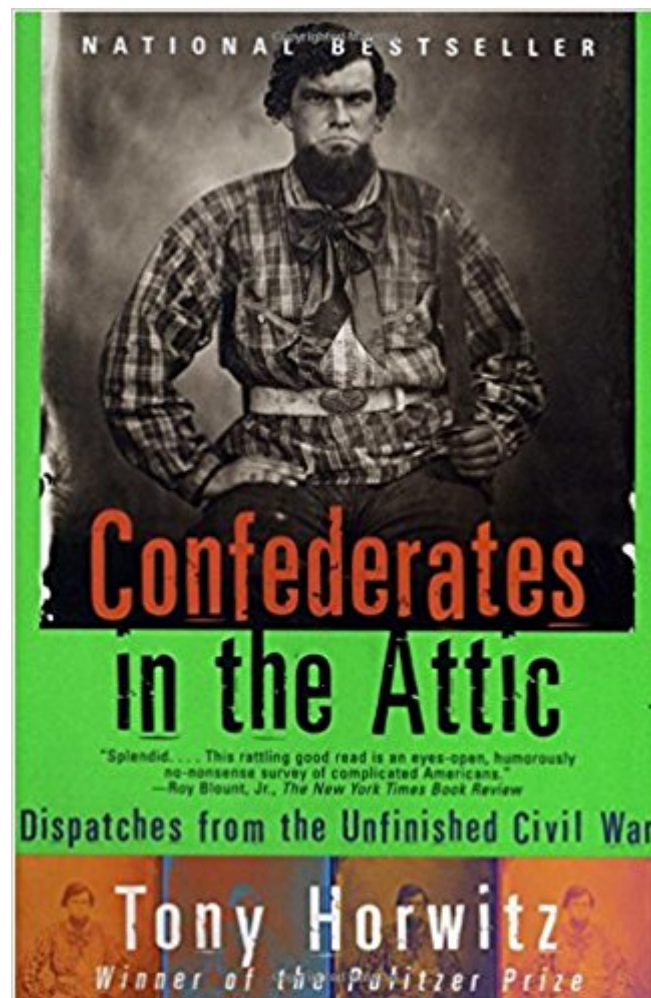




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Confederates In The Attic: Dispatches From The Unfinished Civil War



Synopsis

National Bestseller – For all who remain intrigued by the legacy of the Civil War -- reenactors, battlefield visitors, Confederate descendants and other Southerners, history fans, students of current racial conflicts, and more -- this ten-state adventure is part travelogue, part social commentary and always good-humored. “Splendid.” – Roy Blount, Jr., The New York Times Book Review

When prize-winning war correspondent Tony Horwitz leaves the battlefields of Bosnia and the Middle East for a peaceful corner of the Blue Ridge Mountains, he thinks he’s put war zones behind him. But awakened one morning by the crackle of musket fire, Horwitz starts filing front-line dispatches again this time from a war close to home, and to his own heart. Propelled by his boyhood passion for the Civil War, Horwitz embarks on a search for places and people still held in thrall by America’s greatest conflict. The result is an adventure into the soul of the unvanquished South, where the ghosts of the Lost Cause are resurrected through ritual and remembrance. In Virginia, Horwitz joins a band of ‘hardcore’ reenactors who crash-diet to achieve the hollow-eyed look of starved Confederates; in Kentucky, he witnesses Klan rallies and calls for race war sparked by the killing of a white man who brandishes a rebel flag; at Andersonville, he finds that the prison’s commander, executed as a war criminal, is now exalted as a martyr and hero; and in the book’s climax, Horwitz takes a marathon trek from Antietam to Gettysburg to Appomattox in the company of Robert Lee Hodge, an eccentric pilgrim who dubs their odyssey the ‘Civil Wargasm.’ Written with Horwitz’s signature blend of humor, history, and hard-nosed journalism, *Confederates in the Attic* brings alive old battlefields and new ones ‘classrooms, courts, country bars’ where the past and the present collide, often in explosive ways. Poignant and picaresque, haunting and hilarious, it speaks to anyone who has ever felt drawn to the mythic South and to the dark romance of the Civil War.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Tony Horwitz returned from years of traipsing through war zones as a foreign correspondent only to find that his childhood obsession with the Civil War had caught up with him. Near his house in Virginia, he happened to encounter people who reenact the Civil War--men who dress up in period costumes and live as Johnny Rebs and Billy Yanks. Intrigued, he wound up having some odd adventures with the "hardcores," the fellows who try to immerse themselves in the war, hoping to get what they lovingly term a "period rush." Horwitz spent two years reporting on why Americans are still so obsessed with the war, and the ways in which it resonates today. In the course of his work, he made a sobering side trip to cover a murder that was provoked by the display of the Confederate flag, and he spoke to a number of people seeking to honor their ancestors who fought for the Confederacy. Horwitz has a flair for odd details that spark insights, and *Confederates in the Attic* is a thoughtful and entertaining book that does much to explain America's continuing obsession with the Civil War. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The first book the author's Russian grandfather bought on emigrating to the U.S., though he neither read nor spoke English, was about the Civil War, a book he still pored over into his 90s. And when Horwitz was a child, his father read him tales of the Civil War instead of fairy tales and children's literature. The powerful hold of that conflict on a diverse assortment of Americans translates into more than 60,000 books on the subject, according to the author; for some Civil War buffs it is an obsession that generates a startling number of clubs whose members regularly reenact the battles, playing out once again the logistics, problems, hardships, leading characters, losses and victories. Horwitz (*Baghdad Without a Map*), on a year-long exploration of these groups throughout the South, participated in some of their activities and came to know the lives and personalities of several of their members. His vivid, personal account is a mesmerizing review of history from a novel and entertaining angle. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Our Book Club had a lively discussion and most every one enjoyed reading the book.....There

