tail rather than nuance to an understanding of backcountry political culture, and his prose and organizational structure are little more than adequate. Still, competent local studies like this one remain vital to the ongoing process of making sense of life in the borderlands of Great Britain's North American colonies during an age of revolution. In particular, scholars interested in the origins of the states of the Ohio Valley will find this book useful in understanding cultural assumptions about the nature of power and authority many settlers brought with them.

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Army of Manifest Destiny: The American Soldier in the Mexican War, 1846–1848. By James M. McCaffrey. (New York: New York University Press, 1992. Pp. xvi, 275. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. $45.00.)

James M. McCaffrey tells the story of America's regular and volunteer ground forces, from the perspective of the enlisted man, in the war with Mexico. The first chapter provides a brief treatment of the war's causes and coverage of the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. The next six chapters are devoted to soldier life: recruitment, the rendezvous, shoulder arms, experiences en route to Mexico, medical conditions, the soldiers' racist attitudes and reactions to the Mexican people and Mexican institutions, attitudes toward officers, rations and other sources of food, sexual mores, disciplinary lapses, military justice, and related topics. Chapters eight through ten treat the war's major campaigns. The last chapter covers occupation duty in Mexico City and the volunteers' homecomings.

Readers familiar with such recently published works as Robert W. Johannsen's *To The Halls Of The Montezumas* (1985), Robert Ryal Miller's *Shamrock and Sword* (1989), and Allan Peskin, ed., *Volunteers* (1991) will find that most of McCaffrey's conclusions echo discoveries and interpretations in previously published works. McCaffrey is by no means the first historian to note, for example, how the volunteers' enthusiasm waned once they had seen "the Elephant" or that they considered "fragging" unpopular officers. An exception concerns desertion. McCaffrey observes that desertion was rare compared to the American Revolution and Civil War and comes up with a figure of less than 7 percent of total strength; Miller, on the other hand, found a desertion rate of over 8 percent and stressed that it was the nation's highest rate for a foreign war. However, *Army of Manifest Destiny* shines as synthesis, makes an effort to place military behavior within the context of psychological

theory, and demonstrates meticulous concern with details. Some of these details, such as how soldiers collected buffalo chips for fuel (they skewered them on their ramrods), concern the unimportant. But much of the detail brings the soldiering experience home with unusual clarity. For instance, McCaffrey provides an extended explanation of the difficulties of *un*loading muzzle-loading weapons—a helpful piece of information since there were 361 accidental fatalities of American troops as compared to 1,429 American soldiers killed or mortally wounded in battle.

McCaffrey stresses commonalities linking Mexican War soldiers to their counterparts in other American wars, but he also isolates several aspects of soldiering which set the conflict with Mexico apart. Memories of brutal Mexican efforts to repress the Texas Revolution and punish consequent incursions by the Republic of Texas into Mexican territory meant that revenge provided a motivation for wartime recruitment and a rationale for atrocities committed against Mexican soldiers and civilians. The war's unusual brevity allowed the nation to avoid conscription. The fleetness with which the American forces accomplished their mission contributed to high morale in the ranks for much of the conflict and helped ensure that American soldiers would never gain the kind of grudging respect for their Mexican antagonists that northern and southern troops acquired regarding each other during the Civil War.

Army of Manifest Destiny benefits from prodigious research in unpublished and published primary sources: its bibliography identifies hundreds of manuscript collections at thirty-six repositories and includes an eight-page list of published diaries, letters, reminiscences, and other documents. Readers of this journal will delight in meeting an ample sampling of Hoosier volunteers in the narrative. Attention, naturally, is devoted to the Second and Third Indiana regiments at the battle of Buena Vista. But Hoosiers also appear on a more individualized level—such as the intoxicated volunteer who kept jumping off a Mississippi river vessel while on the way to war. However, McCaffrey slights or ignores several aspects of Mexican War soldiering, including the Alvarado campaign, the experiences of Americans captured in battle, the role of soldier-artists, the importance of daguerreotypes to soldiers and their families, soldiers' reactions to political news from the home front, and the enlistment of volunteers in a filibuster to Yucatán at the war's close. McCaffrey provides a fine overview of his topic and plugs a gap in the literature about American soldiering, but he also leaves room for a more comprehensive study of Manifest Destiny's warriors.

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