

A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity

Dispatches from the Dakota War

Mary Butler Renville

Edited by Carrie Reber Zeman and Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola

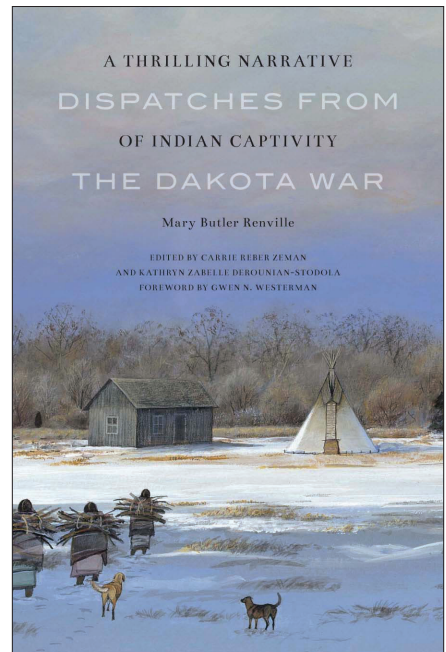
Foreword by Gwen N. Westerman

This edition of *A Thrilling Narrative of Indian Captivity* rescues from obscurity a crucially important work about the bitterly contested U.S.-Dakota War of 1862. Written by Mary Butler Renville, an Anglo woman, with the assistance of her Dakota husband, John Baptiste Renville, *A Thrilling Narrative* was printed only once as a book in 1863 and has not been republished since. The work details the Renvilles' experiences as "captives" among their Dakota kin in the Peace Party camp. Their sympathetic portrayal of those Dakotas who opposed the war combats the stereotypical and inaccurate view that most Dakotas supported the war in 1862. What emerges from the Renvilles' story is a complex and unique picture of race, gender, and class relations on the Minnesota frontier.

As the state of Minnesota commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Dakota War, this narrative provides fresh insights into the most controversial event in the region's history. This new, annotated edition includes groundbreaking historical and literary contexts for both the war and the text.

Mary Butler Renville (1830–1895) and **John Baptiste Renville** (1831–1903) dedicated their lives to education and mission work among the Dakotas. **Carrie Reber Zeman**, an independent historian specializing in the context and historiography of the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862, is a consultant for the Minnesota Historical Society. **Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola** is a professor of English at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and the author of *The War in Words: Reading the Dakota Conflict through the Captivity Literature* (Nebraska, 2009). Dakota scholar **Gwen N. Westerman** is a professor at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and director of the annual Native American Literature Symposium.

“[The editors] have provided splendid introductions and meticulous and helpful annotations that allow readers to appreciate the importance of this account. Zeman’s historical introduction is a scholarly tour de force that reflects an impressive knowledge of the relevant sources and also a good sense of what is significant. . . . It is a complex story that is here well told and convincing. . . . It is an outstanding work.”—Professor Raymond DeMallie, editor of *The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk’s Teachings Given to John G. Neihardt*



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