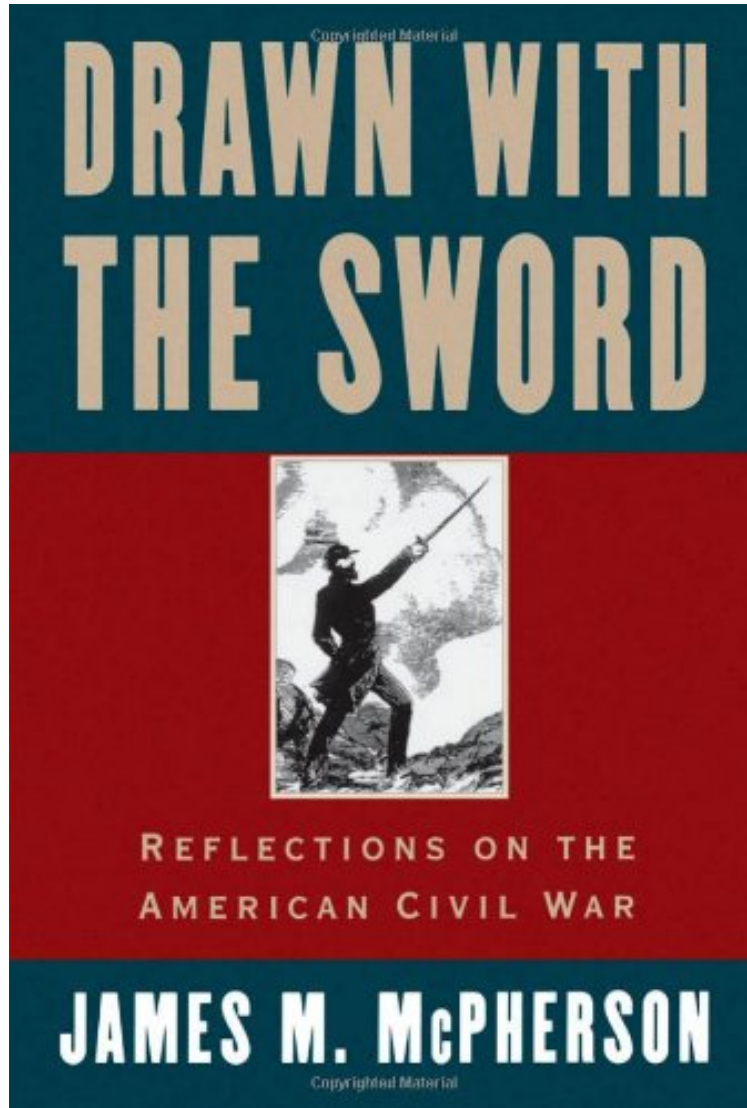


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Drawn with the Sword: Reflections on the American Civil War

James M. McPherson

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#1935246 in Books James M McPherson 1996-04-18Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.69 x 1.05 x 5.88l, 1.09 #File Name: 0195096797272 pagesDrawn with the Sword Reflections on the American Civil War | File size: 43.Mb

James M. McPherson : Drawn with the Sword: Reflections on the American Civil War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Drawn with the Sword: Reflections on the American Civil War:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic For Personal Reading Or Report - Book Report Help/Summary Down BelowBy CustomerFantastic analysis of the Civil War in America. Gives detailed descriptions on what issues caused it, to what future problems it caused. McPherson is an amazing historian who writes in his own

