization and how its death records were kept; explains how he compiled his lists and the lists’ limitations; explains the abbreviations; and includes a good page on “How to Use This Book.” The lists do not contain every soldier’s record, but they are as complete as possible. I found the names of many Iowa soldiers who had been part of my own research. This book, as part of Northcott’s ongoing series, will be a valuable research tool for anyone trying to learn the histories of individual Civil War soldiers.

*Governors of Iowa*, by Michael Kramme. Des Moines: The Iowan Books, 2006. Illustrations, bibliography. 103 pp. \$14.95 paper.

Reviewer Peter Hoehnle lives in Homestead, Iowa. He is the author of several articles in the *Annals of Iowa* and *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* and other publications, and has taught Iowa history at Iowa State University and Cornell College.

Michael Kramme has produced a heavily illustrated short reference book on the governors of Iowa, through Thomas Vilsack. A book of this type is long overdue and necessary. Typically, volumes such as this are useful and entertaining for both casual and academic readers. Unfortunately, the present volume suffers from some flaws.

Each governor receives an average of two pages in this work. Each entry has at least one portrait or photograph of the governor, a photograph of his home, and a photograph of his gravestone. Each entry typically provides information on the governor and his family, details about his career before becoming governor, and also highlights of the governor’s period in office. In many cases, Kramme quotes from a governor’s inaugural address to highlight issues important to that governor and to Iowans of the time. Given the absolute dearth of material on early Iowa governors, and the abbreviated tenures of others, Kramme does a good job of providing fairly standard coverage of each administration.

*Governors of Iowa*, as one would expect from a publication originating with *The Iowan*, is full of color photographs. What is surprising for this publisher, however, is how many of those images are distorted by the digital production process. One might reasonably expect that a publication by the publishers of the *Iowan* magazine would have a more appealing layout.