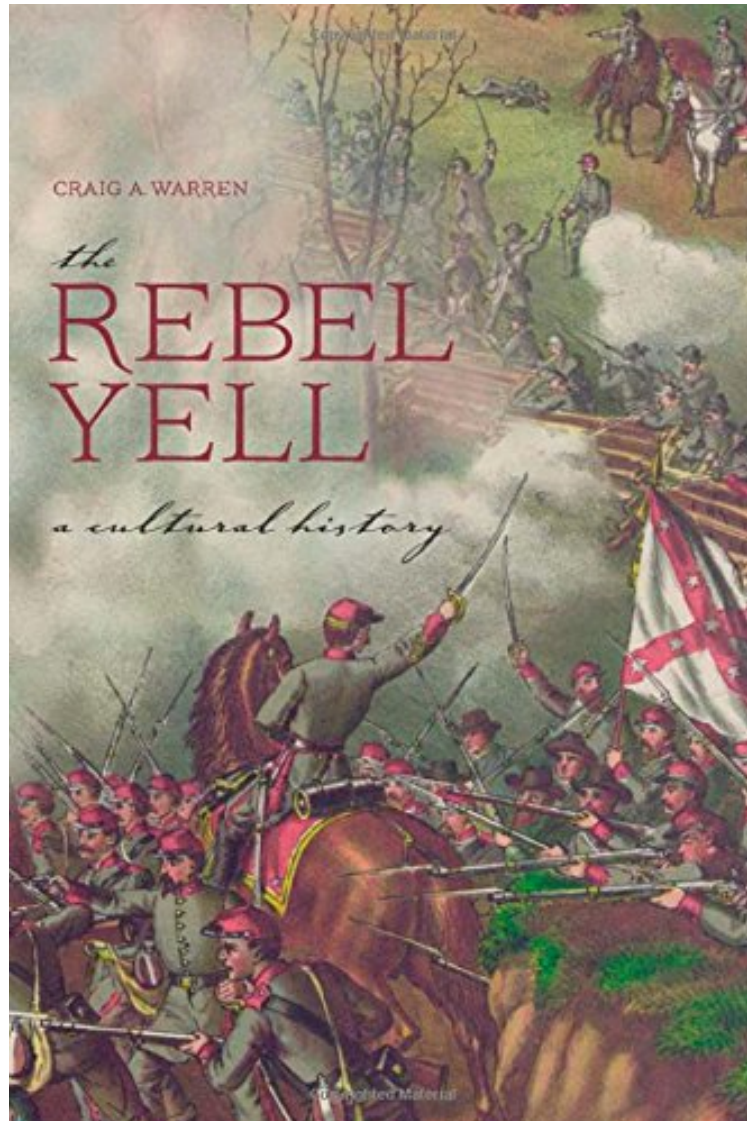


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# The Rebel Yell: A Cultural History

Craig A. Warren

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#1751738 in Books 2014-09-07Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x 1.00 x 6.00l, .0 #File Name: 0817318488240 pages | File size: 38.Mb

**Craig A. Warren : The Rebel Yell: A Cultural History** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Rebel Yell: A Cultural History:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Exhaustive and ExhaustingBy FitzThere could not be any tome written on the rebel yell that is more complete than this work . Every aspect of the yell is examined in minutia . Whether it's literary, pop culture , sociological , psychological , or acoustical it's all in here . ONE OF The author's main pointS is that the yell was not uniform and that each individual soldier had his own particular version of it . This is pretty well-documented in spite of the myth surrounding the rebel yell . In that respect it agrees with what my

