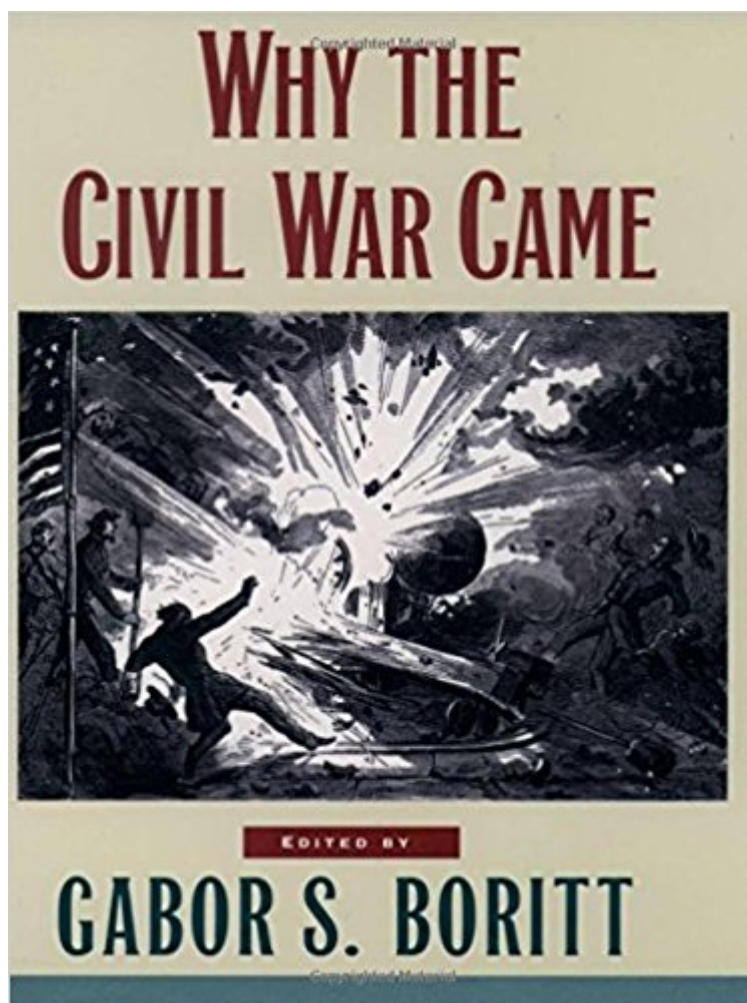


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Why The Civil War Came (Gettysburg Civil War Institute Books)



Synopsis

In the early morning of April 12, 1861, Captain George S. James ordered the bombardment of Fort Sumter, beginning a war that would last four horrific years and claim a staggering number of lives. Since that fateful day, the debate over the causes of the American Civil War has never ceased. What events were instrumental in bringing it about? How did individuals and institutions function? What did Northerners and Southerners believe in the decades of strife preceding the war? What steps did they take to avoid war? Indeed, was the great armed conflict avoidable at all? *Why the Civil War Came* brings a talented chorus of voices together to recapture the feel of a very different time and place, helping the reader to grasp more fully the commencement of our bloodiest war. From William W. Freehling's discussion of the peculiarities of North American slavery to Charles Royster's disturbing piece on the combatants' savage readiness to fight, the contributors bring to life the climate of a country on the brink of disaster. Mark Summers, for instance, depicts the tragically jubilant first weeks of Northern recruitment, when Americans on both sides were as yet unaware of the hellish slaughter that awaited them. Glenna Matthews underscores the important war-catalyzing role played by extraordinary public women, who proved that neither side of the Mason-Dixon line was as patriarchal as is thought. David Blight reveals an African-American world that "knew what time it was," and welcomed war. And Gabor Boritt examines the struggle's central figure, Lincoln himself, illuminating in the years leading up to the war a blindness on the future president's part, an unwillingness to confront the looming calamity that was about to smash the nation asunder. William E. Gienapp notes perhaps the most unsettling fact about the Civil War, that democratic institutions could not resolve the slavery issue without resorting to violence on an epic scale. With gripping detail, *Why the Civil War Came* takes readers back to a country fraught with bitterness, confusion, and hatred--a country ripe for a war of unprecedented bloodshed--to show why democracy failed, and violence reigned.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The war's origin here reveals its many reflections."--Booklist
"Certain to breathe new life into an old subject."--Eric Foner, author of *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution and Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*
"Elegant, provocative, edifying."--Kenneth Stampp, author of *And the War Came and America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink*

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I have read a lot of his civil war collection and am always satisfied by a different perspectives, on different subjects....I will always buy his books as they are both informative and entertaining

In the face of recent debates over the Confederate flag flying over South Carolina's capital, a lot has been said regarding the author's subject. Some contend that the war was over state's rights and others contend it was over the issue of slavery. It has even been suggested by many sources that Lincoln came to oppose slavery late. I bought this book hoping to read an author who both knew history and could examine the facts impartially. I clearly found both. The editor explores pre-Civil War history through the voices of the main figures and groups. In the process I discovered that both states rights and anti-slavery contentions are correct. However, these two are so closely tied that it hardly matters, as you will discover through the eyes of the players. Please read this book. This book should be required reading in every high school history class in America. I found the book to be the best slice of easy reading history I've ever read, and highly applicable to related debates of the 21st century. Incidentally, if you are interested in the unique origins of the Republican party, the

formation of our two parties, the demise of early parties, the early black leaders, the early womens' movements or even early trends in women's literature, this is an amazing read regarding those topics alone. Can't put it down, highlighter in hand stuff.

If you are a serious student of the American Civil War you must read this collection of excellent essays. You will need to be familiar with American history from Jefferson up to the war itself, especially the political parties, sectionalism, administrations, crises, compromises, personalities, etc. If you are not familiar with the pre-war period most of the essays will be tough. You will also have to be patient, several authors have a tendency to construct sophisticated sentences which may require several passes; however, the effort is always worthwhile. You may have to compromise with yourself on the cause(s) of the war, as well as why the soldiers fought.

You will not learn anything new in this book that you don't already know. The book consists of 4 or 5 different essays written by 4 or 5 different authors. It isn't a clear book describing the civil war. I was looking for a book that described each of the reasons for the start of the civil war. This book didn't do that. Each essay tried to make a different point - but it was not clear. The book was too scattered for me. So if you want a more in depth, and more straight forward book about the start of the civil war - try another author.

Way too much revisionist history focused on the slavery part of the pre war history and not enough on the illegal supreme court action in the Dread Scott case and the Lincoln Douglas debates.

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