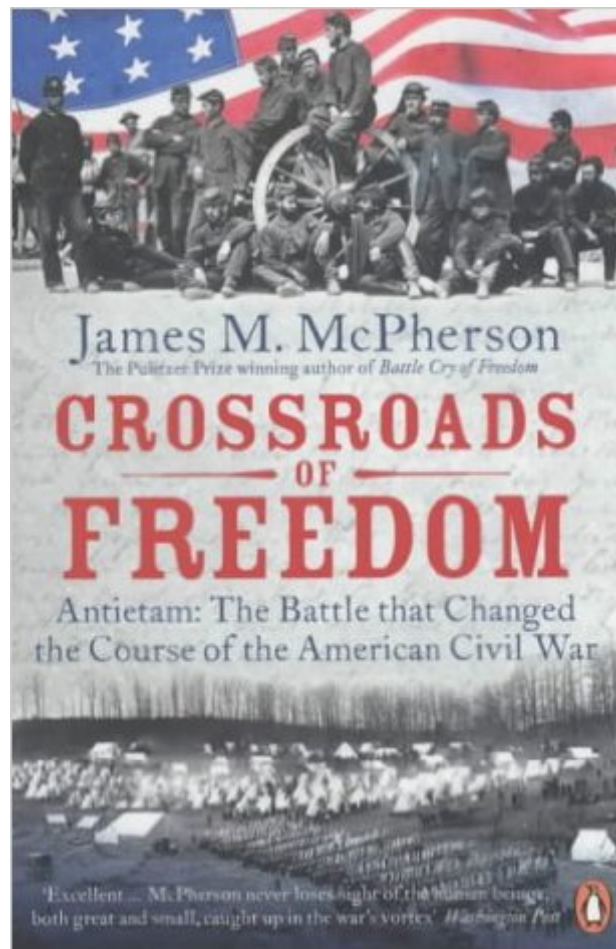


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Crossroads Of Freedom: Antietam: The Battle That Changed The Course Of The American Civil War



Synopsis

The battle of Antietam was the bloodiest conflict of the American Civil War. The author uses this gruesome turning-point to shed light on the conflict that nearly tore America apart.

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 Gettysburg, 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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