



Robert E. Lee and the Fall of the Confederacy, 1863-1865 (The American Crisis Series: Books on the Civil War Era)

Ethan S. Rafuse

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The generalship of Robert E. Lee, the Confederacy's greatest commander, has long fascinated students of the American Civil War. In assessing Lee and his military career, historians have faced the great challenge of explaining how a man who achieved extraordinary battlefield success in 1862–1863 ended up surrendering his army and accepting the defeat of his cause in 1865. How, in just under two years, could Lee, the Army of Northern Virginia, and the Confederacy have gone from soaring triumph at Chancellorsville to total defeat at Appomattox Court House?

In this reexamination of the last two years of Lee's storied military career, Ethan S. Rafuse offers a clear, informative, and insightful account of Lee's ultimately unsuccessful struggle to defend the Confederacy against a relentless and determined foe. *Robert E. Lee and the Fall of the Confederacy* describes the great campaigns that shaped the course of this crucial period in American history, the challenges Lee faced in each battle, and the dramatic events that determined the war's outcome.

In addition to providing readable and richly detailed narratives of such campaigns as Gettysburg, Bristoe Station, Spotsylvania, and Appomattox, Rafuse offers compelling analysis of Lee's performance as a commander and of the strategic and operational contexts that influenced the course of the war. He superbly describes and explains the factors that shaped Union and Confederate strategy, how both sides approached the war in Virginia from an operational standpoint, differences in the two sides' respective military capabilities, and how these forces shaped the course and outcome of events on the battlefield.

Rich in insights and analysis, this book provides a full, balanced, and cogent account of how even the best efforts of one of history's great commanders could not prevent the total defeat of his army and its cause. It will appeal to anyone with an interest in the career of Robert E. Lee and the military history of the Civil War.

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