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Road To Appomattox



Synopsis

Originally published forty years ago, Bell Irvin Wiley's *The Road to Appomattox* marked one of the first efforts by a Civil War scholar to identify the internal causes of the South's defeat. Today this elegant little book remains one of the most penetrating, thought-provoking works on the subject. In the book's three chapters, Wiley treats three broad reasons for the failure of the Confederacy: weak political leadership, low morale among the populace, and four "internal influences" in the South. Those four shortcomings stemmed from traits apparently endemic to southerners in general, Wiley explains, and they included disharmony among and between political and military leaders; the government's failure to provide adequate public information systems; rigidity in outlook and course of action; and poor judgment, especially of the North's strength, the South's own strength, and Europe's dependence on cotton. Recent years have witnessed a number of significant studies dealing with Confederate defeat, particularly with the failings of Davis as war leader and with the complex issue of the South's dedication to the cause. Wiley was one of the first historians to raise these issues and discuss them trenchantly. Those familiar with *The Road to Appomattox* will cheer the reissue of this resonant work; first-time readers will see why.

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Bell Irvin Wiley was the author or editor of some two dozen books on the Civil War, including *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* and *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union*.

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