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Mark K. Christ, ed., *"This Day We Marched Again": A Union Soldier's Account of War in Arkansas and the Trans-Mississippi*. Little Rock: Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, 2014. Pp. 157. ISBN 978-1-935106-67-8.

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Mark Christ has written or edited many works on the Civil War in Arkansas.<sup>1</sup> Now, in this slender volume, he brings to print the diary of Jacob Haas, a private in the Ninth Wisconsin Infantry. Haas was born in Württemberg in 1840 and, according to the 1900 US Census, came to the United States in 1847. His parents eventually settled in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, where, in 1861, Haas enlisted in the Sheboygan Tigers, which soon became Company A of the Ninth Wisconsin, a German regiment under the command of Col. Frederick Salomon.

The men of the Ninth served in the western theater—Kansas, Indian Territory, Missouri, and Arkansas. The regiment spent considerable time on the march, as the book's title implies. It saw action at Newtonia, Missouri, in 1863 (without Haas's company) and against Confederate forces during Maj. Gen. Frederick Steele's spring 1864 expedition from Little Rock to Camden, Arkansas, as part of Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks's ill-fated Red River campaign against Shreveport, Louisiana.

Haas kept a series of diaries in German and after the war transcribed them into a single volume, later translated into English (reproduced here) by a son-in-law. Haas at times recounts events day by day; at times he instead summarizes the events of several days, as in a memoir. He makes his purpose clear from the outset:

The following history and reminiscences out of my years of service in the Civil War, the Union army, are written with no purpose in view except that in later years I may have a clear conception of the things experienced in the best years of my youth as a soldier in the Union Army. The following pages convey the truth of my personal experiences and are written only for my personal satisfaction, and that if occasion calls I may be in position to clearly remember the things experienced personally and with my comrades in the army and bear testimony to the truth. (19)

Common subjects in Haas's account include the drudgery of constant marching from place to place, making do on meager Army rations, foraging additional food from the countryside, passing through ravaged landscapes, interacting with populations often hostile to the Union cause, being harried by small groups of Confederates, and destroying civilian property in reprisals for guerrilla attacks. Over a third of the diary covers Haas's life during the Camden expedition of 23 March to 3 May 1864.

Haas's vivid descriptions of the often ignored mundane details of a soldier's life are especially welcome; the following comments on making camp on rainy days are typical.

Two soldiers chum together. Out came the pocket knife. We cut two forked sticks. For up we put them into the ground, about seven feet apart. Now a pole over the stick and then the two rolls of oilcloth over the pole and the sides fastened to the ground. Now brush and leaves on the ground inside. That gives room & bed for two. From the gable end we crawl in, lie down and sleep. That is the soldier's bivouac. If rain is very copious, then fence rails go below the brush, and grass over the rails. Then the rain can flow below. (92)

The short rations issued to soldiers on the Camden expedition make modern field rations sound appealing: "Two crackers, five inches square and one quarter inch thick [i.e., hardtack], and ¼ ration bacon, two inches square and one inch thick. This in the morning, at noon, and in the evening" (93).

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1. He is also director the Community Outreach Program of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

Though German, Haas rarely writes anything that reveals his ethnicity. He does report that his regiment “lived well [and] had plenty of beer, etc.” (67) at Rolla, Missouri, in May 1863, but many non-German units, too, would have enjoyed having an abundant supply of the beverage. In early 1864, though in an area of reported guerrilla activity, Haas observes that all was quiet and attributes this to the enemy’s fear of attacking “the Damn Dutchman” (88). On the Camden expedition, Union and Confederate forces clashed at Prairie D’Ane, where the lines were so close that the foes could taunt one another: “From shelter, often sharp epithets were thrown across. The rebels offered us coffee and we them sauerkraut—if they come and get it” (107). Haas was one of some 200,000 Germans in Union service;<sup>2</sup> the commendable publication of his diary is a welcome addition to the body of work on their service.

Christ’s edition of the diary is thoroughly annotated, drawing on relevant work in a range of primary and secondary sources. Indeed, footnotes often occupy more space than text on the page. The notes draw attention to accounts by other members of the Ninth.<sup>3</sup> They clarify operational matters<sup>4</sup> and give details about other units<sup>5</sup> when they are mentioned. Christ also provides helpful biographical sketches<sup>6</sup> of general officers mentioned by Haas. Particulars of the territories the Ninth passed through are scrupulously included in notes as well.<sup>7</sup> The text is enriched by a selection of photos and a useful bibliography. Unfortunately, there is a paucity of maps (two only) and those provided have such fine print as to be almost unreadable.

“*This Day We Marched Again*” is a fine addition to the personal narratives of the Civil War. As Mark Christ correctly observes, “Haas’s diary might be most useful to students of the Trans-Mississippi Theater for its detailed account of the exhausting efforts of Union soldiers to control one of the least-developed regions of the United States” (17). It will also strongly appeal to those interested in the Wisconsin regiments and German-American soldiers in Civil War.

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2. William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union’s Ethnic Regiments* (Ames: Iowa State U Pr, 1988) 110.

3. E.g., the diary of Michael Zimmer, which Christ cites from Jürgen Marcha and Andrea Wolf, eds., *Michael Zimmer’s Diary: Ein deutsches Tagebuch aus dem Amerikanischen Bürgerkrieg* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2001).

4. Relying in particular on the 128-volume *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: Gov’t Printing Office, 1880–1901).

5. Using Frederick H. Dyer’s *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (NY: Yoseloff, 1959).

6. Often from Ezra J. Warner’s *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge: LSU Pr, 1964).

7. Christ cites the invaluable online *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*.