

The Mexican War Journal and Letters of Ralph W. Kirkham. By RALPH W. KIRKHAM. Edited by ROBERT RYAL MILLER. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1991. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xxi, 141 pp. Paper. \$12.95.

The Mexican War, 1846–1848. By K. JACK BAUER. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xxvii, 454 pp. Paper. \$16.95.

As several recent books and articles attest, the Mexican War of 1846–1848 has sparked renewed interest among historians. The publications under review are part of this trend to give the war the attention it deserves. They shed light on the political-military problems and cultural differences that influenced U.S. attitudes and actions during that conflict.

K. Jack Bauer's book (first published in 1974) chronicles U.S. military operations during the war. Difficulties such as logistics, recruitment of soldiers, lack of discipline among the troops (particularly the volunteer units), disease and sanitation, domestic political squabbling, and diplomatic negotiations are lucidly explained. Bauer also evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of American and Mexican military leaders, discusses their campaign strategies, and explains how battlefield results shaped the course of subsequent U.S. and Mexican policies.

Although Bauer did not rely heavily on Mexican sources, his book retains its objectivity. It portrays the war as an inevitable consequence of conflicting national interests and objectives: the westward movement of the U.S. frontier clashed with Mexico's reluctance to relinquish national claims to Texas. Bauer points out that President James K. Polk's failure accurately to gauge Mexican popular opposition doomed his policy of graduated pressure; but Bauer also notes that most Mexican leaders did not have national interests at heart. They tried to use the war with the United States only to further their own selfish motives.

Robert W. Johannsen's introductory essay in Bauer's book examines the place of the Mexican War in the popular imagination. The romanticism that pervaded U.S. society in the 1840s allowed the conflict to filter into popular culture, and provided the U.S. public with the impetus to see the war as a prospective opportunity for gallantry. Johannsen also notes, however, that the bloody realities of the battlefield permeated the U.S. consciousness and "stripped the war of its romantic veil" (p. xx). Part of the significance of Lieutenant Ralph Kirkham's eyewitness account of the last 15 months of the U.S. presence in central Mexico is that it vividly illustrates those sentiments, especially the gruesome nature of combat. The Churubusco battlefield was "covered with dead and dying, bodies without heads, arms, and legs, and disfigured in every horrible way! Oh, it was awful and never can I forget this day!" (p. 49).

Kirkham's manuscript is important for two other reasons. Military operations in the southern regions of Mexico have not been as well documented as activities

elsewhere. Moreover, Kirkham's journal showcases both an admiration for Mexico and the negative stereotypes that North Americans have harbored about Mexicans and all Latin Americans. Kirkham praises the temperate climate, the beauty of the countryside, the fortifications at Perote Castle, the public gardens of Puebla, and Mexico City's Art Academy of San Carlos. Nevertheless, he finds fault with the Mexican character. Bullfights were "a most cruel amusement" (p. 44), Mexicans were a "cowardly race" that lacked bravery and skill in the art of combat (p. 68), their clergymen were "immoral and ready to stoop to the very lowest acts of villainy and wickedness" (p. 78).

Robert Ryal Miller's rich introduction to Kirkham's observations outlines U.S.-Mexican relations from the 1820s to the 1840s, describes the course of the war, and surveys Kirkham's career. In addition, Miller's endnotes supply amplifying information on the sites and characters Kirkham discusses, and thus will be useful to non-Mexican War specialists. Despite these benefits, I am troubled by Miller's assertion that Lieutenant Kirkham's comments demonstrate the "considerable collaboration [that existed] between Mexican civilians and American military personnel" (p. xix). The journal does not support this statement. Several Mexican citizens treated Kirkham cordially, but their civility should not be construed as indicative of a partnership.

These works will interest specialists in nineteenth-century Mexican and U.S. history. Bauer's study will appeal to students of military history, while Kirkham's account will be a useful supplementary text for undergraduate courses in Mexican or U.S. history. As the 150th anniversary of the Mexican War draws near, it is to be hoped that books like these will stimulate additional research in the field.

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Indians and Intruders in Central California, 1769–1849. By GEORGE HARWOOD PHILLIPS. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993. Illustrations. Maps. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xv, 223 pp. Cloth. \$24.95.

As the controversy continues surrounding the ongoing campaign to canonize Junipero Serra, O.F.M., the architect of the Alta California mission system, a small group of scholars is revising the biased, self-serving, and at times inaccurate history of the missions written by the Franciscans and their supporters, which is being used to promote the canonization. The tightly written volume under review is the latest addition to the literature treating Spanish-Mexican-Indian relations in California.

George Harwood Phillips examines the adaptations made by the Yokuts and Miwoks living in the San Joaquin Valley during the 80 years following the Spanish colonization of California. He focuses on patterns of resistance and the restructuring of the region's economy. A major theme is how the Indians modified their economy by raiding the herds of horses that belonged to the missions, pueblos,