Book Reviews

Dark Fire. By Bernadette Rule (Las Vegas, NV: The Ironing Board Press, 2021).

During the early part of the twentieth century, "Big Tobacco" met with a spirited resistance from small-time farmers who felt that market forces and corporate greed robbed them of the blood, toil, sweat, and tears that they poured into their crops. An offshoot of the Progressive Era's distrust of Big Business in general, the movement spawned a populist uprising and a series of events that were rife with intimidation and violence. It was lawlessness in a system in which laws tended to favor the interests of the rich and powerful. *Dark Fire* tells the story of individuals caught in the cultural currents of the day.

The book is the result of a longtime project for author Bernadette Rule, who spent years researching, writing, and re-writing it. Its initial incarnation was non-fiction, but the final product is a novel deeply rooted in real events that are both chilling and sobering. *Dark Fire* follows the Drew and Lawrence families to their ultimate demise while at the same time indulging the reader in a wish that the events of history might not end they way they truly ended.

Rule is very artistic in the presentation of this story, yet at the same time, lovers of history will appreciate the research behind it. She masterfully negotiates the turbulent waters of the period by recognizing both the folk hero status of the Night Riders and the cautionary tale of lawlessness. As Rule puts it, "Night Riding began as part of a desperate and even noble move to secure a decent living for tobacco farmers" (xiii). The author drops in small details such as references to Calumet baking cans and the Spanish Flu that really give the reader a sense of the times, and she clearly understands the larger themes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Dialogue of characters at times waxes historical with lines such as one that describes the Populist Party as a "great tradition of agrarian reform" (44). Likewise, Rule astutely points out the tension that urbanization wrought upon communities, coming to a head with an issue of removing hitch-stakes and being explained away with "some line of bull about progress." (65).

For those who are interested in social history, there are interesting passages that describe the rigors of working in tobacco fields and other agrarian pursuits. One section in particular tells

of a hog killing, during which "the blood jist came a-spurtin out" (119). In terms of language, it is worth mentioning that the dialogue is written with rural Kentucky in mind, and while it could be difficult to interpret for people not familiar with the dialect, it lends a sense of credibility to the story.

While there can be something of a language barrier as a result of the dialogue, a more serious obstacle for the reader stems from the use of multiple narrators. This does make parts of the story harder to follow than might otherwise be the case. Similarly, a lack of apostrophes and quotation marks can cause confusion when reading some passages. However, the reader should bear in mind that Dark Fire is an ambitious artistic endeavor and as such, many traditional grammatical rules do not necessarily apply. Additionally, the use of the antiquated dialect can unlock hidden gems of long-forgotten rural wisdom. For example, at a pivotal moment comes the phrase, "What goes over the devil's back'll come under his belly some day" (181).

Overall, several kinds of readers would benefit from reading *Dark Fire*. Those seeking to better understand the violent tendencies of the era will certainly get a sense of underlying conditions that made such a tragic event possible. Others who seek a suspenseful tale of murder and intrigue will indeed find it in *Dark Fire*. Those fascinated by tales of the Night Riders will appreciate the research behind the accounts of them in this book. People who love colorful language will find pleasure in the rendering of the local dialect. Most of all, this book is for people who look at mob violence and simply ask themselves, "What drives it?"

Brent E. Taylor
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No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice. By Karen L. Cox, Ph.D. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021).

In recent years, Dr. Karen Cox has become an important voice in the field of Southern history and politics and how they impact current political and social discourse.

Her previous published works on the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and the larger national depiction of Southern culture have been groundbreaking in that they force scholars to

reexamine the "Lost Cause" myth. As such, her scholarship has been well received in the general public as her contribution has been featured on major broadcast media and in the print press. In particular, she has always addressed how these issues impact race relations and racial power dynamics in the south. Thus, her works have cast these controversies in a contemporary light as an anxious nation is being forced to address long simmering tensions.

Cox's latest work, *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice*, is no exception. The very cover of the book features the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests at the Robert E. Lee statue at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville with a gripping picture of African American murder victim George Floyd superimposed at the statue's base. This work is an excellent continuation of Cox's larger contribution to the literature on race relations in the post Reconstruction South and how they impact current racial and political controversies.

