

## Civil War Publishing, Essay Collections

In the years just prior to and including the sesquicentennial, there was a surge in Civil War publishing. This included many battle narratives, campaign histories, biographies and regimental histories. Some of these books on battles were either extremely large single volumes or were multi-volume narratives. These included Bull Run, Antietam, Shiloh, Stones River, Gettysburg, Kennesaw Mountain, Ezra Church and Petersburg.

Of the new biographies published, *New Looks at R.E. Lee, U.S. Grant, William Sherman, George Thomas*, and many others were available for consumers.

Another category of book that continues to be published, but may not be as popular with readers is the "Essay Collection." Many of these essay collections are parts of publishing series. There are four of these multi-volume series that I wanted to mention. They were either started or had volumes published during the sesquicentennial period.

The first series which is edited by Gary Gallagher and published by the University of North Carolina Press is **MILITARY CAMPAIGNS OF THE CIVIL WAR**. This series was begun in 1994 and has 10 volumes. The tenth volume which was published in September is **COLD HARBOR TO THE CRATER THE END OF THE OVERLAND CAMPAIGN**. The title of the series is a bit misleading as only eastern theater military campaigns have had volumes published. Some of the contributing historians include Gary Gallagher, Robert Krick, James Robertson, Carol Reardon, A. Wilson Greene, and Gordon Rhea. The essays in all the volumes cover both northern and southern subjects. In my opinion, the two best volumes are the ones on The Wilderness and Spotsylvania and the latest volume.

A similar series of essays is now being published by Southern Illinois University Press. It is entitled **CAMPAIGNS IN THE HEARTLAND**. The series is edited by Steven Woodworth and Charles Grear. The series was begun when some of Steven Woodworth's doctoral students urged him to create a series similar to the one Gary Gallagher was editing. His goal was to shed more light on the western theater and to spark more scholarship. The first volume was published in 2009 and three others have followed. The fifth volume on Hood's Tennessee Campaign will be published in January 2016. Chickamauga, Chattanooga, and Vicksburg are the subjects of the three other volumes.

The University of Tennessee Press is currently publishing a series entitled, **THE WESTERN THEATER IN THE CIVIL WAR**. Gary Joiner and Lawrence Hewitt have edited five volumes of essays on confederate generals in the series. The first three volumes are essays on confederate generals in The Army of Tennessee, the largest confederate army east of the Appalachians. The initial volume was a compilation of essays that had been previously

published of which many were difficult for the average reader to obtain. Many of the leading characters in that army, A.S. Johnston, P.G. T. Beauregard, Braxton Bragg, William Hardee, and Patrick Cleburne are represented in the volume. There are also two other essays on lesser known generals of lower rank. These could be considered mini-biographies of the two generals. In one of the essays, the author presents an argument that the general may have been the best general officer in that army.

There are two other volumes on generals in The Army of Tennessee. Some of the generals would be very familiar to the casual reader, John Hood and Joseph Johnston. While others such as Hylan Lyon, George Crittendon, and Stephen D. Lee may not be very familiar.

The two most recent volumes in this series are essays on confederate generals who fought in the Trans-Mississippi Theater. This theater of the war is by far the least known to the casual reader. The generals who led troops there are also not as well known. Some of the generals who are discussed in the essays include Jo Shelby, Kirby Smith, Tom Green, John Marmaduke, and Alfred Mouton. I believe there will continue to be more volumes published in this essay series.

The last series of essays I wanted to detail is being published by the Tennessee Historical Society during the recognition of the sesquicentennial. The series is entitled **TENNESSEE IN THE CIVIL WAR THE BEST OF THE TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**. This series has ten volumes in it with each volume containing essays on a specific subject. Published authors Timothy Smith and Sam D. Elliott have edited the volumes on Shiloh and Chattanooga respectively.

The subjects of the ten volumes are: Tennessee in the Civil War, The Civil War in Appalachia, The Battle of Shiloh, The Battle of Stones River, Nathan Bedford Forrest, Emancipation, and the Fight for Freedom, The Battles for Chattanooga, Tennessee Women and the Civil War, Hood's Tennessee Campaign, and After the War, Reconstruction. These volumes can be ordered from the Tennessee Historical Society website.

I've found these essay collections to be very interesting reading. Although there are many different contributors and editors on many subjects, the series provide the reader with an entry point for many subjects. Generally the essays are either written with either a very narrow focus or with a much broader perspective than authors of battle histories and biographies can usually focus on.

I also wanted to mention two recently published essay collections that are not associated with any series: **GATEWAY TO THE CONFEDERACY, NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHICKAMAUGA AND CHATTANOOGA CAMPAIGNS** 1862 – 2014 Jones, Evan and Sword, Wiley LSU. I've read this book and thoroughly enjoyed the essays. The other recently published title is **BORDER**

**WARS THE CIVIL WAR IN TENNESSEE AND KENTUCKY** – Dollar, Kent, Whiteaker, Dickinson, W. Calvin 2015 Kent State Press. This book is divided into essays on battles/skirmishes and on leaders. For anyone interested in the Civil War in The Heartland, this might be very interesting.

Many of us are very familiar with the battles and general who fought in the eastern theater. The series edited by Gary Gallagher provides many views into these famous battles. Three of these series are focused on the civil war west of the Appalachians. This aspect of the Civil War is beginning to draw more and more attention. The series edited by Steven Woodworth and Charles Grear is a perfect beginning place for the reader to become more familiar with these important battles. The essays on the confederate generals provide the reader with an opportunity to discover information on many forgotten soldiers and the series of essays on Tennessee focuses on many aspects of the Civil War as they relate to one state that was deeply divided during the conflict.