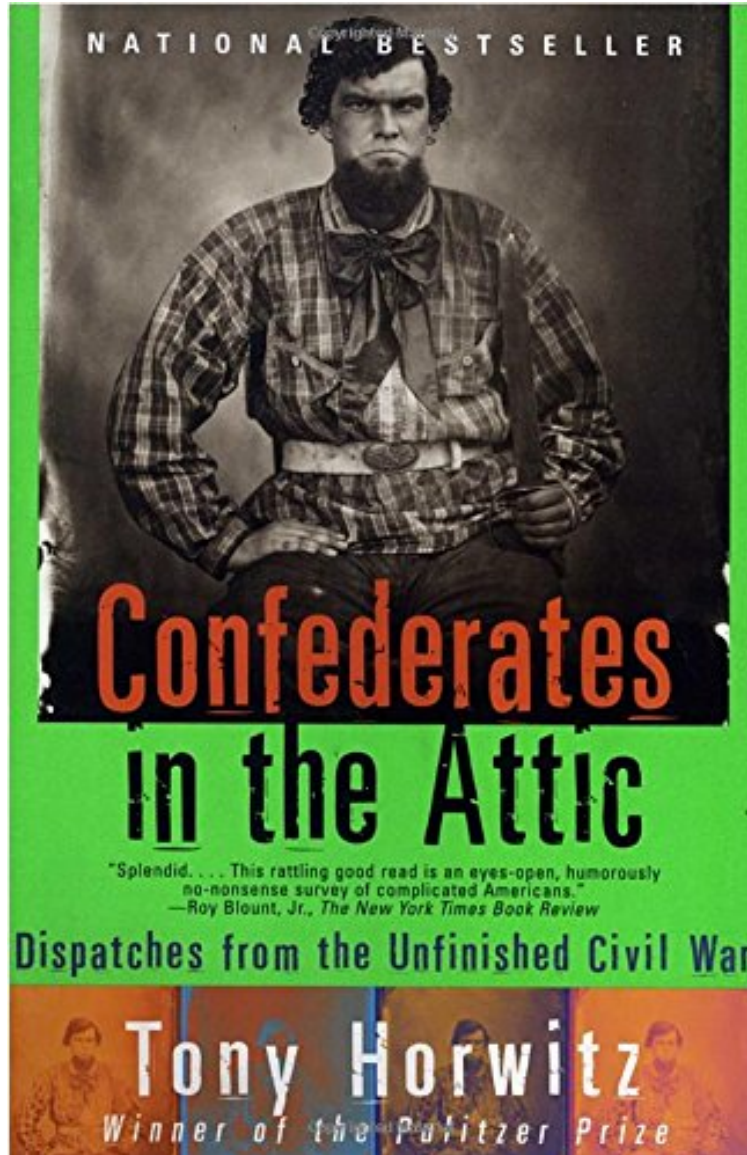


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## Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War

Tony Horwitz

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**Tony Horwitz : Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War:

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National Bestseller For all who remain intrigued by the legacy of the Civil War -- reenactors, battlefield visitors, Confederate descendants and other Southerners, history fans, students of current racial conflicts, and more -- this ten-state adventure is part travelogue, part social commentary and always good-humored. "Splendid." --Roy Blount, Jr., The New York Times Book Review When prize-winning war correspondent Tony Horwitz leaves the battlefields of Bosnia and the Middle East for a peaceful corner of the Blue Ridge Mountains, he thinks he's put war zones behind him. But awakened one morning by the crackle of musket fire, Horwitz starts filing front-line dispatches again this time from a war close to home, and to his own heart. Propelled by his boyhood passion for the Civil War, Horwitz embarks on a search for places and people still held in thrall by America's greatest conflict. The result is an adventure into the soul of the unvanquished South, where the ghosts of the Lost Cause are resurrected through ritual and remembrance. In Virginia, Horwitz joins a band of 'hardcore' reenactors who crash-diet to achieve the hollow-eyed look of starved Confederates; in Kentucky, he witnesses Klan rallies and calls for race war sparked by the killing of a white man who brandishes a rebel flag; at Andersonville, he finds that the prison's commander, executed as a war criminal, is now exalted as a martyr and hero; and in the book's climax, Horwitz takes a marathon trek from Antietam to Gettysburg to Appomattox in the company of Robert Lee Hodge, an eccentric pilgrim who dubs their odyssey the 'Civil Wargasm.' Written with Horwitz's signature blend of humor, history, and hard-nosed journalism, *Confederates in the Attic* brings alive old battlefields and new ones 'classrooms, courts, country bars' where the past and the present collide, often in explosive ways. Poignant and picaresque, haunting and hilarious, it speaks to anyone who has ever felt drawn to the mythic South and to the dark romance of the Civil War.

.com Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Tony Horwitz returned from years of traipsing through war zones as a foreign correspondent only to find that his childhood obsession with the Civil War had caught up with him. Near his house in Virginia, he happened to encounter people who reenact the Civil War--men who dress up in period costumes and live as Johnny Rebs and Billy Yanks. Intrigued, he wound up having some odd adventures with the "hardcores," the fellows who try to immerse themselves in the war, hoping to get what they lovingly term a "period rush." Horwitz spent two years reporting on why Americans are still so obsessed with the war, and the ways in which it resonates today. In the course of his work, he made a sobering side trip to cover a murder that was provoked by the display of the Confederate flag, and he spoke to a number of people seeking to honor their ancestors who fought for the Confederacy. Horwitz has a flair for odd details that spark insights, and *Confederates in the Attic* is a thoughtful and entertaining book that does much to explain America's continuing obsession with the Civil War. From Publishers Weekly The first book the author's Russian grandfather bought on emigrating to the U.S., though he neither read nor spoke English, was about the Civil War, a book he still pored over into his 90s. And when Horwitz was a child, his father read him tales of the Civil War instead of fairy tales and children's literature. The powerful hold of that conflict on a diverse assortment of Americans translates into more than 60,000 books on the subject, according to the author; for some Civil War buffs it is an obsession that generates a startling number of clubs whose members regularly reenact the battles, playing out once again the logistics, problems, hardships, leading characters, losses and victories. Horwitz (*Baghdad Without a Map*), on a year-long exploration of these groups throughout the South, participated in some of their activities and came to know the lives and personalities of several of their members. His vivid, personal account is a mesmerizing review of history from a novel and entertaining angle. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal YA-Fascination with the Civil War runs in Horwitz's family. His Russian immigrant great-grandfather continued to pore over books on the subject at age 101 and his father read to the author each night from a 10-volume photographic history. Years later, the author and his wife awoke one morning to the sounds of a mock Civil War battle being filmed in front of their Virginia home. Subsequent conversations with the participants rekindled this enthusiasm and launched Horwitz on a year-long quest to determine why the Civil War continues to enthrall so many Americans. He journeyed throughout the Old South, visiting battlefields and museums. He joined "super hardcores" such as Robert Lee Hodge, learning about "farbs," "spooning," and "period rushes." He conversed with the only living Confederate widow and witnessed both the "Catechism" taught to Children of Confederate Veterans and the attitudes of black teens in Selma, AL. While his encounters ran the gamut from amusing to infuriating to positively frightening, this Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter relates them all with clarity and honesty. Read *Confederates* simply for the engrossing, well-written account of contemporary American culture that it is or choose any chapter to spark or enliven class discussion. Don't miss this one. Dori DeSpain, Herndon Fortnightly Library,

