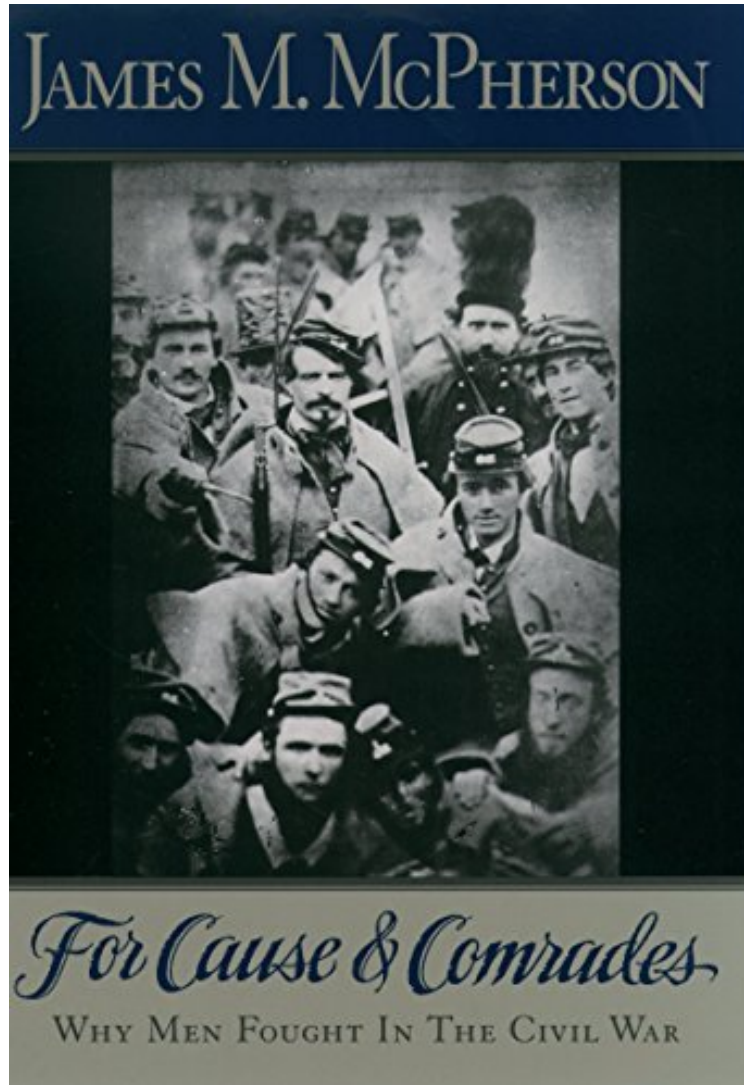


[Download pdf] For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War

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Von James M. McPherson

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Von James M. McPherson : For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Agenda HistoryVon Robert FlournoyI must admit that my excitement over the title of this book was extinguished very quickly as I got into the content. The author may have researched thousands of letters from Civil War soldiers, but, he seemed to be selective in what he chose to use, as his agenda seemed to be to make a few personal points. It appears that this

author wants history to portray the northern soldier as being motivated by an end to slavery as his reason for fighting (patently false), and, southerners as fighting to preserve the "peculiar institution". The excerpts he carefully chose from era letters were seemingly carefully selected to further those ends. He doesn't seem to understand that the concept of "country" in the U.S. in 1860 was very ill defined and not of much interest to most Americans, who, mainly agrarian, were trying to just get by. At best, a man was interested in his state, and, more often than not, what was going on in his own county. There were no strong ties to the idea of being a United States of America at that time. A man from Ohio was, indeed, as foreign to a man from Alabama as one from France would have been. 99% of confederate soldiers were small dirt farmers and owning a slave to them would have been as common as owning a second home on the beach is today. The civil war to the common southern soldier was a simple matter of being invaded by a foreign power, and, fighting for a beloved homeland. It was just that simple. The draft riots and lynchings of blacks in the north are solid testimony to the unpopularity of going south to fight. One of Lincoln's great fears was that McClellan would turn the army of the Potomac against him, throw him out of office, and, end the war. Only Lincoln had the amazing foresight and tenacity to pursue this grisly 4 year task to insure that his vision, Union, would survive. Neither was Lincoln that concerned about slavery as an issue over which the war was fought. His failure to extend freedom to blacks in certain politically sensitive border states, and, the caveat that the Emancipation did not pertain to southern states that laid down their arms and returned to the Union is strong evidence of the minor concern that he had for the issue of slavery as it applied to the broader issue of union preservation. No, the book did not do justice to its ambitious title. Attempting to justify lofty philosophical ideals as the reason that men fight, the author fails to do what the cover promises, which is point out that men fight, because, once a thing like war is in motion, it takes on a life of its own, and, becomes very personal. You fight for the man with the rifle in the hole beside you. An author with this personal experience would know this and be better equipped to tackle a project that lives up to the expectations that the title of his book raised.

1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Basis for Understanding a Difficult Time...Von Bill NewcomerThis review is in response to the one by "rwf3". I have to wonder if the book "rwf3" read was the same one I read.McPherson carefully shows the motivations common to both Union and Confederate soldiers. He does not ignore the fact that many Union men were fighting primarily for the Union, and in fact sets forth the very tenable position that anti-slavery sentiment grew as Union men saw the abolition of slavery, not as an end in itself, but as the only way to preserve the Union.McPherson's careful work provides a basis for understanding some facts regarding the Civil War, that some,(both north and south), choose to ignore because those facts don't fit their "agenda". Why did Union regiments of east Tennessee men engage in mortal combat against Confederate regiments from west Tennessee? Why did Union regiments of northern Alabama men fight against Confederate regiments from southern Alabama? In many of the Confederate states there were areas that were staunchly pro Union. So much for the artificial "north vs. south" dichotomy. So much for the "war between the states" sophistry. The Confederate Lt. General Pemberton at the Battle of Vicksburg was from Pennsylvania. Union General George Thomas, who commanded Union troops at the Battle of Nashville, was from Virginia.Simplistic assumptions about the Civil War are rampant on both sides. James McPherson is to be commended for not engaging in those simplicities, and giving us a careful work that helps us to understand a most complex and difficult time in our history.This is a serious work, not light reading. But it is well worth reading for those willing to take the time that reading such a serious work deserves.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Many of these letters swell the heart and water the eyes.Von Thomas R. FasuloAs a Civil War reenactor and living historian I am often asked why men endured so much for vague principles. I thought I knew the answers. This book has provided me with more admiration for these men and more material to share with those I share history with.