grandfather had told me, his father was a veteran of the Stonewall Brigade (27th Virginia) had told him. Be aware the author is an academic and in accordance with the obligatory political correctness there are infinite references to racism (less he be branded as that most horrible of creatures the neo-Confederate). However, if you can't get past that you're never going to be able to read any history on the Civil War except books by the Kennedy brothers and Thomas Delorenzo. The author does a thorough job explaining attitudes of Confederate veterans, which were often in conflict with one another about the use of the rebel yell in postwar life. I did feel there was a good deal of redundancy and the book could have been much smaller and yet more satisfying for it. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Where the Rebel Yell came from and what it sounded like are debateable. What isn't is that now it's a banal trope. By Lyndonbrecht This is an odd topic but the title is irresistible. Anyone interested in the Civil War has probably heard of it--but what was it? Warren describes it as a yell of many kinds (the pun about Old Yeller occurs..), often used during attack, but also as a kind of cheer on appropriate occasions. Apparently it was higher pitched than the Yankee combat noise, and the Yankees often were actual words in a sort of cheer. Warren discusses its origin and what it sounded like in several chapters. Virtually every Confederate state claimed to be the source, and the often told tale of Stonewall Jackson telling his boys to holler like fiends is part of the debate, too. Among theories are that it mimics Indian yells--Comanche, Cherokee, Chickasaw. Some argue that the call comes from a rural animal husbandry where herders had to communicate with animals--in the antebellum South, large areas were not fenced. Others argue it mimics hunters calling to hounds, and at least one argument exists that claims a sort of Hispano-African origin. Some also argue that it descends from the Scottish clan yells. There likely will be no answer. There are plenty of accounts by Civil War veterans about it, some from journals and many from memoirs--which are not entirely trustworthy. Several British correspondents mentioned it. Those Brits said the Yankees sounded like British soldiers but that the Confederates were different. Whether it was a scream, a yell, farm boys hollering at Yankees, is not known, likely all the above. The cultural history of the yell gets complicated and is the majority of the book. The yell was a main badge of Southernness until the later 1940s (when the Confederate flag--one of them--became a symbol of resistance to federal intervention and to civil rights progress. Perhaps the transition from radio to television as the predominating US media had something to do with it? There's a short film titled "The Rebel's Yell" about 4 minutes, made in the 1930s, available through the Smithsonian, in which some quite ancient Confederate vets gave a really good rendition that may give some idea of the aural quality--I looked it up and listened. We do have some sense of how it sounded despite the views of many researchers that it can't be understood since all the vets are dead. The genesis of that appears largely to be the appearance of the popular historian Shelby Foote on the immensely influential 1990s PBS series on the war, in which Foote said we cannot know what it sounded like, with 40 million viewers. Warren argues that the yell has descended into banality and can no longer possibly be a focus of Southern identity. We have a Rebel Yell bourbon, a recent Rebel Yell line of clothing, a roller coaster ride, an LP by Billy Idol and more. So, the Yell has become a somewhat overused trope. The book has a few rather interesting and relevant photos--the book could use more.

No aspect of Civil War military lore has received less scholarly attention than the battle cry of the Southern soldier. In *The Rebel Yell*, Craig A. Warren brings together soldiers' memoirs, little-known articles, and recordings to create a fascinating and exhaustive exploration of the facts and myths about the "Southern screech." Through close readings of numerous accounts, Warren demonstrates that the Rebel yell was not a single, unchanging call, but rather it varied from place to place, evolved over time, and expressed nuanced shades of emotion. A multifunctional act, the flexible Rebel yell was immediately recognizable to friends and foes but acquired new forms and purposes as the epic struggle wore on. A Confederate regiment might deliver the yell in harrowing unison to taunt Union troops across the empty spaces of a battlefield. At other times, individual soldiers would call out solo or in call-and-response fashion to communicate with or secure the perimeters of their camps. The Rebel yell could embody unity and valor, but could also become the voice of racism and hatred. Perhaps most surprising, *The Rebel Yell* reveals that from Reconstruction through the first half of the twentieth century, the Rebel yell—even more than the Confederate battle flag—served as the most prominent and potent symbol of white Southern defiance of Federal authority. With regard to the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Warren shows that the yell has served the needs of people the world over: soldiers and civilians, politicians and musicians, re-enactors and humorists, artists and businessmen. Warren dismantles popular assumptions about the Rebel yell as well as the notion that the yell was ever "lost to history." Both scholarly and accessible, *The Rebel Yell* contributes to our knowledge of Civil War history and public memory. It shows the centrality of voice and sound to any reckoning of Southern culture.

"Because the [rebel] yell is a historical artifact that cannot be seen or memorialized in a statue or flag, Warren's task is difficult. Yet he takes on the mythmakers and slays them with his acute analysis." —*Journal of Southern History* "That the yell was sometimes uttered off the battlefield is only one of many surprises in Craig A. Warren's fascinating foray into southern aural history." —*The Alabama* "Warren's *The Rebel Yell* is a stellar book. It is a fast and interesting read and gives Civil War historians a new way to consider the yell as part of the 'long war,' a component of the

enduring struggle to reclaim and stake the boundaries of the war's memory." —Civil War News