was humor and there was sadness in that there are people that can't let "THE WAR" be over.....There were some good history that most of us did not know

This book is an absolutely fascinating trip through the former Confederacy, exploring how strong (at least in the 1990s) the sentiments were after 130 years. This is certainly a story, not a serious analysis. It is told through the lives of various people that Horwitz meets on his travels. How some people try to relive the war, why people are obsessed with it, and how many are still trying to keep the debate alive. There is much of the racist sentiment there that might be shocking to Yankees, but in a way defines that subculture of the South. The book is a pleasure to read, full of fascinating people and stories. I do wish there might have been a bit more serious aspect to this to explain more of why so many people won't let go of the war, rather than just relying on anecdotes. But nonetheless, this is a fantastic and fairly quick read. Recommended.

I read this several years ago. Bought this one for my brother. Hope he enjoys it as well. Well loved but good condition.

Tony Horwitz takes up with some Confederate-soldier re-enactors, and has a wild ride. He gets into the heart of re-enacting, and of the South's continuing, sometimes baffling preoccupation with the Civil War and the "Lost Cause." The lot of re-enactors he takes up with are "hardcore" -- living off the land, enduring the weather just as the real article did from 1861 to 1865. These guys try to relive the experience as closely as they can to how the real soldiers did so long ago. It sometimes is not pleasant. Through these re-enactors, and other people he encounters on this journey, Horwitz examines the psyche of the unreconstructed descendants of unreconstructed rebels. I recommend this book to anyone interested in the Civil War or in current American society.

Reading Mr. Horwitz's astutely woven saga has help me gain further insights into how my Civil War relatives' past impacted my own present day views of our country. Fortunately as a youth I knew my paternal Grandmother who was born in 1868 in Arkansas near Indian country. Her father had migrated from Vermont down to Arkansas to farm and within a year was serving as a hospital steward for the Army of Arkansas. That chapter of our country's history is still so very recent. Technological advances have made that era's distance from our present seem so much greater than it actually is.

I Love that I'll see a book I'm interested in in a major chain bookstore while browsing and then go on and get the book for half the price...that was the case here. My in-perfect-shape paperback arrived quickly. The book itself is a terrific read! Tony Horwitz writes with flair, imagination and wit, but in this book, he also presents a serious and sometimes scary depiction of life as it really is in the South. I am not a Southerner by birth having been born in Oklahoma and spending close to 25 years in California, but found myself moving to Mississippi eight years ago. It was true culture shock and I find I am still making the adjustment. This book really shed some light on how many Southerners really feel about what was lost in the War. I admit I am amazed at how strongly the War and it's aftermath still affect the region and it's occupants to this day; it really helped explain the South to me. I learned an enormous amount about the Civil War while being immensely entertained; I think that is his gift: to make history come alive and meaningful in an easy-to-swallow, entertaining way.

Read this book if you care about the South or race in America. Or if you like a good travel story or astoundingly great character sketches. Dozens of wonderful stories skillfully woven around his theme of the undying War Between the States and its lingering affects on whites and blacks in the South and in the USA. The author lets his points develop from the stories. He does not have a soapbox. The re-enactors and various keepers of the flame are so colorful that no one could invent them, not even Charles Dickens. The author does not skewer his subjects. He finds the humanity in all of them. I first read it in the 90s when it came out. Just re-read it for maybe the fourth time after several years. Some of the events and politicians are a little passe, but it's still a more-than-5-star book. I am not from the South and don't have family that cares about the War. That said, I expect that you could love this book as a black or white Southerner. The people are real, not caricatures. The book is tons of fun, and you will certainly laugh out loud, but it's not a make-fun-of-rednecks book.

The most enlightening and interesting account of a period in our history that eludes so many of us. A difficult subject presented with compassion and just the right amount of humor. I was thrilled to ride along with Mr. Horwitz and his various guides as he tackled the questions he had and ones posed by the tour guides, students and former participants of the Civil Rights movement. He explored the many reasons for and endproducts of this War fairly, even as he provided his own take on it. I liked it and had a hard time putting it down. I had to slow myself down to make margin notes, so I could take in the many, many pieces of his journey of discovery. I have lived in Mississippi, Virginia, and Louisiana.

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