

Topic civil war

[War](#), [Civil War](#)



This is to analyze American Civil War based on James McPherson's *For Cause and Comrades* and Sam Watkins' *Company Aytch*, by knowing what were the most important factors that led men to join and stay with the armies. This paper will also consider the ways in which those reasons differed between North and South, and discuss why the resolve to fight largely collapsed in the Confederacy by 1865, while it continued to endure in the North.

2. Analysis and Discussion

2. 1 In general, soldier fought for cause and comrades

When people go to war they do not do it for nothing.

Normally nobody wants to go to war hence going to war must have their good reasons for violating their peace. It must be for reason for cause with the belief that reason of because if more important than allowing the other person of party to continue what he or she must be doing. Tolerance is therefore no longer an option hence resolution by bringing to war is the only best option to resolve the situation. What McPherson tried to paint from his work entitled *For Cause and Comrades* about the reason that men and women may have in going to war. The very title is speaking for reasons in getting to war.

In his work, James McPherson asks that question of the combatants on both sides of the American Civil War. With his subtitle asking the familiar question: " Why did men fight in the American Civil War? " , one could readily agree that author purposely finds real reason why people go the war. The thesis therefore of this his book is that men and women go to war for cause and for comrade. Allowing the more important word to absorb the less significant one would have reduce the title into War for Cause since doing for comrades is for cause as well.

He must have therefore his own reasons for choosing the title and there might be a need for special emphasis for comrades. Hence, McPherson must have been arguing that the main title states the two most important reasons: a cause moved each of them to enlist, but cohesiveness among comrades sustained them to the end. The author reported to have turned the pages of the diaries and letters of 647 Union and 429 Confederate soldiers, and he followed a simple method by categorizing the reasons and inserting four quotations from letters or diaries for each category.

It may be noted that about each soldier, McPherson provided basic information: whether the soldier fought for the Union or the Confederacy, and when and to whom he wrote. His comments on each set of quotations are thin. His typical entry, early in the first chapter: quoted " I am sick of war," as written by a Confederate officer to his wife in 1863, and of the severance from the dearest objects of life--hisfamily. 2. 3 Resulting answers based McPherson's research

McPherson's work was able to extract fourteen key answers as reasons for going to war and these include martial enthusiasm, comradeship, character, and discipline and leadership religion. Other reasons include defense of homeland and preservation of the union. While further reasons include: liberty, slavery, vengeance, duty, glory, and honor. McPherson found both rebels and Yankees to have given similar reasons, except, as expected , on the subject of slavery.

In doing his topical index, McPherson inserted other attitudes, motives, and types of experiences the soldiers recorded as the same soldiers followed their reasons for fighting which may be adventure, , desertion, cowardice,

the draft, skulking, coercion, desertion. The other reasons for fighting include pursuit of promotion, combat stress, rage, poor morale and homesickness. Using some principles from the work of John A. Lynn, McPherson was steered by three categories of motivation: First is initial motivation, followed by sustaining motivation and finally combat motivation.

It was found out the group cohesion and peer pressure were indeed powerful factors in combat motivation and were also connected to the multifaceted mixture of concepts of duty, honor, patriotism, ideology, community of peer pressure and manhood that prompted these soldiers enlist in the army, first place. McPherson then argued for a more relevant relationship among these three categories for Civil War soldiers compared with others' work. Major appeal of this book is the purely interesting, sometimes awesome, but always brief stories the soldiers tell to express their reasons for fighting.

2. 4 Is there basis to take Soldiers' Writings at Face Value? McPherson had asked questions whose answers appear from the diaries and letters of soldiers he reviewed. He is therefore, inclined to take what they say at face value. From an objective historian's point of view, it may be asked whether there is basis to take the writings at their face value. By making his title: *For Cause of Comrades*, McPherson appeared to have taken upon himself that what he got from the diaries and letters is really what the authors to communicate.

