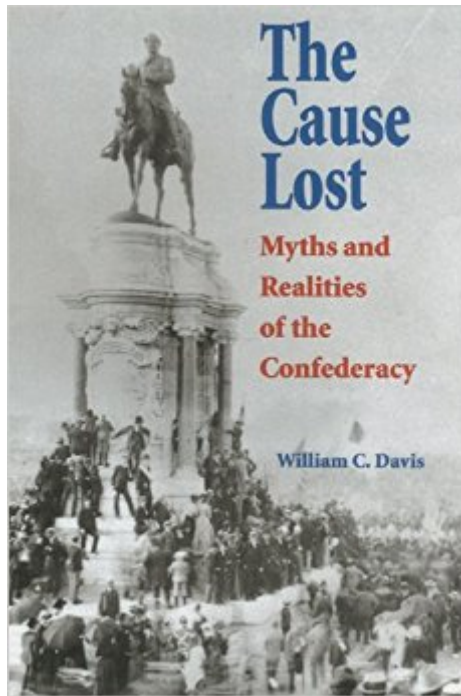


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The Cause Lost: Myths And Realities Of The Confederacy (Modern War Studies (Paperback))



Synopsis

For nearly a quarter of a century, Pulitzer Prize nominee William C. Davis has been one of our best writers on the Civil War. His books—including Breckinridge: Statesman, Soldier, Symbol; Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour; and "A Government of Our Own": The Making of the Confederacy—have garnered numerous awards and enlightened and entertained an avid readership. *The Cause Lost* extends that tradition of excellence with provocative new insights into the myths and realities of an endlessly fascinating subject. In these pages, Davis brings into sharp focus the facts and fictions of the South's victories and defeats, its tenacious struggle to legitimize its cause and defeat an overpowering enemy, and its ultimate loss of will. He debunks long-standing legends, offers irrefutable evidence explaining Confederate actions, and contemplates the idealism, naiveté, folly, and courage of the military leadership and would-be founding fathers. Among the most misunderstood, Davis contends, was Jefferson Davis. Often branded as enigmatic and incompetent, the Confederate president was simply a decent and committed leader whose mistakes were magnified by the war's extraordinary demands. Davis scrutinizes Jefferson Davis' relationship with his generals—most of whom were unproved talents or cronies with proven deficiencies—and reveals why only Robert E. Lee succeeded in winning Davis' confidence through flattery, persuasion, and a sense of responsibility. He also examines the myths and memories of the nearly deified Stonewall Jackson and John C. Breckinridge, the only effective Confederate secretary of war. Davis also illustrates why the cause of the war—a subject of long-standing controversy—boils down to the single issue of slavery; why Southerners, ninety percent of whom didn't own slaves, were willing to join in the battle to defend their homeland; how the personalities, tactics, and styles of the armies in the turbulent West differed greatly from those in the East; what real or perceived turning points influenced Southern decision making; and how mythology and misinterpretations have been perpetuated through biography, history, literature, and film. Revealing the Confederacy's myths for what they really are, Davis nevertheless illustrates how much those myths inform our understanding of the Civil War and its place in Southern and American culture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mr. Davis writes for popular history in that he does not go too deep into any single issue but that he does reduce issues to the point that most readers can understand them. In this book he takes on several of the most enduring "histories" of The Lost Cause of the Southern view of the Civil War and for the most part effectively refutes them. He has done popular history a service by entering into this particular fray. Most Americans recall of the Civil War revolves around what can loosely be called history, much of which is either partially or deeply wrong. Not all states for instance that left the US did so explicitly mentioning slavery, here Alabama comes to mind (the majority of the CS did name it the first or chief reason for secession). The Lincoln pre war tax impost was a reason but outside of SC is seldom mentioned in any other state paper and at best is a minor reason or excuse for the war that resulted. Slavery and Federal interference (or threat of interference) with it, constituted the chief reason for secession. Of course the majority of Southern men fought to defend their homes, one can argue here poor men were manipulated into fighting for the rich slave holders if you take the view of poor always fighting rich men's fights. However, this and the failure of the CSA government, other than the military, to accomplish much in the course of the War is today only now being noticed or studied. Reading several of the previous reviewers it is obvious that no amount of scholarship will change their minds regarding the War, its causes, or lasting effects. Here is proof positive of Mr. Davis' points regarding The Lost Cause; yes history was rewritten, but by the losers.

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