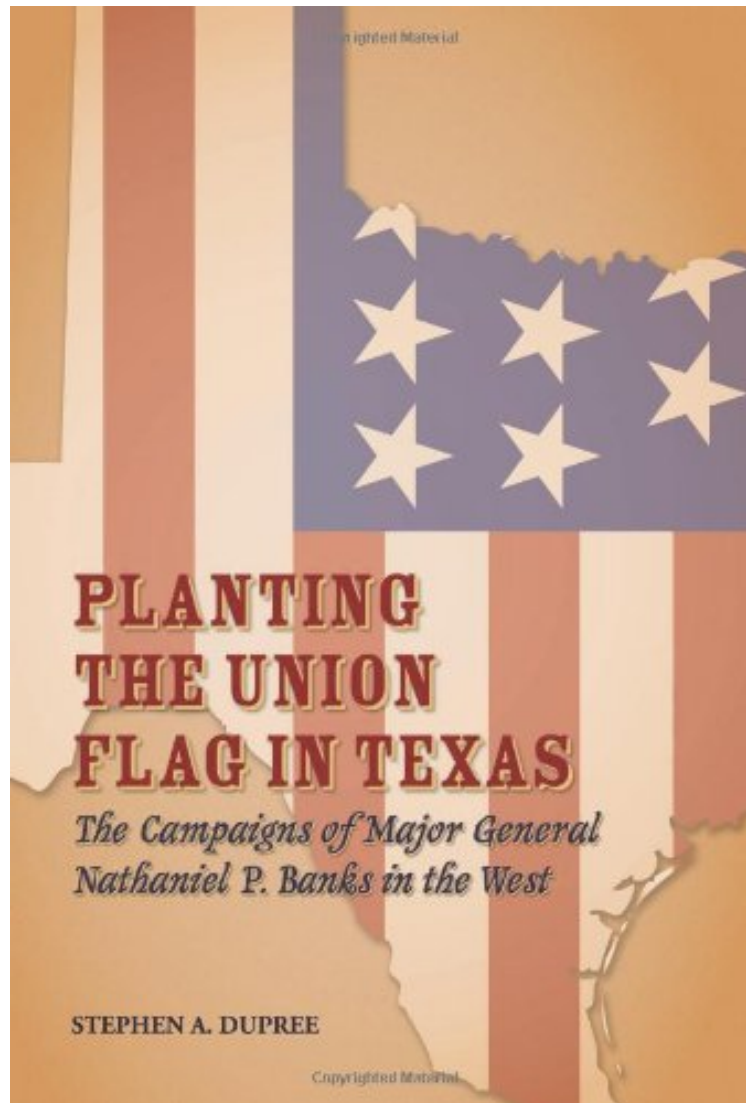


[Free] Planting the Union Flag in Texas: The Campaigns of Major General Nathaniel P. Banks in the West (Red River Valley Books, sponsored by Texas AM University-Texarkana)

## **Planting the Union Flag in Texas: The Campaigns of Major General Nathaniel P. Banks in the West (Red River Valley Books, sponsored by Texas AM University-Texarkana)**

*Stephen A. Dupree*

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**Stephen A. Dupree : Planting the Union Flag in Texas: The Campaigns of Major General Nathaniel P. Banks in the West (Red River Valley Books, sponsored by Texas AM University-Texarkana)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Planting the Union Flag in Texas: The Campaigns of Major General Nathaniel P. Banks in the West (Red River Valley Books, sponsored by Texas AM University-

Texarkana):

