

Men who served in the Mexican War

"The Third Indiana Regiment, Indiana Volunteers, you may rely on it, saved the pass. Had we given away before the charge of the lancers and infantry, all was lost. Our loss was severe in officers and men." Letter from an Indiana soldier after the Battle of Buena Vista.

It did not occur to the governor of Indiana to commission an official account of Hoosiers in the Mexican War (1846-48) until after the turn of the 20th century. *Indiana in the Mexican War*, a report of the state adjutant general, was published in 1908, long after some of the pertinent records were lost.

Monroe County histories contain sketchy accounts of the service of local men during the war, but there are some name discrepancies. Some out-of-county recruits are listed among those from this county.

Perhaps the most colorful character among the troops of Company A of the Third Regiment was Aquilla Rogers, whose name



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cropped up in every local history. He was, for example, commissioned to "carry the chain" at the auction of the first city lots in Bloomington in 1818.

Rogers was in the grocery business, which included "wet groceries," namely liquor. He speculated in the cheap land available for sale, buying it in Seminary Township in 1827 and Salt Creek in 1836. He served the county as a probate judge, which fortunately didn't conflict with his liquor business. It should be noted for the record that he left the Army prior to the Battle of Buena Vista and returned to Bloomington in January 1847.

One list of Monroe County sol-

diers in the war contains the name of Isaac Buskirk, but it is unlikely that he was in the Army. Actually, the correct name — James M. Buskirk — found in the adjutant general's report is the correct one. (The 1850 census for Monroe County lists enough Isaac Buskirks to confuse any genealogist.)

John Eller, onetime sheriff of the county, was killed in the war. He was proudly, but briefly eulogized by his "Aunt Molley" Stewart in a little memoir printed in Pop Hall's *Historic Treasures*. She wrote, "I am rather proud of the record of men-folk, as besides the two husbands who fought in the rebellion, my uncle, John Eller, who was at one-time sheriff of Monroe County, lost his life in the service of his country during the Mexican War."

Capt. John M. Sluss, who led the volunteers from Bloomington, had served the county as both coroner and sheriff in 1832 and

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