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Red River Campaign of 1864 and the Loss by the Confederacy of the Civil War

Michael J. Forsyth

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Michael J. Forsyth : Red River Campaign of 1864 and the Loss by the Confederacy of the Civil War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Red River Campaign of 1864 and the Loss by the Confederacy of the Civil War:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An Interesting StudyBy Walter WoodmanThis well written and researched little book deals with the issue of whether the Confederacy could have done more with their victory in April, 1864, in the Red River campaign and whether there was a failure in the command structure. The Northern forces quickly captured New Orleans and south Louisiana in 1862; but it was not until 1864 that they began their move north to capture the rest of the State of Louisiana and begin their conquest of Texas. The Northern forces were led by the inept political general, Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks, a former Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives. The Southern forces were led by the aristocratic Maj. Gen. Richard Taylor, the son of a former president, Zachary Taylor, and the brother of Jefferson Davis's first wife, who had died at a young age. Neither man was a trained career soldier. But Taylor, a Yale graduate and former Louisiana sugar planter before the war, had served under Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley in 1862 and was the better general. After the Battle of Mansfield on April 8, 1864, resulted in a Confederate victory, General Taylor wanted to pursue and destroy the remainder of Banks's 30,000 man (and some women) army, but was prevented from doing so by his superior in Shreveport, Lt. Gen. Kirby Smith, with the result

that most of Banks's army was able to retreat to the safety of south Louisiana and live to fight another day in other battles. The author documents all of this and specifically shows how certain troops from the Red River Campaign were used in other battles in other states. The author further points out that the crushing destruction of such a large Union army so close to Lincoln's re-election campaign in November, 1864, might have contributed to his election defeat with all the consequences that might have meant for the war. An excellent and recommended study.⁷ of 9 people found the following review helpful. The Red River Campaign of 1864 By Michael Bush An interesting account of largely ignored campaign during the Civil War. Michael Forsyth's detailed descriptions of the relationships amongst the primary Union and Confederate leaders sets the stage for his analysis of the campaign and also sets this book apart from other military history books. His conclusion that this campaign could have changed the outcome of the Civil War is both interesting and soundly arrived at based on the level of research he conducted. Highly recommend this book for those studying the decisive but intangible aspect of combat power - leadership.

The Union Army's Red River Campaign began on March 12, 1864, with a two-pronged attack aimed at gaining control of Shreveport, Louisiana. The Union's main effort came up from Berwick Bay via the Red River, while a supporting force moved south from Little Rock, Arkansas. It lasted until May 22, 1864, when, after suffering significant casualties, the Union army retreated back to Simmesport, Louisiana. The campaign was an attempt to prevent Confederate alliance with the French in Mexico, deny supplies to Confederate forces, and secure vast quantities of Louisiana and Texas cotton for Northern mills. With this examination of Confederate leadership and how it affected the Red River Campaign, the author argues against the standard assumption that the campaign had no major effect on the outcome of the war. In fact, the South had--and lost--an excellent opportunity to inflict a decisive defeat that might have changed the course of history. With this campaign as an ideal example, the politics of military decision-making in general are also analyzed.

"Thorough examination...well researched...informative...very useful" --The Civil War News "Concerns the might-have-beens of the Red River Campaign...provocative thesis" --Blue Gray "Recommended" --Colorado Libraries. About the Author Michael J. Forsyth is a major in the United States Army currently serving as an instructor of artillery tactics at the United States Army's Field Artillery School. He lives in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.