Edward Ashley Bowen Phelps served in the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen (today's 3d Cavalry Regiment) during the Mexican-War. His celebration of Manifest Destiny was highly charged, but not beyond the general ken of expansionists. Like most white Americans, Phelps believed in the superiority of Anglo-Saxons, but thought that intermarriage between Americans and Mexicans would produce a superior people who could conquer the world. Rather than siring a servile caste, Phelps believed that the result of joining "the swarthy supple soft, pliant race of beings" in Mexico with "our sterner natures of the North" would be a "glorious combination."

Able to quote by memory the works of Lord Byron, Joseph Addison, and others, Private Phelps was better educated than his peers. His letters and his family history are a window into the life of a soldier, his family, and the United States in a tumultuous period of war and territorial expansion.

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