

[PDF] The Untold Civil War: Exploring The Human Side Of War

James Robertson, Neil Kagan - pdf download free book

Books Details:

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Author: James Robertson, Neil Kagan

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Description:

Was Gettysburg a tactical success, or was the outcome determined by a far more mundane factor: access to fresh water? How did the need to spread information about the dead and wounded give rise to the U.S. Postal Service? Did President Lincoln really age so dramatically during the course of the war, or was a rare disease to blame for the shocking difference in images of him from before and during the war? From overlooked elements, such as the role of weather, health, and high emotions, to the world-changing effect of the rise of female workers, to the many "firsts" including the introduction of standard time, pre-sized clothing, canned goods, toilets, and Santa Claus, *The Untold Civil War* reveals new facets of a seemingly well-known slice of American history, just in time to commemorate its 150th anniversary.

Dramatically illustrated with archival images and objects and compelling contemporary photography, this book delivers a surprise on every page: from precious personal mementos to forgotten battle sites; from newly recovered glass-plate negatives that reveal long-obscured photographic details to long-lost documents; this book adds a new dimension to our understanding of the Civil War and is a must-have for anyone with an interest in American history.

Six thematic chapters—such as "Characters," "Connections," and "A War of Firsts"—present a short introductory essay followed by approximately 30 self-contained stories that detail surprising, little-known, and fresh aspects of the war. Themes both large and small will be explored and contextualized, painting a fascinating portrait of our national character and showcasing the enduring impact of the Civil War.

Amazon Exclusive: Q&A with James Robertson

Q: You've been telling stories about the Civil War for a long time. What types of stories do you find have the most resonance with your audiences?

James Robertson: The best stories touch the heart. Too much of modern life stresses percentages, statistics, and raw facts. History is most appealing when it underscores human experiences and their accompanying emotions. You can never understand the Civil War unless you comprehend the deep emotions of that time.

Q: In your book, *The Untold Civil War*, we see that a lot of critical changes in American society were forged in the crucible of war. Can you describe a few that you see as the most significant?

JR: Among the greatest changes triggered by the crucible of war were an end to slavery, the sharp rise in equality for women, the impetus of the Industrial Revolution, and the firm establishment of a central government for the reunited states.

Q: In the course of selecting and preparing the stories for the radio programs and this book, what surprised you? Was anything "untold" in your eyes?

JR: The Civil War was the largest event in the nation's history. Three million men served in the armies, which was a sizable portion of the population. Since the war was fought inside America, the respective home fronts played vital roles. Involvement was widespread and unusual. Searching for the "little known" was sometimes easy but always fascinating.

Q: Who do you consider to be the most interesting character from this period of history?

JR: Abraham Lincoln's spirit looms over this nation. His is the story of a poor boy who clawed his way to the very top, led the country through its fiercest ordeal, and suffered a martyr's death. Many consider him the greatest of all Americans. I also find Robert E. Lee an extraordinary figure. His lifetime of devotion to duty to family and country remains inspiring.

Q: Why does the Civil War loom so large in American memory?

JR: The America we know was born in 1865. More Americans died in that struggle than in all of our other wars combined. No other period in national history contains more unforgettable figures.

Preserved battlefields are like magnets, attracting tourists of all ages to see where, and how, men fought and died to give us the country we so often take for granted.

Q: After 50 years of study, what most fascinates you about this period of American history?

JR: What most fascinates me about Civil War history are the common folk of that time. Living in an age when medicine and other fruits of life were still in the Dark Ages, facing one adversity after another, those generations of the 1860s weathered an incomparable storm with such fortitude and endurance that, 150 years later, we still marvel at what they gained--and lost.

Q: In 150 years, how will we remember the Civil War?

JR: Like all historical periods, the Civil War will slowly recede into the grayness of the past. Yet the very existence of a nation of united states will keep that war alive for as long as America still breathes.

Review

"The book ... is a beauty and should make any recipient very happy. Although large, it isn't one of those cumbersome coffee-table books but rather the right size to properly display a great selection of photographs." --*The Washington Post*

"Beautifully illustrated and engagingly written, this thematically arranged book reveals the human side of America's bloodiest war." --*Library Journal*

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