Based upon recent media reports, the casual observer could get the impression that the drive to remove Confederate monuments is a recent phenomenon. Cox clear disabuses the reader of that notion as she contends they these statues have always been the subject of controversy in various quarters of American society. She writes:

This book tells the history of Confederate monuments since 1865 through the debates that surrounded them and the movements that arose to erect, defend, oppose and remove them. It is focused on community-based monuments rather than those erected on battlefields because it is in communities where debates over the meaning of these statues have taken place. The story begins with the Lost Cause, how white southerners came to enshrine the idea in stone, and how their reshaping of the southern landscape shored up a revisionist narrative of the Civil War. At the same time, the book documents an African American legacy of protest against Confederate statues that surfaced as the first ones were being erected in the nineteenth century.

In sum, the current dispute over Confederate monuments is nothing new or unique. Rather, they have always been pregnant symbols in the eyes of two different constituencies. White Southerners view the statues as symbols of a gallant, genteel, sentimental, and glorious time that is proverbially gone with the wind. That they represent to true history of the South and are rich representations of the southern way of life. However, African Americans generally viewed the monuments as ugly and tragic depictions of slavery, Jim Crow and the larger lopsided political

power dynamics that they were forced to accept through disenfranchisement, the lack of economic resources, state condoned violence (especially lynching) and large-scale intimidation.

For example, Chapter Two, "From Bereavement to Vindication" is an excellent summary of how the south sought to redeem itself from the consequences of a lost war and lost face. Historically, white southerners were embittered by losing the War, having their plantation economy severely damaged by "Yankee soldiers," and their unquestioned hold on political power superseded by free blacks, northern "Carpetbaggers" and their southern "Scallywag" collaborators. In particular, Cox discusses how white southern women took the lead to construct monuments to their fallen fathers, sons, brothers, and husbands. However, as Reconstruction waned, and the "Redeemer" governments had returned to power in local and state governments, the drive to build these monuments took on added momentum. Such efforts to cast the vanquished Confederacy, and the drive to reinstitute the white supremacist social order, continued throughout the Nineteenth Century and continued well into the Twentieth as the Civil Rights movement reached its zenith.

However, Chapters Three and Four demonstrate how the irresistible force of white southern nostalgia met the immovable object of black southern resistance to their oppression. For example, in "Confederate Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights," Cox describes how the northern black printed press was critical of the construction of the Confederate monument on Georgia's Stone Mountain (where the Second Incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan took place previously in 1915). In particular, the *Chicago Defender* hosted an open forum to allow readers to express a view on this tribute to the vanquished (read: deceased) Confederate generals. One reader poignantly responded, "Every time child of the men [Confederate veterans] look at the monuments it gives them a greater desire to.... carry out the wishes of their forefathers." In this respect, Cox reminds readers of how southern white school children were taken on educational visits to Confederate monuments in order to pedagogically the emphasize the false narrative of Confederate "greatness" and to reinforce white supremacy.

Consequently, the monuments, and the constant lauding of the Lost Cause myth, was also a direct consequence of the demands of African Americans for their long-denied citizenship rights. In "Monuments and the Battle for First Class Citizenship," Cox observes, "As the civil rights movement won notable legislative victories, black southerners were increasingly insistent in

claiming the right not only to vote but also to occupy community space that, under the gaze of Confederate statues, had been denied to them." Many Confederate monuments had been constructed near county courthouses and other public government buildings, where there was little to no black representation in the halls of power. The successes of the movement in the 1950s and 60s were changing that. And it is the irony of ironies that black protestors chose these monuments to stage their demonstrations for dramatize their plight and to win long sought liberties.

