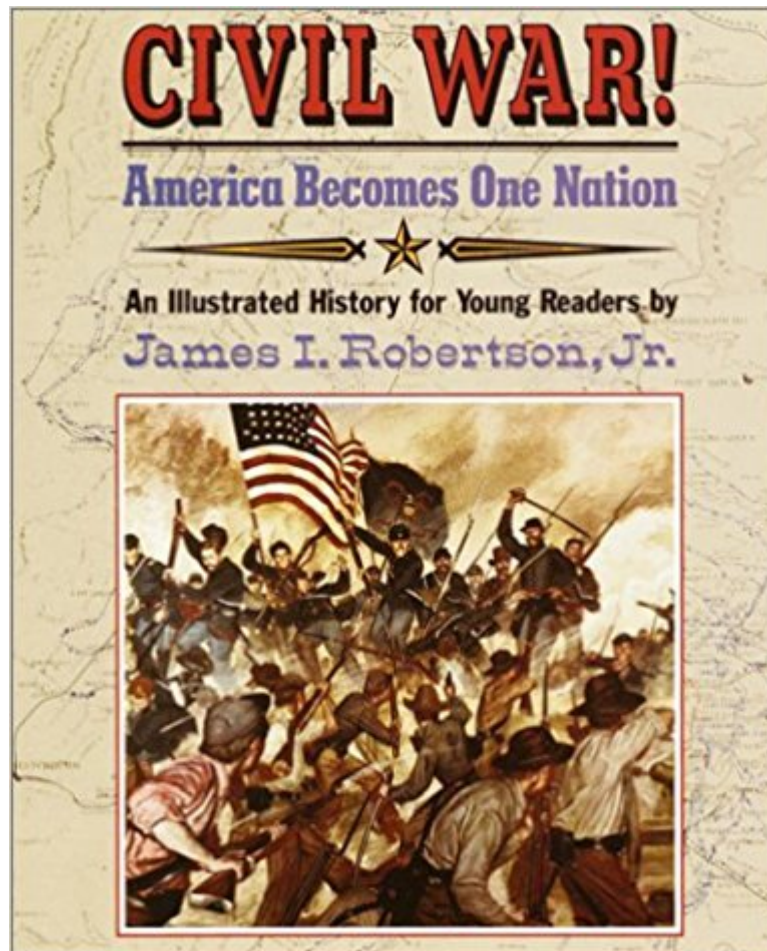




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Civil War! America Becomes One Nation



Synopsis

Clear, insightful text is complemented by black-and-white photographs in this single, comprehensive volume, which details the conflict that shattered a country but forged the strong and united nation the world knows today.

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

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Customer Reviews

In this book, termed "An Illustrated History for Young Readers," clear photos and drawings enhance Robertson's lively, balanced coverage of events. This war, which resulted in more American deaths than all subsequent conflicts combined, brought about a stronger federal government--a core theme here that distinguishes this work from most presentations for this age group. Elucidating differing opinions about slavery and excesses on both sides, the author helps readers understand the very nature of civil war--that the move "from shouting to shooting" is gradual. As he analyzes each combatant's strengths and weaknesses, Robertson's forte lies in portraying small events in the larger frame: fist fights in Congress, how the organization of armies and navies influenced the outcome, the pitiful state of medicine in which limbs were amputated rather than bones set. Yet resourcefulness, too, flourished (shoes, for example, were fashioned from boards) in this trying period--a period depicted here by a scrupulous historian. Ages 10-14. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 7 Up-- Taking as his theme the idea that "the Civil War touched every part of American life" and "from it came the strong and united nation the world knows" today, Robertson presents a

concise, balanced introduction to America's bloodiest conflict and its consequences. He doesn't concentrate upon any one topic but expands upon his theme by surveying in chronological order the major events and personalities of the war. This coverage is preceded by discussions of "King Cotton" and slavery, abolitionism, Union and Confederate resources, and other background information, concluding with a chapter about "Why the Civil War Still Lives." Robertson offers readers no new revelations or interpretations, but this does not detract from a useful distillation of a great deal of information. Well-designed, informative maps and a chart augment the outstanding selection of captioned black-and-white historical photographs and reproductions--many seldom seen--culled from the collections of the Library of Congress, Harper's Weekly, and other sources. The illustrations are comparable in quality and appropriateness to those in Murphy's *The Boys' War* (Clarion, 1990) and Ray's *Behind the Blue and the Gray* (Lodestar, 1991). --David A. Lindsey, Lakewood Junior/Senior High School, WA Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Shopped for an age appropriate book, some no longer available or excessive waiting time. This was just right. Purchased as a present for a Civil War junior reader..