KurzbeschreibungGeneral John A. Wickham, commander of the famous 101st Airborne Division in the 1970s and subsequently Army Chief of Staff, once visited Antietam battlefield. Gazing at Bloody Lane where, in 1862, several Union assaults were brutally repulsed before they finally broke through, he marveled, "You couldn't get American soldiers today to make an attack like that." Why did those men risk certain death, over and over again, through countless bloody battles and four long, awful years ? Why did the conventional wisdom -- that soldiers become increasingly cynical and disillusioned as war progresses -- not hold true in the Civil War?It is to this question--why did they fight--that James McPherson, America's preeminent Civil War historian, now turns his attention. He shows that, contrary to what many scholars believe, the soldiers of the Civil War remained powerfully convinced of the ideals for which they fought throughout the conflict. Motivated by duty and honor, and often by religious faith, these men wrote frequently of their firm belief in the cause for which they fought: the principles of liberty, freedom, justice, and patriotism. Soldiers on both sides harkened back to the Founding Fathers, and the ideals of the American Revolution. They fought to defend their country, either the Union--"the best Government ever made"--or the Confederate states, where their very homes and families were under siege. And they fought to defend their honor and manhood. "I should not like to go home with the name of a coward," one Massachusetts private wrote, and another private from Ohio said,

"My wife would sooner hear of my death than my disgrace." Even after three years of bloody battles, more than half of the Union soldiers reenlisted voluntarily. "While duty calls me here and my country demands my services I should be willing to make the sacrifice," one man wrote to his protesting parents. And another soldier said simply, "I still love my country." McPherson draws on more than 25,000 letters and nearly 250 private diaries from men on both sides. Civil War soldiers were among the most literate soldiers in history, and most of them wrote home frequently, as it was the only way for them to keep in touch with homes that many of them had left for the first time in their lives. Significantly, their letters were also uncensored by military authorities, and are uniquely frank in their criticism and detailed in their reports of marches and battles, relations between officers and men, political debates, and morale. For Cause and Comrades lets these soldiers tell their own stories in their own words to create an account that is both deeply moving and far truer than most books on war. Battle Cry of Freedom, McPherson's Pulitzer Prize-winning account of the Civil War, was a national bestseller that Hugh Brogan, in The New York Times, called "history writing of the highest order." For Cause and Comrades deserves similar accolades, as McPherson's masterful prose and the soldiers' own words combine to create both an important book on an often-overlooked aspect of our bloody Civil War, and a powerfully moving account of the men who fought it. Consider a war in which 25,000 soldiers are killed or wounded in a single battle, as they were at Gettysburg, or 16,000 in a single day, as at Antietam. The degree of suffering and hardship during the American Civil War has been well documented and analyzed in books and films from Margaret Mitchell's fictional Gone with the Wind to Bell Irvin Wiley's classic studies of Civil War soldiers, The Life of Johnny Reb and The Life of Billy Yank. All these sources agree on the brutality of the combat, but what motivated soldiers to continue fighting under such bitter conditions is the cause of some controversy. Until recently, the common stance has been that soldiers enlisted out of economic need and stayed out of loyalty to their comrades. The respected Civil War historian James M. McPherson weighs in with a different point of view in For Cause and Comrades. Professor McPherson posits that the common rank-and-file soldiers did indeed hold political and ideological beliefs that prodded them to enlist and to fight. His research is based on letters and diaries from 1,076 Union and Confederate soldiers. These reveal many motivations, but always they lead back to duty, honor, and a cause worth dying for. For Cause and Comrades is a fascinating exploration of the 19th-century mind--a mind, it seems, that differs profoundly from our own. Pressestimmen "A brilliant analysis of why they fought by a master of Civil War lore and history."--C. Vann Woodward, Sterling Professor of History, Emeritus, Yale University "Modern Americans often express astonishment at the commitment to their causes exhibited by Union and Confederate soldiers during the Civil War. Anyone hoping to understand what motivated soldiers in that horrific conflict should welcome James M. McPherson's For Cause and Comrades. McPherson uses letters and diaries of more than a thousand men to explore how religion, ideology, notions about honor and manhood, pressure from home, and hatred for the enemy contributed to a quite remarkable willingness to sacrifice. Reflecting the fruitful conjunction of an important topic and the talents of a major historian, this book merits the widest possible readership."--Gary W. Gallagher, Professor of American History, The Pennsylvania State University "For Cause and Comrades adds to Professor James McPherson's luster as one of our foremost Civil War historians.... He takes issue with other scholars who downplay or dismiss the ideological commitments of Civil War soldiers, and argues persuasively that courage, honor, love of liberty and country had powerful meanings in North and South."--William J. Cooper, Jr., Boyd Professor of History, Louisiana State University "At a time when the work of some of our leading historians bulge with theory, and carry meager evidence, McPherson shows us history at its best."--Gabor Boritt, Robert C. Fluhler Professor of Civil War Studies, Gettysburg College For Cause and Comrades is nothing short of an excellent book. 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