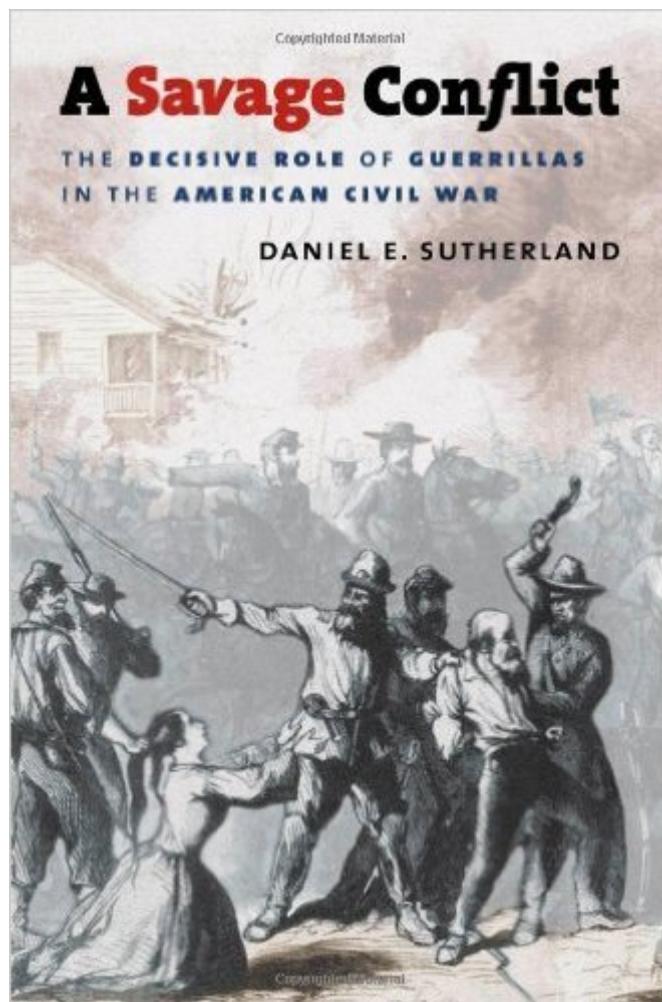


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A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role Of Guerrillas In The American Civil War (Civil War America)



Synopsis

While the Civil War is famous for epic battles involving massive armies engaged in conventional warfare, *A Savage Conflict* is the first work to treat guerrilla warfare as critical to understanding the course and outcome of the Civil War. Daniel Sutherland argues that irregular warfare took a large toll on the Confederate war effort by weakening support for state and national governments and diminishing the trust citizens had in their officials to protect them.

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Customer Reviews

John Mosby, William Quantrill and Bloody Bill Anderson encompass most of our knowledge about guerrillas. The sack of Lawrence and understanding Missouri had a very active guerrilla war completes the picture. If you read a lot of Civil War history, you can discuss the problems caused by deserters and the battles between Unionists and Confederates in the CSA. Pushed, you might talk about guerrillas firing on shipping in the Mississippi River. Really pushed, you might mention North Carolina and/or East Tennessee as "hot spots" of guerrilla activity. After that, we have gone through our knowledge on the subject. After reading this book, you will be able to talk intelligently about this subject across the nation for the entire war. For one book to pack so much information, be readable

and have good historic sources is an accomplishment. This book manages to exceed all expectations by providing a summary with the right level of detail, in an intelligent readable format. The history hangs on a frame covering six to twelve month periods of the war in chronological order. Each part follows the development of the guerrilla war with a section of the nation during this period. The major sections are Kansas/Missouri/Arkansas, Kentucky/Tennessee, West Virginia/Virginia, Mississippi/Alabama and the Carolinas. Texas, Florida and Louisiana appear when they have something to contribute. The author adds sections, as they become part of the story. In Spring-Summer 1861, Kansas/Missouri/Arkansas, Kentucky/Tennessee, West Virginia/Virginia are the major story. This includes problems of guerrillas spilling into Iowa & Illinois from Missouri and into Ohio from Kentucky. As the war progresses, areas are added.

This is an excellent, scholarly book on the partisan warfare during the American Civil War. Author Sutherland contends that the Southern partisans or guerrillas ultimately exerted a negative effect of the Southern ability and resolve to wage war and thus helped bring about the South's defeat. Well, maybe, but after reading the book I tended to agree with the author. The Confederate guerrilla bands included units with some legitimate military status like Mosby's Rangers, citizen bushwackers, and outright criminal bands using the war as justification for their activities. The problem was that their activities steadily provoked harsher and harsher Federal responses, mostly against civilians and their property. Towards the end of the war, this created a war-weariness in the South as the suffering passed the point of civilian endurance. When the main Confederate armies surrendered, there was simply no will to go on when one's farm was destroyed and there was little prospect for economic recovery. The author vividly points out the breakdown in Confederate authorities and their ability to keep order, peace and security in Confederate territory as the war progressed. Citizens were reduced to defending themselves against Federals and Confederate partisans, taking the law into their own hands out of necessity. With impotent civil authorities, it was every man for himself, and the citizenry ultimately blamed the Confederate and state governments for their predicament. Everything became extremely localized, and sending men away to fight the Yankees was not an option with raiders and troublemakers on the prowl near one's own home. Desertions also increased in the main Confederate armies as soldiers returned home to defend their families and homes.

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