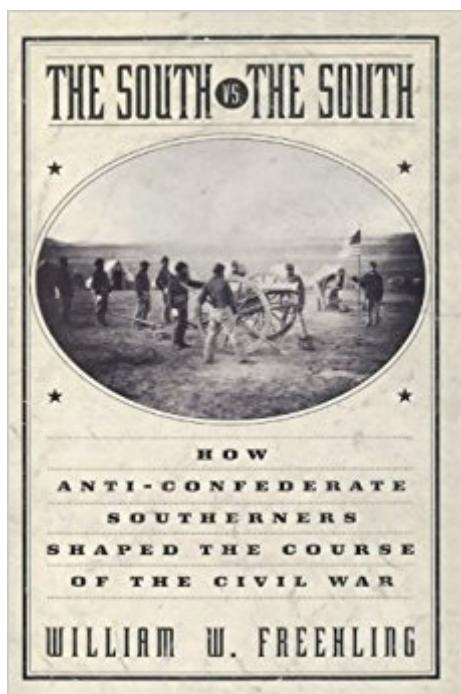


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# The South Vs. The South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped The Course Of The Civil War



## Synopsis

Why did the Confederacy lose the Civil War? Most historians point to the larger number of Union troops, for example, or the North's greater industrial might. Now, in *The South Vs. the South*, one of America's leading authorities on the Civil War era offers an entirely new answer to this question. William Freehling argues that anti-Confederate Southerners--specifically, border state whites and southern blacks--helped cost the Confederacy the war. White men in such border states as Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland, Freehling points out, were divided in their loyalties--but far more joined the Union army (or simply stayed home) than marched off in Confederate gray. If they had enlisted as rebel troops in the same proportion as white men did farther south, their numbers would have offset all the Confederate casualties during four years of war. In addition, when those states stayed loyal, the vast majority of the South's urban population and industrial capacity remained in Union hands. And many forgot, Freehling writes, that the slaves' own decisions led to a series of white decisions (culminating in the Emancipation Proclamation) that turned federal forces into an army of liberation, depriving the South of labor and adding essential troops to the blue ranks. Whether revising our conception of slavery or of Abraham Lincoln, or establishing the antecedents of Martin Luther King, or analyzing Union military strategy, or uncovering new meanings in what is arguably America's greatest piece of sculpture, Augustus St.-Gaudens' Shaw Memorial, Freehling writes with piercing insight and rhetorical verve. Concise and provocative, *The South Vs. the South* will forever change the way we view the Civil War.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Historians have offered many different explanations for the North's triumph over the South during the Civil War. In this work, the University of Kentucky's Freehling (The Road to Disunion) dissects the role played by a failure of border states (Maryland, Delaware, Missouri and Kentucky) to unify with the seceding states. As these border states developed an industrial economy (to replace their extinct tobacco-based economy), they became more similar culturally and politically to the North, he argues. And like most Northern whites, whites living in the border states were not as strongly against slavery as they were for preserving their own "lily-white utopia." Lincoln knew that in order to win the war, according to Freehling, he would have to appeal to the border states' desire to remain with the Union, and in order not to alienate them he had to maintain his ambiguous stance on slavery and emancipation. Moreover, Freehling claims, historians have failed to appreciate fully the corrosive effect runaway slaves had on the Confederacy's ability to promote its proslavery position among its border neighbors. Though the argument that runaway slaves and border-state whites were critical to the outcome of the war is not quite as new as Freehling makes it out to be, his discussion of these two groups together in one volume is a valuable contribution to Civil War literature. B&w illus. and maps. (Mar.) Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The most recent work by Freehling (history and Otis A. Singletary Chair in Humanities, Univ. of Kentucky) examines causes and outcomes of the Civil War. His *Prelude to Civil War* analyzed the nullification crisis, while *The Road to Disunion, Vol. 1: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854* examined the diversity of the South. Here, Freehling postulates that anti-Confederate Southerners, primarily border-state whites and Southern blacks, influenced military outcome by contributing thousands of troops to the Union cause, bolstered by Lincoln's exemplary and cunning statecraft, the Union's anaconda strategy, and the failure of Northern Democrats and foreigners to support the disunionists. This had a profound impact on the war, for the Confederacy needed both manpower and production capacity to realize its aims. Thoroughly and exquisitely researched, Freehling's analysis is provocative and novel. Maps of germane battles and places illustrate the text.

