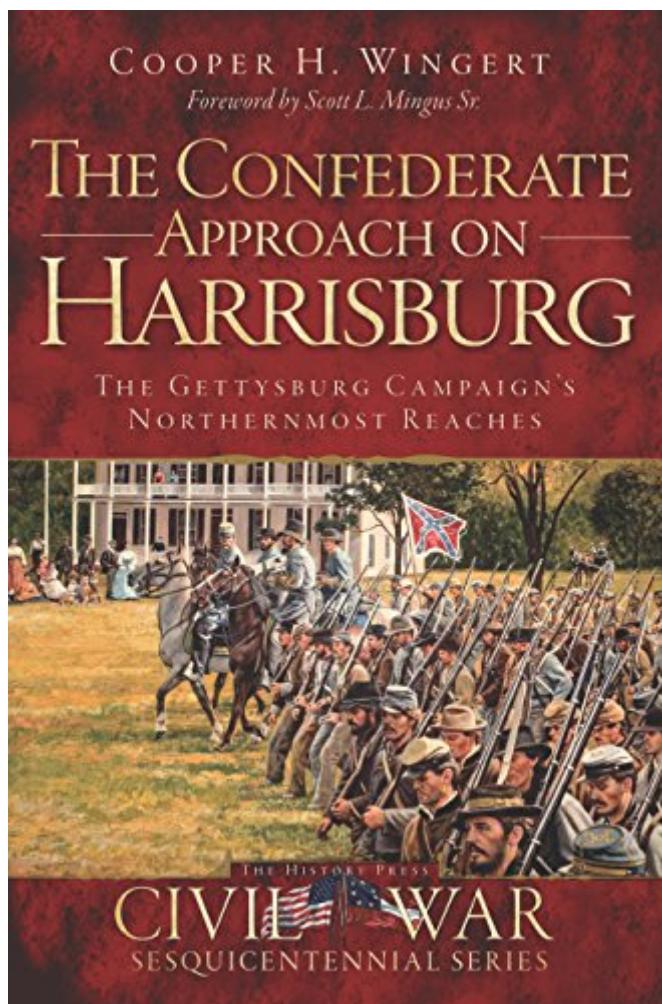


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Confederate Approach On Harrisburg, The: The Gettysburg Campaign's Northernmost Reaches (Civil War Series)



Synopsis

In June 1863, Harrisburg braced for an invasion. The Confederate troops of Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell steadily moved toward the Pennsylvania capital. Capturing Carlisle en route, Ewell sent forth a brigade of cavalry under Brigadier General Albert Gallatin Jenkins. After occupying Mechanicsburg for two days, Jenkins's troops skirmished with Union militia near Harrisburg. Jenkins then reported back to Ewell that Harrisburg was vulnerable. Ewell, however, received orders from army commander Lee to concentrate southward--toward Gettysburg--immediately. Left in front of Harrisburg, Jenkins had to fight his way out at the Battle of Sporting Hill. The following day, Jeb Stuart's Confederate cavalry made its way to Carlisle and began the infamous shelling of its Union defenders and civilian population. Running out of ammunition and finally making contact with Lee, Stuart also retired south toward Gettysburg. Author Cooper H. Wingert traces the Confederates to the gates of Harrisburg in these northernmost actions of the Gettysburg Campaign.

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Customer Reviews

I have lived much of my life in the area and have family connections with Gettysburg. That said, I had only hazy knowledge of the Harrisburg part of the campaign. This book is probably about all that we will get until the 200th anniversary roles around, but fortunately, it is excellent in its coverage of the Union side of the operation. The Confederate side is covered fairly well, but there is apparently a shortage of documentation. I would have liked the maps to be printed larger; when you have to squint to read a unit label, it tends to distract from an overall appreciation of the situation covered. Having traveled up and down I-81 numerous times, I have some idea of the terrain and how the campaign fit together, but there is no map coverage south of Shippensburg. It would have been nice to have had an introductory map of the whole area south to Hagerstown with indications of the areas covered by the smaller maps. Besides filling in the coverage of the Civil War, readers should note the shortcomings of the militia system on display. Despite the relatively simple requirements of the period, the PA and NY militias did not shine. Although quality varied, in general units panicked easily, often in the face of inferior numbers. After several encounters, they tended to settle down, but it is clear that the senior officers with experience could not use the militia like regular troops until they had those encounters. Proponents of the modern militia movement would do well to give sober consideration to this experience.

I enjoyed this book, because I learned something new about the battle and indeed the Civil War itself. I am well read on the battle of Gettysburg and was aware of General Ewell's northernmost probe towards Harrisburg, but I wasn't aware of how close it had come to success before he was recalled to concentrate the Confederate forces for the larger battle ahead. If General Mead's advance towards Gettysburg had been a day or two late, it is likely Harrisburg would have been taken by the Confederates, with profound political effects. It was instructive to me to see how poorly prepared and led the local militias were, though they labored mightily to perfect their defenses. Also, it was interesting to note the impact of poor intelligence and rumors on the course of the confrontations.

Wingert, like Scott Mingus, has a knack for burrowing into a relatively small subject, operations on the edge of the battle of Gettysburg, and put them in a tactical and operational context. One should remember that the battle at Gettysburg was in part the result of not capturing, either or both, the bridge at Harrisburg and the one at Wrightsville (Mingus' "Flames Before Gettysburg"). Wingert explains the how and why the Confederates failed by digging into original sources overlooked by

others. His maps seem properly scaled to the page, unlike some of the other books in the History Press series which shrink them down to the point of uselessness. Maps and period pictures are often extended with modern photos that are well produced. And, while there are many pictures of bearded generals that actually led the fighting, there are no pointless pictures of Lee and Meade.

This delightful book contains significant details of the northern-most confederate incursion; yet also contains personal vignettes of the people involved. Remarkable for the author to have done so at age 14 or 15. Have ordered this book as a gift for others after reading it.

I live in the area that is written about in the book. Super detail for the small things that effected the Cumberland Valley . This is a must read for the Civil War enthusiast.

Very well done, recommend the book,I did not realize how far the Confederates had moved into Pennsylvaniaand what was done to defend Harrisburg

A very interesting view from the Confederate aspect. Hard to believe that this book was written by a 14 year old.

Considering it was written by a teenager, this is a stellar effort. Everything you need to know about this aspect of the Gettysburg Campaign is enclose in theis short but fact-filled book. A must for your Gettysburg Library.

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