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## Book Reviews

*Baptism of Fire: Rowlett's Station, 1861: Indiana's German Sons, a History of the 1st German, 32nd Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry.* By Michael A. Peake. (Indianapolis: Max Kade German-American Center, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, and Indiana German Heritage Society, Inc., 1999. Pp. iv, 68. Illustrations, notes, appendices. Paperbound).

Michael A. Peake presents an intriguing portrait of the early history of the First German, Thirty-Second Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry. In August 1861, the state of Indiana charged August von Willich, a former Prussian officer who had left Europe following the defeat of the 1848 uprisings, with the task of creating a regiment of German immigrants. Demonstrating their commitment to fighting for their new country, over four hundred German-American men joined this regiment on the first day of enlistment, and eventually this group attracted recruits from several midwestern states and even Tennessee. In this work, Peake traces the activities of this regiment from its founding through its deployment in Kentucky and the first major engagement at the Battle of Rowlett's Station.

Peake's discussion of the regiment provides insight into the experiences of immigrant soldiers in the Civil War. Peake emphasizes the unit's European military training, which helped to make it one of the most highly disciplined Indiana regiments from the war's outset. The unit demonstrated its military prowess and bravery during the Battle of Rowlett's Station when it triumphed despite being greatly outnumbered. Perhaps the most admirable aspect of this study is Peake's investigations of how the German-American culture of this regiment affected the soldiers' experiences of military life. For example, when the regiment traveled to Louisville, Kentucky, the German-American community ecstatically welcomed them with banquets and the presentation of gifts such as a regimental flag. Peake's description of the regiment during 1861 shows that, in camp and on the field of battle, the unit's ethnic identity significantly distinguished it from other Union regiments.

In the foreword, Peake notes that this volume is an initial contribution to a more comprehensive study of the Thirty-Second Indiana that he plans to write. Many authors have written regimental histories and books about Civil War battles and campaigns. However, in this work Peake reveals the rich and unique opportunities this regiment offers for studies of Indiana's participation in the Civil War in general and the experiences of German-American Union soldiers in particular.

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