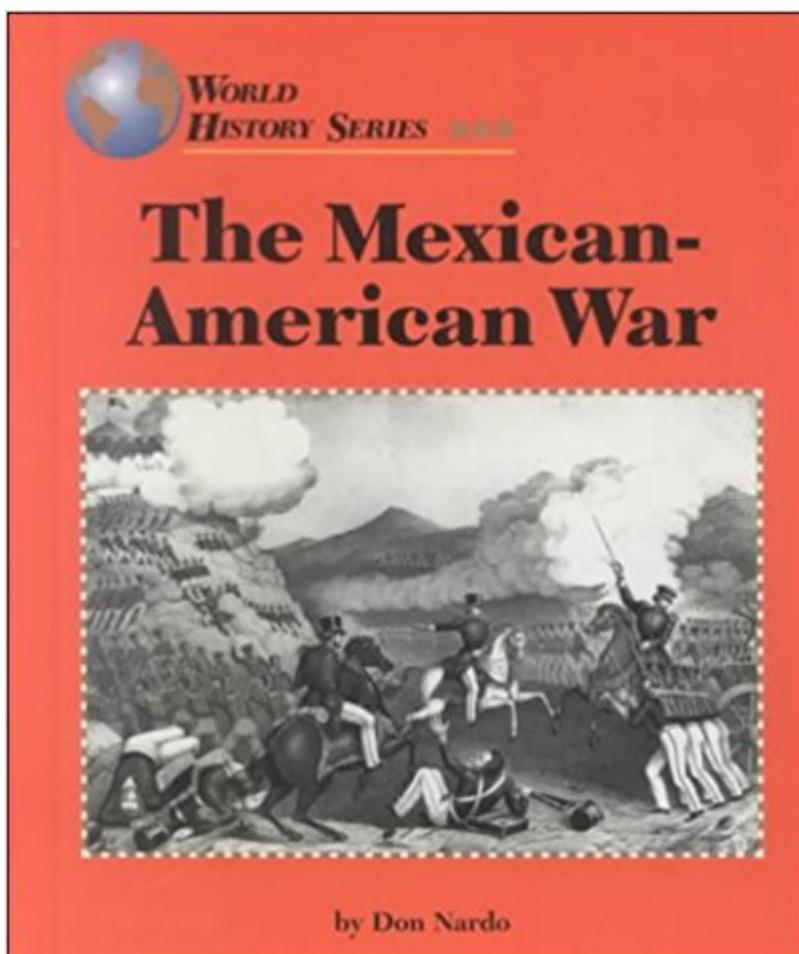


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The Mexican-American War (World History Series)



Synopsis

Examines the Mexican-American War, discussing American expansion, the fall of Mexico City, the conclusion of the war, the peace treaty, and the legacy of a "dirty" war.

Book Information

Series: World History Series

Hardcover: 112 pages

Publisher: Greenhaven Press (March 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1560064951

ISBN-13: 978-1560064954

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 7.8 x 0.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,808,408 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 in Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > Mexico #176 in Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > United States > 19th Century #324 in Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > Military

Customer Reviews

Grade 6-9-A clear and concise look at a largely forgotten but extremely important part of American history. Nardo covers the events leading up to this still controversial conflict; the major battles; the large antiwar movement in the U.S.; and the bitter reaction, which persists to this day, on the part of some Mexicans. Excerpts from various documents from the period are included, as are extensive chapter notes and bibliographies. Numerous black-and-white photos and reproductions enliven the presentation, but there are only a few maps and the movements of the various armies become a little confusing. There are also one or two minor errors. For example, Grant and Lee did not form a friendship during the war. At Appomattox, Lee couldn't ever remember meeting Grant. Alden Carter's The Mexican War (Watts, 1992) covers the military side of the war, but doesn't go into as much depth on the political issues. Nardo offers one of the best overviews of all aspects of the war currently available. Todd Morning, Schaumburg Township Public Library, IL Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

A well written and kind of disturbing book about a war most Americans have pretty much forgotten.

The author tells it like it is, or was to be more precise, without trying to gloss over the bad parts, for instance where Americans were lawbreakers, greedy, and sometimes warlike and brutal in their relations with the Mexicans. Those are the disturbing parts, because today we don't like to hear that our country can do things that we normally associate with guys like Saddam Hussain. But the story has to be told because it did happen and forgetting about the past is a big mistake, as some scholar once pointed out. For those who are unhappy about George W. Bush making it into the White House, I wonder what they would think of James K. Polk. They should read this book and find out what this guy did to make sure the country got its hands on Texas and California.

Historian Don Nardo has written numerous excellent books for young people, mostly about ancient times. I have had the good fortune to use some of them in teaching my high school history classes. I was not aware until now, however, that he is equally versed in American history. Most people today do not remember the Mexican War. That is probably due in part to the fact that it was a shameful affair, in which the United States quite literally launched an essentially unprovoked military aggression against a neighboring country, mainly out of greed for land and deep-seated racial and ethnic bias. Though Nardo does not take sides, since he is writing for students and must remain impartial, he allows the facts to speak for themselves. And those facts nearly leap from the pages. Numerous passages from books, newspapers, and official documents of the times provide copious documentation worthy of scholarly history books (although Nardo is always careful to keep the writing clear and easy to understand). It is difficult, after reading this superlative treatment of the war, and especially the events leading up to it, to think about Texas in the same way I used to. The way this country acquired it was and will always remain a stain on American honor. Nardo must be congratulated for a job exceedingly well done.

I highly recommend this brief but superbly written synopsis of the Mexican War. Even though it is aimed at students, it does not talk down to the reader and really captures the events, political debates, protests, and ultimate outcome of the conflict. John Eisenhower's "So Far from God" and John Weems' "To Conquer a Peace" are good choices for those wanting a more in-depth look at the war, but for those shopping for a quicker, easier read, Nardo's book really fills the bill.

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