Chapter Four had particular personal resonance for *this writer* as Cox discussed the career of City Councilman Harvey Gantt and his drive to prevent the dedication of a Confederate monument in 1970s Charlotte, North Carolina. Her in-depth interview with the future Democratic U.S. Senate contender revealed that despite the changing social and political demographics, Gantt ran into stalwart resistance to opposing the monument and clearly expressed his deep angst as he recounted those events. Said Gantt, "In 1923, it might have been just a matter of course to put a monument out on the lawn of City Hall, but you did not have black citizens in the community voting, they were not participants as first-class citizens, and I don't think anyone would have denied that." Thus, the Harvey Gantt interview best illustrates the central thesis of Cox's book: that there was a close historical relationship between white southerners lauding a dreadful past at the expense of the aspirations of their fellow citizens of color and that people of color were equally adamant to reassert their humanity and demand their full citizenship birthright. **(As a side note: Councilman Gantt would later become the first African American mayor of Charlotte and unsuccessfully challenge staunch segregationist U.S. Senator Jesse Helms in the 1990 and 1996 general elections in North Carolina. The next year, Gantt was interviewed on the Southern Illinois Public Broadcasting Television affiliate station by this writer, an overly ambitious doctoral history student and instructor at Southern Illinois at Carbondale.)**

In chapter five, "Debating Removal in a Changing Political Landscape," Cox mirrors many of the essential themes of the previous chapter, but that these arguments carried over into the Ronald Reagan Era 1980s, a period where American Conservatism had blossomed from a nascent political movement in the 1950s and 60s into a governing majority in national politics, led by white southern politicians who were bent on reversing the political, social, and economic gains that African Americans had made in the previous decades. For example, she examines how

attempts by Richmond, Virginia's "city fathers" to add a statue of the late tennis great Arthur Ashe in Richmond, Virginia (the second Confederate capital, by the way) to blunt African American opposition to the removal of rebel heroes. Cox concludes, "The ceremony (to dedicate the statue to Ashe) was met by protestors, but (Virginia Governor) Douglas Wilder, the statue's most vociferous advocate, proclaimed that (Richmond's) Monument Avenue was 'now an avenue for all people.'."

The final chapter of Cox's work, "Charleston, Charlottesville, and Continued Challenges to Removal" ends the work with a proverbial question mark, instead of a "period" in that the controversy over Confederate monuments is an ongoing issue with a final resolution yet to be determined. The horrific 2015 mass shooting of nine African American parishioners at an African Methodist Episcopal Church by Confederate sympathizer and avowed white supremacist Dylan Roof led to renewed calls for the removal of Confederate monuments and the Confederate battle flag from public spaces, mainly the state capitol in Charleston. True to form, there was equal resistance by supporters of the Old South as they expressed determination to defend their "history" and "heritage." Two years later, the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia to celebrate the ascendency of nativism in American political discourse (after the successful election of Donald Trump the presidency in 2016) and to protest the removal of the Robert E. Lee statue, led to violence and the death of one counter protestor. These events were further buoyed by a fatal citizen/police encounter in Minnesota when a suspect, George Floyd, was killed in full view of cameras as the arresting officer caused the slow suffocation of Floyd. This killing was reminiscent, to some, of garden variety lynchings that had occurred in many years passed. The outpouring of global anger and grief brought the question of the removal of Confederate monuments into a new and poignant light.

Cox cites the tragic events in Charleston and Charlottesville illustrate the fact the struggle for the removal of Confederate relics from the public square is an ongoing struggle that is underscored by old unresolved hatreds, the need on behalf of some to protect a past that was far from glorious and gallant, and the desire of aggrieved Americans to remove the celebration of symbols that are painful reminders of their historic (present) oppression. Indeed, she concludes, "For more than 150 years, this erroneous version of the past (the Lost Cause and the veneration of the Old South) has dominated the culture of the South, but as the removal of monuments

suggests, the Lost Cause's days may be numbered. And with that, perhaps, there is common ground ahead."

This is an excellent book for those who wish to study the tumultuous periods of race relations in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, as well as those who seek to understand current political controversies and why Confederate monuments, and the veneration of that tragic period, plays such a prominent role in political conversation in these polarized and unprecedented times.

Dr. Brian K. Clardy
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Fall of Kentucky's Rock: Western Kentucky Democratic Politics From the New Deal. By George G. Humphreys. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2022).

