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Jeb Stuart and the Confederate Defeat at Gettysburg (review)

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Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies, Volume 77,
Number 1, Winter 2010, pp. 89-92 (Review)

Published by Penn State University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/pnh.0.0015>



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The battle had turned out nearly as Howe wished it to. He had once again bested Washington and the road to Philadelphia was now open, although the Continental army had again escaped destruction. Howe had been slow to pursue and Washington quick to run. Howe would march into Philadelphia on 26 September 1777 and occupy it until the following spring. Its fall hurt but did not cripple the patriot cause. Even in defeat, Washington sought an opportunity to turn the tables on Howe before the end of the campaign season. He would nearly do so at Germantown, the subject of the second volume in McGuire's history of the campaign.

The pros far outweigh the cons in this masterful work. McGuire's writing flows easily. More impressive is the author's command of source materials. A review of his bibliography and footnotes demonstrates that he has been to all of the major archival holdings in the United States as well as the United Kingdom. He has also employed the latest in secondary source materials. In terms of scope, this is no general's history of a campaign. Whether general or private, farm girl or Luthern minister, McGuire has woven their views of the campaign together, using logically based assumptions to account for the discrepancies in the primary documents. If there are problems with the volume, they are not major. His maps are good but not great. Perhaps a better cartographer would be in order should this go to another edition. There are a few minor irritants in the printed copy not the least of which was the decision on the part of the publisher to use a capital I instead of a 1 in any numerical entries. This too should be corrected in a second edition. Taken as a totality, this is the best account of Brandywine that I know of in print.

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Warren C. Robinson. *Jeb Stuart and the Confederate Defeat at Gettysburg*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007. Pp. xiii, 198, maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$24.95.)

As the 150th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg approaches, historians are already disseminating new interpretations of the events surrounding one of the most studied happenings of the American Civil War. In *Jeb Stuart and the Confederate Defeat at Gettysburg*, economics professor emeritus Warren C. Robinson seeks to renew one of the most debated controversies surrounding

Gettysburg: whether Jeb Stuart's absence was to blame for the Confederate loss. Previous works that analyze this debate assert that since Stuart and his cavalry did not arrive until the second day of Gettysburg, their absence left General Robert E. Lee without sufficient reconnaissance and logistical support. Robinson, however, argues that both Stuart and Lee should share responsibility for the Confederate loss as both men wrongly assumed what the other person would do as the Confederate army marched northward.

Robinson begins his book by exploring previous studies surrounding the Stuart-Gettysburg debate in order to demonstrate how his work contributes to the historiography. Prior works such as Edwin B. Coddington's *The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command* and Douglas Southall Freeman's *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command* are not overly critical of Stuart, as these authors cite other officers for failed strategies at Gettysburg. Conversely, Mark Nesbitt's *Saber and Scapegoat: J.E.B. Stuart and the Gettysburg Controversy* attempts to exonerate Stuart from any blame at Gettysburg. However, Robinson asserts that these prior studies argue their case by selectively choosing what evidence to use to support their assertions, thereby ignoring any contradictory evidence that would subvert their thesis. As such, and in order to further the historiography and his own argument, Robinson points out that he analyzes military reports, soldiers' accounts, and secondary sources that these previous works fail to incorporate within their studies.

One of the strengths of Robinson's book lies in his attempt to evaluate the relationship between Lee and Stuart prior to Gettysburg. While one could depict Lee's orders as oftentimes ambiguous, Robinson asserts that Lee and Stuart developed a general understanding in which both parties knew what the other expected. Robinson argues that Stuart fully understood the essential role of the cavalry in Lee's strategies and the objectives given to his cavalry by Lee. Although some historians portray the controversy surrounding Stuart at Gettysburg as a conflict between Lee and Stuart, Robinson depicts the relationship between the Confederate generals as amicable and trustworthy. Therefore, Robinson questions why there existed a lack of communication between Lee and Stuart during the Gettysburg campaign.