style. Had to choose this book for a report and wound up loving it after i thought I would be dragging my feet from page to page. The book is a collection of essays by McPherson. Each essay talk about a specific issue/person/time period and flows nicely into other topics. Very informative and concise. Provides the reader with facts as well as some of his own opinions at times to give the reader a balanced look at both the perspective of the North and South. The book is great. If you need to write any about the American Civil War this book is perfect for you. It has some dry passages at times but keep in consideration that it is a history book. I used this book and wrote a 10 paged paper and presentation and it gave me more info and quotes than I could possibly need. If you need to skim read it, here is my method that got me a 94 in a College Junior history class. READ UP TO AT LEAST PAGE 86 OR CHAPTER 6. It is very important because there are many great quotes, important passages of historical info and it will give you a taste of his style of writing, as well as how his own opinions compare to others. Most of my hard info came from these chapters which is why I implore you to AT LEAST read up to this point. Now, secondly take a highlighter (if you can), or some Post-Its and mark all the important passages up to CH 6. Chapter six is about race and classes in the war which you can skip, 7 is about the film Glory and how it pales in comparison to historical accuracy. Is an interesting chapter but not vital. It has some AMAZING quotes though it isn't necessary. CH 8-10 are all about how the South almost won the war and what tactics the North used to stop Lee and the Confederates. You can skim thru it briefly but i would at least sparknote/cliffnote those chapters to understand how the South was beaten even though they had the advantage of supreme military leaders like Lee and Stonewall. The rest of the book (besides the final essay/chapter) is about Lincoln's legacy and how he paved the way for rebuilding in America and set up future success for years to come. This section is vital if you need info on Lincoln and his policies, what issues rose from after the war, or the reconstruction time period. The final chapter is an essay of McPherson's own opinions on history and how it compares to others as well as how history will last forever. The section is not important to the report unless you want to write about his opinions. I hope this helps you with your essay/presentation or helps you choose this book to read. Peace!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Essays From a Great Historian and Popular Author By arthur banner Drawn with the Sword is a slim volume consisting of 15 essays written by the Civil War historian James McPherson. All but the final essay was previously published, but in sources not readily accessible by the average reader. All are now obtainable in this single volume. Although each essay can stand alone, their juxtaposition provides each with greater meaning and power. It has been said, that there is a tendency for modern historians to write more and more about less and less. This is not true of James McPherson, who does not shirk from taking on the big issues. In Drawn with the Sword he deals with the cause of the war, slavery and the determinants of Northern victory amongst other important issues. Although McPherson is an academic historian, his popularity is based on his skill as a writer. However, historians are best judged by their ability to synthesize and interpret. McPherson's expertise at these skills is evident in the first chapter where he struggles with the origins of the Civil War. A less skilled historian would suggest the conventional wisdom that the war was caused by slavery and/or states' rights, but Mc Pherson is more nuanced; he takes us through a complicated journey, exploring issues such as cultural differences, estrangement and finally irreconcilable differences. According to McPherson, the debate concerning the causes of the Civil War hinge on whether cultural and economic differences between the North and South created an estrangement that made separation inevitable. Some historians have argued that no important differences existed between the sides, whereas others believed that the differences were so profound, that co-existence was impossible. McPherson argues that the acceleration of differences during the 19th century made war unavoidable. Although he did not state so explicitly, McPherson alludes to concepts related to divorce in explaining how sectional differences made secession inevitable. McPherson is at his best when exploring major historical issues. His chapter on who freed the slaves is notable. Like a good college professor, he makes us work for our knowledge until we cannot distinguish our own conclusions from his. We thought we knew it was Lincoln who freed the slaves but McPherson makes us doubt our beliefs. He sets up a counterfactual that the Negroes actually freed themselves. His argument is convincing, but he soon explains that they could not have been freed without Lincoln. So in the end Lincoln did free the slaves. But now we struggled and the conclusion was ours. The most compelling chapter in the book is the final one, in which McPherson defends himself from criticism by his academic colleagues. He wrote this chapter at the height of his career, when no apologies were needed. Nonetheless, he fears that they may suspect that he betrayed his academic roots to obtain commercial success. The final sentence in the final chapter sums it all up. He recalls an academic colleague of his from " a California university" who cautioned him that he would be forced to choose between becoming a popular writer or an academic historian. The colleague warns that he was in mortal danger of becoming the former. McPherson fears a threat of excommunication from the academic community, due to his popularity. However, one must consider that his popularity is consequent to his writing ability and not to a lack of historical rigor. He need not worry or apologize for this talent. He is both a historian's historian as well as a popular historian. One has no hesitation in recommending this book to anyone interested in the history of the Civil War.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Why the Civil War Matters By booksrmywindows This is the only book that I've read thus far that plunges directly and succinctly into why the Civil War matters in American history. McPherson examines in very clear direct language the importance of the war, how the Nation that emerged from the Union was different and why it was different. He also examines in some

detail the way professional historians and the public have often failed to fully examine what the war meant to the country, academics by focusing on issues that suggest that the battles that were fought were meaningless and Civil War "buffs" by focusing on finer and finer degrees of detail dealing only with the military side of the war. Just as the First World War was seen by many of its participants as being, "The War to End All Wars," and the Second World War was fought to "Save the World for Democracy", the Civil War was seen by both sides as being a war to determine the righteousness of their causes, both sides were willing to pay a horrendous price for those things that they believed in. It is essential that we understand their motivations and the moral outcome of this struggle not just in terms of what it meant for the people who fought in this most horrific of wars, but what it means for us today.