With the skill of a seasoned pundit, George G. Humphreys blends the flavors that make up the Jackson Purchase region. From the banks of the mighty rivers and the long rows of the tobacco patch to the depths of the coalfields, Humphreys' narrative reveals the complex heritage upon which the Gibraltar of Democracy was built.

A native of the Jackson Purchase, Humphreys' interest centers upon the turn of events in Kentucky politics occurring since the 1930s. Before retiring from his 20 + years career as staff director in the Oklahoma House of Representatives, Humphreys became interested in Kentucky politics. His new publication, The Fall of Kentucky's Rock: Western Kentucky Democratic Politics From the New Deal, focuses on how the often-ignored region of western Kentucky was a key player in statewide political affairs.

Western Kentucky has provided seven Democratic governors for Kentucky and a majority leader for the United States Senate who later served the nation as vice-president. These political feats earned the region the moniker, Gibraltar of Kentucky Democracy.

In describing the geographic and legislative landscapes, Humphreys wisely acknowledges the difficulty in defining the boundaries of "western" Kentucky. The land and abundant water were what drew people to this part of the state. The latter asset, specifically the rivers, were what kept them separated from the rest of the commonwealth. These early settlement people were

farmers and miners, busy raising their crops or digging for coal. They transported their products mostly to southern markets. Even with their isolation from others, they eagerly kept abreast of Kentucky politics as they knew their very lives depended upon what happened in Frankfort and Washington.

Humphreys' book provides an excellent cultural review of the western region, from its southern sympathies during the Civil War, followed by the brutality of reconstruction and the activities of the Night Riders, on to the Suffrage movement and both World Wars. He shares a thorough understanding of the social characteristics that defined the region – farming, coal mining, religion, slavery, education, women's work – each of which played a role in setting the political stage that gave the region its nickname.

Along with river and later rail developments, the advent of the telephone and municipal utilities were other milestones that shaped the region. Humphreys explains how local leaders across the area worked together to improve transportation. With these advancements, the western lands were more connected to other locales in Kentucky and across state lines. New jobs brought in laborers moving in from other locations. Moving people and goods has always been a priority as well as political hot buttons for western Kentucky.

In addition to those with personal political ambition, Humphreys acknowledges that the media also played a significant role in politics. The Democratic stronghold in the west was supported by several newspaper publishers who shunned elected positions even as they embraced their roles as Democratic devotees. Even with their influences, there were also strong Republican factions that held their ground for decades.

Humphreys explains how the advancements made in the west with investment and construction of public facilities such as Western State Hospital, the Kentucky State Penitentiary, and training schools for teachers, changed the region. His account also provides an often-overlooked aspect of western Kentucky history by providing details about the plight of Blacks as the state and the region moved from the days of Jim Crow into the Civil Rights era.

From there, the author sheds light on how the economy evolved after WW2 and the Korean War. An interesting read particularly as this was during the time the first and to date, the only, U.S. vice-president was from the Jackson Purchase. From the uranium-enrichment plant at Paducah drawing in laborer's from afar and manufacturing plants like Curlee and Merit clothing

factories, there were many jobs available for men and women all throughout the region. While many of the jobs offered low wages, politics had certainly played a mighty hand in terms of generating economic growth.

The book also covers the legislation around the integration of local schools in the Purchase with the ruling of Brown v. Board of Education. That difficult and controversial change was soon followed by more frustration and political maneuvering as each county struggled with school consolidation.

The region's cash crop of tobacco has always played a prominent role in the realm of politics as well as the production of coal. As no smoking signs popped up across the country and clean coal technology was being sought, western Kentucky farmers and miners worked with their legislators to protect these economic engines that had been their livelihood for generations.
As the story moves into more recent history, Humphreys relays how the Gibraltar of Democracy eventually came to its demise. He sees it as a chain of events that began in 1994 when the Democratic losses experienced in the congressional races ended the party's uninterrupted control of western Kentucky.

In recent years, the Jackson Purchase has become a fairly dependable vote for the Grand Old Party. Even so, says Humphreys, that loyalty has yet to be as rewarded economically as in the days of the New Deal.

