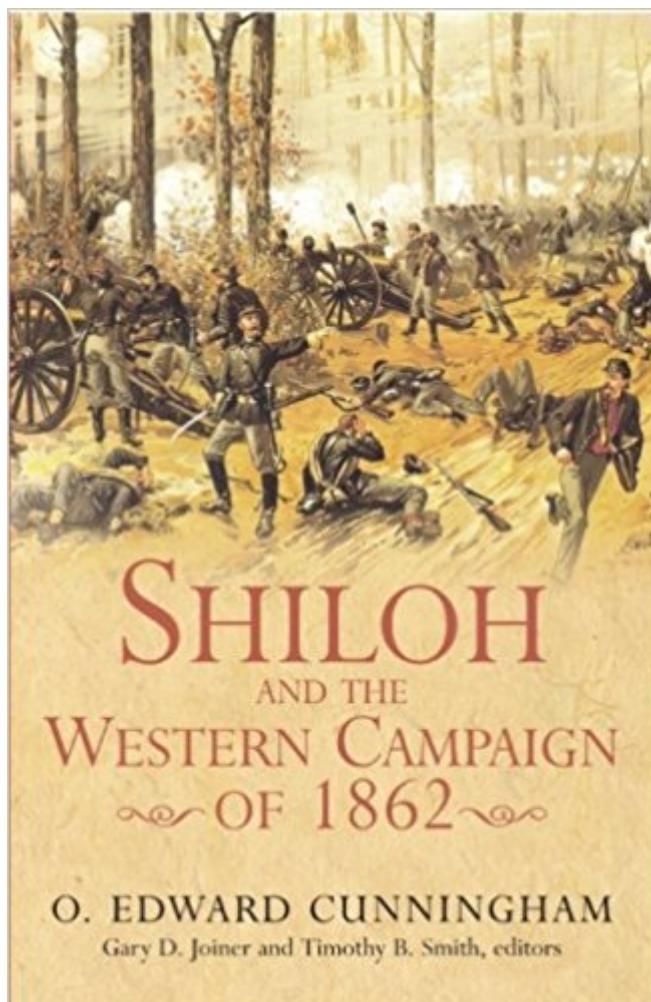


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Shiloh And The Western Campaign Of 1862



Synopsis

The bloody and decisive two-day battle of Shiloh (April 6-7, 1862) changed the entire course of the American Civil War. The stunning Northern victory thrust Union commander Ulysses S. Grant into the national spotlight, claimed the life of Confederate commander Albert S. Johnston, and forever buried the notion that the Civil War would be a short conflict. The conflagration at Shiloh had its roots in the strong Union advance during the winter of 1861-1862 that resulted in the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson in Tennessee. The offensive collapsed General Albert S. Johnston advanced line in Kentucky and forced him to withdraw all the way to northern Mississippi. Anxious to attack the enemy, Johnston began concentrating Southern forces at Corinth, a major railroad center just below the Tennessee border. His bold plan called for his Army of the Mississippi to march north and destroy General Grant's Army of the Tennessee before it could link up with another Union army on the way to join him. On the morning of April 6, Johnston boasted to his subordinates, "Tonight we will water our horses in the Tennessee!" They nearly did so. Johnston's sweeping attack hit the unsuspecting Federal camps at Pittsburg Landing and routed the enemy from position after position as they fell back toward the Tennessee River. Johnston's sudden death in the Peach Orchard, however, coupled with stubborn Federal resistance, widespread confusion, and Grant's dogged determination to hold the field, saved the Union army from destruction. The arrival of General Don C. Buell's reinforcements that night turned the tide of battle. The next day, Grant seized the initiative and attacked the Confederates, driving them from the field. Shiloh was one of the bloodiest battles of the entire war, with nearly 24,000 men killed, wounded, and missing. Edward Cunningham, a young Ph.D. candidate studying under the legendary T. Harry Williams at Louisiana State University, researched and wrote Shiloh and the Western Campaign of 1862 in 1966. Although it remained unpublished, many Shiloh experts and park rangers consider it to be the best overall examination of the battle ever written. Indeed, Shiloh historiography is just now catching up with Cunningham, who was decades ahead of modern scholarship. Western Civil War historians Gary D. Joiner and Timothy B. Smith have resurrected Cunningham's beautifully written and deeply researched manuscript from its undeserved obscurity. Fully edited and richly annotated with updated citations and observations, original maps, and a complete order of battle and table of losses, Shiloh and the Western Campaign of 1862 will be welcomed by everyone who enjoys battle history at its finest. Edward Cunningham, Ph.D., studied under T. Harry Williams at Louisiana State University. He was the author of The Port Hudson Campaign: 1862-1863 (LSU, 1963). Dr. Cunningham died in 1997. Gary D. Joiner, Ph.D. is the author of One Damn Blunder from Beginning

to End: The Red River Campaign of 1864, winner of the 2004 Albert Castel Award and the 2005 A. M. Pate, Jr., Award, and Through the Howling Wilderness: The 1864 Red River Campaign and Union Failure in the West. He lives in Shreveport, Louisiana. Timothy B. Smith, Ph.D., is author of Champion Hill: Decisive Battle for Vicksburg (winner of the 2004 Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Non-fiction Award), The Untold Story of Shiloh: The Battle and the Battlefield, and This Great Battlefield of Shiloh: History, Memory, and the Establishment of a Civil War National Military Park. A former ranger at Shiloh, Tim teaches history at the University of Tennessee.

