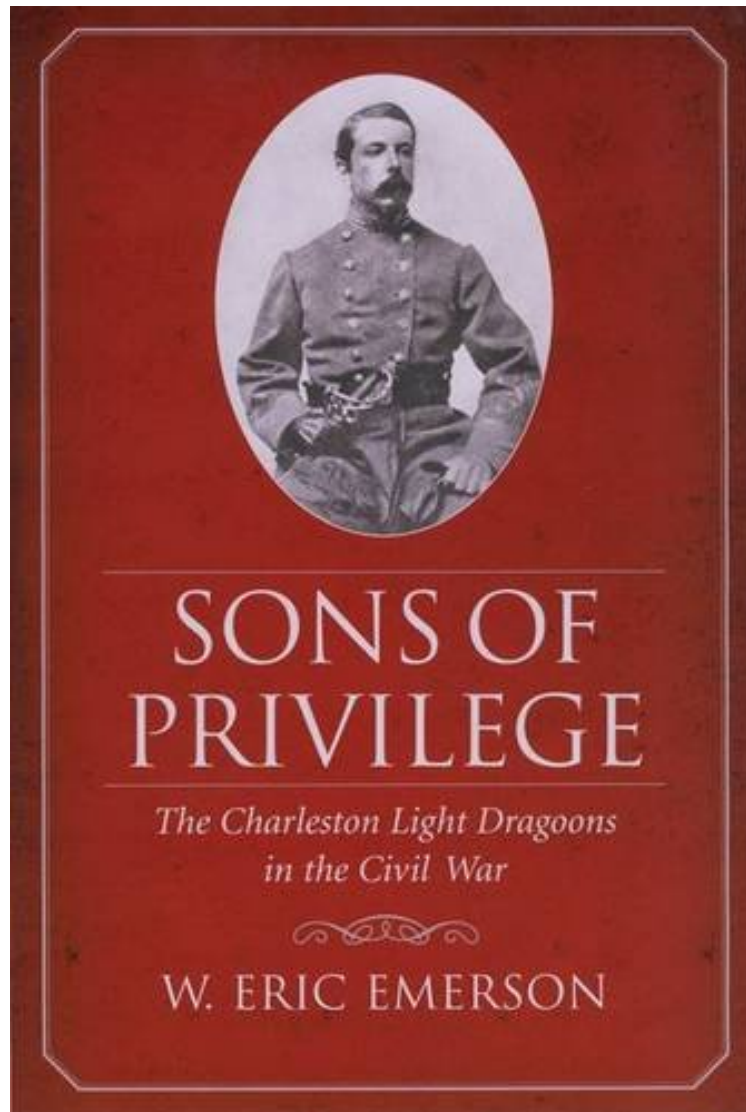


[Mobile ebook] Sons of Privilege: The Charleston Light Dragoons in the Civil War (Civil War Sesquicentennial Edition) (Civil War Sesquicentennial Edition (University of South Carolina Press))

Sons of Privilege: The Charleston Light Dragoons in the Civil War (Civil War Sesquicentennial Edition) (Civil War Sesquicentennial Edition (University of South Carolina Press))

W. Eric Emerson

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W. Eric Emerson : Sons of Privilege: The Charleston Light Dragoons in the Civil War (Civil War Sesquicentennial Edition) (Civil War Sesquicentennial Edition (University of South Carolina Press)) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sons of Privilege: The Charleston Light Dragoons in the Civil War (Civil War Sesquicentennial Edition) (Civil War Sesquicentennial Edition

