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Fathers, Sons, And Brothers



Synopsis

On the 27th of July 1862, Nathan marries Sarah, his sweetheart of two years. The following day, he musters in as orderly sergeant of the Masardis Militia and helps raise volunteers for the Maine Volunteer Infantry, in answer to President Lincoln's call for 300,000 more volunteers to bolster the Union efforts to put down the rebellion that has torn this Nation in two for over a year. Nathan, George, and seventy other men from Aroostook County say their sad goodbyes and leave for Bangor in early August to join thousands of other Maine men that have answered the call to duty. These citizen soldiers and 900 others, additional recruits, would become The Twentieth Maine Regiment. Disease, Antietam, the cold, fiery hell at Fredericksburg, more disease, the daunting day at Gettysburg; follow Nathan and Company H through it all.

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Customer Reviews

Fathers, Sons, and Brothers: Book One By James "Gus" Filigar ISBN 1-59129-908-X Publish America 2002 Reviewed by Tom Feller In 1973, Michael Shaara won the Pulitzer Prize for his novel The Killer Angels, which was made into the movie Gettysburg 20 years later. His son Jeff has written prequels and sequels to his father's famous novel. One of the main characters is Joshua Chamberlain, commander of the 20th Maine Infantry Regiment. James "Gus" Filigar writes about another member of that regiment, a non-commissioned officer named Nathan Clark. Like Shaara, Filigar writes about people who really lived, so I guess we can describe it as a "non-fiction novel", a term popularized by Truman Capote. It refers to using the techniques of the novelist to tell a true story. Filigar uses Clark's diary and pension records as well as histories of the regiment and biographies of Chamberlain, who appears in the story from time to time. Born in Ireland, Clark and his family

immigrated to the United States in 1848. They eventually settled in Levant, Maine. In 1859, Clark bought his own land and became a farmer in Mesardis, Maine. Sarah Cowperthwait was already working in her uncle's general store there. They were married just before Clark joined the army in 1862. Two of his brothers, Sidney and Prentiss, had joined a cavalry regiment the previous year, and Benjamin, another brother who had been a student of Chamberlain's at Bowdoin College, joined another infantry regiment when he did. His cousin Samuel Witherspoon, whose branch of the family had immigrated to Alabama, was in the Confederate army. At one point in the book they meet up. In July of that year, President Lincoln had called for 300,000 volunteers to join the army for three years to put down the rebellion in the southern states. Clark, his friend George Buck, and 70 other men from Mesardis answered the call, and they became part the 20th Maine Infantry Regiment. With inadequate training, they participated in the Battle of Antietam. Later they fought in the battles of Fredericksburg and Gettysburg. Clark is a corporal during most of the first year of his service. This book ends with Clark and others witnessing the execution of deserters, including a former sergeant in his company, by firing squad. I did not find any historical errors, although I am by no means an expert on the American Civil War. However, I did wonder about the religion of Clark's family, which Filigar fails to mention. They were members of Ireland's tenant farming class, which usually meant Catholic. Nathan and Sarah were married in a protestant service, but no one makes a comment so presumably Nathan was already a protestant. Then, as now, this is a serious issue in Ireland, and I wish Filigar had gone into it, especially since he had been so detailed about every other aspect of their lives. It is this attention to detail that brings me to recommend this novel. It includes everything from the type of socks the soldiers wore to the quality, or lack of it, of the food the army served them. Yet Filigar does not get bogged down with such details or bore the reader with too much information, as many writers do. They never get in the way of the story, which is a fascinating one. Rating: 5

I had the pleasure of reading an excerpt of this novel during the pre-publication stage and I am delighted that I've been given the opportunity to share with you my feelings about the book. First of all, the vibrant cover of the Union Soldier in front of the Stars and Stripes made this book jump off of the shelves. To look at the cover is to be invited inside to journey back into time. *Fathers, Sons and Brothers* is a story told from the vantage point of Nathan S. Clark. Clark is an Irish immigrant and patriot that left home soon after his marriage to the woman that he loves to fight for the country in the Civil War. He is a member of the Twentieth Main Infantry Regiment and he is seen as a leader by his superiors from the beginning. He feels that the war is just, even though he does not savor the

fact that he will be taking lives, he is determined to carry out his orders. He and his regiment battle the weather, disease and fear as they march towards their objective. His service is dotted with several skirmishes and a first hand view of the horrors of war. However, Gus Filegar will show you the human side of this struggle. With the violence that is a part of any war, he will also show you compassion and mercy for those who take up arms on opposite sides of the battlefield. The writing is extremely descriptive and the vivid details will take you as close to the battle as you would like to go. You see the men charge into battle, you see them fall on the battlefield and you see the medics struggle to piece together the mutilated parts to make the soldiers whole again. You see the sacrifice and feel the pain. You enjoy the small comforts that the men enjoy - such as hot coffee and stale bread. You travel into a world where soldiers die on the battlefield due to the munitions or the biting cold. As you read this you realize that these things actually happened. A country united once to escape from the watchful eye of Great Britain now drawing a line between the North and South and battling for independence from the other's ideals and beliefs. This book has it all and it will pique your curiosity and perhaps you will go on a fact-finding mission to learn more. While on that mission you learn of the plight that every soldier faces as they lay down their lives for a cause and develop a new sense of respect for this "career". Read this book and digest every word, just as I have, and you will appreciate the level of craftsmanship that this book contains. It is well worth one or two evenings to travel with the Civil War historian Gus Filegar and perhaps understand why he had to write this book. It wasn't just for him; it was for all of us. (...)

This book accurately and vividly details the life of the common soldier in the Union army during the Civil War. You follow along with Nathan Clark as he lives through the travails of Antietam, Fredricksburg, and Gettysburg. The story is rich with the description of armies on the march, great battles, and the longing for loved ones. Mr. Filegar, aside from being a promising new author, has also been deeply involved in Civil War re-enactments for years, and this is obvious from his writing. Nowhere, have I seen a better, more thorough description of camp life. He has captured the essence of the everyday life of the common foot soldier and set it before the reader to delve into. The humor, the tragedy, the frustration, the hardships, and even the victories overcome you with an emotional impact that leaves you wanting more. The subtitle of this work is "Book One". Let us hope that the subsequent works are not long in coming.

From Ron and Pat at The 20th Maine Store; Freeport Maine "A well-balanced combination of action - romance and historical accuracy make this novel about Company H of the 20th Maine exciting

material. It is based on the Civil War diary and experiences of Nathan S. Clark."

As a fellow historian and reenactor (46th PA Vol. Inf.), I thoroughly enjoyed Gus' book. I highly recommend it to anyone with an interest in history, specifically the American Civil War.

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