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Jayhawkers: The Civil War Brigade of James Henry Lane
(review)

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membership that Lincoln typically understood as the foundation of citizenship. The essay also takes up the perspective of African Americans by considering the extent to which they expressed affective identification with the nation. William Blair's discussion of emancipation commemorations examines one practice related to such affective citizenship, as he sensibly focuses on the complex story of black attitudes toward collective remembrance rather than the more straightforward white hostility to freedom festivals in the South after Reconstruction. The military enlistment of African Americans that followed from the Emancipation Proclamation, important to the essays of Vorenberg and Blair, is at the heart of Stephanie McCurry's thoughtful contribution to the volume. In the political discourse of the 1860s, in popular culture, and in historical scholarship, she points out, "slave men took the martial route to emancipation, and slave women, apparently, the marital one, which is to say that women got freedom at second hand, by way of marriage and in relation to their husbands' rights" (122). That narrative has had crucial short-term and long-term consequences for citizenship in the United States. By exposing those implications and encouraging more attention to the experiences of women in the achievement of emancipation, McCurry adds another significant step toward the gradual coalescence of a Reconstruction synthesis centered on gender. Like the other fine essays in this volume, her stimulating prospectus indicates that the Emancipation Proclamation will long remain a pivotal event for our understanding of American history.

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Jayhawkers: The Civil War Brigade of James Henry Lane.

By Bryce Benedict. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009. Pp. 352. Cloth, \$32.95.)

Bryce Benedict's *Jayhawkers* is a history of the Kansas Brigade, or Lane's Brigade, commanded by U.S. senator James H. Lane early in the Civil War. The brigade, composed of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Kansas Volunteer Regiments, existed for only about seven months, from June 1861 to February 1862. During that time, it earned a reputation as a band

of robbers, murderers, and wreckers, little better than bushwhackers. The Kansas Brigade committed many crimes against civilians; even so, Benedict shows its evil reputation was exaggerated.

Benedict's book also gives a striking picture of the chaotic nature of the war on the western frontier. Benedict notes that when the war started, few of the men who officered the newly mobilized units had prior military training or experience. The seventy-five thousand volunteers Lincoln called up in April 1861 needed over thirty-five hundred officers—five times the number of West Point graduates who were already in the army or who returned to it from civilian life. The knowledge gap was worst on the war's western fringe, where the regular army had almost no presence. There, some of the new volunteer units mustered into state service; others did not. It made little practical difference in the early months of the war, since there were neither arms, uniforms, nor supplies available. Without logistical support, these troops had no choice but to forage, that is, to take from civilians whatever the troops needed. Military custom allowed foraging but not theft or destruction of civilian property without military value. The U.S. Army, however, had no written laws of warfare until April 1863. Military units only distantly connected to their respective armies made up the rules as they went along, often with unfortunate results. A piece of paper might be all that distinguished regular troops from guerrillas or robbers.

A major fault of *Jayhawkers* is that it is too fine-grained and inward-focused. Most of the book recounts the day-to-day business of the brigade's individual companies. For example, Benedict writes that during a scout in August 1861, Captain James M. Williams's company rode forward at a gallop a quarter mile from Nevada, Missouri. Benedict then notes that according to another account, the troops had galloped down Nevada's main street. Either way, these are free-floating details, unconnected to any larger point. Individual soldiers, too, have walk-on roles throughout the book, sometimes for nothing more significant than a punishment for drunkenness. Genealogical researchers look for just such material, but readers hoping to learn about the brigade's role in the larger war will feel some frustration. The book only sporadically describes the movements of nearby Confederate forces and scarcely mentions Missouri's Union troops, who were only slightly less hostile toward the Kansans than they were toward the Confederates. The border war was a complex game, and Benedict tells us too little about the moves of the other players.

The book's strength, however, is its clarity on two major issues. First, it corrects some serious errors made by earlier historians of the border war, who relied too heavily on public media and family histories. Such

sources often contain wildly exaggerated accounts, and Benedict's book is a forceful reminder of how misleading some primary sources can be. One example Benedict gives is a speech that Lane delivered in the U.S. Senate in July 1861. On that occasion, Lane accused the "slave oligarchy of Missouri" of routinely torturing, murdering, and mutilating Free State men. Lane's accusations were ridiculous, but public discourse was full of similar allegations.

Second, the book provides an interesting perspective on the nation's unpreparedness for war in 1861. The Union army eventually gained control of units like Lane's, but not without difficulty. The border troops had been fighting their own war for months, and the temptation to reject army discipline and become bushwhackers must have been strong. As it was, Lane's Brigade entered the regular service only after some striking instances of insubordination. Officers ignored orders, and enlisted men circulated petitions and in one case formed a committee to wrest control of a company from its officers. Yet despite its unseemly behavior, in some ways Lane's Brigade was ahead of its time. From the brigade's earliest days Lane took runaway slaves into his camp and refused to return them to their masters. On the negative side, as the war progressed and attitudes hardened, better and more senior commanders than Lane ordered their troops to destroy civilian property, or allowed them to steal it. Lane's Brigade was hardly a model unit, but in historical memory it is a scapegoat for abuses that were widespread.

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Race and Radicalism in the Union Army. By Mark A. Lause.
(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009. Pp. 208. Cloth, \$45.00.)

In the vicinity of Checotah, Oklahoma, off U.S. Route 69, lies a remarkable relic of multiracial collaboration to save the Union. This mostly forgotten icon of history, overshadowed by Checotah's most famous export, the country music singer Carrie Underwood, is the battlefield of Honey Springs. Here, Mark Lause argues, the spirit of John Brown led a Union army of white radicals, American Indians, and African Americans to