



# History of the Civil War, 1861 - 1865

*James Ford Rhodes*

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

# History of the Civil War, 1861 - 1865

*James Ford Rhodes*

## History of the Civil War, 1861 - 1865 James Ford Rhodes

Awarded the Pulitzer Prize in History in 1918, Rhodes chronicle of the War Between the States both provides the general reader with a clearly written description of the events of four bloody years as well as reveals the self-educated authors belief in the wars cause as the evil of slavery.

## History of the Civil War, 1861 - 1865 Details

Date : Published (first published May 27th 1918)

ISBN :

Author : James Ford Rhodes

Format : Kindle Edition 512 pages

Genre : History, Military History, Civil War, Nonfiction, War

 [Download History of the Civil War, 1861 - 1865 ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online History of the Civil War, 1861 - 1865 ...pdf](#)

**Download and Read Free Online History of the Civil War, 1861 - 1865 James Ford Rhodes**

---

## **From Reader Review History of the Civil War, 1861 - 1865 for online ebook**

### **John says**

I read a first edition, published by Macmillan in 1917, which included the elegant fold-out maps. It turned out the maps were unnecessary as Rhodes spent almost no time on any detail of the battles. His work (438 pages) covers mostly the details of the personalities and politics of the great conflict. These he deals with in a business-like and straight-forward and extremely accurate manner. He clearly educates the reader of the political and economic conditions that lead both sides in the early years of the war to conceal from public discourse the obvious and evident nature of the true cause, that of course being slavery. He elucidates Lincoln's reasoning during 1863 in abandoning this falsity with the eventual publication of the Emancipation Proclamation, and how it served, among other result, to end the duplicity of the English and French and resolved their foreign policy to one of actual neutrality and ended their deceptive and clandestine support of the Confederacy.

This book is one of politics and strategy and would make an excellent introduction for the beginning student. I have often felt that accurate history can hardly be written within 50 years of an event, after partisanship and passion have departed the field. Rhodes position is certainly sympathetic to the Union cause (how could it be otherwise for a civilized writer in the 20th century?) but he deals evenhandedly with most events and issues. So far as I know, contemporary historians would take no significant exceptions to Rhodes excellent little work.

Given the nature of Rhodes' work, a low-cost paperback or electronic copy would more than suffice most readers.

For those seeking the immense detail of the Civil War years, including military aspects, I know of none better than Shelby Foote (for those who can digest 3000 pages).

---

### **John Mayers says**

Very good history that does more than account the battles. Rhodes presents the other dimensions of the War including international relations/role of the British and clearly presents the precarious position of the Union until Gettysburg and Vicksburg.

---

### **Andrew says**

Really enjoyable history of the Civil War by a Midwest industrialist. Unbiased but clearly in awe of the political leadership of the United States and the generalship of both sides, it never gets bogged down. It is wide ranging and covers a lot of the foreign policy stuff that often gets overlooked in these single volume histories. Very good.

## Katy says

Wonderfully written and interesting to note that this book was written much closer to the Civil War than to today. Mr. Rhodes does have a bias in his regard to Lincoln, nicely done with Lincoln as a hero with some faults. This is a history of the war and its battles and generals, and some politics. It is a brief history, but well done.

---

## Dave says

James Ford Rhodes (May 1st, 1848 - January 22nd, 1927) was both an industrialist and an historian. Prior to this work, he produced seven volumes of a "History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850" (an eighth volume was published after this work), and he also produced a three volume "History of the Civil War 1861-1865". In the preface to this one-volume "History of the Civil War 1861-1865" he states that this is not an "abridgement" of his prior work, but rather was a "fresh" study.

Originally published by "The MacMillan Company" in 1917, this new History was awarded the 2nd Pulitzer Prize for History in 1918. Rhodes became known for his detailed research and lack of bias which is consistent throughout all his history works. His balanced treatment of both sides is a rather stark contrast to the first winner of the Pulitzer Prize in History (Jean Jules Jusserand's "With Americans of Past and Present Days") which was more of a celebration of Franco-American relations.

It is interesting while reading this book to think about the way the perceptions of the United States Civil War have changed over the years. As an example, Rhodes has no difficulty in emphasizing slavery and anti-slavery as the primary causes of the war, and since that time it has become more common to see more general references to state rights used, perhaps to cover the ugliness of issue. Another example would be the way History and Historians treat Robert E. Lee. Rhodes has high praise for Lee, though that is not to say that he doesn't point out his mistakes. Lee does not seem to fare so well with modern historians.

