Retreat From Gettysburg: Lee, Logistics, and the Pennsylvania Campaign

Terry L. Beekenbaugh
tions. John’s presidential candidacy in 1856 and his troubled command in Civil War Missouri brought less acclaim, but Jessie bore greater responsibilities in seeking to rescue her husband’s fading fortunes. The authors follow others in criticizing the Frémonts’ efforts to subdue war-torn Missouri and emancipate its slaves prematurely. They also regret Jessie’s famous stormy meeting with President Lincoln over war policy, while noting her pioneering role as a “female politician.”

Not meant for specialists, this short biography skims over details and avoids extended analysis. The authors mention the 1820 controversy and compromise over slavery in Missouri, but neglect the famous division of the remaining Louisiana Territory between free and slave areas. Similarly, discussion of John’s eventual emergence as the Republicans’ first presidential candidate fails to stress the role repealing the Missouri Compromise line played in the notorious 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act. However, the authors’ analysis of the difficulties surrounding John’s command in Missouri summarizes the basic issues well, and they effectively sketch John’s decline in fame and fortune and at least hint at the couple’s marital tensions. Lastly, the authors tell movingly of how Jessie passed her final years without John but defiantly defending her departed mate.

Capably highlighting Jessie’s prominent role as a woman, the authors naturally focus on the Frémont couple’s importance to Missouri history. The University of Missouri Press should be congratulated for producing such an attractive and affordable volume that introduces readers to a famous family connected to their state. Readers from other states can also gain easy introduction to a captivating woman who deserves a better place in our nation’s history. True to her role as a devoted wife of a past century, she will always be tied to the troubled life and often clouded career of her husband. Despite such failings, John and Jessie Frémont warrant the regard of today’s public. A good place to begin would be to read this handy introductory volume.


Reviewer Terry L. Beckenhaugh is senior military analyst, Dynamics Research Corporation, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His Ph.D. dissertation was “The War of Politics: Samuel Ryan Curtis, Race, and the Political/Military Establishment.”

Whoever says that there is nothing new to write about regarding the Battle of Gettysburg (July 1–3, 1863) obviously has not read Kent Mas-
terson Brown’s *Retreat From Gettysburg: Lee, Logistics, and the Pennsylvania Campaign*. Brown studies the Army of Northern Virginia’s retreat from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, back across the Potomac River into Virginia. That portion of the campaign has occasionally been examined before, but not from a logistical perspective. Brown uses many previously uncited documents, basing his study around the Army of Northern Virginia’s June and July 1863 quartermaster records. He argues that Robert E. Lee’s superb handling of the retreat in shepherding the army back to friendly territory, while simultaneously stocking up on supplies, allowed him to maintain the balance of power in the Eastern Theater throughout the rest of 1863.

*Retreat From Gettysburg* is an excellent study, one that should set the standard for future logistical studies of other campaigns. Furthermore, for students of the Gettysburg campaign, it should be required reading. It is a significant addition to Civil War historiography.


Reviewer LaVern J. Rippley is professor of German at St. Olaf College. His publications include biographical studies of German immigrants Hans Reimer Claussen, Conrad Kornmann, and F. W. Sallet.

In an introduction and eight unrelated chapters, William Roba roams Iowa, presenting specific themes. In an overarching first chapter, he describes the beginnings of German settlement in Iowa. He concludes with insightful perspectives on German politicians—Gülich, Claussen, Olshausen and others, mostly Schleswig-Holsteiners, who dominated early Iowa emigration from Germany—and their influence on Iowa history. Chapter two takes up the cultural unifiers of the Germans in Iowa during their heyday; parades, public speeches, community festivals, and the like reduced tensions between Germans and local Yankees as well as other Germans, when Schleswig-Holsteiners aggravaed “lesser” arrivals from Germany. The dominance of the northern East Elbian settlers created certain myths and generated pageantry, such as the re-enactment in 1883 of the 1683 arrival of Germans in Philadelphia, the 1888 dedication ceremonies of the new Central Turner Hall in Davenport, and the Turner Jubilee of 1902 in the tri-cities area. Such events created an air of arrogant and distasteful German ethnocentrism that later exploded negatively when the United States entered World War I.