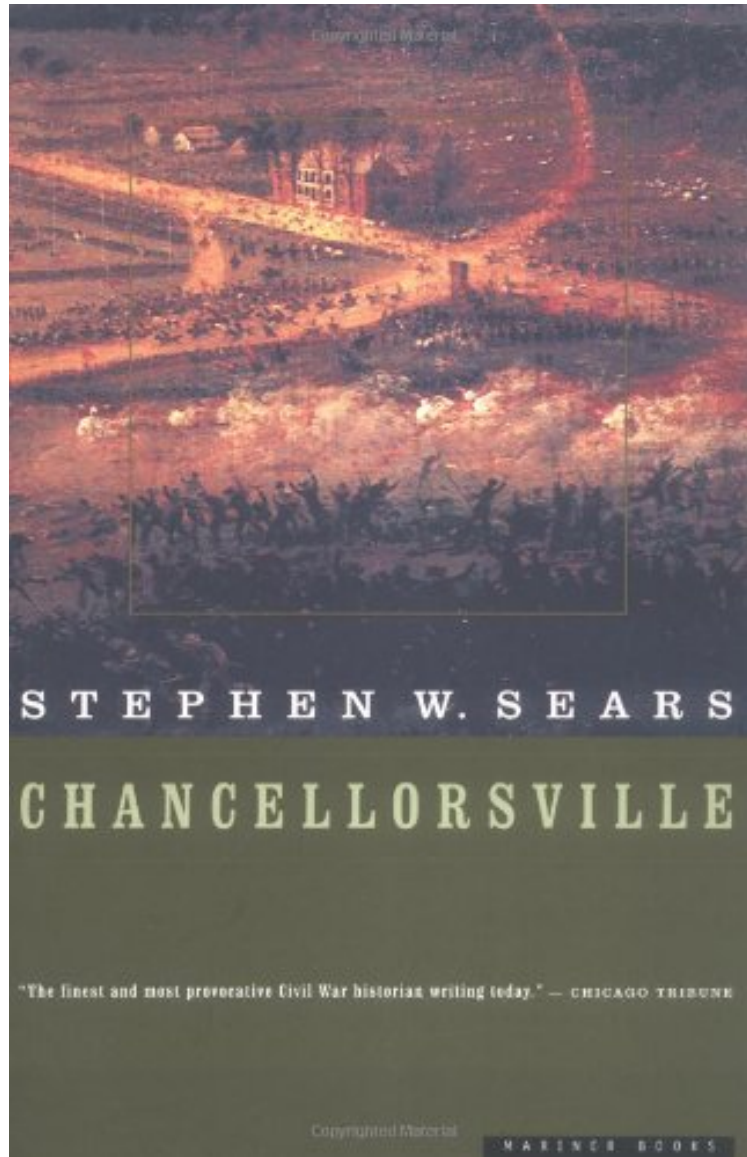


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Chancellorsville

Stephen W. Sears

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Stephen W. Sears : Chancellorsville before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chancellorsville:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent account By Jon Clear discussion of battle without the odd reports of key battle events that have appeared as almost facts over the years. Makes clear the luck that helped Lee and harmed Hooker. Really drives home how badly served Hooker was by his Calvary, his communications and his structure for his large guns. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful book but no argument for

HookerBy John BenintendiI have just recently gotten back into Civil War History after about a 5 year lapse. I read Foote's Fredericksburg to Meridian (Part II of his massive trilogy) in August. In that book, I learned about the Battles of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg - as well as others. In looking for books on Chancellorsville, I came across this one by Stephen Sears. I bought it along with Gettysburg as well as his others on Antietam and the Peninsula Campaign. I also read the reviews on Chancellorsville and I saw some that indicated this book was a defense of General Hooker. After reading this book in a mere two weeks, I did not find it to be a defense of Hooker but more of a realistic approach to what Hooker did after he took over for Burnside. Hooker did many great things during his time as head of the Army before the Battle of Chancellorsville. However, Mr. Sears did not leave out his shortcomings during the actual battle. He points out that his decision to abandon Hazel Grove was one of the biggest mistakes of the battle. He also points out that Hooker's decision to retreat was a mistake since Lee had sent some of his army facing Hooker to take on the VI Corps at Fredericksburg. Lastly, Mr. Sears tells of Hooker's mistake in not turning over command of the Army to General Couch after his being wounded. I did not find this book to be an argument in favor of Hooker and against the generals under him. There is no doubt that the generals under Hooker, at least a couple of them (Generals Howard and Stoneman) failed Hooker. This is made very clear in the book. But Mr. Sears does not excuse Hooker for these failures totally. The failure of the XI Corps was not totally of Hooker's doing but more because of Howard. This comes through loud and clear in the book. This is a very good book. It is easy to read and understand. It is easy to get bogged down in the names of the generals and whether they are confederate or union but Mr. Sears made this easy for he put the names of the units behind them so if you know what states were fighting for the Union and what states were Confederate, then it is not difficult. The pace of the book is very good. I did not find any part of the book boring or tedious. I now have a much better understanding of the battle. In fact, I have already begun Mr. Sears' book on Gettysburg and am already 50 pages into it and am liking it very much. I am looking forward to finishing Gettysburg and then moving on to the other books I have that Mr. Sears wrote. I highly recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in the Civil War and specifically the eastern theater. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. " what was it like to be there" By Miriam Foster As a non-American (Irish) but with a passion for history, I found Stephen Sears 3 books; Landscape turned red, Antietam, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg to be outstanding reads. The detail provided is first class and they gave me a deeper understanding of the politics of the time especially from a northern standpoint. The battle descriptions truly answers the age old question, " what was it like to be there". I cannot recommend these books strongly enough.

