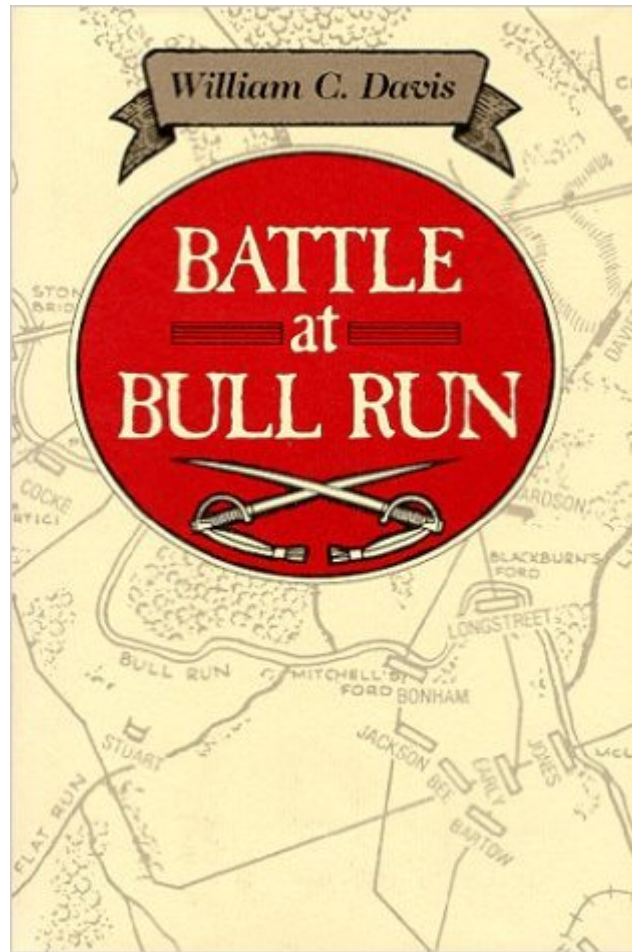


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Battle At Bull Run: A History Of The First Major Campaign Of The Civil War



Synopsis

The first major history ever written on the first battle of the Civil War, this narrative describes the chaotic fighting by courageous amateurs that nearly resulted in Confederate independence. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (17 customer reviews)

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History > Military > United States

Customer Reviews

Mr. Davis has over the years provided Civil War enthusiasts with many fine books dealing with most aspects of the war. He has written books on the politics of the era, biographies of some of the era's leading figures and in the case here, he has written battle histories. This book like the author's other offerings is clearly written and concise, easy to understand and read and most importantly, it is not dull. Many authors offer up books that are just full of good information but reading them is like reading the Biblical book of Leviticus. Heaven only knows just how many well intentioned people have attempted to read the whole Bible but have come to a dead halt upon reaching Leviticus. The same applies to history books which go into such mind numbing detail about every movement of every regiment and company that the reader finds themselves completely lost and frustrated. Davis, with his wonderfully chatty writing style avoids this problem while still giving the reader all of the pertinent details. Davis begins his story with Fort Sumter where the reader meets General P.G.T. Beauregard, the first major player in this story. Beauregard of course becomes the "hero of Sumter" and goes north to Virginia with a high reputation and an even bigger ego. Davis is not kind to the Creole general in this book and in fact may be just a little too harsh. As the story progresses the reader is also introduced to some of the people who will be major players throughout the war. This

view of men like Jackson, Ewell, Early, Sherman, Stuart and Burnside will certainly help the reader understand events shaped by these men later in the war and each of these men are destined to play a major role over the next four years.

I would like to give this review 3.5 stars. The book is too well written for a 3, but it has some flaws that make me somewhat uncomfortable with the 4 I am giving it. Davis' book about New Market is a 5 star effort. Davis succeeds in most areas with Battle of Bull Run. He describes the campaign well, and he gives adequate background of most of the key participating officers. The maps are adequate. The battle itself and the aftermath are competently covered. Most importantly, Davis' writing style makes for comfortable reading. His retelling appears objective and balanced for the most part, and it appears that he tries to treat the participants fairly with the information at hand all these years later. Although he does relish in retelling a few romanticized episodes (particularly in the opening), he is quick to point out the theater in these. So where is the book lacking? Overall, it is a bit shorter and more concise than what I expected of such a momentous battle (this will be a positive for some readers, less so for the more detail oriented.) Unlike his New Market book, there is no Order of Battle, detailed listing of unit strengths, or casualties. The maps could be larger, and zoomed in to particular zones. Davis' writing in this work is not quite as clear as it was in the New Market work (or at least as I remember it.) There are several points where sentences are not adequately phrased to give the reader a full view of the subject, without paging back through the book to find the original event 40 pages earlier. Other problems are some minor but annoying factual discrepancies (usually generalities, that are too general) or things that leave one wondering what the rest of the story was.

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