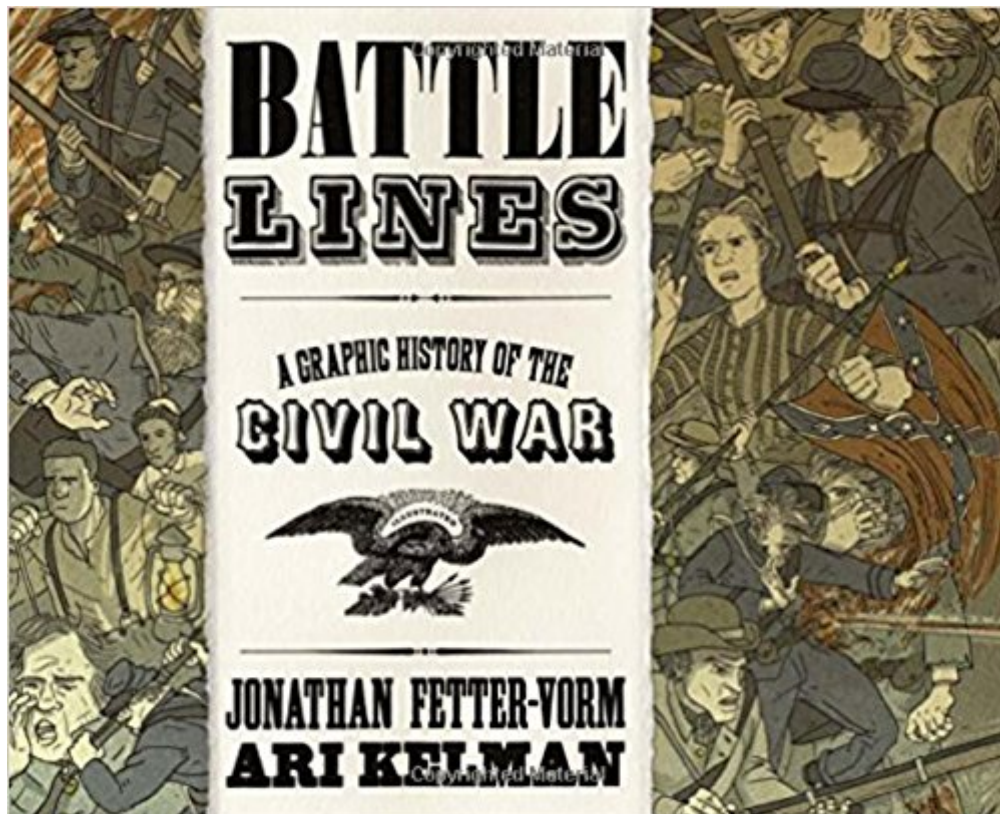




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Battle Lines: A Graphic History Of The Civil War



Synopsis

Featuring breathtaking panoramas and revelatory, unforgettable images, *Battle Lines* is an utterly original graphic history of the Civil War. A collaboration between the award-winning historian Ari Kelman and the acclaimed graphic novelist Jonathan Fetter-Vorm, *Battle Lines* showcases various objects from the conflict (a tattered American flag from Fort Sumter, a pair of opera glasses, a bullet, an inkwell, and more), along with a cast of soldiers, farmers, slaves, and well-known figures, to trace an ambitious narrative that extends from the early rumblings of secession to the dark years of Reconstruction. Employing a bold graphic form to illuminate the complex history of this period, Kelman and Fetter-Vorm take the reader from the barren farms of the home front all the way to the front lines of an infantry charge. A daring presentation of the war that nearly tore America apart, *Battle Lines* is a monumental achievement.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A graphic novel that tells the history of the Civil War through a series of vignettes highlighting the experiences of ordinary people. For context, Fetter-Vorm and Kelman provide a brief prose account of the war—the politics, battles, and troop movements that are part of the standard history—broken into short pieces that introduce each graphic tale. But the true heart of the book is its 15 short stories of life during wartime, which encompass a wide variety of average American citizens. Here, readers meet blacks and whites on both sides of the battle lines, widows, nurses, runaway slaves, and many more. Perhaps the most resonant of many moving stories is

"Ink," which shows the lives of soldiers in a prisoner-of-war camp and ends on a darkly ironic beat. The artwork has a rushed, sketchy feel, which matches the urgency of the stories, and washed-out blues and browns that comprise the bulk of the color give the book a strong sense of the period.

