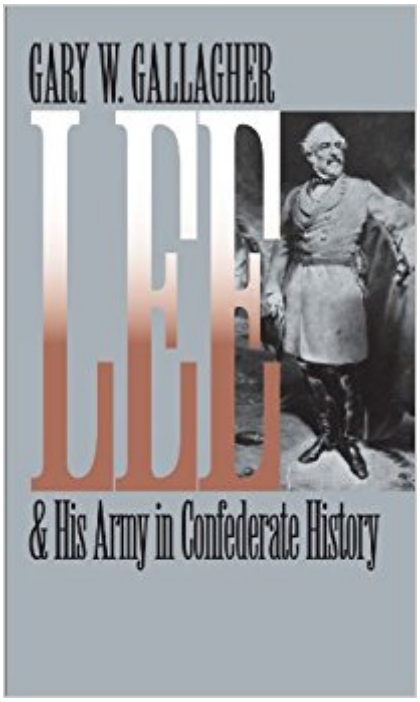
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Lee And His Army In Confederate History (Civil War America)



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Synopsis

Was Robert E. Lee a gifted soldier whose only weaknesses lay in the depth of his loyalty to his troops, affection for his lieutenants, and dedication to the cause of the Confederacy? Or was he an ineffective leader and poor tactician whose reputation was drastically inflated by early biographers and Lost Cause apologists? These divergent characterizations represent the poles between which scholarly and popular opinion on Lee has swung over time. Now, in eight essays, Gary Gallagher offers his own refined thinking on Lee, exploring the relationship between Lee's operations and Confederate morale, the quality of his generalship, and the question of how best to handle his legacy in light of the many distortions that grew out of Lost Cause historiography.Using a host of contemporary sources, Gallagher demonstrates the remarkable faith that soldiers and citizens maintained in Lee's leadership even after his army's fortunes had begun to erode. Gallagher also engages aspects of the Lee myth with an eye toward how admirers have insisted that their hero's faults as a general represented exaggerations of his personal virtues. Finally, Gallagher considers whether it is useful--or desirable--to separate legitimate Lost Cause arguments from the transparently false ones relating to slavery and secession.

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In these essays Gary Gallagher once again demonstrates the mastery of sources, elegance of style,

and lucidity of explanation and interpretation that have made him the foremost historian of the Army of Northern Virginia. (James M. McPherson, Princeton University)A stimulating and thought-provoking book."Journal of Southern History"Gallagher has reinforced his position as one of the nation’s leading Civil War historians."Florida Historical Quarterly""Gallagher’s work, both in "Lee and His Army" and elsewhere. . . sets a high standard for the history profession."Civil War Book Review""Gallagher and the University of North Carolina Press have performed a valuable service for current and future students of Lee and the Lost Cause."Civil War News"Gallagher demonstrates in his latest book that he is . . . the foremost historian of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia today."Journal of Military History""A very valuable work." -- "Nymas Review""A very valuable work." - "Nymas Review""This paperback reprint of one of his collections of essays provides another welcome look at Gallagher’s perspectives on compelling aspects of Confederate historiography." -- "Military History of the West"

Gallagher demonstrates in his latest book that he is, without question, the foremost historian of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia today. . . . Gallagher has proven adept at standing established scholarship on its head and posing important new questions that are bound to revise our understanding of the American Civil War.--Journal of Military HistoryGary Gallagher’s Lee and His Army in Confederate History is a wonderful blend of traditional and the ’new’ military history, a balance from the perspective of high command, the soldiers, the home front, and their collective memory. By anyone’s standards, this is a terrific book.--Joseph T. Glatthaar, University of HoustonDistinguished by the compelling prose, command of relevant primary and secondary sources, and superb insights Civil War enthusiasts have come to expect from Gallagher, these essays deserve wide readership. . . . By bringing them together under a single cover Gallagher and the University of North Carolina Press have performed a valuable service for current and future students of Lee and the Lost Cause.--Civil War NewsGallagher [is] one of the best of a new generation of Civil War scholars. . . . Gallagher’s work, both in Lee and His Army and elsewhere. . . sets a high standard for the history profession.--Civil War Book ReviewThis book is a distillation of years of thought and research by a skillful and respected historian. Its interpretations are thought provoking and solidly grounded in primary research. . . . Not only valuable to professional historians but accessible to the casual reader as well. This book informs and surprises, and all the while it is a pleasure to read. . . . Gallagher has reinforced his position as one of the nation’s leading Civil War historians.--Florida Historical QuarterlyDrawing on massive primary evidence, Gallagher has limned attitudes toward Lee and his army from a wide spectrum of Confederate society. The result is a

formidable, definitive delineation of the subject. This book punctures the notional and otiose premise that postwar Southerners created an image of Lee that had not existed during the conflict.--Robert K. Krick, author of Lee’s Colonels and Stonewall Jackson at Cedar MountainIn these essays Gary Gallagher once again demonstrates the mastery of sources, elegance of style, and lucidity of explanation and interpretation that have made him the foremost historian of the Army of Northern Virginia. The reasons for the morale and esprit that made this army such a feared fighting force are set forth more clearly here than anywhere else.--James M. McPherson, Princeton University This paperback reprint of one of his collections of essays provides another welcome look at Gallagher’s perspectives on compelling aspects of Confederate historiography.--Military History of the WestBetter than any other historian of the Confederacy, Gallagher understands the importance of . . . contingent turning points that eventually made it possible for superior numbers and resources to prevail. He understands as well that the Confederate story cannot be written except in counterpoint with the Union story.--New York Review of Books

