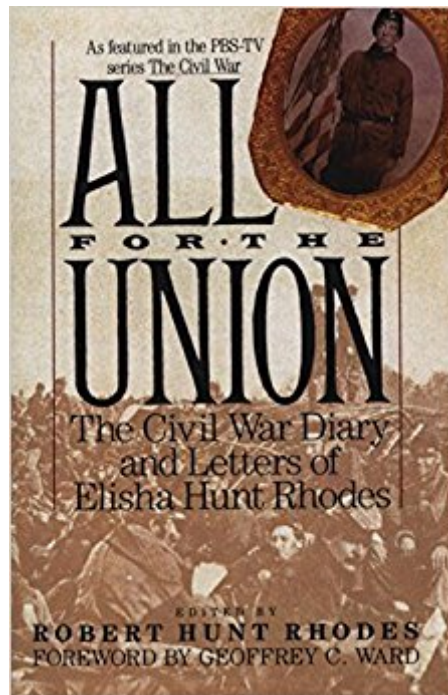




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# All For The Union: The Civil War Diary & Letters Of Elisha Hunt Rhodes



## Synopsis

All for the Union is the eloquent and moving diary of Elisha Hunt Rhodes, featured throughout Ken Burns' PBS documentary The Civil War. Rhodes' diary enlisted into the Union Army as a private in 1861 and left it four years later as a twenty-three-year-old colonel after fighting hard and honorably in battles from Bull Run to Appomattox. Anyone who heard these diaries excerpted in The Civil War will recognize his accounts of those campaigns, which remain outstanding for their clarity and detail. Most of all, Rhodes's words reveal the motivation of a common Yankee foot soldier, an otherwise ordinary young man who endured the rigors of combat and exhausting marches, short rations, fear, and homesickness for a salary of \$13 a month and the satisfaction of giving "all for the union."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Featured in the PBS-TV documentary The Civil War, Union soldier Elisha Hunt Rhodes's diary chronicles that bloody conflict from Bull Run to Appomattox. Photos. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"One of the best firsthand accounts I have read of campaigning and combat in the Civil War." -- James M. McPherson, author of Battle Cry of Freedom "One of the most remarkable diaries I have ever read. Elisha Hunt Rhodes saw action from Bull Run to Appomattox and somehow survived, and his diary came to represent, better than any other I found, the spirit of the Union soldier." -- Ken Burns, director and writer of The Civil War

I was a good friend of Jimmy Rhodes, a direct descendant of this Civil War hero from Rhode Island, in grade school. I am proud to note the author hailed from my native state of "Little Rhody." This particular primary source from the Civil War was utilized by Ken Burns' in his Civil War series with great success. Rhodes was a participant in many if the major battles ranging from Bull Run all the way through Appomattox. And like many others he quickly rose from the rank of lowly private to a Colonel by the time the War was over, and he was a proud member of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) veterans organization for many years following the war's conclusion. His writing voice is clear and descriptive. He is an unabashed patriot for the Union cause, as the title of this work suggests. He is unquestionably brave, and writes movingly about the horrors of combat, bringing the conflict to life in a brutal, vivid way. Rhodes, to repeat, is a hero, just as much as the glory-seeking Joshua Chamberlain from the 20th Maine, who after his exploits on Little Round Top at Gettysburg spent the remainder of his life touting his singular leadership and bravery (this is not to knock or question Chamberlain's bravery, he was wounded four or five times during the war, it's just that Chamberlain spent so much time bragging about himself once the war ended). Rhodes, on the other hand, is not nearly as obnoxious. The focus of Rhodes' writing is not on himself, but on the conflict around him, the men, the misery, the futility of war. And love of country resonates throughout the read. Highly recommended read.

"All for the Union" is an outstanding story of a young soldier at work. Elisha Hunt Rhodes enlisted in the Army of the Potomac and fought in almost every major eastern Civil War engagement. This book is a compilation of his private diary and papers written at the time of these events. The book is one of the most insightful and honest glimpses into the life, hardships, motivations, and opinions of a young soldier that the reader is ever likely to find. Rhodes writes with clarity and candor; if you want to know what it was like to be a Union Civil War soldier, there is perhaps no better book. The PBS Documentary "The Civil War" drew heavily on Rhodes' book. By the way, one of the things I really liked about the book is that it included some contemporary photographs of people that served with Rhodes in his regiment. Being able to match faces with his narrative was delightful. What amazing times Rhodes lived through! As soon as he enlisted, he was sent to the Capitol to help guard it. On the way his regiment was booed and reviled by pro-Rebel citizens in parts of Maryland. Rhodes lived through battlefield defeats and victories--the reader can fully appreciate the significance to a young soldier like Rhodes when the great Union victory at Gettysburg takes place. After all, there had been many Union defeats preceding it. Rhodes comes through as a good and

honest man, very intelligent, but in the beginning somewhat naive as twenty year olds are apt to be. This is an outstanding glimpse into the mind of one of the soldiers who helped to save and preserve the Union. After reading it, one can see that America was fortunate to possess thousands of Elisha Hunt Rhodes because that is what it took to win the war. As the South had many equally good men, equally motivated, the reader can understand why it was a hard and long war.

This was well written and detailed. I am still amazed how someone could start out a buck-private and be a Colonel three years later. Good story.

This is the best war diary I have read, and for many reasons. Elisha Rhodes has an excellent, straightforward writing style with very good grammatical structure. This makes the diary easy to follow. He was involved in virtually the entire war fought by the Army of the Potomac, and so it is pretty much a complete history in that sense. At the same time, this private who ultimately became a colonel (in his early 20s!) remains about as unaffected as a man could be. Nothing good or bad really changes his simple and honest view of the war's ultimate justice, and many times he refers to the sacrifices as being easily justified by the gain of saving the union and of freeing the slaves. He is religious but not judgmental, and never does he develop any real hatred of the enemy. He does his duty with a minimum of fuss. He enjoys his army life, but is quite happy to return to civilian life at the end. Maybe most interesting to me was his innocent myopia. He never really knew the "big picture" of how the overall war was being fought, or even what the importance of many of the battles he was involved in might have been. He was content to leave that to the generals, and especially to Grant, in whom he had a great deal of trust. This is a great weekend read for any civil war buff.

A fine journey of a dedicated and courageous soldier, often quoted in Ken Burns, The Civil War documentary.

A good look at the war from a man that started low in rank and advanced. His outlook on what was going on is truthful and enlightening. If you are a Civil War buff then you should read this especially if you are a union person. It is weird how everyday life gets involved with both sides as for the gentlemen agreements that exist during the slow times.

Well written and very informative.

I am an American history buff and this one gets you into the day to day life of a union soldier. I would also suggest the book Company Aytch. which is the confederate side of the day to day life. Diaries are usually very good as they tell it like it really was. I find myself getting into these and very difficult to put them down.

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