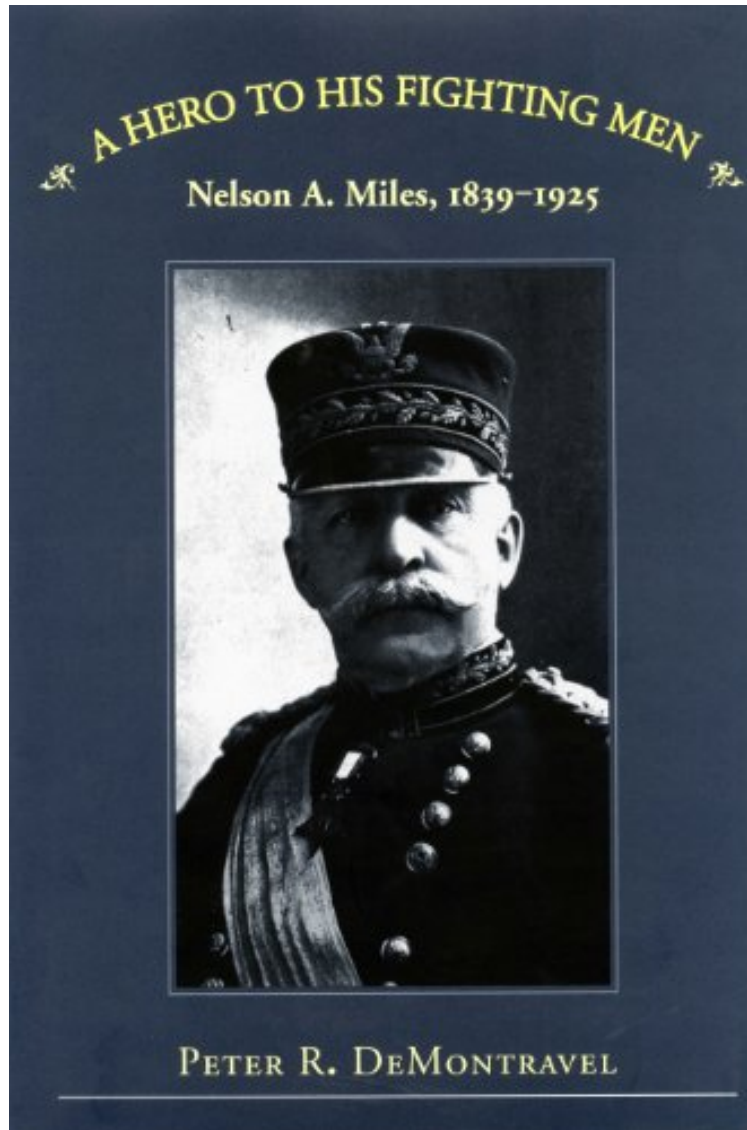


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A Hero to His Fighting Men: Nelson A. Miles, 1839-1925: Nelson A.Miles, 1839-1925

Von Nelson A DeMontravel
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Von Nelson A DeMontravel : A Hero to His Fighting Men: Nelson A. Miles, 1839-1925: Nelson A.Miles, 1839-1925 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Hero to His Fighting Men: Nelson A. Miles, 1839-1925: Nelson A.Miles, 1839-1925:

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Author's Review Von Ein Kunde A Hero to His Fighting Men. Nelson A. Miles, 1839 - 1925 is a biography of an American hero