Political enthusiasts will appreciate the chronological approach the author uses in sharing the western region's political role as it played out in statewide politics. Perhaps even more importantly, followers of history will gain insight as to how western Kentucky influenced the region's economy through political decisions at both the state and national levels. Those who enjoy learning more about far western Kentucky will delight in Humphreys' well-researched cultural and social heritage of the Jackson Purchase region.

The Fall of Kentucky's Rock lays out the rich traditions and customs of a fervent voting populace that created a legacy rooted in partisan politics, and how that heritage evolved over time.

Bobbie Smith Bryant
Louisville

As if They Were Ours: The Story of Camp Tyson America's Only Barrage Balloon Training Facility. By Shannon McFarlin. (Hoosick, NY: Merriam Press, 2016).

Camp Tyson, Images of America Series. By Shannon McFarlin. (Mount Pleasant, SC: Arcadia Press, 2017).

A Local Story with National Implications.

Shannon McFarlin has captured a unique and even romantic moment in local and national history in her companion books As if They Were Ours: The Story of Camp Tyson America's Only Barrage Balloon Training Facility, published by Merriam Press (2016) in their World War Two Series, and Camp Tyson, published by Arcadia Press (2017) in their Images of America Series. Hers is a passionate and intimate look into an Army Camp, Camp Tyson, and the local community, Paris, Tennessee, with which it became intertwined during the years of the Great Crusade of World War Two.

Most of our popular narratives of World War Two brush lightly over the story of the home front. We are aware of the general outline of military events and the grand strategy behind the campaigns across the Pacific and Europe, but we are not so conversant of the industrial, economic and social mobilization behind the scenes, nor are we aware of the very great challenge within the mobilization effort to house, organize and train the 8.4 million men and women in uniform needed to accomplish the task. Shannon provides a much needed and appreciated glimpse into the larger national story of the mobilization effort. What played out at Camp Tyson between Town and Camp is an iconic representation of what played out at 60 other "giant bachelor cities" built for the mobilization effort of WWII.

The world went to war in 1939. The United States did not. Americans were divided about how to respond to a rapidly deteriorating international situation. Many sided with Charles Limburg and his "America First" movement advocating for neutrality. Others sided with a preparedness faction seeking a heightened level of preparedness should the worst come about. Mindful of the domestic political divide, President Franklin Roosevelt treaded softly issuing a Limited State of National Emergency that modestly expanded the Regular Army from 215,000 to 227,00 and authorized an additional 100,000 National Guardsman be added to the 215,000 standing by to be called to Federal Service, if required. Throughout the months across the winter of 1939 and into the spring of 1940 the lack of military activity in Europe gave rise to the

description "Phony War." The anxiety and anticipation of those months then gave way to real war in the spring of 1940 witnessed by the rapid fall Norway, Denmark, Belgium, to the Nazis and capped off with the stunning and dramatic six week blitzkrieg campaign resulting in fall of France in June of 1940. With all of continental Europe in the grip of Fascist domination and with Imperial Japan intensifying her war with China, the balance of opinion in the United States tilted in favor of preparedness, albeit in politically palatable incremental steps as the country was not yet at war.

The executive and legislative acts of 1940-41 that increased the size of the Army carried within them a balance and political compromise between the fears of neutrality advocates and the wants of preparedness advocates. While the size of the Army was dramatically increased, prohibitions for its use anywhere outside the United States and her territories were enshrined. There was as yet no foreign battlefield to ship these troops. A standing army was inevitable and housing that Army demanded a solution. Congress made it explicit that the citizen-soldiers of the new draftee Army would not live in the "tents and mess hall" environment of the World War I Army: "snug barracks, toilets, showers, heating, and electric lights," it was stipulated, would have to be in place before these new soldiers arrived at camps, which at this time had hardly even been conceptualized. The issue of comfort for the soldiers of this citizen army was from the beginning of incremental mobilization an uncompromising public concern. It had been but twenty years since World War I and the fathers of the boys who were being drafted were not about to allow their sons to have to endure what they had in the austere mobilization camps of WWI. The matter even rose to the level of Presidential politics in the election of 1940. Republican candidate Wendell Wilke made a campaign accusation that the camps would not be adequate or even ready for the troops as they came into service. President Roosevelt responded and promised, "I can give assurance to the mothers and fathers of America that each and every one of their boys in training will be well housed."