Sears describes the series of controversial events that define this crucial battle, including General Robert E. Lee's radical decision to divide his small army--a violation of basic military rules--sending Stonewall Jackson on his famous march around the Union army flank. Jackson's death--accidentally shot by one of his own soldiers--is one of the many fascinating stories included in this definitive account of the battle of Chancellorsville.

.com Many Civil War buffs have called the battle of Chancellorsville Robert E. Lee's greatest victory; Stephen W. Sears doesn't necessarily agree, and in this painstakingly researched book, he offers ample evidence that Lee had luck on his side in the battle. Lee was a great general all right, and his men did fight savagely. But the notion that Union General Joseph Hooker was inept is cast into doubt by Sears, who describes the action of Chancellorsville as most great battle books do--hour by hour. This book is the finest rendition of the battle yet and an interesting thesis for Civil War discussion. Lee's penchant for aggressiveness and his faith in his troops as unbeatable may have worked at Chancellorsville, but Sears argues that these alone couldn't win the war. Lee learned this lesson too, a month later at Gettysburg. From Publishers Weekly Chancellorsville was one of the Civil War's pivotal campaigns, a great victory for the South that, however, led directly to the death of top Confederate general Stonewall Jackson. It hasn't generated the amount of literature devoted to most major Civil War battles, largely because John Bigelow's 1910 classic, *The Campaign of Chancellorsville*, seemed for years to offer the last word. But Sears, employing a mix of published and unpublished primary accounts to buttress secondary studies, manages to offer more than one new word in a thoroughly engaging text. Most notable is his use of Union military intelligence reports to show how General Joseph Hooker was fed a stream of accurate information about Robert E. Lee's troops; conversely, Sears points out the battlefield communications failures that hampered the Union army at critical times. He also examines the roles of Hooker and his corps commanders, finding that half of the latter badly served their commander in the campaign. On the Confederate side, Sears analyzes Lee's faulty intelligence and his relationships with his subordinates. Throughout, he highlights Lee's marvelous good luck, as well as his army's fighting capability. One of the book's three appendices explores several of the battle's "romances"--e.g., Jackson's wounding, Alfred Pleasonton's false stories--while two other appendices present orders of battle and casualties. A model campaign study, Sears's account of Chancellorsville is likely to remain the standard for years to come. Maps and photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Sears turns his formidable skills from General George McClellan (*To the Gates of Richmond*, Ticknor Fields, 1994) to "Fighting Joe" Hooker and the last great battle in which Napoleonic-style tactical offense prevailed. Sears's almost hour-by-hour account of soldiers under fire will confuse some, but close

readers will find a stunning analysis of how terrain, personality, chance, and other factors affect fighting and distort strategic design. Sears offers new information on the "modern" intelligence gathering of the Union Army, refutes many old "romances" of Chancellorsville, especially the one that Hooker lost his nerve, and adds vital details to both commanders and battle movements. He also shows that Hooker, more than McClellan, made the Army of the Potomac into "the finest army on the planet"—one that survived bad generalship and Robert E. Lee's aggressive moves at Chancellorsville. Sears also reminds us that "character" and "will" count for much in war. The Confederacy did not die with Stonewall Jackson at Chancellorsville, as Southerners often lament, but many men did and to little purpose. Battlefield victory alone did not win the war. A tour de force in military history. ?Randall M. Miller, St. Joseph's Univ., Philadelphia Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.