

Hiram's Honor: Reliving Private Terman's Civil War, by Max R. Terman. Hillsboro KS: Tesa Books, 2009. 242 pages, many photographs both period and contemporary. \$16.99 from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, other major booksellers, or from the author at <maxt@tabor.edu> or <<http://home.southwind.net/~mjterman>>. The book is now available in the OGS Library. Reviewed by Dan Reigle for *Ohio Civil War Genealogy Journal*, <www.ogs.org>.

Walt Whitman cautioned us that “the real war will never get in the books” and that “the fervid atmosphere and typical events of those years are in danger of being totally forgotten.” This book is an attempt to capture some of the “fervid atmosphere and typical events” in the Civil War experience of one young Ohioan, and it succeeds admirably in this reviewer’s opinion. Private Hiram Terman of Richland County OH served in the 82nd OVI from December 1861 until January 1865. With the 82nd, he fought in the 1862 Shenandoah campaign at McDowell and Cross Keys, Cedar Mountain, Second Bull Run, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. Captured late on the first day at Gettysburg, he was a POW for more than 17 months at Belle Isle, Andersonville, Savannah, and Camp Lawton in Millen GA.

The author, a native of Mansfield OH and professor emeritus of biology at Tabor College KS, has put enormous research effort into making this work of historical fiction as accurate and comprehensive as possible. *OCWGJ* readers will recognize many of his sources, such as Andersonville historian and *OCWGJ* Contributing Editor, Kevin Frye. His Civil War research is extensive, and the veteran student of the Civil War will find this book accurate and congruent with major works on soldiers’ experience. As examples, the “real life” details range widely from the medicinal quality of clay mixed with charcoal powder in treating diarrhea and dysentery, to the decisions on what equipment to keep and what to leave behind on a difficult march, to discussions and debates on *Les Miserables* and *The Origin of Species*. At the same time, I recommend this book for the genealogist who is a Civil War novice researching his or her ancestors’ military experience, as it will give some perspective on that experience in a highly engaging and readable form. In addition, the four-page “Historical Notes and Acknowledgments” chapter is a very useful guide to the types of research and sources needed to compile a history that will capture as much of the “real war” as possible.

Writing a book like this is no easy task, but the author succeeds by weaving facts and themes together with the events that shaped Hiram’s career. The dialogues and arguments between and among Hiram and his two close friends, Seth Hall and Isaiah Rinehart, on the major themes of fighting and killing, secession, interaction with civilians in their areas of operation, military leadership, abolition, politics, emancipation, and religion, give them depth as individuals, and provide context for the events in which they participate and the actions which they take. Their opinions often change over time, and it is clear that no one has all of the answers all of the time. They often do not agree with each other, but they come to recognize that they need and value each other as people and as indispensable support for each other. Their improvised three-man formation used during their fighting withdrawals at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg have meaning beyond just the creative tactics used by soldiers under combat pressure. In addition, the author adds credibility by portraying a wide range of people who move into and out of the narrative. Some of the people in this book are honorable, well-intentioned people; others are not, and the seedy side of life is portrayed in perspective. One of the ugliest examples is that groups of prisoners at Andersonville had to have pickets at night to protect themselves from some of their fellow prisoners.

One of the most insightful paragraphs comes after Hiram’s initiation into the real war, seeing and causing death at McDowell and Cross Keys. “I had already seen many men die and be left behind. Who would ever know what happened to the soldier buried by the enemy in a mass grave only a foot below the surface? An overwhelming sense of being insignificant came over me.” Later, he worried that “I don’t know why, but the fate of the nameless bothered me.” This, to me, captures one of the concerns that plague many men and women in the danger and uncertainty of military operations, not only within immediate combat but also in the related support activities that may be isolated. The large gaps in our information about who died, where and when they died, and what happened to them are reminders of the validity of this concern.

Because of the major battles and the prisons that Hiram experienced, reading this book may become more personal for many readers with relatives who served in the eastern theater, as it did for this reviewer. When Seth, Hiram, and Isaiah were debating the post-Chancellorsville criticism of the 11th Corps, Isaiah refused to join the general denunciation of the performance of the German regiments: “Seth, not all the Germans ran. The Wisconsin regiment off to our right held their ground on the first attack and fought like tigers. Almost all their officers were shot.” The

regiment to which he referred was the 26th Wisconsin, and one of the men killed in that assault was Private Hermann Roehr, the younger brother of the reviewer's great-great-grandfather. In addition, when Hiram and colleagues arrived at Belle Island in July 1863, one of the current prisoners was Private Daniel P. Reigle of the 87th Pennsylvania, who had been captured on 15 June at Winchester along with the members of the 123rd OVI who befriended Hiram, Seth, and Isaiah and taught them how to survive in the prison camps. (The brother of another great-great-grandfather, Reigle was paroled in late July, and was spared the 17 months of agony endured by Hiram, Seth, and Isaiah.)

One brief, fleeting glimpse of the impact of the "real war" might come to the reader who realizes that when Hiram Terman was able to make it home in January 1865, the survivor of six major battles and the worst that Civil War captivity had to offer, he was only 23 years old. "And so good-bye to the war," as Whitman wrote. Of course, the war may have ended, but it never went away. And, fifty years later as described in the opening chapter of *Hiram's Honor*, some of the survivors were able to gather in Shiloh OH for a reunion, prompting one observer to wonder, "My Lord, what would it have been like? Don't you wonder what those men have seen?" One of the rather feeble veterans arriving by train, who needed help from the conductor in knowing whether he was in the right town, wore a *Sultana* lapel pin. Anyone who has read *Hiram's Honor* will recognize the significance of the three veterans coming to meet him, and will be anxious to know the rest of Isaiah Rinehart's story, the subject of the author's next book.