The discussion of other nation's attitudes towards the war is one of the more interesting sections, at least for me. Though ultimately there was no foreign interference, it is interesting to learn how a different outcome in a battle here and there, could easily have changed things considerably. One also gets a slightly different view on the French position towards the Union than one did from the essay from Jusserand's work, though to be fair the prior work was more focused on their attitude towards slavery and Abraham Lincoln, and not as much on the war and its negative effects on France.

Other interesting chapters and threads throughout the book include looking at how the North responded to the draft, especially after it became clear that the war would be won. There is a discussion of the politics and the Democratic Party turning into the Copperheads, while some legitimate opposition positions were lost as a result of the party pushing their opposition to Lincoln and the war. Rhodes also discusses the technology, and the failure to quickly move to breech loading rifles.

His discussion of the economics during the war is also very thorough. Obviously there is a discussion on the blockades and blockade running. In addition he discusses the currency problems faced both in North and South, as well as the debt resulting from the war and the consequences to the populations of the Union and the Confederacy. He also looks at the illegal trade between North and South during the war.

Not surprisingly, Rhodes gives an excellent and thorough evaluation of the Generals and other figures on each side of the war. In particular, his comparison of the Generals as they come into opposition with each other is particularly well done. While the perception of some of them as changed through time, one can count

on an even appraisal in all cases. The same is true for his evaluation of the battles, tactics, and strategies from the perspective of both sides. Of course, there are many good books on the United States Civil War which cover these areas, but just as obviously this book would not be complete without them.

One weakness of this history, is that despite Rhodes' claim that this was a fresh study, he does in the very early discussion inform the reader that his discussion of the supporters for disunion was so complete in his three volume history that it is unnecessary to repeat it at length. The result is that one has to wonder how much he is leaving out in this one volume history that was included in his earlier three volume work. Having not read his earlier history, or his larger history of the entire era, it is impossible to judge how much he is leaving out.

Along the same lines, his discussion ends fairly abruptly after describing in some detail Lee's surrender, he then briefly mentions the assassination of Lincoln and the surrender of Johnston to Sherman. There is no discussion of the aftermath of the war to balance the discussion of the events leading to the start of the war. These weaknesses are small though when one looks at the overall strength of the book. This one is highly recommended, even after 90+ years.

---

### **Matthew says**

Although I had difficulty following a few times, I learned a LOT.

---

### **Mike Ehlers says**

Excellent overview of the Civil War, and I can see why it won a Pulitzer. Worth reading 90 years later (makes you realize the book was written closer to the war itself than to the present). I read this online.

I was impressed with the scope of the book, covering not just the fighting, but politics, foreign interest, diplomacy, economics, business, and society as well, to name a few. But due to its nature, you sometimes notice the lack of detail in the book. It is very literally a history of the war, as motivations before the war and reactions after are not included. In fact Lincoln's assassination isn't given much more than a few paragraphs. But it did make me want to seek out Rhodes' larger work, *History of the United States*, in several volumes, so I guess I liked the author's style.

---

### **ralph widmer says**

**Wow! A great historical read of the Civil War.**

The author does an excellent job of reviewing significant details on the Civil War. Extensive research and information included in this work, so much so that if you cannot read this work in a fairly short time frame you may want to keep notes on who's who so you don't get confused.

---

### **Michelle says**

I cannot say enough of this book. Rhodes leaves no stone unturned throughout it. The history of the civil war is not told from a biased standpoint. He lays out the facts of each side as honestly as possible and only infers his opinions to help understand the strategy/thinking of the times. His opinions are always declared so and never laid out to be mistaken with fact. His style is a brilliant form of narrative that left it hard to put down the work at times.

I try to reserve my five star ratings, but there is nothing that I could detract from this book. Once finished, I wanted to go back and read it from the beginning as with the vast amount of information contained in it I am sure to have missed plenty. I can see myself reading this multiple times in the future to gain more information, pleasure, and to experience the author's style again and again.

---

### **John Davis says**

Written almost a hundred years ago this single volume history of the Civil War by Ohio native James Ford Rhodes is quite engaging in its straight forward narrative. Between the accounts of the major battles he gives interesting insight to the affects of the War on foreign economies, the civilian home fronts in the South and the North and other social concerns affected by the conflict. The interesting state of the monetary currency, the impressment issue in the North and South and other matters of the Civil War.

---

### **Matthew Slaven says**

I thought this was an excellent book. I really enjoyed the balance between the history of the military events and the political, social and economic circumstances of the war. It is an extremely accessible read and gave me a good sense of the major themes that determined the war's course and outcome. I deducted one star because it suffers slightly from the common ailment of many history books in that it focuses primarily on the side that ultimately won the war.

---

### **Brian Chapman says**

**Informative and keeps you interested.**

Very well written. One of the best books on the civil war that I've read. I definitely recommend this book

---