(University of South Carolina Press)):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. "Sons Of Privilege" is a compelling read By Andrew J. Guest When I first learned of Sons of Privilege: The Charleston Light Dragoons in the Civil War, it sounded mildly interesting but I didn't buy it. A few months later, I bought a copy and found myself glued to it until finished. It's an interesting, compelling story that is presented fairly and in a straightforward manner, with neither sarcasm nor glorification of the Charleston Light Dragoons, who enjoyed a privileged existence within the Confederate Army for most of the war. It's very well done. 0 of 4 people found the following review helpful. okay book By nom de plumetells the story of some pampered sons of the south who wanted to play soldier and that is all that they did - play 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Military and Social Elite By William J. Long Eric Emerson has taken an in-depth look at a fascinating Confederate unit. The Charleston Light Dragoons were pedigreed men on thoroughbred horses, drawn from Charleston's aristocracy and assigned to a low-intensity theater on the South Carolina coast for most of the war - until thrown into the meatgrinder in northern Virginia in 1864. Emerson has done a tremendous amount of research and puts it to excellent use giving the reader a fine sense of the world these men lived in. It should be stressed that the CLD's were an anomalous unit; their ranks were so exclusive that men resigned officers' commissions in other units to serve as ordinary enlisted Dragoons, while others served briefly in the Dragoons as a stepping-stone to prestige in other units - a resume-builder, as it were. Emerson demonstrates very well the "privileged" status the title refers to, in the men's flouting of military discipline and natural assumption of social superiority even over fellow Confederate cavalry. He does not, however, denigrate the noblesse-oblige which was the flip side of that privilege, and faithfully chronicles the valiant service the "Drags" would put in when faced with the horrors of late-war campaigns. It would be hard to assert the War was not a "Rich Man's Fight" as well, after any honest look at their battlefield performance and the "butcher's bill" they paid. If this book has a flaw - and you do have to hunt to find one - it is perhaps in an emphasis on "class" which occasionally protests a bit too much. The lax discipline of the "Drags" as a prewar militia unit which behaves more like a college fraternity, is a case in point; while the anecdotes are amusing and instructive, they hardly prove that OTHER militia units drawn from lower classes took their peacetime drills much more seriously. The Dragoons were doubtless drinking more expensive beverages, but they were hardly unique in letting drills degenerate into revelry. However, Emerson DOES certainly demonstrate the unique status of the Charleston Light Dragoons in other ways, and has done a great service in chronicling the service and adding depth to the interpretation of a socially AND militarily fascinating Confederate unit.

Sons of Privilege traces the wartime experiences of a unique Confederate cavalry unit drawn together from South Carolina's most prestigious families of planters, merchants, and politicians. Examining the military exploits of the Charleston Light Dragoons, W. Eric Emerson finds that the elite status of its membership dictated the terms of the dragoons' service. For much of the war, the dragoons were stationed close to home and faced little immediate danger. As the South's resources waned, however, such deference faded, and the dragoons were thrust into the bloody combat of Virginia. Recounting the unit's 1864 baptism by fire at the Battle of Haw's Shop, Emerson suggests that the dragoons' unrealistic expectations about their military prowess led the men to fight with more bravery than discretion. Thus the unit suffered heavy losses, and by 1865 only a handful survived. Emerson tracks the return of the survivors to ruined homes and businesses, the struggle to rebuild lost fortunes, and the resurrection of exclusive social organizations that would separate them from Charleston's more prosperous newcomers. He chronicles efforts of veterans to reestablish the unit and evaluates the influence of writings by survivors on the postwar veneration of the dragoons.

"A valuable addition to the Civil War bookshelf. More than just a unit study, Sons of Privilege goes beyond traditional military history to examine politics, social relations, and economics. Emerson writes well and his lively prose provides the reader with a glimpse of the exclusive realm of the Charleston Light Dragoons." --Civil War History "W. Eric Emerson's well-paced narrative shows how the Civil War experiences of the Charleston Light Dragoons mirrored those of the South Carolina lowcountry's elite as a whole. Sheltered duty and good living during the war's early years gave way to devastating casualties that almost destroyed the unit after it went to the front in Virginia in 1864, even as the wealth of Carolina's tidewater aristocracy was also being wiped out by the war." --James M. McPherson, author of *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* "Emerson draws on an impressive array of sources to offer this fascinating analytical portrait of an unusual Confederate military unit. Readers interested in the long-standing debate about whether the conflict was a rich man's war and a poor man's fight will find *Sons of Privilege* especially useful, but all students of the Confederacy will turn to its examination of an elite group of soldiers with profit." --Gary W. Gallagher, author of *The Confederate War From the Inside Flap* A fascinating look at a "company of gentlemen" in America's bloodiest war About the Author W. Eric Emerson is the director of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History in Columbia. The coeditor of *Faith, Valor, and Devotion: The Civil War Letters of William Porcher DuBose*,

Emerson has also served as director of the Charleston Library Society and the South Carolina Historical Society.