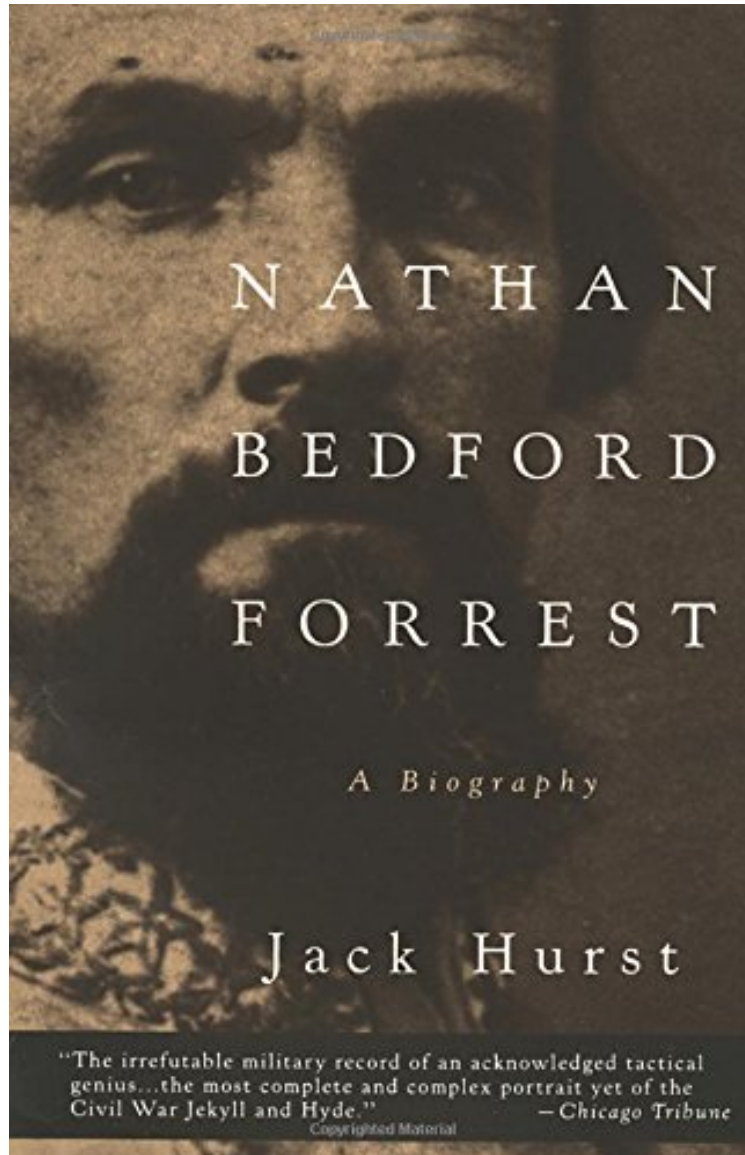


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Nathan Bedford Forrest: A Biography

Jack Hurst

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Jack Hurst : Nathan Bedford Forrest: A Biography before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nathan Bedford Forrest: A Biography:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Great read! By Rychefan Read that this is one of the best biographies of NBF. I will agree with many of the reviewers...EXCELLENT READ!!! If these stories are true then I want to travel back in time and meet this man! This book details the life of Nathan Bedford Forrest. Like most history, as time goes on we learn new things. I always enjoyed the tactics of NBF but to know "who he was" is depicted by Jack Hurst.

Hurst does an amazing job detailing everything found (at least known) about the General and the person. Hurst is able to put together the pieces without bias and tell a story of a man who most of history maybe got wrong, or at least parts. I am an amateur Civil War buff and reading this book not only educated me on NBF but also explained reasons why and how certain things occurred. A must-read for and Civil War OR history fan! 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. eye opening By D. LeBlanc True history is not always what we think it is. History paints a picture of N.B. Forrest as a radical racist who hated the black man and tried to oppress and exterminate him. True history tells the story of a man raised in poverty who went on to prosper before the war. He was a product of his time and environment. We tend to judge by the prism of modern times. This is an account that helps put his actions into perspective. The telling of his life after the war gives a truer account of who he really was. If you enjoy unbiased history you will enjoy this book. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. arrived fine. Interesting life of a man that with no ... By Geobough used, arrived fine. Interesting life of a man that with no formal education was the nemesis of Sherman and the union army in the regions where he operated. Enjoyed the first third about his early life, and the second third which discusses his wartime efforts. Last third was a bit slow, but did illustrate how that after the war ended he struggled as did many other generals on both the union and confederate sides. I would have liked to been along with him during his campaigns as he was a spectacular gambler using ruses and feints to his advantage on many occasions. I would not have liked to face him as an opponent. A worthwhile read.