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Customer Reviews

With their sparkling introductory essay, editors Gary Joiner and Timothy Smith give readers ample reason to want to read O. Edward Sullivan's 1966 dissertation....Anyone with a serious interest in the early Western theater campaigns and the Battle of Shiloh will find this book essential reading. Casual readers will likely enjoy it as well (not something you can often say about a dissertation). (Civil War Books and Authors)...it may well be the best, most perceptive and authoritative account of the Battle of Shiloh .." (The Weekly Standard)...an excellent scholarly work about the pivotal Shiloh Campaign. (Collecting Miscellany) "the best history of the most important battle in the West and is required reading. This is the best book on the battle. (Civil War Courier)deeply researched" puts into perspective the unexpected Northern victory at Shiloh" (The Midwest Book Review)

Edward Cunningham, Ph.D., studied under T. Harry Williams at Louisiana State University. He was the author of The Port Hudson Campaign: 1862-1863 (LSU, 1963). Dr. Cunningham died in 1997. Gary D. Joiner, Ph.D. is the author of One Damn Blunder from Beginning to End: The Red River Campaign of 1864, winner of the 2004 Albert Castel Award and the 2005 A. M. Pate, Jr., Award, and Through the Howling Wilderness: The 1864 Red River Campaign and Union Failure in the West. He lives in Shreveport, Louisiana.

I bought this book because I'd also often heard of the battle of Shiloh, but knew almost nothing about it. This book has the thoroughness and completeness of a PhD thesis (because it is), and yet is written in a very readable fashion (unless you read all the footnotes). The book was the most detailed campaign description I have ever read. The lineup of military units (both Federal and Confederate) during the different phases of the battle is listed. Indeed, I had the feeling that I should have read the book with an accompanying detailed map and movable markers (to better track the movement of various units). The book's thoroughness was impressive, so the author deserves a 5/5 for the outstanding research that is evident throughout the book. Though perhaps unfair, I give the book itself a 4/5 because I suspect many readers may be surprised by the level of detail in this book.

This book appears to have been a study written within the National Park Service by Mr. Cunningham years ago. It has been updated by others and I like the fact that in the book where information is updated, the reader is told that it is updated and why. For example, Cunningham seems to indicate that the fighting on April 7, 1862, the second day of the battle, was a tactical draw. The authors who have updated the book point out that most historians would disagree now -- that tactically it was a Federal victory. The best part of the book in my opinion is the first chapter or two, which really lays out for the reader the incredible amount of territory that the Southern Confederacy "out West" had to defend. I don't think this fact is appreciated by all. It's not the distance of Richmond to the Blue Ridge Mountains or even to the Alleghenies. It's a vast amount of territory. There is quite a lot of tactical detail in this book, but I enjoyed it. However, it sometimes seems so detailed that it's hard for the author to tie up some loose ends, which sometimes made it rather tedious to read. This is a problem with many detailed tactical accounts; however, the reason I bought the book was to learn the details of the battle. All in all, this is a very good book on Shiloh and one that I probably will take off the shelf often, as I look for more information and wish to read

again.

Shiloh was the first really monster battle of the Civil War. To be sure, other battles of substance had occurred earlier--from Wilson's Creek in the West to First Manassas in the East. But none was as vicious, nasty, and deadly as Shiloh. This book, by O. Edward Cunningham, represents his doctoral dissertation. Somehow, it did not get published in book form, although it was used by National Park Service personnel. However, all to the good, his dissertation has been recently published, annotated by Gary Joiner and Timothy B. Smith, who provide updates and comments on the original document--as well as some minor changes to address inaccuracies. The end result is a solid contribution to understanding Shiloh and the context in which that battle took place. The book does not begin with Shiloh, but with events that led to this battle. Here, we see the development of Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston's position, the development of the Union forces opposing Johnston. Key here are early battles that unhinged the Confederate line and forced a retreat where disparate forces united. We get a sense of the importance of conflicts at Mill Springs and Forts Henry and Donelson. The Confederate forces gathered at Corinth, as Grant's army camped on the grounds above the Tennessee River at Pittsburg Landing. The Hero of Fort Sumter, P. G. T. Beauregard took operational command, developing the plan of attack to surprise Union forces. And Cunningham then goes on to explain in great detail (one can almost get lost in the minutiae) the actual progression of events at Shiloh. Cunningham does a fine job of getting the available information together to make sense of a confusing battle. The editors credit him with paying less attention to the Hornet's Nest and more to the Crossroads than quite a few others did in prior volumes on the battle. This book, despite its age, is still one of the best volumes on the subject (I think Daniel's book is the gold standard, but this volume holds up pretty well in comparison). If interested in an in depth analysis of Shiloh, this is a very good resource.

I gave this book the highest mark because of the incredible effort that the author put in to make this book as accurate and concise and detailed as humanly possible, and because the book with some additions and modifications was originally Cunningham's thesis for his doctorate. Few have gone to such an effort to be as detailed as to write a thesis of this magnitude. This book a true study in the love of the subject matter, and gives true honor to the men North or South who fought at Shiloh who after all, right or wrong, were and will remain American soldier's.

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