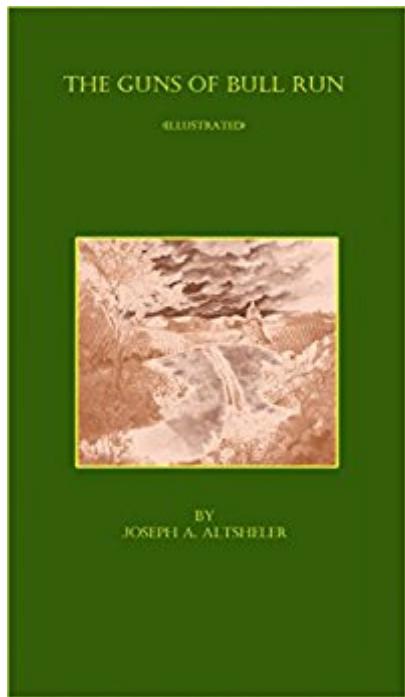


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The Guns Of Bull Run (Illustrated)



Synopsis

Harry heard them distinctly and he and his comrade lay more closely than ever in the bushes, because the horsemen, a numerous body, as the heavy tread indicated, were passing very near. The two lads presently saw them riding four abreast toward the campfire, and Harry surmised that they had been scouting in strong force toward the Southern front. They were large men, deep with tan and riding easily. Harry judged their number at two hundred, and the tail of the company would pass alarmingly near the bushes in which his comrade and he lay. "Don't you think we'd better creep back?" he whispered to St. Clair. "Some of them taking a short cut may ride right upon us." "Yes, it's time to make ourselves scarce." They turned back, going as rapidly as they dared, but that which Harry had feared came to pass. The rear files of the horsemen, evidently intending to go to the other side of the camp, rode through the low bushes. Four of them passed so near the boys that they caught in the moonlight a glimpse of the two stooping figures.

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Customer Reviews

When I was in third grade in 1959, I found Joseph Altsheler's Civil War novels in the children's section of the Santa Clara Public Library - and fell in love. Reading the whole series turned me into

a Civil War buff, leading me on to read great history like Bruce Catton's Army of the Potomac trilogy. So I was a little worried, when I found these books in ebook format, that they wouldn't hold up. I shouldn't have worried. Altsheler does a splendid job of giving a fair-and-balanced treatment of the Civil War, with engaging characters and gripping adventures. The vocabulary of children's books in the early 1900s was more elevated and challenging than today - but kids don't need as much hand-holding as adults insist on giving them, and I think the whole series would continue to work well to readers today. Back when I first read them, they were listed as fifth-grade-level books (which is one of the reasons that I read them in third grade, just to prove I could); I think that's still a good guide to parents, though maybe we should bump it up a year to sixth grade. A child ambitious enough to tackle longish chapter books, full of adventure and good sense, may well be enthralled by Altsheler's work.

This book, the first in a seven-volume Civil War series, sets the stage for a truly excellent description of this terrible conflict, virtually battle-by-battle. The war is described as seen through the eyes of two first cousins from the border state of Kentucky, where as was the case in several states, relatives having different views and interests often fought on opposite sides. In this scenario, Harry Kenton fought on the side of the Confederates, while his cousin Dick Mason fought with the Northern armies. The story covers the graphic differences that separated the two young men, and their state, and how those differences progressed into the first great battle of the war, the conflict at Bull Run, or Manassas. The true value of this volume, and the six volumes that follow, is how Joseph Altsheler uses the names, places, and facts associated with the Civil War, and uses alternating volumes to tell the tales of the planning, execution, and aftermath of the battles, through the eyes of the two young soldiers. He also used Harry's and Dick's personal experiences in non-battle situations to show how the war affected the entire extended family, and events in the non-military events that in many ways were far worse than the actual battles. Altsheler takes great care to describe the battles in sufficient detail to enable the readers of any age to understand the horrors of this horribly destructive conflict. But he takes care not to do so graphic a way as to render the series unfit for young readers. His approach of using the personal experiences of the fictional Harry and Dick, interwoven with historical facts, to render the series wholly readable for any age. But as the series progresses, it leaves the reader no doubt regarding the horrors of war. This is a truly excellent volume, and a superior series.

I've never read anything like this before because, frankly I was never interested. I acquired this for

homeschooling and decided to read it. I really enjoyed it. The writing is a little dated, yet enjoyable. The reasons for the Confederate support of the war are never mentioned, but in a way that is the story of Harry. He was swept up in the idea of going to battle and he was his father's son.

A good way to learn about the early days of the Civil War from the personal viewpoint of a fictional Southerner's viewpoint. The writing is simple, clear, and easy to follow, an unusual quality in today's reading. I look at it as a useful complement to my collection of Civil War non-fiction. It's not "The Killer Angels" but it does help understand what it would be like day to day to be involved in the start of this major war.

I read several civil war stories by an author named Altsheler when I was in high school. I remembered that I liked them and that they involved two cousins who fought on opposite sides, but I couldn't remember the names or the plots of the stories. Through the years I occasionally looked for them in libraries and bookstores, but without success. I was delighted to discover them online recently. I began ordering them for my Kindle. The first book, *The Guns of Bull Run*, is about Harry Kenton, the cousin who goes with the South. The author is able to plausibly place him in Charleston for the bombardment of Fort Sumter, in Montgomery for the inauguration of Jefferson Davis, in his home state for the attempt to take Kentucky out of the union, and in Virginia for the battle of Bull Run. I liked the stories long ago and I really like this one now. The Kindle version of the story is helpful because I can easily search for names and places to see the original context in which they appeared. This story would be good for any young American to read; adults will benefit from it as well.

Although basically written for a young audience (through teenhood), *"The Guns of Bull Run"* will captivate readers of almost any age who enjoy high adventure and good historical settings. Although it's basically a good book, the battle sequences are broad and general and don't really give one much of a feel or flavor of what it must have been like to fight in a Civil War battle. The reader should also be wary of some historical fudging by the author. He speaks of Wheeling being in West Virginia before that part of the state seceded from Virginia, and of a young Confederate scout viewing the massive dome of the Capitol in Washington in June 1861 -- before the dome was completed!! Still, a good read if you don't read too closely.

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