Following the battle of Brandy Station, critics of Stuart, including General James Longstreet, argued that the Confederate general sought to regain his reputation and honor by exceeding his orders during the Gettysburg campaign. While Robinson portrays Stuart as a man with a dual character, that of "Stuart the cavalry general and Stuart the raider," the author asserts that Brandy Station did not significantly influence Stuart's mindset during

Gettysburg (46). Although some historians argue that Stuart should have followed Lee's orders verbatim, Robinson demonstrates that Lee did not expect Stuart to adhere strictly to his commands. By analyzing previous correspondence between Lee and Stuart, Robinson reveals that Lee repeatedly allowed Stuart some discretion when carrying out his orders. However, in regards to the Gettysburg campaign, Robinson argues that Stuart extended the breadth of his orders from Lee by including a raid on Washington D.C. that ultimately affected the outcome at Gettysburg.

In order to analyze the controversy surrounding Stuart's absence at Gettysburg, Robinson traces the debate regarding Stuart's orders by analyzing the accounts of Lee's aide-de-camp, Colonel Charles Marshall, and Stuart's aide-de-camp, Henry B. McClellan. Marshall claimed that Lee ordered Stuart to monitor General Joseph Hooker's movements, harass the Union army, and keep Lee informed regarding the position of Hooker. Once Hooker navigated the Potomac River, Marshall argued that Lee expected Stuart to rejoin the main body of the Confederate army. Conversely, McClellan stated that Stuart received a "lost third order" from Lee that instructed Stuart to ride around Hooker's army rather than rejoin the Confederate army. While Noah Andre Trudeau and Edward G. Longacre support McClellan's assertion, Robinson cites the lack of primary sources as his reason for not believing McClellan. Instead, Robinson concludes that McClellan probably fabricated the third order in the attempt to protect Stuart's honor and legacy.

After receiving his orders from Lee, Stuart began his ride around the Union army as he pushed further eastward toward Washington. Several historians, as well as Stuart, argued that the presence of Union scouts and the crowded roads from both armies forced Stuart to adjust his path. However, Robinson maintains that Stuart could have moved northward along the Blue Ridge Mountains and would have only incurred minimal Union resistance. Although Stuart acknowledged within his reports that he clearly understood the objectives given to him by Lee, Robinson asserts that Stuart's actions did not coincide with such acknowledgements, as Stuart participated in several events that delayed his arrival at Gettysburg.

Citing Stuart's absence prior to Gettysburg, Robinson argues that the lack of information caused Lee to become hesitant during the first day of Gettysburg. Although some historians argue that Lee did not act like himself during the battle of Gettysburg, Robinson attributes Lee's passivity to the lack of accurate reconnaissance. Therefore, Robinson asserts that Lee did not fully commit his forces during the first day of the battle because he was

waiting for word from Stuart. Following the war, supporters of Stuart argued that Lee could have utilized other cavalry for reconnaissance, but Robinson maintains that Lee placed greater confidence in Stuart's reports. Robinson concludes that while Stuart did not disobey Lee's orders, the cavalry commander failed to explicitly follow the commands as Lee expected.

While Robinson's work will promote a renewed interest in the different perspectives of warfare and Gettysburg, Robinson's study does contain several factual errors, including Robinson's assertion that Lee began his Gettysburg campaign on June 9 rather than June 3. Despite these inaccuracies, Robinson's book provides an intriguing analysis of the essential role of affective communication when conducting warfare. While historians will never fully agree on whether Stuart fully disobeyed Lee's orders, Robinson's study reminds us that no Civil War general was ever infallible.

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Jennifer L. Weber. *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Pp. xv, 286, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$28.00; Paper, \$16.95.)

Political dissent and protest in wartime is a controversial topic and how we interpret those historical movements reveals much about ourselves and our own times. Jennifer L. Weber has written the latest word on the perennially contentious Democratic peace movement during the Civil War. *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North* outlines several worthwhile findings beginning with the notion that dissent in the Civil War North was not a peripheral issue but central and pervasive. Moreover, she articulates how it divided communities both rural and urban into a "neighbor's war" noted at times for the outbreak of violence. Weber shares company with other scholars pointing to the fractured and contradictory Northern experience. Much of this work lies in essays, such as collections edited by Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller, *Union Soldiers and the Northern Home Front: Wartime Experiences, Postwar Adjustments* (2002) and Joan E. Cashin *The War Was You and Me: Civilians in the American Civil War* (2002). Such fruitful inquiry owes a great deal to the larger body of literature on the Southern home front that highlights parallel experiences there.