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*Spring 1865: The Closing Campaigns of the American Civil War*  
by Perry D. Jamieson (review)

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Gettysburg Magazine, Number 54, January 2016, p. 102 (Review)

Published by University of Nebraska Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/get.2016.0002>



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Perry D. Jamieson. *Spring 1865: The Closing Campaigns of the American Civil War*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015. 286 pp., 15 illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Hardcover, \$34.95. ISBN 978-0-8032-2581-7.

Perry Jamieson's *Spring 1865: The Closing Campaigns of the Civil War* gives readers a deep understanding of the final months of the Civil War by focusing on the simultaneous campaigns that brought the war to a close in the winter and spring of 1865. By drawing a wide focus on the armies and leaders, Jamieson successfully presents the last spring campaigns as unified efforts, and he offers a sense of how these grand strategies set the stage for the deciding events of April 1865.

*Spring 1865* is part of the Great Campaigns of the Civil War series from the University of Nebraska Press. According to the press's website, this series "offers readers concise syntheses of the major campaigns of the war, reflecting the findings of recent scholarship." Jamieson successfully synthesizes the most recent scholarship, particularly in regard to the Carolinas Campaign. However, his book is a departure from other entries in the series, which focus on single campaigns. Jamieson's scope is ambitious but somewhat limiting: as he himself notes, "It was necessary to focus on planning and operations at the strategic and operational levels of warfare" at the expense of "tactics or more human-interest stories" (xi). Readers looking for views from common soldiers and civilians may be disappointed, but those looking for a synthesis of multiple campaigns will be pleased.

*Spring 1865* focuses primarily on the war in Virginia and North Carolina; and as an analysis of the campaigns themselves, Jamieson emphasizes the decisions rendered by the general staff of the Union and Confederate armies. Jamieson shows a deft understanding both of the creativity and conflict that arose among the generals and of how their relationships influenced military matters. In his first section of the book, dealing with the Union effort to capture Fort Fisher, he highlights the personal conflict between Braxton Bragg and Robert Hoke. This disagreement shaped the Confederate response to the Union beach landing, which ultimately set the stage for Union victory.

After the fall of Fort Fisher, Jamieson charts the falling dominos, revealing how developments in South Carolina and North Carolina influenced the military situation in Virginia, and vice versa. This is the true value of Jamieson's work; *Spring 1865*'s broad scope allows the reader to see the connections between the individual theaters of action.

One of the great benefits of Jamieson's approach is the way he places the Carolinas Campaign on equal footing with the Petersburg and Appomattox Campaigns. *Spring 1865* underscores the importance of the actions in South Carolina and North Carolina by covering these developments first. The quick movement and desperate actions in this campaign offer a counterpoint to the stalemate at Petersburg. Jamieson also skillfully covers the tense and complicated negotiations between Sherman and Johnston at Bennett Place, a set of multiple meetings with varied participants held over the course of ten days.

Jamieson's ability to weave together the campaigns and show their connectivity tempts one to think that perhaps an even wider view—to include the Trans-Mississippi region—would make this book's message more effective. To be fair, Jamieson mentions the campaigns in the West in his final chapter, "Scattered Embers," but these portions of Jamieson's book are cursory compared to the depth of his analysis of the Carolinas and Virginia. Overall, Jamieson should be applauded for his work in synthesizing not just the most recent scholarship but also these important campaigns, which benefit equally by being viewed together.

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