

The Wolfe Institute

*The Ethyle R. Wolfe Institute for the Humanities,
in cooperation with the Daniel M. Lyons Chair of American History,
and the Brooklyn College Historical Society,
presents*

An American Soldier in Mexico: Edward Ashley Bowen Phelps and the Course of American Empire, 1846-1848



Mounted Companies, U.S. Regiment of Mounted Riflemen, 1847

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.

Ricardo A. Herrera is Professor of Military History at the School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College. He is the author of *For Liberty and the Republic: The American Citizen as Soldier, 1775-1861* (New York University Press, 2015). He is working on two book projects, tentatively titled *Feeding Valley Forge: The Fatal Crisis of 1778* and *An American Soldier in Mexico: The Life and Letters of Edward Ashley Bowen Phelps and the Course of American Empire*. Herrera is also the author of several articles and chapters on American military history. A graduate of Marquette University and the University of California, Los Angeles, Herrera has also taught at Mount Union College, at Texas Lutheran University, and has served as an officer in the US Army.

**Wednesday, October 31, 2018
11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
Occidental Lounge, 5th floor
Brooklyn College Student Center
Campus Road and East 27th Street
Refreshments will be served**

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