And so these newly drafted citizen-soldiers were well housed, and well housed on time as they came into service. These camps in size and scope were, in fact, small cities unto themselves. Each camp housed from 30,000 to 100,000 men, often dwarfing neighboring civilian cites. In his Annual Report of 1941, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson reported, "a program of construction...of over 40 veritable cities...entertaining all the necessary utilities and conveniences

including recreation buildings, theaters, service clubs, chapels, athletic areas, hospitals, bakeries, laundries, and cold storage plants...". By the end of 1943 the Army built 61 of these veritable cities. By the end of the war the nation had witnessed a program of military construction which had few parallels in world history.

Many communities competed for selection as a camp site. In the Depression Era, the infusion of Federal dollars, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities were enticements few local politicians could overlook. The site selection for Camp Tyson was unusual in that the Army made the selection unbeknownst to local citizens: it rather appeared out of nowhere. Special criteria such as distance from the newly developing air traffic corridors, airports, and the direction of prevailing winds were safety considerations for the unique training of barrage balloon units for which the Camp was to be built.

Shannon's telling of the story of Camp Tyson in both word and picture nicely captures the elements of a larger national story of the impact of these camps. There was a national "mixing of DNA" throughout the war years as boys from around the country drafted and volunteered into service mixed with local girls from the communities around these camps resulting in marriages and relocations unimaginable in the pre-war years. There was a bonding that occurred between the citizens of the country with her soldiers as each camp was largely built and sustained by a local workforce and a local pride in caring for "our soldiers," as was so nicely captured in her title, As if They Were Ours. It was also a time of racial and gender segregation in the Army. The Army did not racially desegregate until 1948, nor gender desegregate until 1974. Shannon has provided special attention to the lives and stories of black soldiers assigned to a Camp located in the Jim Crow era of 1940-1945 Tennessee and of the pioneering women of the Women's Auxiliary Corps (WACS).

As the accomplished reporter that she is in her professional life, Shannon has woven together a plethora of stories around these elements. There is certainly a newsy feel to her vignettes and a richness in the way of historical and genealogical presentation that should be informative, pleasing, and a source of civic pride as first and foremost a local history, as well as an excellent

telling and insight into a larger national story that Camp Tyson and Paris Tennessee so adequately represent.

John J. O'Brien

Fort Campbell

Milburn Baptist Church, 1866-2006. By Glen Stewart. Privately printed. 2006, 3rd Printing.

Pastor Glen Stewart compiled and published Milburn Baptist Church, 1966-2006 for the 140th anniversary of the church's establishment. Stewart acknowledges that this small booklet is the product of a concerted effort by church members and that they consulted numerous primary sources such as local newspapers and church records as well as some regional historical works. The booklet's simple title is somewhat misleading as it focuses a great deal on the history of Milburn itself rather than just on important events in the church.

The booklet begins with a brief but descriptive history of Milburn's founding in Carlisle County, Kentucky. This section is interesting and examines how communities began along transportation and trade routes along the region's waterways. This first section also contains lists of professionals and business owners in the community; however, the author provides no dates or context of their service to the community. Despite the booklet's title, none of these business owners or professionals are demonstrated to have any connection to the church itself.

When Stewart discusses the history of Milburn Baptist Church, he mostly addresses information about when building and renovation projects were completed or when church traditions began. There are, however, some other interesting pieces of information that he does include. The 1860s saw many Baptist churches founded in Western Kentucky, many of which still exist today. As the population of the region and the number of Baptist churches expanded, so too did the number and organization of Baptist associations in the region. Stewart explains that Milburn Baptist Church was created during this period of Baptist expansion in the region.