whose good name has been unfairly tarnished. Miles compiled a flawless record of military feats after he began his army service as a volunteer officer in the Civil War. Following the Civil War, in which he fought in every major battle of the army of the Potomac except Gettysburg, and won the Congressional Medal of Honor for "distinguished gallantry at the battle of Chancellorsville, Virginia, May 3, 1863," he earned fleeting fame on the frontier. Today, few realize that, in turn, he defeated dissident bands of Kiowa-Comanches, Sioux, Nez Perces, and renegade Apaches led by Geronimo, and then skillfully managed the Messiah outbreak of 1890. The climax of his career came in 1895 with his appointment as commanding general of the army. The driving ambition, courage, and self-confidence that were responsible for his military successes and advancement also made him a controversial officer who begot a legion of enemies. Because the judgments of his critics have influenced the way history has viewed Miles it is necessary to reassess the career of the officer who was appreciated in his day as "the idol of the Indian fighters." One can readily understand why some of his contemporaries did not wish Miles well. For instance, supporters of Jefferson Davis found it difficult to forgive Miles, when, as jailer of the fallen President of the Confederate States of America, he had his prisoner temporarily placed in chains. Equally apparent is how, in the post Civil War army, at a time when there were few opportunities for advancement, jealousies naturally sprang up between Miles and his rivals for promotion. It is also evident why officials in Washington would resent his outspoken criticism of mismanaged bureaus and campaigns. For example, in his 1886 annual report Miles complained about the shoes manufactured at the military prison at Fort Leavenworth and worn by his men on the Geronimo campaign. The Adjutant General had earlier praised the prison for its products. Miles faultfinding partially explains why the government made little effort to honor him for his victory over the Apaches. A painstaking search that took over fifteen years, of both manuscript collections and nineteenth century newspapers, unearthed information that justifies reexamination of Miles' career. For instance the Adjutant General's bruised feelings concerning the shoes made at Fort Leavenworth does not completely explain Miles' difficulties following the Geronimo campaign. Miles also had to contend with bureaucratic intrigues emanating from the headquarters of his superior officer at the time, Major General Oliver O. Howard. For example, Howard muddied the details of what actually happened when Geronimo surrendered to Miles. As a result, Miles fell into official disfavor. Miles did not publicly air his exasperation at this disservice, but he reacted after he read the published correspondence of the surrender and realized what had happened. In a letter found in Howard's papers, which has not been fully appreciated by some students of the campaign, it is clear that Miles was aware of how the mischief damaged his reputation. Seething at what he read in the government document, Miles accused Howard of keeping his report "pigeon-holed at Division Headquarters for nearly a month notwithstanding that I was being denounced, meanwhile, from one end of the country to the other for not reporting the fact of the surrender." In some bewilderment, Miles continued: "You not only failed to set me right when it was within your power so to do, but you seem to have gone out of your way in the opposite direction." Another instance in which history has misjudged Miles resulted from strained relations between Miles and the Commanding General of the Army, William T. Sherman. Most Indian War historians have been negatively influenced by an impulsive letter written by Sherman, which Miles probably never knew existed. Greater insight into their feud, however, would be gained by considering an interview of General Sherman by a New York Herald reporter that has not been commented upon in other studies of this period. Miles, who President Theodore Roosevelt dismissed as a "brave peacock" because of his vanity and love of pomp deserves a more accurate epitaph. A Hero to His Fighting Men reminds its readers that in 1910 a balladeer honored Miles, asserting that the general, who was "solid with the ranks," might be a Little partial to the medals on his chest. He's got a darned right to be; He earned 'em in the West. Note: Great care was taken to insure that although A Hero to His Fighting Men, Nelson A. Miles, 1839 - 1925 was a scholarly study of the General's career, it was also a very readable portrait of a military leader who deserves greater appreciation for his services to our nation. 1998, c. 568pp., 23 illus. ISBN-0-87338-594-

Kurzbeschreibung Nelson A Miles began his military service as a volunteer officer in the Civil War. He later earned the appellation "the idol of the Indian fighters" and capped his controversial career by serving as Commanding General of the Army from 1895 to 1903. Without the benefit of a college education, Miles attained the rank of major general of volunteers two months after his twenty-sixth birthday. At the close of the Civil War, he was Jefferson Davis's military jailer, and then served with the Freedmen's Bureau in North Carolina. On the frontier, he won a series of victories against the Kiowa-Comanches, Sioux, Nez Perce, Bannocks, and Geronimo's band of Apaches. His skillful management of the Messiah outbreak of 1890 ended the Indian Wars. Miles also commanded the Army during the Spanish-American War and was involved in the late nineteenth-century Army reforms. During his long and distinguished career, Miles made numerous enemies, including Theodore Roosevelt. Peter DeMontravel contends that the comments made by these enemies influenced the way historians have viewed Miles' career. This reassessment of that career restores him to a degree of prominence.

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