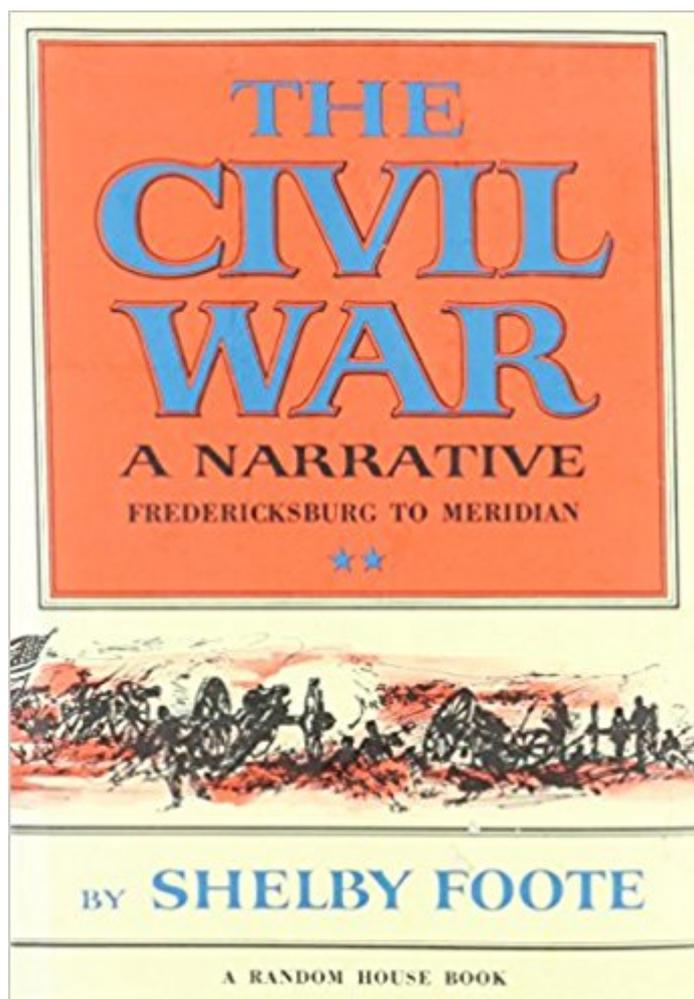


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The Civil War A Narrative: Fredericksburg To Meridian



Synopsis

This second volume in Shelby Foote's masterfully written history of the Civil War is dominated by the almost continual confrontation of great armies. The Army of the Potomac under Burnside attempts once again to take Richmond, resulting in the bloodbath at Fredericksburg. Then Joe Hooker tries again, only to be repulsed at Chancellorsville as Stonewall Jackson turns his flank - a bitter victory for the South, paid for by the death of Lee's foremost lieutenant.

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This book continues the story of the Civil War, expertly told through the narrative voice of Shelby Foote. This is an accounting of the fighting as seen from the perspective of the commanders (generals and admirals) on both sides. This is because the official war correspondence (orders, reports, etc) were Foote's primary source of information. While there are a couple major points in the book that focus on Lincoln and Davis (far less even than the first volume), the vast majority focus on the men who are in command in the field. Likewise, little attention is given to the individual soldiers who fought the battles, other than to include an occasional pertinent remark. So this book does a fantastic job of describing how the war was actually fought. It ties one battle to the next, explains how each major unit fought in each battle, and how the commanders reacted to the outcome. This volume covers the middle years of the war and the major battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Vicksburg, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga. It begins with Davis's tour of the Confederacy and ends with Grant's promotion to lieutenant general. Foote's narrative makes this book eminently readable. It is in no way difficult to read. The highly descriptive passages turn what could have been a dry academic account into an almost real experience. While it is fair to say that no one will read this book (or the entire trilogy) unless they are highly interested in the Civil War, it is important to note that this is not a work intended for only the most serious of history buffs. This book is designed for the casual reader, while containing so much information as to please the more serious. Strongly recommended.

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