

# THE POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR; A Handbook for Reenactors Who are Never Allowed to Discuss Such Things in Polite Society

George Roland Wills



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When one attends a Civil War reenactment, one is told not to discuss politics or religion. This is required of all participants in order to keep the peace between people from various parts of the country. It is required so that everyone may have an enjoyable experience on the field of honor. Civil War reenactors usually come away from these events knowing everything that there is to know about the battles, the clothing, and the lifestyles of the people who lived during the Civil War, yet knowing little or nothing about the causes of that war, and the political reasons that it took place.

The main reason for this is simple; the side who ultimately won that four year engagement had also been the invading army. Knowing full well that the only justifiable war is one of defense, there is a moral dilemma upon the part of the Union army. How can one be the aggressor, and yet be on the side of right in order to make his victory a justifiable one?

A number of standard answers have been memorized by the reenactors in order to answer the questions of the spectators who come to these things to witness them and to try and learn about real history. The first standardized response is that the Civil War was fought to free the slaves and to preserve the Union. When this is told, the Northern troops can feel proud of their victory and the Southern troops can feel some justification in their loss, being thus in the supposed 'wrong' on this point, and having been Reconstructed to feel that their loss was 'for the best.'

Absolutely nothing could be further from the truth, however, and yet this standardized rhetoric has become the accepted and unarguable mantra of Civil War reenacting.

This book hopes to answer a number of unasked questions about what caused the Lost Cause, and what it really meant to the United States as a whole... and not just the Slave-holding South.

Much of this book has been previously released as "Abraham Lincoln and the Politics that Led to War" by Darryl Franklin Jameson.

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