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*The Knoxville Campaign: Burnside and Longstreet in East Tennessee* by Earl J. Hess (review)

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valuable examination of one of the most important but overlooked campaigns in the Civil War.

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*The Knoxville Campaign: Burnside and Longstreet in East Tennessee.* By Earl J. Hess. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012. Pp. 402. \$39.95 cloth)

One of the ironies of the Civil War in Tennessee was that Union armies quickly occupied much of Middle and West Tennessee—where support for secession had been overwhelming after Fort Sumter—whereas the deliverance of staunchly Unionist East Tennessee was of relatively low priority for much of the war. The explanation was essentially logistical. Although President Abraham Lincoln pressed for the liberation of the area for political reasons, Union generals repeatedly argued that the military risks of an invasion of the region far outweighed the anticipated benefits. With formidable mountain barriers to the east and west and solidly Confederate states both north and south, East Tennessee was a “horror,” to quote William Tecumseh Sherman. Thus it was not until late summer 1863 that a Union army under Major General Ambrose E. Burnside finally marched into upper East Tennessee, emboldened by the decision in Richmond to send most of the Confederate troops in the area to reinforce General Braxton Bragg in his struggle against Union Major General William Rosecrans near Chattanooga.

In the first week of September, Burnside’s force of some twelve to fifteen thousand troops marched triumphantly into Knoxville—the largest town of upper East Tennessee and the most important transportation hub—to the delight of jubilant loyalists who welcomed the Yankee soldiers as deliverers. Less than three months later, in mid-November, an army of nearly twenty thousand Confederates

under Lieutenant General James Longstreet would seek to smash Burnside's army and reclaim the region. The siege that resulted was a costly Confederate failure, punctuated by the Rebels' lopsided and bloody defeat in the twenty-minute-long battle of Fort Sanders in late November. This work, by acclaimed Civil War historian Earl Hess, is the most thorough, scholarly treatment of this military campaign ever produced. It will be of interest to history buffs and military historians interested in the western theater of the Civil War.

Hess's exhaustively researched study recreates the struggle between Burnside and Longstreet in meticulous, painstaking detail. He carefully sets the stage for the campaign, beginning with Bragg's questionable decision to weaken his force after the Confederate victory at Chickamauga by sending Longstreet's divisions (on loan from the Army of Northern Virginia) to strike at Burnside more than a hundred miles to the north. If the undertaking were to succeed, it was imperative that Longstreet strike Burnside quickly and decisively and then rejoin Bragg before the concentrating forces under newly appointed Union commander Major General Ulysses Grant launched an offensive from Chattanooga. A long shot from the start, the campaign failed miserably, partly for logistical reasons, partly because of the bickering and incompetence of Longstreet and his lieutenants, and partly because of Burnside's effective response to the Confederate thrust.

Hess focuses narrowly on the military campaign itself, and many of the defining characteristics of recent trends in military history—including careful attention to the ideology of enlisted men, the effect of war on civilians, and the interplay between front line and home front—are muted in his study. His approach is also more descriptive than analytical. He packs his narrative densely with facts, impressively mining an array of archival sources for evidence about the campaign—his footnotes and bibliography run to an eye-catching ninety-six pages—but he does not always distinguish between significant and extraneous details as effectively as he might. When he concludes in the end that Braxton Bragg had “sent away some of his best troops”

in a failed attempt “to retake a city of secondary importance” the reader is left wondering why the author believes that the campaign merits the lavish attention he has accorded it (p. 247).

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*The Fire of Freedom: Abraham Galloway and the Slaves’ Civil War.* By David S. Cecelski. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. Pp. 352. \$30.00 cloth; \$30.00 ebook)

David S. Cecelski’s biography of Abraham H. Galloway, an African American leader in the Civil War era, is a masterpiece of research. While the book contains more context than many life studies, it also has much substance accumulated from a very extensive search for information. Moreover, it illuminates how the events of the period affected the communities of slaves and freedmen.

Galloway (1837-70) developed an intelligent and assertive personality, while growing up as a slave in coastal North Carolina, where he became a self-hired mason and where coastal commerce exposed him to outside influences. Questioning slavery, he escaped on a cargo ship in 1857 and eventually reached Canada. After joining the militant wing of abolitionism, he returned as a speaker to the United States and even visited the black-operated nation of Haiti in the Caribbean. When the Civil War began, his connections led to a job as a scout and spy for Major General Benjamin Butler in Virginia, North Carolina, and Louisiana. Captured by Confederates at Vicksburg, Mississippi, Galloway mysteriously escaped or was released and then left for New Bern, North Carolina. There, he resumed work for the Federal army, but mostly concentrated on developing the contraband community as a social and political leader. He also travelled to participate in a visit by a local delegation to Lincoln, the 1864 National Convention