Fantastic resource!! It is a shame that this book has been allowed to go out of print! One of the best books on the Civil War I have read, and I have read many, even though it is written for a younger audience. James Robertson is a wonderful writer and has incredible depth of knowledge on his topic. The book is also unbiased, presenting both Northern and Southern perspectives in a neutral manner. Highly recommended!! Use it as a supplement to another text, or as a text for younger students. They will crave to know more after reading this book!

The title of "Civil War! American Becomes One Nation," an illustrated history for young readers by James I. Robertson, Jr., has an interesting title which echoes the point Ken Burns often made in talking about his celebrated PBS documentary on "The Civil War," that before the war people said the United States "are," but afterwards they said the United States "is." The story of the Civil War is inherently one of national divisions, but Robertson literally begins with the positive legacy of the war. His introduction emphasizes that although it should not have happened this way, the Civil War brought an end to three heated controversies about the future of the nation: (1) there would be a permanent union of states; (2) the rebuilt country would be a nation with a strong federal government; and (3) the U.S. would be a land where "all men are created equal" and not the largest

slaveholding nation in the world. Robertson's book focuses on why the differences between North and South ended in a war and the changes that it brought about to the new nation. In between he describes the major military campaigns, covers the political leaders and military commanders who directed the war, and tries to show how the Civil War touched every part of American life and all of its citizens while producing a strong and united nation. That last bit might smack of hyperbole, but Robertson certainly gets credit for looking backwards to show how the Civil War created the country in which we live. In other words, it was a second American Revolution that it produced a new nation that really did not exist before that time. The first and chapters of the book provide the requisite background on the war, setting up how King Cotton and his slaves ruled the South while in the North abolitionists began their attacks. The chapter on the road to war looks at how the Compromise of 1850, Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, and John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry set the stage for Lincoln's election and the attack on Fort Sumter (there is a nice sidebar on the many names by which the 1861-1865 conflict would be known). Before getting into the start of the fighting, Robertson provides an overview of the differences in the resources of the Union and Confederate in terms of the advantages and disadvantages they presented each side. Chapters are devoted to the military actions of each year, alternating with chapters on other issues including the problems faced by Presidents Lincoln and Davis, the main military commanders on both sides, the naval war, the lives of Johnny Rebs and Billy Yanks, emancipation, the health issues of the war, and life on the home front. A final chapter is devoted to Robertson's arguments for "Why the Civil War Still Lives." Through the book Robertson highlights key issues in sidebars. For example, in the chapter devoted to the start of the fighting in 1861 he provides a chart detailing the organization of Civil War armies, so young readers understand the difference between a regiment and a corps, and a sidebar explaining exactly how the rifle (the Springfield musket to be specific) changed warfare. The result is a look at the Civil War that is both compact and compelling. "Civil War!" is generously illustrated with historical photographs and other pictures, including an insightful contrast of Lincoln in pictures taken in 1860 and 1865, showing how much the war had worn on him as president, and a rare photograph of union artillery in actual combat during the Fredericksburg campaign. In the back of this book young students will find a map of Major Civil War Battle Sites, a Chronology of the war that begins with Eli Whitney inventing the cotton gin in 1793 to the adoption of the 15th Amendment guaranteeing the right to vote for every male American citizen regardless of color in 1870, and a Glossary of terms from "abolitionists" to "torpedoes." The list of books For Further Reading is broken down into categories representing general works, battles and armies, leaders of north and south, slavery, and specialized studies,

given interested students specific guidance on where to turn next to pursue their interest in this fascinating chapter of American history.

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