VERDICT An excellent graphic-style introduction to the history and the reality of the Civil War. — Mark Flowers, Rio Vista Library, CA

— "A remarkable achievement both as a work of history and visual literature, providing a broad overview of the complex circumstances that gave rise to the bloodiest conflict in American history, while simultaneously making those deaths meaningful by capturing fleeting moments amid the slaughter in panels so beautifully wrought as to beggar description." — Scott Eric Kaufman, Salon — "Academic history at its finest . . . a remarkable and beautiful book . . . Battle Lines should be required reading in graduate historiography and teaching courses. It is a tribute to Fetter-Vorm and Kelman that I want copies of the book displayed on my academic bookshelf, in my classroom, and on my coffee table." — David Schieffler, The Civil War Monitor — "[A] really beautiful, gorgeous graphic novel about the Civil War . . . Lovely, evocative and harrowing . . . I would recommend this book highly." — Gene Demby, NPR — "Pop Culture Happy Hour" podcast — "An amazing piece of work." — Virginia Prescott, New Hampshire Public Radio, "Word of Mouth" — "A graphic rendering of epic destruction and intimate despair, as the authors make Civil War scholarship come alive for readers young and old. The artistry of Fetter-Vorm powerfully captures the devastation that the war wreaked on the country, extending well past the armistice, while the historical context by Bancroft Prize winner Kelman provides the contextual depth . . . In this gripping graphic narrative, the complexities of history achieve clarity, and the depth of the tragedy has a visceral impact." — Kirkus Reviews (starred review) — "In 15 harrowing chapters, Fetter-Vorm and Ari Kelman's graphic take on the Civil War brings home the shattering costs of America's epochal conflict like almost no other single-volume history . . . Poignant and heartbreaking." — Publishers Weekly — "Battle Lines is not the first graphic novel about the Civil War, but it is one of the most ambitious. Rather than following a single wartime plot, Battle Lines spans from Congress's 1808 ban on the importation of slaves to the end of Reconstruction in 1876. Readers get concise and useful overviews of seminal moments in the war via newspaper pages that precede each chapter. But the authors smartly forgo comprehensiveness by grounding this bold historical spread in episodic chapters . . . This framework helps balance a useful breadth with striking depth." —

“Powerful and evocative . . . This book belongs in every school library in the country and on the shelf of anyone interested in good art, excellent storytelling, and careful scholarship.”

Matthew Helmke “A fascinating look at one of the biggest events in United States history . . . The gut-punches started and they simply didn’t end until the conclusion of the book . . . I’d highly recommend it.”

Janelle Asselin, Comics Alliance “Battle Lines brings us the Civil War as we’ve never seen it before. An inspired blend of images and words, this fresh, vivid history is the perfect primer for students and devotees of America’s greatest conflict.”

Tony Horwitz, author of *Confederates in the Attic* and *Midnight Rising* “Battle Lines is the best film about the Civil War that has never been made. It is a penetrating account of the war’s deepest dramas, told in the fewest words imaginable. It is history as poetry.”

Stephen Kantrowitz, Professor of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and author of *More Than Freedom* “Featuring inspired storytelling and haunting images, Battle Lines is the best graphic novel ever produced about the Civil War.”

Josh Neufeld, author of *A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge* “Battle Lines is thoughtful, sophisticated, and beautifully wrought. Jonathan Fetter-Vorm and Ari Kelman offer further proof that the graphic novel is a powerful medium for exploring the nuances of history.”

Gene Luen Yang, author of *American Born Chinese*, finalist for the National Book Award

This book is simply superb! This is storytelling at its finest. The illustrations pull you deeper into the personal history of historic events, and they manage to fool your senses into believing you might actually be there. My eyes lingered on them, and I found myself flipping back to previous panels to review them for subtleties I missed the first time. I teach middle school history, and I’ve been yearning for a book that would dare to cover the scope and breadth of the American Civil War. The authors have written a page turning graphic novel that will appeal to all ages, and will grip even those with a brief knowledge of U.S. history. This should be on the reading list of every American history class, and in the library of every school in the country. The history is first rate.

A beautiful and affecting book. The civil war is, at least to me, deeply familiar, but this book focuses on the personal, and conveys with a painful immediacy the ways that the horror of this conflict infiltrated and transformed the day-to-day existence of our not-so-distant ancestors. I was struck as I have never been before by the degree to which the appalling, unprecedented violence of the conflict was "just around the corner" for familiar and modern-seeming Americans.

Love this book! Super entertaining. It doesn't provide a detailed account of the events of the American Civil War, but it gives you the important parts of the war and illustrates them. Really great to read. I needed it for a class and I could have borrowed it from a friend, but I found it here for a great price and I don't regret buying it.

I have started using this in my US history survey class (along with our traditional textbook and primary sources) and my students LOVE it. Although it's not perfect, it's a great complement to other sources and offers a terrific way to talk about alternate ways to interpret history. In addition, my 11 and 14 year old sons have also read it and enjoyed it, so it's accessible for a broad range of ages. And, as my students note in their final papers, it's fun to read, and how often do gen ed students say that at the end of the semester?

Awesome Civil War graphic novel. Kept my son interested. He prefers the Narhan Hale series of history graphic novels because there's a lot of humor but he still liked this one.

Used this in a US History class in college. It was the most useful book we were assigned. You got the sense of the war being in a different world from our own and involving real people instead of just "big names." I didn't sell it back because it was that good!

Battle Lines is one of the best books I've read, in any genre, in a long time. It's beautiful, evocative, and sharply written. The stories it tells are layered and complex, but presented in an engaging way. You can read it in one sitting or enjoy the nuances and details of the images and words more slowly. Either way, it's well worth it.

An extraordinary history. The graphic format works very well, but this is a real history book, not just a piece of art or entertainment. The two media (text and illustration) work beautifully together to create a work much more visceral and compelling than either medium alone.

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