The booklet includes lists of the church's previous pastors and deacons and those men who were ordained to the ministry throughout the years; although, this information is incomplete in some places, lacking years of service for some of these men. Stewart also includes a table of additions and subtractions to the church membership roll through baptisms, membership letters, deaths, and exclusions. While this is interesting information, there are no names or context given which could provide additional value. The booklet concludes with several pages of historical photographs of businesses and individuals from the community and church throughout the years. While many of these photographs do include captions identifying the person or building, many of them lack years to provide additional historical context.

Milburn Baptist Church, 1866-2006 fills a small niche among the historical community of Western Kentucky. As of today, Milburn Baptist Church has stood for over a century and half as a community of faith; that, in and of itself, is an achievement to be recognized. No doubt, those who grew up in the church and community over the last several decades will enjoy this booklet as it recounts people and events that they have known throughout the years. The booklet accomplishes its goal in commemorating the 140th anniversary of the church; however, those without connections to the church and community of Milburn may lack the context to appreciate the information presented.

Chad Wells
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Thomas Elsey George: The Ways of War: My Experiences as an Artillery Man in World War II.
By Mary Ellen Thomasson, editor. Self-published, 2010. 48 pp., 22 illustrations. Paperback.

Today, as the last members of whom Tom Brokaw famously labeled "The Greatest Generation" continue to pass away, their eyewitness accounts of soldier life during World War II, unfortunately, are passing away with them. The emergence of the vernacular-based "new military history" during the late 20th century provided an early platform where these veterans could record their wartime experiences in the form of oral interviews and self-published accounts. While many noted historians and journalists would seek out these veterans as a way of publishing their next scholarly work, many of the best accounts are those written by the veterans themselves in their own hand. Such is the case with Thomas Elsey George.

In The Ways of War, Thomas Elsey George chronicles his 40-month tour of duty as an artilleryman in the United States Army during World War II. A native of Carlisle County, Kentucky, George was the son of Edward T. and Mary Elsey George. In 1926, George and his family moved to Illinois where he attended grade school and graduated from Olive Branch High School in 1936. The economic crisis during the period prevented George from continuing his education, so with the help of a family member, he landed a job making leather gloves first at a factory in Indianapolis, Indiana, then in Detroit, Michigan. Shortly after the United States entered World War II, George, like millions of other young men around the country received his draft notice. On March 18, 1942, George reported for duty at Fort Custer, Michigan.

Since its establishment in 1775, the US Army has used the term "camp" to identify locations designated as temporary outposts with "fort" applied to those areas that were deemed as permanent. After induction, George joined 150 other inductees as they made their way to Camp Sutton, North Carolina, for eight weeks of basic combat training. At Camp Sutton, the group became part of the 938th Field Artillery Battalion, a Pennsylvania National Guard Unit that had been mobilized for federal service. After completing additional training at Camp Blanding, Florida, and Fort Sill, Oklahoma, George reported to Camp Gordon, Georgia, for deployment

preparations. The 938th Field Artillery Battalion deployed first to Oran, Algeria, and then shortly afterwards, relocated to positions near Naples, Italy. The unit took part in the Battle of Anzio that occurred from January to June 1944 and then deployed to Europe where it took part in Operation DRAGOON, the invasion of southern France. Operation DRAGOON was originally scheduled as part of the larger Operation OVERLORD that began on June 6, 1944 but was delayed due to logistical issues. In the wake of the German surrender on May 8, 1945, George served as part of the occupation force made up of American, French, British, and Soviet forces. After Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945, George was sent to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, where he remained until honorably discharged on October 18, 1945. After discharge, George returned to Detroit where he worked in the automobile industry until his retirement in 1974.

An easy read, George's personal experiences in two combat theaters is perhaps the books greatest strength. This allows readers to experience the wartime conditions faced by soldiers in two distinct combat arenas. This book is impressive for its size and is a must read for those historians, and non-historians, looking for an authentic eyewitness account of the living conditions experienced by the common soldier during World War II as well as their life before and after the war. The book is available for $10 from Glen Stewart at 524 State Route 94E. Fulton, KY 42041 or glenstewart48@hughes.net.

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