



Bridge Building In Wartime: Colonel Wesley Brainerds Memoir (Voices of the Civil War)

Ed Mallets

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This book, containing the detailed recollections of a Union combat engineer, will add immeasurably to our understanding of the logistical complexities of the Civil War campaigns and introduce an important new point of view amid the array of available Civil War diaries and memoirs. Wesley Brainerd was a twenty-eight-year-old businessman living in Rome, New York, when the war erupted in 1861. Enlisting after the first Battle of Bull Run and eventually achieving the rank of colonel, he served as an officer in both regiments of the Volunteer Engineer Brigade of the Army of the Potomac, a unit that distinguished itself throughout the war by building bridges, fortifications, batteries, roads, and temporary shelters. After the war, Brainerd drew on his diaries to recount his experiences in a memoir originally written for his son. As appealing in style as it is informative, Brainerd's account is told with a strong sense of the war's importance and of the part his unit played in the larger scheme of things. Modest and truthful, Brainerd sought to relate the story of his service in a meaningful and straightforward way, ever mindful of the lessons he had learned and that he wanted to impart to his son. Now available with carefully researched annotations and an introduction, this unique document will fill an important gap in the literature of the Civil War.

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