



Medical Histories of Confederate Generals

Jack D. Welsh M.D.

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From official records, personal letters, and postwar memoirs, Jack D. Welsh, M.D., has compiled the medical histories of 425 Confederate generals. The generals' early military experience, at West Point and in Florida, Mexico, or on the western frontier, meant that hundreds of them were exposed to and immunized against the diseases that killed so many soldiers in the Civil War, while many also were wounded or lost limbs. In addition, several survived street fights, duels, and shooting accidents—all before the war. Throughout the Civil War, most officers fought in spite of illness or wounds and spent little time in hospitals. Welsh mentions this fact not to point out bravery, but rather to illustrate the prevailing attitudes toward disease and injuries. Ninety-six Confederate generals died during the war; half of those who survived lived to age 70 or older. Welsh does not attempt to analyze the effects of an individual's medical problems on a battle or the war, but whenever possible provides information about factors that may have contributed to the wound, injury, or illness, and the outcome. He also details the immediate care, logistics of transportation, timing of operations, and the remedies used or recommended by the physicians, when such data is available. This insight into the lives of men who often paid a high price for the Confederacy will prove fascinating for physicians, historians of medicine, and students of the Civil War.

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