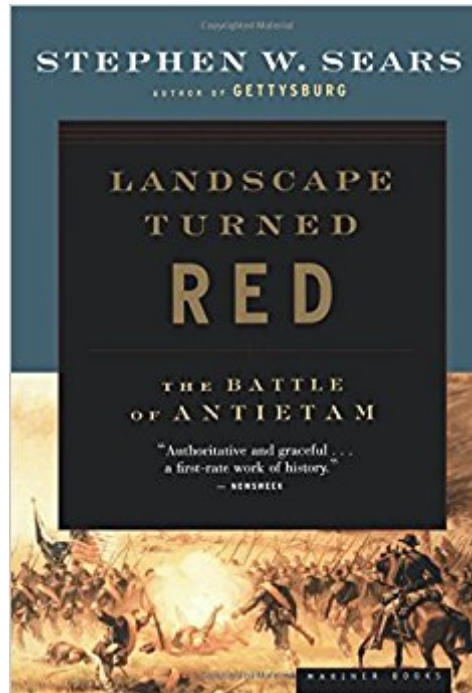




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Landscape Turned Red: The Battle Of Antietam



Synopsis

Combining brilliant military analysis with rich narrative history, *Landscape Turned Red* is the definitive work on the Battle of Antietam. The Civil War battle waged on September 17, 1862, at Antietam Creek, Maryland, was one of the bloodiest in the nation's history: on this single day, the war claimed nearly 23,000 casualties. Here renowned historian Stephen Sears draws on a remarkable cache of diaries, dispatches, and letters to recreate the vivid drama of Antietam as experienced not only by its leaders but also by its soldiers, both Union and Confederate, to produce what the New York Times Book Review has called "the best account of the Battle of Antietam."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The best account of the Battle of Antietam." The New York Times Book Review
"A modern classic." The Chicago Tribune
"No other book so vividly depicts that battle, the campaign that preceded it, and the dramatic political events that followed." -- Washington Post Book World
The Washington Post
"Authoritative and graceful . . . a first-rate work of history." Newsweek

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This is a detailed, but highly readable account of the entire Antietam campaign, from Lee's decision to invade the North, the practical problems he encountered when his army had to advance from its base in Northern Virginia, the complex stratagems he hoped to employ to entrap McClellan's Army of the Potomac, how these almost led to his destruction when a copy of his marching orders fell into McClellan's hands, and the heroic delaying actions (as well as inertia on the part of several Northern generals) which gave him barely enough time to regroup his dispersed forces. The battle itself—which claimed more American casualties than any other day in the entire history of this country's wars (of course, both sides were American)—takes up over half the book, and is described in enough detail that the reader can comprehend not only what was going on, and what went wrong, but also get a vivid feel for what it might have been like to be there. The author is not sparing in discussing the mistakes made by both sides, as well as the heroism and cowardice of the young men and their field officers who actually had to fight in this charnel house for which neither side was really prepared. Lee outnumbered more than two to one—managed to fight the battle to a draw, but he was lucky that the Northern Army made several crucial mistakes, and that A.P. Hill arrived in the nick of time to prevent his position being overrun by Burnside's slow-moving flanking attack. Nonetheless, Lee was forced to withdraw, and the North could claim its first success in the Eastern theater of the war. In many respects, Antietam marks the turning point in the Civil War. The book centers on the military aspects of the Antietam campaign, but deals with the politics enough to put the fighting in context, and make it clear what the impact of this momentous battle was: it probably played the crucial role in persuading the British and French that the Confederacy might well lose, and gave Lincoln the moment he had been waiting for to turn the war into a fight against slavery, which gave it a moral dimension previously absent, and further doomed any prospect of foreign intervention. For any reader with more than a casual interest in the period, and certainly for any Civil War buff, this is a must read, as well as for anyone about to visit the battlefield.

I haven't read every book on the battle of Antietam, but I would be surprised if I ever find one better than this one. Sears has a powerful narrative voice and did a masterful job telling this story of one of the most pivotal battles of the war. Really, this is a book of the first year and a half of the war, a history of the Army of the Potomac under George McClellan. It starts with background and context, which includes the outbreak of war, McClellan's rise to command, the Peninsula Campaign, and finally the battle of Antietam. Battle histories can be complex and confusing. Sears does well in

telling this story in a clear, logical way. He is balanced in giving perspective to both North and South, though so much focus is given to the failed leadership of George McClellan (and Lincoln's hope of issuing his Emancipation Proclamation) that at times the book as a whole tips to a mostly northern perspective. The book finishes with the failure of McClellan to follow-up this victory-by-default and his dismissal from command. Sears also gives significant treatment to the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation, reactions to it, and its impact. Both within the book and in the appendix. The same goes for the lost order 191, who knew about it and when, and how it was used (or not used) by McClellan. Overall, this is an essential book, not just for understanding the events of the battle, but the context and significance of it.

I so enjoyed Sears' book on Gettysburg that I then turned to this one. I like Sears' writing style and his narrative pace, you have time to digest the changes occurring on the field. Few on the Union side, particularly Little Mac, seems worthy of praise. Only McClellan can snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. It's sad to contemplate that an aggressive commander, armed with the gift that McClellan received, might have destroyed the Army of Northern Virginia and hastened the end of the war. Sears devotes separate space at the end of the book to the enduring mystery of the Lost Order 191. No one would fess up then and I suppose we'll never know for sure how that order got left in the grass for the Union to find.

This is an excellent account of the bloody battle at Antietam. The author has obviously researched the history of events in grand detail. The writing is fluid and the author's style makes for an interesting read. Due to the nature of the battle, and all the players involved, there are an enormous amount of names, titles and designated unit identities that sometimes bog the reader down while chronicling events, but this is a minor irritant on an excellently done recounting of this devastating meeting of the North and South. Occasionally the author assumes his reader is well versed in military weaponry of this period, but again, this does not take away from the story he is telling. His assessment of the personalities involved bring the story to life and in the end make for a meaningful read. This book gave me a deeper understanding of not only this particular battle, but the general nature, and horror of the Civil War in general. I do recommend the book to anyone interested in learning more about Antietam. This is a very complete and engaging account.

Unbelievable book on the Battle of Antietam, the single bloodiest day of any war the U.S. has fought. Despite the poor leadership of General George McClellan the Union was still able to inflict a

large number of casualties on the Confederacy. McClellan allowing the confederacy to withdraw from Sharpsburg without pursuit enabled the south to live and fight another day.

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