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Technical ReadBy Mail ManNot what I would call a "good bath room reading material." Primarily a chronicle of a Generals successes and failures.7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A Requiem for Nathaniel BanksBy Mark LongstrothThis book is laid out in a linear fashion and is relatively easy to follow. This book is more about General Banks than the Civil War in Texas. I found the book interesting in that I had never read a sympathetic treatment of Nathaniel Banks. Banks was an important Democrat. He had been the Speaker of the House before the Civil War and Lincoln appointed Banks, a Major General of Volunteers. He was one of the senior generals in the Union Army. Banks career in the east was punctuated with several run-ins with Stonewall Jackson. Banks was sent west and relieved Benjamin Butler, another political general, who had occupied New Orleans, after its capture by Admiral Farragut. Banks was charged with developing a civilian government in Louisiana and New Orleans, clearing Confederate forces from the Mississippi River, planting the Union flag in Texas to show federal influence and support the Mexicans in their war with France and capturing the port of Mobile. He managed to do almost all of these but was severely hampered by his lack of skill as a military commander. While Banks proved himself to be an excellent politician he was a poor general who trusted his subordinates who often proved to be worse than he at anticipating what needed to be done. The author points out that Banks didn't learn from his mistakes and never expected the enemy to do anything other than what he wanted them to do. Banks was unlucky in that the Confederate commander he faced Richard Taylor A Crisis In Confederate Command: Edmund Kirby Smith, Richard Taylor, And The Army Of The Trans-Mississippi was skillful and aggressive. Banks also looked to his commander Henry Halleck for direction but students of the Civil War know that Halleck was a master at giving vague advice so he would not be linked to any failures. The book follows Bank's five attempted invasions of Texas. Banks as commander of the Gulf Department organized these attacks. An invasion of Galveston by several hundred troops was too small to repeal a Confederate counterattack and the force was captured. An attempt to capture Sabine Pass Sabine Pass: The Confederacy's Thermopylae (Clifton and Shirley Caldwell Texas Heritage Series) was repulsed by a tiny garrison force whose accurate artillery fire forced the Union Commander, General Franklin, to withdraw. Next Banks tried to send Franklin overland from New Orleans to Texas but Franklin's progress stopped after Banks returned to New Orleans. Bank then landed forces at the mouth of the Rio Grande River and occupied Brownsville, Texas The Yankee Invasion of Texas (Canseco-Keck History) temporarily disrupted Confederate trade with Europe through Mexico. After some early success, Banks removed most of these forces and concentrated them back in Louisiana for a fifth attempt to invade Texas, this time up the Red River. Halleck had constantly suggested this invasion route and responded to Bank's frequent reports and requests for advice with requests for reasons why he did not invade Texas by way of the Red River and finally Banks succumbed to the pressure. Much has been written on the fiasco that was the Red River campaign. Through the Howling Wilderness: The 1864 Red River Campaign and Union Failure in the West Little to Eat and Thin Mud to Drink: Letters, Diaries, and Memoirs from the Red River Campaigns, 1863-1864 (Voices of the Civil War Series.) Earthen Walls, Iron Men: Fort DeRussy, Louisiana, and the Defense of Red River Banks was ill served by Franklin again and Richard Taylor ruined Banks and several other generals' reputations. The Red River Campaign takes up the second half of the book with accounts of the Battles at Mansfield and Pleasant Hill and Banks hasty retreat to meet the Navy at Alexandria. The Navy was trapped by low water at Alexandria and there is an excellent account of the construction of two dams to raise the water level high enough to allow the Navy to flee. So ended Bank's fifth and last attempt to invade Texas and plant the flag. There are a few large-scale maps and two battlefield maps of Mansfield and Pleasant Hill. There are few portraits of important officers and pictures of the construction of the Red River Dams. I would recommend this book to those interested in the Civil War in Trans Mississippi, specifically, Louisiana and Texas. The author does a good job of assessing Bank's attempts at the end of a long supply and communications line to do what Washington wanted given the limited troops and vast areas that he covered. This book paints a picture of a dysfunctional Union Army far from the harsh publicity and glory of the eastern front.

Appointed by President Lincoln to command the Gulf Department in November 1862, Nathaniel Prentice Banks was given three assignments, one of which was to occupy some point in Texas. He was told that when he united his army with Grant's, he would assume command of both. Banks, then, had the opportunity to become the leading general in the West—perhaps the most important general in the war. But he squandered what successes he had, never rendezvoused with Grant's army, and ultimately orchestrated some of the greatest military blunders of the war. "Banks's faults as a general," writes author Stephen A. Dupree, "were legion." The originality of Planting the Union Flag in Texas lies not just in the author's description of the battles and campaigns Banks led, nor in his recognition of the character traits that underlay Banks's decisions. Rather, it lies in how Dupree synthesizes his studies of Banks's various actions during his tour of duty in and near Texas to help the reader understand them as a unified campaign. He skillfully weaves together Banks's various attempts to gain Union control of Texas with his other activities and shines the light of Banks's character on the resulting events to help explain both their potential and their shortcomings. In the

end, readers will have a holistic understanding of Banks's "appalling" failure to win Texas and may even be led to ask how the post-Civil War era might have been different had he been successful. This fine study will appeal to Civil War buffs and fans of military and Texas history.

"Overall this is a well-written, thoughtful, and detailed examination of Northern attempts to invade Texas."-  
Southwestern Historical Quarterly