This book is a collection of Gallagher’s essays published elsewhere. In this format however, they take on an added dimension and explaination of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and its commander, Robert E Lee.Gallagher begins by examining Lee’s Maryland campaign, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg and the army’s campaigns in 1864. His conclusions on the Battle of Gettysburg and its effects on the Confederate home front are particularly interesting. He concludes that the battle was not the overwhelming defeat to the Army of Northern Virginia and the Confederate home front that it would later be portayed as by historians. He makes the argument that the loss of Vicksburg was seen as a vastly bigger loss and Gettysburg was more seen as a small defeat or even a victory because of Meade’s failure to chase the Confederates in retreat.Gallagher also includes an interesting essay evaluating the claims of some historians that Lee was not fighting a modern war with modern tactics and if he had done so, the Confederacy would have been better off. He ably demonstrates that indeed Lee did understand the difference in technology such as the minie ball and its impact on strategy and tactics.However, the best essay is Gallagher’s essay on the Lost Cause "myth". Gallagher explains that many of the claims that were later associated only with Lost Cause historians such as Jubal Early or Douglass Southall Freeman, were actually developed during the war and immediately following the war prior to any claims made by Early and others. Thus some of the "myths" such as the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Union as part of the central cause of the Confederacy’s defeat, is actually true. He draws the wonderful and correct conclusion that to dismiss the Lost Cause myths in their entirety does a major

disservice to the historical profession and that discussing those Lost Cause claims that do have a basis in fact is not in fact giving any legitimacy to any neo-Confederate point of view concerning the centrality of slavery to the origin of the Civil War.The one quibble, and the reason I gave this book four stars instead of five concerns Gallagher's essay "Fighting the Battles of Second Fredericksburg and Salem Church." I really couldn't find a point as to why this essay was included in the book, unless it was to demonstrate a hard and fast friendship link between Early and Lee that Gallagher does build upon in his essay on the Lost Cause. However, I still think the essay about Fredericksburg really doesn't belong in this format.

With the skill of a surgeon, Gary W. Gallagher dissects the myths and legends surrounding Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia, past and current, to reveal a fascinating new look at the "marble man". Positioning himself squarely between the Lost Cause proponents and the current pack of revisionists, Gallagher relies on primary sources (newspapers, diaries and letters of civilians and soldiers, official correspondence) and careful, well-reasoned analysis to discover the real truth surrounding Robert E. Lee, and in the process lands an effective blow worthy of the general himself upon both sides. Gallagher's claims that Robert E. Lee was indeed an able proponent of modern warfare (though I would dispute the term modern) and also a capable administrator fully capable of being as strict or lenient with his subordinates as the case required breathes new life into the continuing quest to discover this fascinating man and effectively destroys the myths held by both sides (ironically enough, both sides often seem to wind up arguing both sides of the same coin) that Lee was first of all a member of the landed Virginia gentry far too short-sighted and stuck in the past for command of the Confederacy's main eastern army as well as being far too gentlemanly to deal strictly with subordinates. In fact, Gallagher presents Lee, through his own words and letters, as a man fully aware of the forces arrayed against him and as one who from the beginning knew full well that the Confederacy needed to marshall all of its resources in order to win the war and gain independence and that tough decisions and hard sacrifices would be required, and that a strong government would be required to take charge in order to ensure this was done and coordinate everyone's effort. Also, the idea that Lee "bled" his army to death (the fact that Lee's army at the beginning of the 1864 Overland Campaign was basically the same size as it ever was seems to have escaped the notice of many) also comes across as rather weak thanks to Gallagher's fine research. The weakest argument Gallagher refutes is that Lee's myth was wholly created after the war, and he does this by proving most emphatically that Lee and his army were indeed the primary source Confederates looked to for hope as well as the national symbol of the Confederacy (much

like Washington's Continentals) worldwide. The fact that the main part of Grant's thrust against the South hit here against Lee proves this as well. However, do not mistake Gallagher as a Lost Cause proponent in disguise; though he defends the points Lost Cause proponents make that are actually rooted in fact, he spares them not his swift, sharp sword in pointing out the concerted effort to preserve and protect the memory of the Confederate armies, and Lee in particular, by shaping history through their own eyes. Also, he cuts like a knife through as many of their arguments as those of the revisionists, who, in their zeal to cut through the myth of the Lost Cause (and rightfully so, since we must be as objective as possible) often go too far and wind up rejecting legitimate conclusions and research in favor of their own modern myth. In conclusion, Gallagher, the good professor has taught us all a valuable lesson; look not through the lens of your own eyes to view history, but search ever more diligently for the real facts and take nothing for granted. Though I'm sure we all carry our own biases (I fully admit my admiration for Lee, and I fail to see how anyone can remain truly and completely aloof), we can all separate ourselves, at least partially, from our opinions in order to get at the facts and reach reasonable conclusions, as Gallagher has so beautifully done. Good job, Professor Gallagher.

Like everything else Gallagher writes about the Civil War, this is also well worth the time for a serious student.

anything written or edited by Gary Gallagher is worth buying.

very nice

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