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## Review of Soldiers West: Biographies from the Military Frontier

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*Soldiers West: Biographies from the Military Frontier.* Edited by Paul Andrew Hutton and with an introduction by Robert M. Utley. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987. Maps, photos, index. xiii + 276 pp. \$19.95 cloth, \$9.95 paper.

The American West and the Old Army's role in it remain of enduring interest. For example, Edward M. Coffman's *The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898* (1986) is a collective study of the officers and enlisted men and their dependents. Now, as an unintentional but superb companion piece, *Soldiers West* examines individual officers who were influential in exploring, policing, and developing the frontier. Two important themes emerge from these mini-biographies. First, as military historians have long recognized, the army played a vital role in national development. Second, and less well understood but especially fascinating, was the diversity among officers in their personali-

ties, interests, and experiences.

The parameters of diversity ranged from Stephen H. Long to William S. Harney, from George Crook and Nelson A. Miles to John G. Bourke and Charles King. As Roger L. Nichols details, Long conducted explorations and worked on transportation projects, but never commanded in combat. By contrast, Richmond L. Clow describes Harney's action-packed career in the Black Hawk, Second Seminole, and Mexican Wars and in campaigns against the Winnebagos and Brule Sioux. Like many officers, this aggressive Indian fighter eventually became a staunch defender of Indian rights. Crook and Miles, portrayed by Jerome A. Greene and Robert M. Utley respectively, both achieved considerable success in various Indian campaigns, and became rivals for fame and promotions. Yet, Crook seemed (as his aide said) "plain as an old stick," while Miles's vanity and flamboyance led Theodore Roosevelt to label him a "Brave Peacock." Joseph C. Porter depicts Bourke as a soldier-scholar who fought the Apaches and Cheyennes, but who acquired an international reputation as an ethnologist and anthropologist. Another energetic scholarly soldier was King, who, as Paul L. Hedren recounts, wore a soldier's uniform for seventy years and wrote more than sixty books and 250 short stories.

Also included are essays by Jerome O. Steffen on William Clark; Arrell M. Gibson on James H. Carleton; Hutton on Philip H. Sheridan; Brian W. Dippie on George A. Custer; Bruce J. Dinges on Benjamin H. Grierson; J'Nell L. Pate on Ranald S. Mackenzie; Marvin E. Kroeker on William B. Hazen; and Paul C. Carriker on Frank D. Baldwin. Individually, the essays are well researched and crafted, and collectively they have a strong thematic unity. The only thing that might have made this book better is more essays—on John C. Fremont and Eugene A. Carr, for instance—of equally high caliber.

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