

# Monroe County had spirited volunteers in Mexican War

"When the war breaks out in Mexico, I'm a gonna go to Montreal; I've got a 42nd cousin up in Canada, and I'm gonna pay a friendly call . . ." lyrics from a popular song.

Monroe Countians of the 1840s would not have been in any way amused by the song that so cavalierly referred to evasion of one's duty to country. By 1846 relations between the Americans and the Mexicans had deteriorated along the border, and President James K. Polk sent General Zachary Taylor down there to run Mexican squatters out of Texas.

A border clash ensued and the United States declared war on Mexico May 13, 1846. Monroe County responded to the call for volunteers with a company of soldiers commanded by John M.



## Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

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Sluss, John Eller and Aquilla Rogers. According to Forest M. ("Pop") Hall's *Historic Treasures*, 67 in all signed up for Army duty. They were known as Company A of the Third Regiment.

It was a time of high patriotism, because Americans thoroughly believed in manifest destiny. The *Histories of Morgan, Monroe and Brown Counties, Indiana* gives the reader a little of the flavor of those days after the declaration of

war. "A beautiful flag was presented the boys by the ladies of Bloomington, Miss Sarah Markle making the presentation speech."

It should be noted that some of the departing "heroes" were remnants of the old 20th Regiment of the Indiana Militia, formed to protect settlers from Indians. With none of them in sight, through the years the 20th had kept up their spirits with "ribaldry and loud, bolsterous drinking parties."

After an emotional send-off, the volunteers discovered the reality of military discipline — sleeping in tents in the summertime and Army food. Some of the Indiana troops never made it to Mexico, having drowned in the Ohio Riv-

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