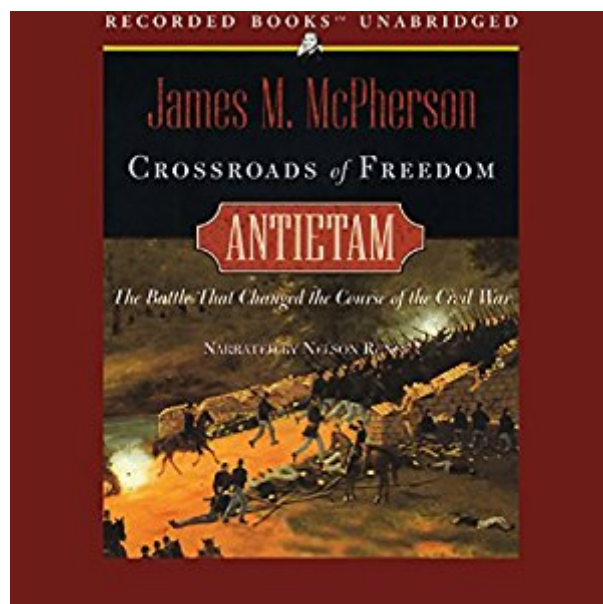


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Crossroads To Freedom: Antietam



Synopsis

Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times best-selling author James M. McPherson is America's leading Civil War historian. In this powerful book he reconstructs the gripping Battle of Antietam. Compared to the Normandy invasion in World War II, Antietam produced four times as many casualties. It remains the single bloodiest day in the history of American combat. Through historical newspaper accounts and the personal letters of soldiers, the events leading up to the battle and the battle itself are stunningly recreated. You will enter the mind of Robert E. Lee as he makes the fateful decision to cross the Potomac River and take the offensive. You will feel the frustration of Abraham Lincoln as he struggles to convince George McClellan to fight. And you will stand side-by-side with foot soldiers as the peaceful Maryland countryside explodes into terrifying, unforgettable carnage. In vivid detail and with remarkable insight, McPherson makes a convincing case that Antietam was the "battle that changed the course of the Civil War." The "Pivotal Moments in American History" series seeks to unite the old and the new history, combining the insights and techniques of recent historiography with the power of traditional narrative. Each title has a strong narrative arc with drama, irony, suspense, and - most importantly - great characters who embody the human dimension of historical events. The general editors of "Pivotal Moments" are not just historians; they are popular writers themselves, and, in two cases, Pulitzer Prize winners: David Hackett Fischer, James M. McPherson, and David Greenberg. We hope you like your American History served up with verve, wit, and an eye for the telling detail!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

On September 17, 1862, the Army of the Potomac commanded by General George B. McClellan met the Army of Northern Virginia commanded by Robert E. Lee in the fields near Sharpsburg, Maryland. The result was the Battle of Antietam, the bloodiest day in American History and a pivotal moment of the Civil War. The battle ended the Confederacy's first invasion of the North and gave President Lincoln the opportunity to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. In his short study, "Crossroads of Freedom" Professor McPherson weaves together many strands in discussing the significance of the battle. First, he places the battle against the backdrop of the prior military course of the war, both in the Eastern and the Western Theatres. He points out how Union successes in the early part of 1862 were followed by serious defeats in the Seven Days Battle and Second Manassas with the tide of the war turning to the Confederacy. Although the South would again invade the North culminating in the Battle of Gettysberg, Antietam was a clear check to Southern momentum. It gave the Union the courage, will and political force to fight on. Second, Professor McPherson emphasizes the role of the European powers -- England and France -- in the Civil War. These nations followed events in America closely and were economically at risk from the loss of Southern cotton for their textile mills. They likely would have recognized the Confederacy if the results of the first invasion of the North had favored the Confederacy. Third, and probably most importantly to his theme, Professor McPherson discusses the role of Antietam in the changing character of the Civil War. President Lincoln was opposed to slavery, but his initial war aims did not include freeing the slaves. Rather he wished to hold the Union together.

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