



The Better Angels of Our Nature: Freemasonry in the American Civil War

Michael A. Halleran

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The first in-depth study of the Freemasons during the Civil War

One of the enduring yet little examined themes in Civil War lore is the widespread belief that on the field of battle and afterward, members of Masonic lodges would give aid and comfort to wounded or captured enemy Masons, often at great personal sacrifice and danger. This work is a deeply researched examination of the recorded, practical effects of Freemasonry among Civil War participants on both sides.

From first-person accounts culled from regimental histories, diaries, and letters, Michael A. Halleran has constructed an overview of 19th-century American freemasonry in general and Masonry in the armies of both North and South in particular, and provided telling examples of how Masonic brotherhood worked in practice. Halleran details the response of the fraternity to the crisis of secession and war, and examines acts of assistance to enemies on the battlefield and in POW camps.

The author examines carefully the major Masonic stories from the Civil War, in particular the myth that Confederate Lewis A. Armistead made the Masonic sign of distress as he lay dying at the high-water mark of Pickett's charge at Gettysburg.

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