

The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes, 1754–1814. Edited by David Curtis Skaggs and Larry L. Nelson. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2001. Pp. xxvii, 414. Maps, notes, illustrations, index. \$49.95.)

In the Second Hundred Years' War (1689–1815), England and France fought a series of wars for hegemony in the Old World and New. In the first phase of this warfare (1689–1763), England emerged as the dominant power in North America. Not long after, however, she lost the heart of this territory in the American Revolution and the rest was threatened in the War of 1812. Although frequently a theater of operations, North America was never an easy setting in which to conduct warfare. The vast expanses of territory were heavily forested and all but impassable, creating a logistical nightmare. Waterways provided the easiest and sometimes the only means of moving men and material to a battle front. Whoever controlled the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence and the Ohio rivers and their tributaries controlled not simply the surrounding territory but the entire region.

This anthology, which consists of the best twenty papers from a conference on the history of the Great Lakes held at Bowling Green State University in 1998, is devoted to what editor David Skaggs calls "The Sixty Years' War for the Great Lakes" (1754–1814). Instead of treating the recurring warfare in this region as a sideshow for the larger international conflict, Skaggs and coeditor Larry Nelson present it as a single regional contest that was important in its own right because it shaped the future of North America.

This work avoids the weaknesses that so often plague anthologies. The essays share a common theme, giving the work coherence. In addition, most of the essays were written by accomplished scholars and appear to be of a uniformly high quality. Skaggs presents a good overview of the Sixty Years' War in the first essay, and Andrew Cayton has written a thoughtful concluding essay.

In the other essays, Indians loom especially large. This is hardly surprising given the central role that they played in almost every North American war before 1815 and the opportunities for research that this group still offers. The essays shed light on the spread of disease among Indians, the role of certain mixed-breed leaders, the notorious Gnadenhutten Massacre of 1782, the cultural and commercial interactions among the races, Quaker missionary work with the Indians, and Iroquois diplomacy as well as the Shawnee-American alliance during the War of 1812. Other essays deal with French imperial policy, British infantry tactics, the history of Fort Detroit, transportation and logistics along the Mohawk River corridor, land speculation in the Ohio Firelands, and command of the lakes and Canadian opinion during the War of 1812.

This is an interesting and useful collection for students of American and Canadian history. While there is little here that focuses exclusively on Indiana, there is much for anyone interested in the

broader history of the Old Northwest. The volume is nicely produced and is adorned with good maps. Michigan State University Press has recently become a player in early republic studies. Unfortunately, this volume, like earlier ones from the press, appears to be priced mainly for libraries. This will deter some people who might otherwise buy this book from doing so.

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Ham, Eggs, and Corn Cake: A Nebraska Territory Diary. By Erastus F. Beadle. Introduction by Ronald C. Naugle. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001. Pp. xxiv, 130. Notes, maps, index. Paperbound, \$12.95.)

Erastus F. Beadle left both his comfortable position in his publishing company and his wife and three children to venture from New York to Omaha City, Nebraska Territory, in 1857. He intended to make his fortune in real estate and resettle there eventually with his family. Even though his plans did not succeed and he returned to New York within the year, his diary provides a fascinating glimpse into the lives of individuals and families whose optimism drove them to pursue prosperity in the West.

The introduction by Ronald C. Naugle places the few months of Beadle's adventure within a historical context and describes Beadle's successes before and after his real estate fiasco. After Beadle returned to New York he rejoined his brother in the publishing house of Beadle and Adams, which became known for more than fifty different kinds of publications, of which the Dime Novel is the best remembered.

The strength of the diary lies in Beadle's astute observations of ordinary people caught up in extraordinary circumstances. Beadle is succinct yet perceptive in his observations of everyday life. The account of his twenty-one-day journey from New York to Omaha illuminates the difficulties of travel in the mid-nineteenth century. He began the trip in a rail car but from that point made use of a variety of conveyances, including steamers, ferries, buggies, stage coaches, and even his own feet during some of the stretches.

Many of the hazards of travel are described with seemingly good humor. Navigating the Missouri was difficult at best: "we came in collision with the Crossman [another river boat] and smashed in our wheelhouse on the same side the previous injury was sustained" (p. 14). Toward the end of his journey, the stage coach in which Beadle was a passenger got mired in the mud during a rainstorm. The passengers had to disembark and wade through the water, "knee deep and some of the way up to the seat of our pants" (p. 25). The walk into Council Bluffs turned out to be six miles.