



The Civil War 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential People in the War Between the States

Robert Wooster

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At the Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1862, four times as many American men died as died during the Normandy landings in World War II. Numbers such as these make the impact of the American Civil War almost incomprehensible. By focusing on people rather than numbers, *The Civil War 100* gives the war a human face. Each selected individual is the subject of a brief biography, a discussion of his or her relevance, and a photograph or two. The author, Robert Wooster, admits to having no clear system for ranking his choices. Influence was deemed more relevant than skill; a military failure might therefore rank above a successful general. Indeed, only half of those selected were directly involved in the war effort. The list includes many people who influenced society in the antebellum and reconstruction periods. Both heroes and villains are featured: Abraham Lincoln understandably gets the top spot, but readers may be surprised to find John Wilkes Booth at number 25.

This book is clearly not designed as an entry-level text. Readers with some knowledge of the Civil War will find it much more rewarding. That said, Wooster does include a helpful introduction with general background, a detailed chronology, and battle maps. True buffs may argue with Wooster's rankings-- indeed, that may be half the fun--but *The Civil War 100* is a real treat for anyone who knows his blues from his grays. --C.B. Delaney

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