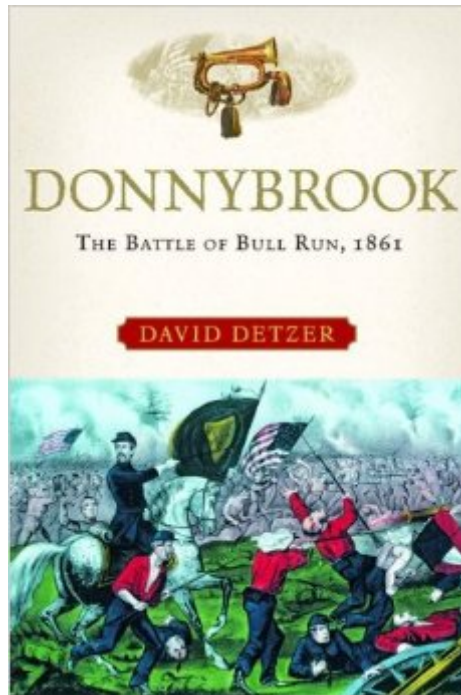


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Donnybrook: The Battle Of Bull Run, 1861



Synopsis

In April 1861, Confederate artillery blasted Fort Sumter into surrender. Within weeks, the Confederacy had established its capital at Richmond. On May 24, Lincoln ordered troops across the Potomac into Virginia, only a few miles from the Confederate military base near the hamlet of Manassas. A great battle was inevitable; whether this would end the war, as many expected, was the only question. On July 21, near a stream called Bull Run, the two forces fought from early morning until after dark in the first great battle of the Civil War. America would never be quite the same. Donnybrook is the first major history of Bull Run to detail the battle from its origins through its aftermath. Using copious and remarkably detailed primary source material-including the recollections of hundreds of average soldiers-David Detzer has created an epic account of a defining moment in American history.

Book Information

Hardcover: 512 pages

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Customer Reviews

In general I like the book. However, there are two factors which tend to grate. One is that the author has some axes to grind as well as people to defend. In the first part of the book Detzer makes a clear effort to exonerate Patterson as culpable for later events. His efforts go so far that he evens magnifies distances to provide excuses for Patterson. The author also seems to have a hard place for Scott and Beauregard. The second factor that is actually more egregious is the author's consistent inability to tell distance or direction. Martinsburg, VA (now WVA) is not 40 miles from Hagerstown, MD, but doubling the distance worked to defend Patterson. Detzer breaks down the actual battle field into four sectors as defined by the Sudley road and the Warrenton tpk. He then

goes on to misidentify the compass location of each sector, consistently misnaming the northEAST sector as the northWest. At the point the battle shifts to the northWest sector, he claims the sector is the northEast sector. Later, he describes McDowell having moved along the road/path, from the turnpike, toward Sudley Ford (i.e. in a generally NW direction) and looking across Bull Run sees troops the author identifies as coming from the depot. Except that Detzer says McDowell looked to the southWest, when the depot, and troop movements would have been from the southEast. Later, after he says that Keyes had moved across Bull Run, that is, to the southern, although also somewhat western side, he describe Keyes moving along the east side of the water. Perhaps he meant moved easterly on the southwestern bank. One final quibble, Detzer says that details about troop movements and actions during many portions of the battle are confused and or missing.

This is the third David Detzer American Civil War book I have read and reviewed (The other two are "Allegiance: Fort Sumter, Charleston, and the Beginning of the Civil War", and "Dissonance: The Turbulent Days Between Fort Sumter and Bull Run". Both good books I recommend) and I believe this is a good addition to someones understanding of the Battle of first Bull Run. But, you have to realize that the author has his own style and flair that does not sit well with all readers. First, I want to get the issue of maps out of the way. His first two Civil War books deal with the begining of the war and even they needed more maps than the ones that were included, and they didnt even cover a field battle. To keep track of all the troop movements, attacks, retreats, etc., you have got to have more maps! (I recommend using "The Maps of First Bull Run" by Bradley M. Gottfried as a map guide while reading any book on the battle.) For the experienced Civil War Buff who knows the flow of events, not that big of a deal, for the novice and/or casual reader, I dont know how they could keep up with whats going on? On the positive side for the maps included (my paperback 2005 edition has seven maps) the map showing the route of Johnston's Army of the Valley as it made its way to Manassas was helpful and easy to follow. And the Area of Operations map showing Washington D.C. and Northern Virginia from the Potomac River to Bull Run creek (Loudoun, Fairfax, and Prince William counties Virginia) showed all the roads that Union General McDowell's troops used to advance to Bull Run and was pretty good allowing me to follow the campaign before and after the battle.

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