James M. McPherson is acclaimed as one of the finest historians writing today and a preeminent commentator on the Civil War. *Battle Cry of Freedom*, his Pulitzer Prize-winning account of that conflict, was a national bestseller that Hugh Brogan, in *The New York Times*, called "history writing of the highest order." Now, in *Drawn With the Sword*, McPherson offers a series of thoughtful and engaging essays on some of the most enduring questions of the Civil War, written in the masterful prose that has become his trademark. Filled with fresh interpretations, puncturing old myths and challenging new ones, *Drawn With the Sword* explores such questions as why the North won and why the South lost (emphasizing the role of contingency in the Northern victory), whether Southern or Northern aggression began the war, and who really freed the slaves, Abraham Lincoln or the slaves themselves. McPherson offers memorable portraits of the great leaders who people the landscape of the Civil War: Ulysses S. Grant, struggling to write his memoirs with the same courage and determination that marked his successes on the battlefield; Robert E. Lee, a brilliant general and a true gentleman, yet still a product of his time and place; and Abraham Lincoln, the leader and orator whose mythical figure still looms large over our cultural landscape. And McPherson discusses often-ignored issues such as the development of the Civil War into a modern "total war" against both soldiers and civilians, and the international impact of the American Civil War in advancing the cause of republicanism and democracy in countries from Brazil and Cuba to France and England. Of special interest is the final essay, entitled "What's the Matter With History?", a trenchant critique of the field of history today, which McPherson describes here as "more and more about less and less." He writes that professional historians have abandoned narrative history written for the greater audience of educated general readers in favor of impenetrable tomes on minor historical details which serve only to edify other academics, thus leaving the historical education of the general public to films and television programs such as *Glory* and Ken Burns's PBS documentary *The Civil War*. Each essay in *Drawn With the Sword* reveals McPherson's own profound knowledge of the Civil War and of the controversies among historians, presenting all sides in clear and lucid prose and concluding with his own measured and eloquent opinions. Readers will rejoice that McPherson has once again proven by example that history can be both accurate and interesting, informative and well-written. Mark Twain wrote that the Civil War "wrought so profoundly upon the entire national character that the influence cannot be measured short of two or three generations." In *Drawn With the Sword*, McPherson gracefully and brilliantly illuminates this momentous conflict.

From *Publishers Weekly* McPherson's scholarly breadth and intellectual depth place him in the front rank of Civil War historians. All but one of the 15 pieces in this anthology have appeared elsewhere, but in a spectrum of publications so wide that their appearance between one set of covers is especially welcome. They cover four themes: the war's origins, its social consequences, the reasons for its outcome and Abraham Lincoln's central role. Topics range from an analysis of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to an argument that the Confederacy almost won. The essays are, however, connected by McPherson's conviction that the Civil War's origins and outcome were in no way predetermined: the campaigns, battles and elections that determined the war's course were shaped by specific contingencies. The final piece, provocatively dissecting the failure of contemporary academic historians to reach general audiences, is by itself worth the price of a book that belongs in all Civil War collections. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* Historian McPherson (*Battle Cry of Freedom*, LJ 3/1/88) has compiled a series of thoughtful essays on some of the most thought-provoking questions of the Civil War. All of the essays were published earlier but have been updated and revised for this compilation. The topics deal with such subjects as the origins of the Civil War, the slavery question in both North and South, why the North won the war and why the South lost, President Abraham Lincoln, and the change in historical writing. In these essays the author has proven that history can be accurate, informative, and interesting. For informed readers. W. Walter Wicker, Louisiana Tech Univ., Ruston Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* The Civil War endures as a topic of fascination for scholar and buff alike. The latest "gift" -- as we, his grateful readers, perceive it -- from one of our finest Civil War historians is a collection of essays, all but one of which previously appeared in various journals and as book chapters and are now updated. The essays are gathered under five general headings, including "Origins of the Civil War" and "The Enduring Lincoln." Within these categories appear such specific titles as "The Glory Story," a critique of the well-received movie *Glory*, about a black regiment in the Union army; "Antebellum Southern Exceptionalism," a fresh look at whether the South before the war was a unique and separate entity from the rest of the nation, and if so, why and how; and "Lee

Dissected," a separation of the real from the mythical Robert E. Lee. Clear, luminous writing matched by incisive, original thinking makes this collection irresistible to anyone interested in U.S. history. Brad Hooper