Colonel Heg and His Boys: a Norwegian Regiment in the American Civil War

Stephen Engle
piled biographical sketches of the major individuals mentioned in the accounts. The prologue and introductions to sections provide invaluable continuity to the many narratives, so that all the prison experiences of the 12th Iowa Infantry may be read as one.


Reviewer Stephen Engle is professor of history and director of graduate programs at Florida Atlantic University. He is the author of several books and articles on leading Civil War military figures, including Struggle for the Heartland: The Campaigns from Fort Henry to Corinth (2001).

Waldemar Ager's Colonel Heg and His Boys provides invaluable material on the role of the Norwegian Fifteenth Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment's involvement in the Civil War. It is not, however, a history of the regiment. More than half of the volume is taken up by the diary of Colonel Hans Christian Heg, detailing the role he and his regiment played in the war and the battles in which his unit was engaged. Colonel Heg and his boys fought mainly in the war's western theater, participating in the battles of Chickamauga and Stone's River. The latter portion of the volume includes short essays and incidental observations by Heg on particular battles and the Norwegian Regiment's losses. He also includes letters from other Norwegian soldiers in the 15th Wisconsin, detailing their experiences and impressions of the war.

Students of the Civil War will find this a welcome addition to the growing body of literature focusing on the ethnic dimensions of the conflict and how midwestern ethnic groups contributed to the effort to preserve the Union.


Reviewer Wallace Hettle is associate professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. He is the author of The Peculiar Democracy: Southern Democrats in Peace and War (2001).

Mark Lause's book traces the 1880 presidential campaign of Iowa congressman James B. Weaver on the Greenback-Labor ticket. The title of