

## THE LAST LAIRD of SAPELO

By T. M. Brown

TMBrownAuthor.com

ISBN: 979-8888240427

ASIN: BoC5K8Y66Y

Koehler Books

Rating: 5/5; Highly Recommended!



*The Last Laird of Sapelo*, by T. M. Brown, is the story of one man's tragic death in pursuit of justice, as his way of life, too, dies in the flames of a war that he had tried his damndest to avert.

Sapelo is one of the barrier islands off the coast of Georgia. As this story opens, the War Between the States has just begun, and the Confederacy plans to use those islands as a bulwark against the Union gunboats that assuredly will extend their blockade of Savannah all the way down the coast. If the blockade succeeds, then the South's cotton, the fuel of its economic engine, will languish in Southern warehouses instead of sailing to buyers and allies across the sea.

Colonel Randolph Spalding, the last laird of the title, committed to the war despite arguing vehemently against it. Now an officer in charge of building a garrison on his own land, he's caught between military duty, and personal responsibility.

As the Laird of Sapelo, Spalding is duty-bound to protect his family and his property, including more than three hundred enslaved people.

The Spaldings consider themselves 'enlightened' slaveholders, giving their slaves more time and 'freedom' to work for themselves and have leisure, as well as sturdy houses and decent food. Their neighbors call them fools. The Confederate soldiers see the slaves as their rightful prey.

His military duty is to keep those soldiers in line. His personal duty is to keep his people safe. When those lines get crossed, he moves Heaven and Earth to make it right. Even if those lengths will cost him his own life.

This fictionalized biography illuminates a little-known, but pivotal, part of the U.S. Civil War: the defense of the Confederate coastline as it happened on the ground, in tiny communities.

Spalding draws readers into his own story, telling it through letters and diary entries over the first year of that terrible war. His first-person perspective on those early

months, at a point when hopes were high but organization was lacking, foretells the inevitable cost of this fight. The Civil War will exact a bloody cost no matter who triumphs on the battlefield.

Despite the deplorable cause for which he fights, Spalding's internal conflicts, filled with intense emotion, make him a riveting character. He faces the scant triumphs and ultimate tragedies of a man who fights to preserve his world, only for it to disintegrate in his grasp.

*The Last Laird of Sapelo* will fascinate readers interested in the unsung facets of the U.S. Civil War, those looking for a nuanced approach to the origins of the conflict, and anyone interested in the details of military organization – or lack thereof – in 19th-century warfare.