

Arthur H. Mitchell, ed. *Fighting Irish in the American Civil War and the Invasion of Mexico: Essays*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2017. 272 pp. \$35.00, e-book, ISBN 978-1-4766-2726-7.

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Fighting Irish in the American Civil War and the Invasion of Mexico explores Irish immigrants' history of, participation in, and legacy of the mid-nineteenth-century US wars and their integration into American society. This anthology is divided into two parts: part 1, comprising only two essays, focuses on Irish participation on both sides of the Mexican-American War (1846–48), and part 2, comprising sixteen essays, examines different aspects of the American Civil War (1861–65) related to the Irish immigrant experience, such as issues of race, gender, and methods of assimilating the Irish into American cities or opposing military factions. The contributors of this collection focus on what it meant to be Irish and how experiences differed according to geographic location, gender, ideologies, and sentiments.

Part 1 starts with a contribution by historian Michael F. Hogan, "The Irish Soldiers of Mexico." Hogan identifies the causes of the Mexican-American War while demonstrating why some Irish people decided to defect to Mexico and fight under the Mexican flag. He focuses on the San Patricios, a battalion formed primarily of Irish and German Catholics who deserted the US Army. Furthermore, he breaks down the multiple reasons for desertion. Some Irish immigrants defected to Mexico because of American prejudice toward them and shared similarities with Mexican people. For Irish

deserters having an identical Catholic background became a moral blockade. He also sheds light on the symbology behind the San Patricios' green silk flag and its representation of their spatiality within the Mexican army. Lastly, Hogan dedicates part of his chapter to the American military's capture of the San Patricios and explains the brutal punishments they received on behalf of Colonel William Harney. Still, he recognizes the perseverance of the Irish men as they protested and demonstrated humoristic defiance toward their executioners.

Arthur H. Mitchell reveals an opposing examination by focusing on Irish participation in the invasion of Mexico from a US perspective. He opens the chapter by saying that "the Mexican War of 1846–1848 presented Irish people in the United States with a challenge and an opportunity" (p. 24). As previously mentioned, many Irish immigrants faced American prejudice and agitation. However, military participation and nationalistic integration demanded Irish immigrants to demonstrate their patriotic duty toward their host country, and in return, they hoped to be accepted by their American counterparts. The chapter also exposes the role of Irish print culture in the United States as many Irish newspapers did not ring the bell of Irish recruitment but instead demonstrated the achievements of Irish people in the war effort.

Mitchell unveils American and Irish reactions toward the San Patricios and the effects of their defection on American opinions toward the Irish.

Part 2 focuses on Irish involvement during the American Civil War and addresses how they were treated, recruited, and assimilated into US culture and cities. This part draws attention to the roles of different battalions, such as the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry regiment, the 23rd Illinois Infantry, and the 28th Massachusetts Infantry regiment. Historian Phillip G. Pattee, for example, examines the various reasons why the 69th Pennsylvania regiment enlisted in the Union army, including to gain political and economic positioning among Americans and to improve the lives of their children in the US in the midst of growing anti-immigrant sentiment. Similarly, Lawrence J. McCaffrey's chapter, "Preserving the Union: Shaping a New Image of Chicago's Irish Catholics and the Civil War," reveals the hardships of the immigrating Irish, as most were illiterate and unskilled and could not adapt to a growing industrial city like Chicago. The inability to adjust alienated many Irish people and they started exhibiting antisocial behavior as a way to cope with alienation. Still, for those looking to change their social status, serving in the Union or the Confederacy gave them an opportunity to be accepted while also providing economic incentives. Most noteworthy is D. R. O'Connor Lysagh's contribution, "What Made the 'Fighting Irish Fight,'" as he recounts Irish agitations and reasons why they joined the Union or the Confederacy.

Historian Eileen M. McMahon's chapter, "Irish Women in the Civil War," identifies how women served the Union and the Confederate armies. She demonstrates how Irish women were outsiders during the antebellum period but also played a crucial role on both sides of the Civil War. While many women played a role as nurses and caretakers, McMahon highlights such women as Bridget Divers, a nurse who fought under the command of the 1st Michigan Calvary, where she and her fellow troops repelled a Confederate assault.

Irene Hiders of the 95th Illinois Infantry defied gender norms as she enlisted under the name of Albert Cashier. Under this new identity, Cashier fought in over forty battles for the Union army. Nevertheless, similarly to Irish men, women also sided with Confederacy, as was the case with Rose O'Neal Greenhow, a Confederate spy who passed information through embroidered pieces of clothing. Greenhow's espionage even received praise from Secretary of War Jefferson Davis for her participation in the Battle of Bull Run.

This second part also contributes to the intersectionality between Irish people and enslaved Black Southerners. Andre Fleche's chapter, "Irish and African Americans in the Civil War," describes the sentiments felt by some of the Irish regarding enslaved Black people, as they thought that unfree labor would bring even more economic hardship and competition for Irish people. Other Irish immigrants enlisted in the Union army as they hoped to be incorporated into the social structure of the US with military service as the vehicle, while others joined to battle against anti-Catholic sentiments and nativism and others served out of abolitionist principles.

Although *Fighting Irish in the American Civil War and the Invasion of Mexico* delivers in its encapsulation of Irish struggles during two major US wars of the nineteenth century, the title is somewhat misleading. The anthology only dedicates two chapters to describing the involvement of the Irish during the invasion of Mexico. In comparison, the rest of the collection commits sixteen chapters to unravel the stories of the fighting Irish during the American Civil War. Still, this compilation of essays represents what it means to be Irish in the United States during the nineteenth century. This book will be a great source of information for those looking to understand Irish participation during these two major conflicts. The issues it explores are relevant to anyone looking to understand the involvement of Irish men and women in

American conflicts from the late 1840s to the late 1860s.

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