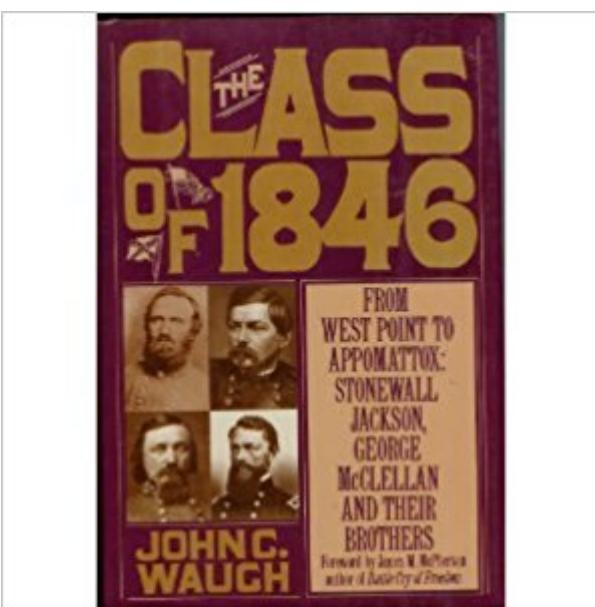


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The Class Of 1846: From West Point To Appomattox : Stonewall Jackson, George McClellan And Their Brothers



Synopsis

No single class of West Point--or possibly any academy--has been so indelibly written into history as the one that graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point in 1846. It fought in three wars, produced 20 generals, and left the nation a lasting legacy of bravery, brilliance, and bloodshed. THE CLASS OF 1846 is the fascinating chronicle of this singular group of men, their training their personalities, and the events in which they made their name and met their fate. In this book, we come to know the Class of 1846 intimately, not only as individuals but as members of a brotherhood linked inseparably by a shared history. From the day they arrive at West Point to their baptism as soldiers in the Mexican War and in the Indian campaigns of the West...to the day they turn their guns against one another in the bloodiest of all American wars, you will meet: George B. McClellan. Bright, confident, and affable, aristocratic Philadelphian shines as the star of the class. Great things are expected of him; only later would the disappointments set in. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. Taciturn, eccentric, and unprepossessing, western Virginia mountain boy. Tom Jackson is accepted at the last minute only after another candidate drops out. In the first year, he passes by the skin of his teeth. No one expects much at all of "Old Jack." But he would surprise them at the Point, and he would surprise them even more 20 years later--with deadly consequences. A. P. Hill. At school, George McClellan and A. P. Hill are roommates for a time and best friends always. Even their rivalry for the hand of the lovely Miss Ellen Marcy (who first became engaged to Hill, but married McClellan) could not tear them apart. At Antietam, McClellan and his Union soldiers would bear the brunt of his Confederate roommate's pounding attack. We'll also meet: George Pickett, George Henry Gordon, John Gibbon and many more who shaped our nation's history

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Customer Reviews

I found this book to be a very enjoyable book to read and it helped fill in a few spaces left about the great names of the Civil War before they became Generals. I have always enjoyed reading accounts of the war with Mexico and seeing how the future enemies of the American Civil War fought together, saved each other's lives on occasions and learnt the common lessons of war. This is a very interesting and well presented account although I found the battle scenes lacking in depth but I would suppose that was not the author's main focus but more on the people involved. I think it may have helped to have added a few maps of the fighting in Mexico and the Valley as if you have no prior knowledge of these areas you really do not appreciate the efforts involved in moving from one point to another. Overall this is a decent book and most people should enjoy immersing themselves in this bit of history.

Well-researched, immensely readable, and very highly recommended. I learned a lot of new things, not just about the Civil War and West Point, but also the Indian wars. Maps would have been useful, especially for Jackson's Valley Campaign of '62 as another reviewer mentioned, but I have a regular Kindle Paperwhite and they most likely would not have been readable, so I googled everything. There are no photos mentioned in the ToC, and I searched for them, both by searching and paging through, but somehow did not find them until I finished the book. It would have been nice if there had been a link to them. Most of them are googleable, as is the Valley Campaign, etc. John Waugh made me feel some sympathy for Tom Jackson, and since he's one of my least favorite people, that's an achievement and points to the quality of his writing. McClellan is sympathy-proof as far as I am concerned, no matter how well John Waugh writes.

Although most of the information in this book is not new, it is presented with such flair that it is hard to put down. From time to time, I was offput by Waugh's determination to go into excruciating detail on some battles. For example, did the anger of the Union cook in Charleston harbor do anything for the Ft. Sumter issue? (If I were to indicate that perhaps it was nonetheless humorous in those dark and sad times, I would feel insensitive.) Using so much print here and throughout, he omitted other battles that could have added to his writing laurels. Nonetheless, I felt the anguish of our country's patriots, on both sides of the rifles. Having myself completed a military career, I tried to put myself in their shoes of yesteryear. How I would have cried having to fire upon those with whom I bonded in

aviation cadets. And with whom I still stay in touch, these 45 years later. Or if some of my family, i.e., parents, sister, or children, had chosen to fly a different flag than mine. On the other hand, I relished Waugh's description of General Tom Jackson revving back and forth in Virginia time and time again. We've lived in the metropolitan area of Washington, DC for many years, and traveled the length of Virginia several times. How exciting to read about the names of so many places that we have driven past at least a dozen times enroute to our family home in Mississippi, yet another Confederate stronghold. Having visited Gettysburg's battlefield provided us with another sense of our nation's anguish. This book provides so many moments of recall, that I could continue on, but I would never be able to capture the spirit of that era that Waugh has so generously shared with us. Clearly, this book will rank alongside the top notch Catton works of the Civil War.

Incredibly readable history. I couldn't put it down. Waugh doesn't offer a lot of new information but presents the stories of George Meade, Stonewall Jackson and a multitude of others in a different and thought provoking format. Not only was this the War Between the States but also the War Between Classmates and Colleagues. The author delves into some of the greatest military minds this country has ever produced as they first meet at West Point, then fight together in Mexico and on the western frontier, and finally on the Civil War battlefields at a time when being an officer also meant being a gentleman. The class of 1846 studied together, fought and died together, and then fought against each other and died. They prayed for victory and wept when they won. This book is a profound emotional experience.

A very interesting proof that, once again, truth is stranger than fiction. The coincidence of these fellow classmates coming together time and again, and under circumstances of great import for the future of the United States, is well-documented by the author. I did not give the book a fifth star because of the limited reach of the biographies. So much of the book was focused on Jackson that the quality of the writing seemed to fall off when discussing the personal lives of the others, with the exception of McClelland. So many other biographies are intertwined but are mentioned only in agonizingly sparse sentences.

A must read for civil war enthusiast, goes deep into the interaction and friendship of young men who would kill each other to defend their principles, they lived together, fought together through the Mexican and Indian wars becoming proficient officers and then the war between the states began, love, hatred, family separation ..historical people, political, military and private came from the class

of 1846 shaping this country ..

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