As a general rule a diary is something personal where if the issue is truthfulness of its contents, this researcher therefore would like to give credence the validity of those events happening with the official function of the knowledge as made known to the faculties. Although McPherson's <https://assignbuster.com/topic-civil-war/>

findings represented to have the many letters, he was just trying to extract the motives from those statements. It may be argued that people react differently to situations and reactions to situations could be numerous or the context from which statements were made do really vary hence they could be capable of different meanings.

Psychology is different field from law. Although in both field, motives may be used to predict behavior, the predicted behavior may really vary from the actual result. Trying to infer what was the motive by reading statements would have the characteristics of being speculative. If speculation could be away of learning for something that will come then by all means it should used not sparingly since the cost could be higher if futures are not studied well in the content of agreement. Motives as used by McPherson has catalogued are not the same as actual events as proved evidence.

Realities cannot be equated with simple extraction from testimonies found in letters or diaries. The same argument may hold even by a quantitative statistical analysis of all the letters ever written, combined with sociological, cultural, linguistic, and psychological, principles. It may therefore be safely deduced that motives standing by themselves and by their very nature, possess few of the necessary attributes of fact. One could accept the at the most what could be done in the diaries and letters is just the option of speculation. Fortunately but speculation as sometime done have become useful sometimes.

One could therefore speculate on the motive for fighting based on reading the from the testimony of soldiers on their motives for fighting, in terms of the level of consciousness motive as they say their own piece of their own

stories. In psychology many things are possible as it could be possible that while at certain times, the writer's conscious motive is to reassure, it is also possible that his unconscious motive is self-delusion. If the soldier asks his own self why he needs to join the draft, and thereby answered is religion, then such is a prerogative of any person.

Taking the words of soldiers at their face value must be given credence given this may even be sustained in the court of law. In law the express meanings of the words are given preference over the implied meaning. The probability therefore that contents of the diaries are true is more than not has a good chance of being upheld. 2. 5 Questions based on Answers McPherson's latest study on the motives of soldiers from their letters and diaries may be considered as an achievement itself as for further exploration and speculation.

Having perhaps taken a necessary first step, while none of the reasons he gives are new, he has assembled together many colorful testimonials of soldiers who have the chance to be part of the actual war. He just set to do the laying out of the soldier's own stated reason and he must be given credit for thoroughly doing in good order, and in a readable style. But to consider his approach, as if it has accomplished everything or in a context where he has already provided almost the final answers would be too simplistic.

To substitute what could otherwise be an inherently complex dynamic issue where other researchers may take several steps further a powerful lead to further research. Some of the questions that could be asked from his work include: Is the person talking or writing a ranking or non-ranking soldier. Is <https://assignbuster.com/topic-civil-war/>

the same soldier from the South or from the North. His work may not be fully compared with the work of Sam Watkins who was part of the Confederates. Having a person interpreting what other people are saying is different from having the person who actually did it to say.

To appreciate the concept, having a person to testify in court will carry more weight than a mere affidavit or a deposition taken from that person. Sam Watkins may therefore have the chance to write the most famous and most complex memoirs in "Co. Aytch" as one who was there could actually explain it more fully. The other question that could be asked included the place where the soldier is at the time he writes. This could be Winter quarters, his home, a hospital or even prison or on a ship. Another angle is the reason for writing which is the immediate reason. Does the writer write to reassure?

to reproach? to brag and to justify? Having perhaps answered to these questions would make separate research that would further really explain that is causing people to go to war. The fact that one writes in a letter, a diary, or a memoir where each is different from the other. To have a deeper truth is to ask the author to whom does he write? This will normally take to a mother, a grandmother, a father, a grandfather, a brother, a sister, a uncle, a aunt, a cousin. The following individuals people such a friend, a sweetheart, a politician, a teacher, a wife, a little child, or even fellow soldier.

What is logical is a different rhetoric is aimed at each person in this array of types. It is therefore logical to a writer to anticipate the response of his audience. If the audience is one of a variety of people or oneself, a relevant question is would include trying to persuade with such rhetoric, oneself or

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the other person, or both. Answers to these many questions would provide a complex setting for answers to the question McPherson poses. He doesn't pose these related questions; he does not, therefore, attempt to answer them.

