



Virginia at War, 1861

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Although nine of the former British colonies joined the United States before Virginia, the fate of the new republic depended heavily on the Commonwealth. With four of the first five American presidents, and many other founding fathers and framers of the Constitution, calling Virginia their home, the roots of American democracy are firmly planted within the borders of the Old Dominion. Similarly, several Southern states preceded Virginia in seceding from the Union, but until Virginia joined them in April 1861, the Confederacy lacked cohesion. Richmond was immediately named the capital of the fledgling nation, and by the end of spring, Virginia had become the primary political and military theater in which the grand tragedy of the Civil War was enacted. *Virginia at War, 1861*, edited by acclaimed historians William C. Davis and James I. Robertson Jr., vividly portrays the process of secession, the early phases of conflict, and the struggles of Virginians to weather the brutal storms of war. *Virginia at War, 1861* is the first in a series of volumes on each of Virginia's five years as a Confederate state. Essays by eight noted Civil War scholars provide a three-dimensional view of Virginians' experiences during the first year of the War Between the States. In addition to recounting the remarkable military events taking place in Virginia in 1861, this collection examines a civilian population braced for war but divided on crucial questions, an economy pressed to cope with the demands of combat, and a culture that strained to reconcile its proud heritage with its uncertain future. In 1861, the outcome of the Civil War was far from determined, but for Virginians there was little doubt that the war experience would alter nearly everything they had known before the outbreak of hostilities. In exacting detail, *Virginia at War, 1861* examines the earliest challenges of the Civil War, the changes war wrought, and the ways in which Virginians withstood and adapted to this profound, irrevocable upheaval.

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