Melzer develops that fuller description in a number of ways. He explores the reasons for Pyle's settling in Albuquerque and the dimensions of his life there. The friendships he made there, particularly that with Edward H. Shaffer, the editor of the Albuquerque Tribune, form an interesting subtheme of the book. Beyond that Melzer explores the impact that New Mexico had on Pyle and the ways in which he influenced New Mexico and its citizens. These explorations represent the most original parts of the book, and Melzer presents them in the context of Pyle's travels as a roving reporter and war correspondent. Throughout the book, the author also underscores the interaction that existed between Pyle's professional and private life.

Melzer provides an interesting portrayal of Pyle's association with the Southwest and proves that New Mexico as well as Indiana is justified in celebrating his memory. The book merits attention for this reason and because Melzer makes an interesting probe into Pyle's personal life. He also accords Pyle's wife Jerry a prominent place in the book and treats her sad struggle with mental depression and alcoholism in a sensitive and informed manner. Although previously covered, Pyle's own mood swings and restlessness do not receive a similar in-depth treatment. For a slim volume, however, this one is rich in intimate detail and reflects Melzer's appreciated exploitation of personal paper collections and oral histories. He achieved his goal in writing the book, but some readers will wish the book were more expansive.

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The three Ohio River states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois were noted for their divided loyalties during the seventy years before the Civil War. Beginning with the arrival of New Englanders in Ohio's Western Reserve and Virginians and Kentuckians in southwestern Ohio in the 1790s, the three states remained deeply divided until the Civil War brought a measure of unity in defense of the Union. Nicole Etcheson has produced a brief and succinct monograph in an effort to explain this phenomenon and in the process has helped show why these residents of the Old Northwest were so often at odds with one another.
Etcheson keeps her focus on the upland southerners but cannot avoid an equal emphasis on those from the Northeast who moved into the regions around the Great Lakes. Building on the work of other historians who have attempted to explain the southern identification with democracy and independence and the distaste for Yankee cultural imperialism, she adds little to earlier, more extensive interpretations. She does, however, effectively bring together the issues that divided and united residents and shows how most eventually came to view themselves as westerners.

Etcheson, who is an assistant professor at the University of Texas, El Paso, originally produced this study as a doctoral dissertation at Indiana University. She has done an impressive and exhaustive job of research in primary materials, including letters, editorials, petitions, speeches, diaries, and memoirs. She pieces together these highly subjective accounts into an objective explanation of midwesterners' views. She notes how each of the three territories fought for statehood as a kind of second war for independence, their citizens overcoming the often tyrannical executive authority of territorial governors. Not only was Arthur St. Clair viewed as an outsider by Ohioans, but even William Henry Harrison was seen by many in southern Indiana as representing wealth and speculator influence at the expense of small struggling farmers. Such governors sometimes were viewed as less manly than the honest farmer/mechanic.

Various economic and social issues made upland southerners suspicious of northeasterners, issues that included internal improvements, land policy, public education, immigration, and temperance. Yet it was slavery and the threatened presence of free blacks that most effectively united these settlers. All who sought racial equality were seen as a threat to the position of whites. Rejecting the extremes of abolitionism and secession, they sought a compromise stance, most frequently embodied in the concept of popular sovereignty. The sectional crisis of the 1850s nonetheless challenged their newborn status as midwesterners and brought a resurgence of sympathy for the South. Yet their hatred of the wealthy planter aristocracy, who they believed had originally driven them from their southern homes, meant that to most Abraham Lincoln had more appeal than Stephen A. Douglas. Few were willing to surrender to southern demands in 1861, and they emerged from the war far more western than southern, albeit with a persistent hint of distrust of New Englanders.

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