

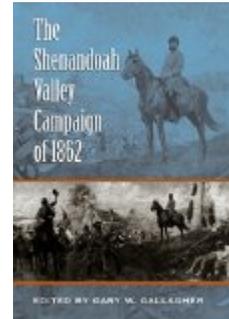
# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Gary Gallagher, ed. *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003. xxii + 280 pp. \$34.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8078-2786-4.

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## Mobility, Deception, and Hard Fighting: The 1862 Valley Campaign and Its Aftermath

During the spring and summer of 1862, while Union General George B. McClellan attempted to capture the Confederate capital of Richmond by advancing up the peninsula between the James and York Rivers, Confederate Maj. Gen. Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson staged a brilliant diversionary campaign down the Shenandoah Valley toward Washington. In approximately thirty days, Jackson’s army seemed to be everywhere at once, marching 350 miles, defeating three Union armies in five battles, and inflicting twice as many casualties as they received. The confusion created by the Confederate movements in the valley immobilized the Union forces in the region and kept reinforcements from reaching McClellan during the critical Peninsula Campaign which resulted in a Confederate victory.

*The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862*, Gary Gallagher’s latest volume of essay collections in the Military Campaigns of the Civil War series, examines the leaders, events, and military operations in the Shenandoah Valley between March and early June of 1862. As in previous volumes, Gallagher and his collaborators give insightful analyses of various perspectives of the campaign, focusing on topics such as leaders and strategy as well as the campaign’s impact on the civilian population and the process of Civil War memory.

Gallagher fires the opening salvo with an essay challenging one of the most resilient misconceptions about the Valley Campaign, that Jackson’s movements in the Valley caused President Abraham Lincoln to panic in

the wake of the early Rebel victories at Front Royal and Winchester. The author maintains that contrary to popular opinion, Lincoln used Jackson’s exploits in the Shenandoah to prod McClellan into action. At no point, Gallagher contends, was Lincoln unnerved by the crisis.

William J. Miller’s chapter on Federal generals in the Valley follows suit and challenges the widely held notion that Union commanders were a set of bumbling fools who failed miserably when faced with the military genius of Stonewall Jackson. Miller, the editor of *Civil War: The Magazine of the Civil War Society* and author of several Civil War studies, argues that while none of Jackson’s foes were blessed with keen military intellect, the Federal commanders struggled with logistical difficulties and the lack of a coherent plan from the authorities in Washington. Although the Federal commanders “made mistakes, each deserves some credit for modest accomplishments in bad situations not of their making,” Miller writes (p. 81).

While the Federal high command receives some attention in the various essays, Confederate leaders dominate the study. Preeminent Jackson scholar and former battlefield park historian, Robert K. Krick, examines how Jackson’s success in the Valley not only lifted him to Confederate prominence, but garnered him national fame as well. Krick asserts that it was Jackson’s exploits in the Shenandoah and not the postwar Lost Cause myth-makers which catapulted the Virginian into the pantheon of Confederate heroes. Essays by Peter Carmichael and

Robert E. L. Krick explore Confederate Brigadier Generals Turner Ashby and Charles S. Winder. Carmichael's essay focuses on how and why southerners transformed a man with a modest military record into the archetypal cavalier, who projected the values of male honor and Christianity. Killed while fighting a rear guard action during the Valley Campaign, Ashby's background did not demonstrate any of the traits postwar apologists attributed to him. Nevertheless, Carmichael, a history professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, traces the process of how some southerners distorted the Virginian's views, personality traits, and even his physical appearance to propagate the cavalier myth and their romantic view of the past. "Death had brought Ashby instant martyrdom in the public memory," the author maintains (p. 144). Robert E. L. Krick, a Richmond-based historian and author of *The Fortieth Virginia Infantry* (1985) and *Staff Officers in Gray: A Biographical Register of the Staff Officers in the Army of Northern Virginia* (2002), offers the first biographical analysis of Winder, the commander of the famous Stonewall Brigade through most of the Valley Campaign. Krick's study claims that the Maryland native impressed Jackson with his strict hand and solid disposition, but failed to grasp the intricacies of leading an army of volunteer soldiers. Although the able general gained Jackson's respect, he failed to win the hearts of his men. Winder's predecessor at the helm of the Stonewall Brigade, Brig. Gen. Brooke Garnett, is the subject of A. Cash Koeninger's essay. Koeninger, a professor of history at the Virginia Military Institute, analyzes Jackson's court-martial of Garnett, who was arrested for withdrawing his troops at the Battle of Kernstown on March 23, 1862. Despite overwhelming testimony in support of the accused, Jackson stubbornly proceeded with the trial, only to suspend the proceedings in the wake of a Union advance. Garnett was ultimately transferred to Maj. Gen. James Longstreet's corps by General Robert E. Lee. The author uses the Jackson-Garnett court-martial to demonstrate Stonewall's rigidity and propensity for arresting officers and creating unnecessary conflict in his command.

The two essays which study topics outside of leaders and strategy focus on the impact that the campaign had on the civilian population of the Shenandoah and the process of how a particular Confederate unit preserved the memory of its deeds for posterity. Jonathan M. Berkey's chapter analyzes the impact military operations in the Shenandoah Valley had on the southern populace. The author, a doctoral candidate in history

at Pennsylvania State University, asserts that beyond the immediate physical destruction caused by the opposing armies, the Valley Campaign also hampered the short-term productivity of the population and weakened the institution of slavery as slaves used the arrival of Federal troops to escape abusive masters. Berkey's perceptive examination of the campaign's impact also reveals the reversal of gender roles as female citizens exploited the nineteenth-century mores which spared them physical harm from men to take a more active role in supporting the southern cause by harassing, insulting, and even assaulting Federal soldiers in the Valley. Keith Bohannon's essay on the Twelfth Georgia Infantry explores the purpose behind how contemporaries reported the exploits and failures of the regiment. The author argues that the southern press offered laudatory treatment of the Twelfth Georgia to boost public morale during the war. Following the war, Bohannon points out, aged veterans of the regiment ignored "embarrassing episodes when recording their service of their regiment for posterity" (p. 116). The author, a professor of history at the State University of West Georgia, maintains that the Twelfth Georgia's methodology in using selective memory was not unique to Confederate units alone, as Federal veterans also were similarly selective in recording their history during the postwar era. The essay is a discerning look into the process of preserving memory.

Like some other essay collections, *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862* does not demonstrate a unifying theme or a sense of continuity. In fact, there is a lack of balance between Union and Confederate topics in Gallagher's anthology. Yet that does not diminish the fact that the latest volume in the Military Campaigns of the Civil War series is a valuable contribution to the field. This study is well written and well documented, making an effective use of archival sources, newspapers, and other relevant data. While Robert K. Krick's chapter on the origins of the image of "Mighty Stonewall" offers recognizable themes to scholars familiar with other studies on the Confederate chieftain, the remaining essays are an excellent work of historical writing and investigation. The book's particular strength may be that it forces the reader to make some sort of response to each particular author's conclusion and to think critically about the various topics dealing with the Shenandoah Valley Campaign. Historians will turn to Gallagher's collection of essays for its compelling insights into the campaign and the process of how historians view the subject.

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