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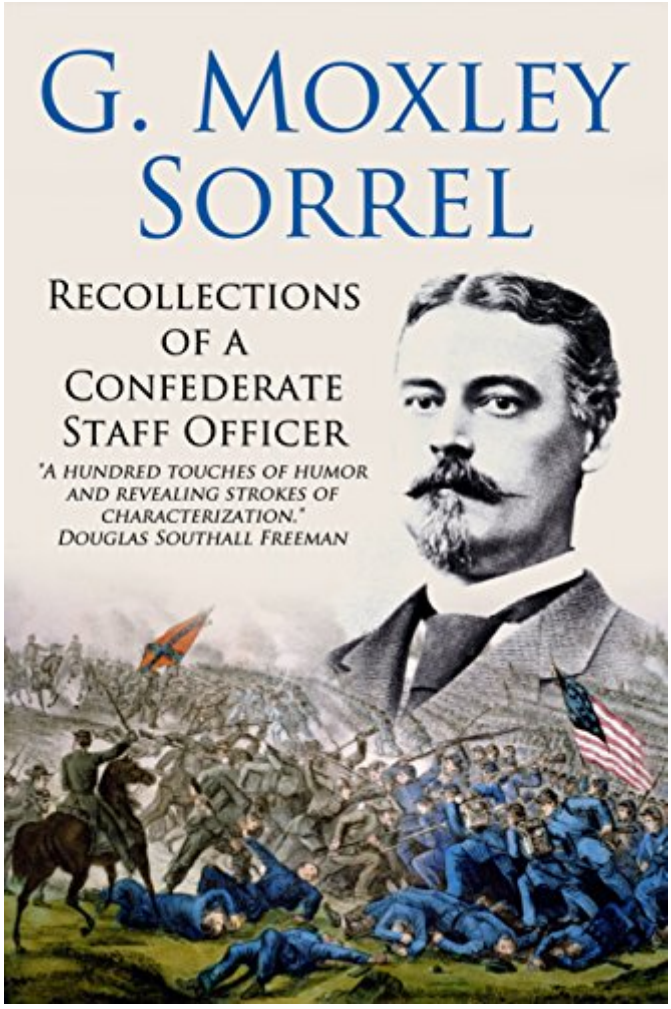
Recollections Of A Confederate Staff Officer



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Synopsis

â œ[Longstreetâ ™s] de facto chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel Moxley Sorrel, was the best staff officer in the Confederacy.â • The Journal of Military HistoryAt the tender age of just twenty-three Gilbert Moxley Sorrel earned his commission as captain and was posted as General James Longstreetâ ™s chief-of-staff.Through the next three years he would remain by Longstreetâ ™s side, rising to the ranks of Major and Lieutenant Colonel, until he was eventually given command of his own brigade within Major General William Mahoneâ ™s division.Moxley Sorrel made an immediate impression on Longstreet who wrote that he â œcame into the battle as gaily as a beau, and seemed to receive orders which threw him into more exposed positions with particular delight.â •Indeed he went on to witness some of the most famous battles of the American Civil War and his experiences are recorded here, from Manassas to Seven Pines, Sharpsburg to Fredericksburg, Gettysburg to Petersburg. He was even with Longstreet at the Battle of Wilderness when Longstreet was struck down by a bullet coming from their own men.As Longstreetâ ™s right hand man through the war until 1864 Moxley Sorrel was put into contact with some of the most remarkable figures of the Confederate army, and they are all vividly portrayed within his memoirs.At Petersburg, during the Battle of Hatcherâ ™s Run, he was wounded and feared mortally so, eventually he recovered but his military career ended here.The historian Douglas Southall Freeman wrote that Moxely Sorrelâ ™s Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer contains â œa hundred touches of humor and revealing strokes of swift characterisation.â •Once the war ended Moxley Sorrel returned to the south where he entered business. His Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer was published in 1905. He died in 1901 in Roanoke, Virginia.

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Customer Reviews

As Civil War autobiographies go, this one is more delightful than informative. Well, Sorrel does tell us what he saw during the war, much of which he spent as adjutant to Lt. General James Longstreet. And in that capacity, he saw a lot. Near the end of the war, after Longstreet was wounded at the Wilderness, he was given a command of his own. Not long afterward he, himself, was seriously wounded.Written at the suggestion of his wife while he recovered from an illness, the general gives a ground level view of the war as a young soldier. Although privy to many decisions made by his superiors, he was not in on the decision making. Sometimes there is a certain naivete about his observances.This more personal view of the battles and times between would be of interest to any student of the Civil War. It is a valuable story, if only for his view of the controversial Longstreet.

Excellent book for someone trying to obtain insight into characters of the conflict. Sorrel is candid and generally does not fall into the "hero worship" that many Confederate Officers did when writing their memoirs.He makes it very clear throughout the book that his observations are his own and may be flawed when viewed historically (and some are).Very easy reading -- not a lot of Victorian memorializing and generally flows well. A real good book for the beginner or historian alike.

This book shows an officer who we usually do not hear from, and yet he was a hard working and dedicated soldier, doing his duties meticulously for the Confederacy. If you enjoyed reading KILLER ANGELS, you really ought to add this book to your library of personal reports of the civil war.

Short & sweet, I just started to read this book last night. I been reading civil war books for 50 plus years and a long time member of the Sons of Civil War Veterans, so you know I’m into it. BUY THIS BOOK, it has more insight into the officers who fought the war, then any other book, I ever read. He makes it clear, its his insight, he calls it like he feels is right. He gets down and dirty, after the war,

he was sitting with General Johnson talking about his scars. One big one on his head, he asked where that came from. Johnson reply was a cherry tree that he fell out of and had to run for it, with the farmer close behind. Buy it.

The writer makes you feel like you are there in person fighting for the southern cause. When you finish reading this book, you will personally know many confederate officers, what they were like and how fought the war. I highly recommend reading this book.

General Gilbert Moxley Sorrell's memoir of the War Between the States is a must-read for any serious student of the War and a fascinating historical account of soldierly life and experiences. Sorrell served in Longstreet's Brigade beginning at Manassas and as his staff officer until his promotion to Brigadier-General in 1864. He paints a vivid picture of camp life and of the political climate of the times that is often overlooked in military accounts. Highly recommend

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I enjoyed reading about the Confederate Army from the view of an insider, it personalized history for me. The author did not try to write about every detail of the war, but rather the personal qualities of the main players.

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