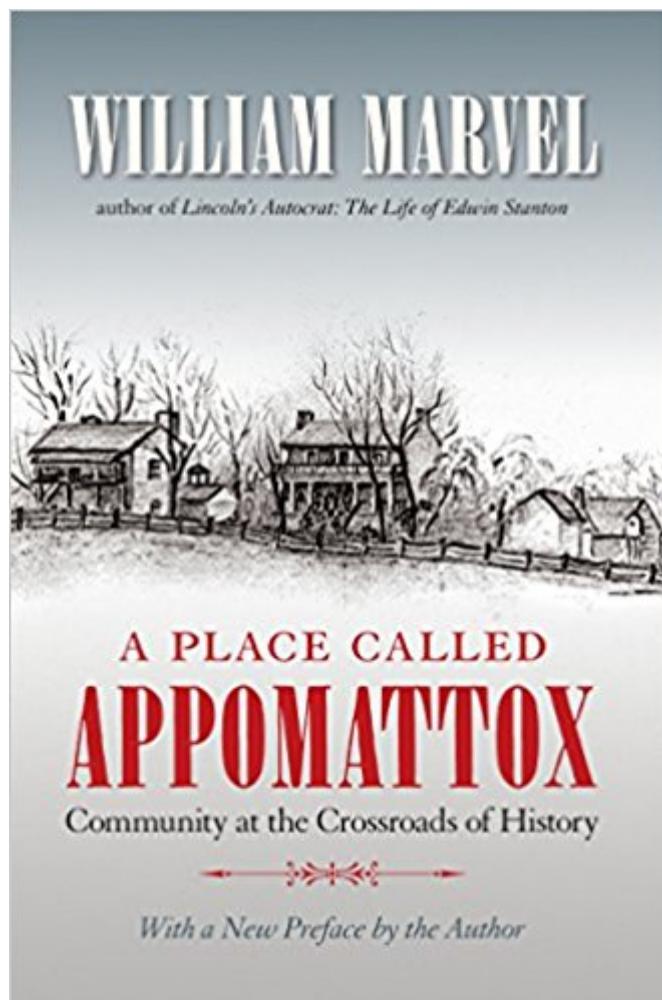


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A Place Called Appomattox (Civil War America)



Synopsis

Although Appomattox Court House is one of the most symbolically charged places in America, it was an ordinary tobacco-growing village both before and after an accident of fate brought the armies of Lee and Grant together there. It is that Appomattox--the typical small Confederate town--that William Marvel portrays in this deeply researched, compelling study. He tells the story of the Civil War from the perspective of one of the conflict's most famous sites. The village sprang into existence just as Texas became a state and reached its peak not long before Lee and Grant met there. The postwar decline of the village mirrored that of the rural South as a whole, and Appomattox served as the focal point for Lost Cause myth-making. Marvel draws on original documents, diaries, and letters composed as the war unfolded to produce a clear and credible portrait of everyday life in this town and the galvanizing events of April 1865. He also scrutinizes Appomattox the national symbol, exposing many of the cherished myths surrounding the surrender there. In particular, he challenges the fable that enemies who had battled each other for four years suddenly laid down their arms and welcomed each other as brothers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

From the point of view of a family historian, Marvel's book fills a hole in the genre of social history books for Appomattox. The gems in this book consist of a lengthy source for chapter notes, family names like Ferguson, Flood, and McClean, and simplified maps showing the layout of Appomattox

CH, as well as Clover Hill, and the delineation of Buckingham and Appomattox Counties. The latter can be a source of much confusion in census records after 1845. Marvel tells a story of typhoid epidemics, social mannerisms, and politics that will tickle the soul of the wanna-be gossip, as well as the reader who relishes a good story. The attention to detail goes beyond the call of duty, and is much appreciated by this reader. This is the first book I've seen that mentions Robert Kyle's heavy artillery division in any detail. If you're not familiar with the names and families through genealogical research, you'll know them by the time you finish the book. Excellent reading, excellent resource.

I am actively researching genealogy in Appomattox, Va. I heard about the book from another researcher. The book includes a tremendous amount of information about the people of Appomattox during the period of the Civil War. It covers a lot of history from the founding of Appomattox in 1845 through the surrender in 1865. The war obviously plays a big part but the book is about the people, not the war. This is a refreshing change from most books about Appomattox. I was frustrated a number of times by the author's failure to include names. Many times in describing events the author will say the equivalent of "Jane Doe and her two sisters". As a genealogist I would like to know the names of the two sisters. The book is very thoroughly researched with extensive original sources and I have not found any errors in the genealogy aspects. A very well written and readable book.

Overall this book is a good read on an unwritten subject. The events during Lee's surrender have been written many times, but not many have discussed how Appomattox was founded, who lived there, etc. Marvel does this, although the first couple chapters are a bit slow. However, during the war years, the text picks up and is more lively. Marvel's description of the differing personalities in Appomattox's history is very good too. The section on the post-war years did not go into as much depth however. Nor did Marvel go into much depth on the death of Appomattox or its rebirth as a national park. I have been to the park and this book gave me a better understanding of some of the things I saw. Overall, the book is very good, but Marvel did miss a couple things.

I have been to Appomattox several times. This book gives a good insight into the town's history.

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