He has acquitted himself well of an historian's task: to state a subject that deserves research, uncover what's in the record, and then give a report of the matter. But one should not expect an historian to deal with questions that can be answered most effectively by experts in other disciplines. Most questions about the Civil War are simplistically posed and simplistically answered, because each question is asked in isolation of all or most others, and asked from the perspective of a single discipline. The Civil War in most of its aspects defies single-perspective explanations.

Answers to McPherson's question are most useful after the most perspectives have been brought to bear. This is a task of interdisciplinary study: psychology, linguistic anthropology, statistical analysis, cultural geography, religion, political science, social science, literary criticism, military science, etc. No one discipline serves well enough. Such is the art of making further studies in the work of others. The relevancy of questions posed will have now to consider the possibilities for multidisciplinary approaches to address such complex questions.

The McPherson's book appendixes points the way to the larger, more complex job to be done. There is indeed the need for more direct interpretation of McPherson's quotations in light of such information is needed. The presence of geographical distribution of white Confederate and of white Union soldiers and their occupations, a provide a mutual

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misunderstanding. It could thus be asserted the Civil War, was a class war--a rich man's war, but a poor man's fight. What comes next is the unanswerable question that remained? What were the reasons of the poor and illiterate, the white, the black and the foreign born to fight in going to War.

3 Conclusions The most important factors that led men to join and stay with armies vary but according to McPherson's *For Cause and Comrades*, basically there must be a cause that is defined with the individual level. Fighting for comrades is a cause itself but other soldiers have expressed these reasons in other ways which McPherson was able to extract and categorized from the letters and diaries and soldiers involved in the war. McPherson has provided readers with the means to start on asking major questions whose answer may be applied to later years such as thereconstructionera.

The same answers may also illuminate one's understanding of the evolution of the American character from 1865 to the current chapter in our history. The answers may be used also to deal with the legacy of violence, racism, distrust of government, and economic instability, in understanding the lives that Americans have in understanding others who are enduring or surviving the crucible of Civil War around the globe. Understanding the why men and women of past fight may help the Americans to deal with those wars from within and from without more effectively.

Knowledge of inner reasons is good starting point of really doing a research that points the wisdom of learning from experience. The value if learning is therefore not to commit the same mistake. The book of Watkinson the other hand was written by a Confederate private who served in the Army of <https://assignbuster.com/topic-civil-war/>

Tennessee for nearly the entirety of the Civil War. Having been extracted from diaries of the author during the war, it carries more credence than that of McPherson since this memoir of civil war experiences from a private's perspective is priceless in terms of primary source material.

Watkins was found to be frank and impenitent, thus his book is possessed of a quality that gives the historian with unique material in terms of dealing with the sentiments that the non-elite confederates often held. Watkins's frankness is almost certainly the most important feature of this work. His hatred of Yankees and the same level as his hatred of some of the Confederate command proposes an individual who most likely defies current simple philosophy of Yankee/Rebel mentality. Watkins is often amusing, especially when reflecting upon feelings that we would now understand as being imbedded in "class struggle".

Of course, Watkins's frankness extends to his views of blacks and slaves, illuminating an individual who was both racist and yet not in the generally held conventional manner. This paper also considered the ways in which those reasons differed between North and South, and is making a resolution why the resolve to fight largely collapsed in the Confederacy by 1865, while it continued to endure in the North. The earlier collapse in the Confederacy by 1965 may be explained by the fact that the Conferacy often used slaves as naval crewmembers and soldiers, the African American soldiers were paid less than white soldiers.

And the African American soldiers were discriminated against and served in segregated units under the command of white officers. It may be given emphasis that the knowledge of knowing the motivation of soldiers would be

a good way to prevent a destruction of life that must come out of the war. It is said that not any one really win in war in perfect manner for whoever goes of war faces the risk of possible loss of life. Work Cited: McPherson , For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War (Paperback) Oxford University Press, USA, Aug 28, 1998 Watkins, and Inge, Company Aytch, Plume; Subsequent edition (November 1, 1999)