Amid the aristocratic ranks of the Confederate cavalry, Nathan Bedford Forrest was untutored, all but unlettered, and regarded as no more than a guerrilla. His tactic was the headlong charge, mounted with such swiftness and ferocity that General Sherman called him a "devil" who should "be hunted down and killed if it costs 10,000 lives and bankrupts the treasury." And in a war in which officers prided themselves on their decorum, Forrest habitually issued surrender-or-die ultimatums to the enemy and often intimidated his own superiors. After being in command at the notorious Fort Pillow Massacre, he went on to haunt the South as the first grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. Now this epic figure is restored to human dimensions in an exemplary biography that puts both Forrest's genius and his savagery into the context of his time, chronicling his rise from frontiersman to slave trader, private to lieutenant general, Klansman to—eventually—New South businessman and racial moderate. Unflinching in its analysis and with extensive new research, Nathan Bedford Forrest is an invaluable and immensely readable addition to the literature of the Civil War.

.com Nathan Bedford Forrest was the only soldier to rise from the rank of private to general during the U.S. Civil War. At once "a soft-spoken gentleman of marked placidity and an overbearing bully of homicidal wrath," Forrest is best remembered for the combination of brilliant military leadership and flamboyant bravery that drove his Confederate cavalry troops from victory to victory on the battlefield. His subordinates feared him (he shot those who turned tail), as did his enemies (he rarely lost a fight). General Sherman once said that Forrest must be "hunted down and killed if it costs 10,000 lives and bankrupts the [national] treasury." Detractors point out that Forrest never has been exonerated from the Fort Pillow massacre, in which many Union soldiers, most of them black, were slaughtered after attempting to surrender. Following the war, he went on to found the Ku Klux Klan. Late in life, however, Forrest disavowed racial hatred and called for black political advancement. Author Jack Hurst has written the essential biography of a complex and compelling man who was arguably the Civil War's most remarkable soldier. (Movie trivia: Forrest Gump's mother named her son after this general.) From Library Journal Hurst presents a balanced, well-documented study of Nathan Bedford Forrest, whom many consider to be the most brilliant general of the Civil War. Hurst, a columnist for the Chicago Tribune, explores Forrest's entire career more thoroughly than other writers, devoting the first part of the book to Forrest's prewar occupation as a slave trader and the last to Forrest's involvements with the Ku Klux Klan and state politics as well as his attempts to regain the fortune he lost during the war. The author presents a detailed study of Forrest's wartime campaigns, from his brilliant exploits in battle to his controversies with his commanding officers and the debacle at Fort Pillow. With his guerrilla tactics Forrest revolutionized the way armies fought, but he was never fully accepted by his fellow generals because of his lack of military education. Overall, this is an outstanding study of one of the Civil War's more controversial generals. Essential. - W. Walter Wicker, Louisiana Tech Univ., Ruston Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s The Confederate cavalry commander, as conspicuous for his racism as for his military prowess, receives a biography that emphasizes his reprehensible exploits as slave trader and founding father of the Ku Klux Klan. Robert E. Lee supposedly called Forrest "the most extraordinary man the Civil War produced." But Chicago Tribune newsman Hurst offers the first recent portrait that pays as much attention to Forrest's distasteful activities before and after the war as to his undeniable martial genius. Better written than Brian Steel Wills's *A Battle from the Start* (1992), this new book spends less time on Forrest's extraordinary career as a soldier--he was the only man on either side who went from private to lieutenant general--and gives equal weight to his rise from raw frontier poverty to self-made wealth in land and slaves, his prewar civic activities as a Memphis alderman, and his postwar career as an icon of the unreconstructed South. But the good news about Hurst's work--his reluctance to substitute speculation for fact in the name of psychobiography--is also the

bad news: The reader is left wondering about the sources of Forrest's undeniable penchant for personal violence. What other general was even reported to have killed 30 enemy soldiers in hand-to-hand combat, in addition to shooting his own men caught running from battle? Hurst's hands-off attitude also results in an absence of strong conclusions about Forrest's conduct when the evidence is conflicting (did Forrest encourage or prevent the notorious massacre of Union, particularly black, soldiers at Fort Pillow? Hurst thinks he may have done both). Readers wanting military history should pass over both recent biographies for Edwin Bearss's *Forrest at Brice's Cross Roads* (1991). Hurst's is the best all-around recent life of Forrest, but we still await a truly insightful study of this complex man. Since Richard Ellmann is dead and Walter Jackson Bate is retired, how about it, Stephen Sears? -- Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.