

RESEÑA BIBLIOGRÁFICA

John S. D. Eisenhower, *So Far From God. The U. S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848. Anchor*, 1990.

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IMAGINE Arizona, California, and New Mexico as Mexican states; San Francisco, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Tucson, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque as Mexican cities. Military historian John Eisenhower contributes a detailed, informed, and balanced history of that long-forgotten war which was so crucial to U.S. and to Mexican history and to U.S. -Mexican relations.

The approach is a model of military history. There are maps of the major battlefields, rundowns on strategy and tactics, profiles of military leaders on both sides (warts and all), and excellent background on the politicking in Mexico City and Washington. The details are often poignant, such as the American efforts to discipline their own rambunctious occupying forces, the camp followers on each side, and the flamboyant personalities. The abundance of diaries, journals, letters, memoirs and other documents makes the telling of the American story much fuller. The Mexicans wrote less and little has survived. The author focuses on the personality of Santa Ana as military commander, in-and-out president, and the sole leader capable of rallying Mexicans. He notes that guerrillas in 1847-1848 were more likely to attack their countrymen than take on alert American forces.

Could this dirty, costly war with its high casualties (mostly from disease) have been avoided? Americans were determined to acquire New Mexico and California over which Mexico had lost most administrative control. "Few people, certainly not the proud Mexicans, would ever entertain offers to purchase part of their countries; though it cost Mexico dearly to resist, it is to her credit that she did."

The legacy of this war, especially the bitter memories become Mexican official history, has persisted in Mexico while overridden in the U.S. by the Civil War and later conflicts.

It was a war that made a lasting difference for both countries and it is good to have this well-written, thoroughly researched, and even-handed account.

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