

H-Net Reviews

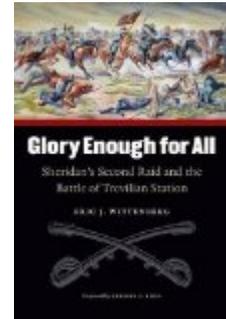
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Eric J. Wittenberg. *Glory Enough for All: Sheridan's Second Raid and the Battle of Trevilian Station*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007. Maps, Illustrations. 391 pp. \$24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8032-5967-6.

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Hurrah for Hampton, Shame on Sheridan

Eric J. Wittenberg's *Glory Enough for All: Sheridan's Second Raid and the Battle of Trevilian Station* (originally published in 2001) actually proves that in the particular case of these cavalry battles in 1864, the North held control over the postwar historical interpretation of the victors for better or for worse through the less than accurate accounts and legacy of General Philip Henry Sheridan. Reissued in 2007 with a forward by Gordon C. Rhea, Wittenberg's work covers the crucial days of June 1864 in the Eastern (Virginia) theater where significant leadership changes of the cavalry in both the Army of the Potomac (Federal) and Army of Northern Virginia (Confederate) occurred.

Seeking to launch unified offensive operations to win the war, President Abraham Lincoln appointed Ulysses S. Grant to the supreme command of the Federal armies in March 1864. Believing that the Army of the Potomac under the command of Major George G. Meade had not fought to its full potential, Grant came east to direct operations in Virginia. He also placed a former infantry commander from the Western theater, Sheridan, in command of Meade's cavalry. A month of inconclusive fighting compelled Grant to shift his operations south of the James River. Sheridan's cavalry was tasked to proceed westward with the primary mission of destroying Robert E. Lee's supply line near Charlottesville along the Virginia Central Railroad and the secondary mission of linking up with a Union army that had been operating in the Shenandoah Valley expected to advance on Lynchburg.

Glory Enough for All centers on Sheridan's diversionary raid resulting in the Battle of Trevilian Station, the largest, hardest, and most brutal all-cavalry battle in the war. Approximately 9,300 Federal troopers clashed with 6,400 Confederate cavaliers. Wittenberg contends that Sheridan's failure in this raid, coupled by Major General Wade Hampton's success, "extended the war for at least six months" (p. 321). Sheridan and Hampton were both relatively new to their respective cavalry commands in June 1864. Hampton was one of the wealthiest men in the South, organizing and purchasing arms and equipment for his Hampton Legion for the Confederacy. Assigned to J. E.B. Stuart's cavalry in the summer of 1862, Hampton embarked on the cavalry service with which he has long since been identified. Wittenberg argues that Hampton "deserves the accolades and the reputation he has been given" (p. xvii). Sheridan had taken command of a cavalry corps that Wittenberg writes "had been forged in battle that was led mostly by competent veteran officers who had proven their mettle during 1863's long hard-fought campaigning" (p. 10).

Wittenberg provides readers with a fast-paced narrative that flows as swiftly as the Battle at Trevilian Station played out on the two days of June 11-12, 1864, and Sheridan's subsequent withdrawal southeast toward the James River to rejoin the Army of the Potomac that led to the June 24 Battle of Samaria Church. The author utilizes an impressive array of unpublished manuscripts, diaries, memoirs, and contemporary periodicals to craft his

narrative. Wittenberg incorporates the historic voices of those in the ranks from the lowliest private whose concerns were his creature comforts and comrades as well as the actions that were occurring in his immediate surroundings to the seasoned but beleaguered brigade commander who was staving off disaster from his flanks and appealing to higher authorities for much needed reinforcements. The impact that Trevilian Station had on the actions of civilians in Louisa County, Virginia, in the midst of the fighting is not lost on Wittenberg, adding another key dimension to his campaign narrative. The story of the Towles Family (losing three sons in battle—one at Trevilian Station on June 11) illustrates on a local level the ultimate tragedy that the Civil War brought to families throughout the nation. Maps by Blake A. Magner and photographic illustrations of the participants and significant landmarks compliment this masterful work. Wittenberg gives readers the penetrating analysis of a lawyer with the assessments of a thorough academic scholar.

This reviewer would be neglecting his role if he did not point to a minor aspect of an otherwise worthwhile read. Wittenberg asserts in his preface that there “are many tales of honor and courage on the Confederate side

that will be related in these pages,” placing great emphasis in giving the South Carolinians of Brigadier General Matthew C. Butler’s brigade the justice that he believed they deserved but that has been forgotten in history (p. xviii). His only early acknowledgement of Union bravery is in his enumeration of the three Medal of Honor winners at Trevilian Station and two winners for their valor at Samaria Church. Readers may potentially interpret this work unfairly as a biased polemic favoring the Confederacy when it is in reality a well-balanced and nonpartisan work of military history.

Wittenberg makes the strong case that this cavalry campaign prolonged the American Civil War. Sheridan’s limited raid masked the movements of the Army of the Potomac enabling it to shift its operations south of the James River leading to the eventual Siege of Petersburg. Hampton’s victory at Trevilian Station cleared the way for Lee to detach a portion of the Army of Northern Virginia under General Jubal A. Early to make a subsequent campaign in the Shenandoah Valley that late summer and fall. *Glory Enough for All* is an essential volume for anyone interested in the Eastern theater campaigns and Civil War cavalry.

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