Recommended for academic libraries. Kathleen M. Conley, Illinois State Univ., Normal Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Dr. Freehling argues, most persuasively, that dissension from within the states that should have

comprised the Confederacy was of greater effect in defeating it than any other factor. He points especially to the failure of the Confederacy to "jell" in Kentucky, where Gen. Bragg had to take back to Tennessee the rifles he had planned to distribute to the thousands who should have answered the call. He is the first historian of this period in whose work I have found an explanation of the term "filibustering" in its Civil War context. "Filibustering fantasies remained alive only on the Union side by 1863." However, in October of 1863, they must have still been alive. This is certainly the best explanation I have ever read for the Battle of Westport, MO, in which an attempt by Confederate General Price to filibuster there was defeated. This battle occurred less than 50 miles from where I grew up. I have Freehling to thank for the fact that I now understand it, having heard about it many times as a youngster. Many other events you've read about before will suddenly make sense as you read this book. His coverage of the role of blacks in defeating the confederacy is both even-handed and as near definitive as any I've seen.

a union military strategist's history-in-response to Du Bois' "black reconstruction" "s framing of the civil war as a general strike against the slave power and the confederacy. From "filibusterers," to "contraband," to "garrison," a by-the-numbers explanation of how a racist Union Army could evolve into an army of liberation by positioning Southerners of all races to fight the confederacy. Short and sweet.

This like the rest of Freehling's work is important. In recent years a trend has developed to submerge the central issue of the civil war--slavery--in a myriad of other issues leading to the war and thus diminishing the importance of the war for the US and the World. Part of this slide from confronting the central issue is a tendency to be cosier to attitudes justifying or defending the slaveholders Confederacy in the war. This book is very clear that within the South, the majority of the population did not support the Confederacy and probably a plurality of the South at first and then a majority actively worked to destroy the Confederacy. The Confederacy was not a Southern republic, it was a slaveholders republic. Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Missouri were slave states, but they went with the union. Considerable portions of Eastern Tennessee and Western North Carolina supported the Confederacy throughout the war, and large groups of white people throughout the South opposed the Confederacy. This book explains that without this opposition, the Union would have never been able to enter the South and attack the Confederacy's military and political centers so easily and would have had to mobilize many more troops were there more Confederate support in the areas the Union liberated. For the most part, the Union liberated

rather than occupied the South because as the author explained, African Americans overwhelming supported the union and selflessly threw themselves into the war, working first to build defenses, transport materials, tend to the sick, guide the troops, and forage for food and supplies. Later, hundreds of thousands of African Americans volunteered to serve in the Union Army, providing a ready made force available right in the South to support the Union lines against slaveholder terrorism. What I found unique here was his analysis of the 1864 election and his view that had McClellan, the Democrat who ran against Lincoln won, the South would have still been defeated, although he leaves open whether slavery would have been obliterated the way it was under the Republicans. This is a good read, and not as ponderous as his other work, although his new work is decisive to understanding American history as a whole.

Freehling's main thesis in this book really has some merit. He does an excellent job of supporting his arguments with facts that can be overlooked when analyzing the U.S. Civil War. Even though the book drags in certain chapters, there is no denying the author did his research well. This is a book that should be read by any U.S. Civil War buffs.

This was definitely a refreshing new perspective on the civil war mixed with the author's subtle humour. Worth the while

In this short and easy-to-read book, Dr. Freehling continues his thesis about the malign effects of the division of the south explored in his Road To Disunion series into the Civil War itself, demonstrating that the division of the south was a critical element in its defeat. Though Dr. Freehling sometimes plays a little fast and loose in his estimates of which proportion of the south opposed the Confederacy (his best guess, including runaway slaves who fought with the Union and Union soldiers from the Middle and Upper South, is about 1/3 of the south, a pretty fair estimate), the book demonstrates that the division among white Southerners (particularly in the Border states and the mountainous country in West Virginia and Eastern Tennessee) and black Southerners (especially when Union armies approached) was crucial in leading to the decisive defeat of the Confederacy. May that benighted region never rise again.

This work is a classic for those who study the Civil War and the South's participation in it. This is a stellar work.

Any Civil war buff should read this perspective

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