Black Flag: Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861-1865

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REVIEWED BY NICOLE ETCHESON, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

Thomas Goodrich surveys the guerrilla warfare on the Kansas-Missouri border during the national Civil War. Although he opens the book with an account of the Pottawatomie killings of 1856, he passes over Kansas’s territorial period quickly. The book’s true opening is the 1861 Missouri attack on a train carrying federal troops. Goodrich reviews the activities of Jayhawkers such as Charles Jennison, James Lane, and James Montgomery and bushwhackers such as William Quantrill, Bill Anderson, and George Todd. He includes such well-known events as Quantrill’s raid on Lawrence, General Order No. 11, and the Marais des Cygnes massacre, but also lesser-known topics such as the sense of fear that permeated the border and caused the village of Lecompton to panic when a group of boys playing a prank convinced the town that it was set upon by bushwhackers. True to his subject, Goodrich’s account contains more than its fair share of clubbings, shootings, blood, mayhem, pathos, and miraculous escapes.

Goodrich clearly aims at a popular rather than a scholarly audience. The book lacks footnotes and consists largely of long extracts from newspapers and eyewitness accounts. Goodrich accepts all accounts at face value, even the obviously self-serving ones of former guerrillas who always claimed to have been good boys driven to violence by the actions of others. This is an enjoyable, but not analytical, account of the Kansas-Missouri border warfare from 1861 to 1865.


REVIEWED BY LOREN N. HORTON, IOWA CITY

This history of the Quad Cities follows a strict chronological sequence, with the blocks of time falling evenly within years ending in zero or five. The author offers a nicely balanced presentation, with attention to political, economic, and social factors. The illustrations are chosen to enhance the text, and are placed properly in relation to the information to which each is connected. Chapters are short, hold the interest of the reader, and give equal attention to the cities involved. But the everlasting question remains, when the expression “Quad Cities” is used. Davenport, Rock Island, and Moline are the regulars. Then we