

The Confederate Letters of Benjamin H. Freeman. Compiled and Edited by STUART T. WRIGHT. (Hicksville, New York: Exposition Press, 1974. Pp. 109. Notes. \$5.00.)

Benjamin H. Freeman was an enlisted man in the Forty-fourth North Carolina Infantry Regiment, a segment of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. This slim book is a collection of the May 4, 1862, to March 28, 1865, letters he wrote from the army to his family home in North Carolina describing his life as a Confederate soldier. The grammar is mangled, the spelling atrocious, and the style rambling and in places nearly unreadable, but the meaning is clear nonetheless. The life of a Civil War soldier was a difficult one, replete with bouts of diarrhea, longing for an end to the fighting and a return home, and all the other usual miseries of warfare. As a farm-boy, Freeman paid much attention to crop conditions in the areas where he fought and was constantly wondering how his parents' crops and hogs were doing in North Carolina. He kept his family informed on the friends and relatives he met on the war front while expressing curiosity about family matters on the home front.

All of this is interesting, but it is not new. Historians and Civil War buffs will find little novel in these letters: Freeman's experiences, as related in *The Confederate Letters of Benjamin H. Freeman*, are like those of the average Confederate soldier. Since Professor Bell Wiley has brilliantly chronicled Confederate army life in his book *Johnny Reb* (which editor Wright leans on very heavily in his annotations), Freeman's letters are supplementary rather than innovative. Their appearance does not add to our knowledge of the Civil War.

Stuart T. Wright, a private-school teacher with ambitions for a future doctorate in Southern history, has done an acceptable editing job. He has performed a labor of love and shows promise for a successful graduate career. His notes are generally clear and informative. But, there are some slips. His account of the role of black troops at Petersburg (p. 100), for example, is not accurate and would have benefited from consultation with the books of Benjamin Quarles, Dudley Cornish, and others. His Preface is inadequate, particularly because he does not mention the location of the Freeman letters, how he happened to come upon them, or why he felt they are sufficiently unique to justify publication.

Considering the limited budgets of most libraries today, most should not feel they need to order this book for their collections unless

they have a particular emphasis on North Carolina history. Civil War buffs, though they might enjoy this book, might better read *Johnny Reb*.

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Sioux Trail. By JOHN UPTON TERRELL. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974. Pp. 213. Author's note, selected bibliography, index. \$7.95.)

This volume is not just another book about Indians. Terrell tries to present a survey of all the native American tribes who are a part of the Sioux group. He has utilized history and anthropology to write a very readable ethnohistory of the Sioux. The author, in *Sioux Trail*, traces the evolution of some of the Sioux tribes in the southeastern states and follows the Sioux trail to the great plains and beyond. While the book is not written for specialists, it can provide them some additional insights for a greater appreciation of the Sioux.

A weakness lies in the author's attempt to do too much in too few pages. Even the number of pages in the book is not a valid indication of the actual length of the book. Many of the pages are partially blank, and although this is pleasing to the eye, it is a waste of paper. This book could have been much shorter without any loss of content.

It is obvious that Terrell knows his field of Western history, and he has the ability to impart this knowledge to others. However, there are portions of the book which will raise some questions, and not all readers will agree with the author's answers. Since the book is not well documented, the reader is often forced to take Terrell's assertions at face value. Some of his statements are too broad. An example is: "the Conestoga, like all people of Iroquoian blood, proved to be treacherous and disloyal to their benefactors" (p. 56). Using the term "all" does a disservice to all the members of all the Iroquoian tribes. Another case in point is: "Although the name Quapaw means 'down-stream people,' and since there are available old maps and other early documents *purportedly* reflecting the true history of the Quapaw at a time one hundred and fifty years post-De Soto, I suggest it *probably* can be categorically asserted that they were not the Pacaha or Capaha"