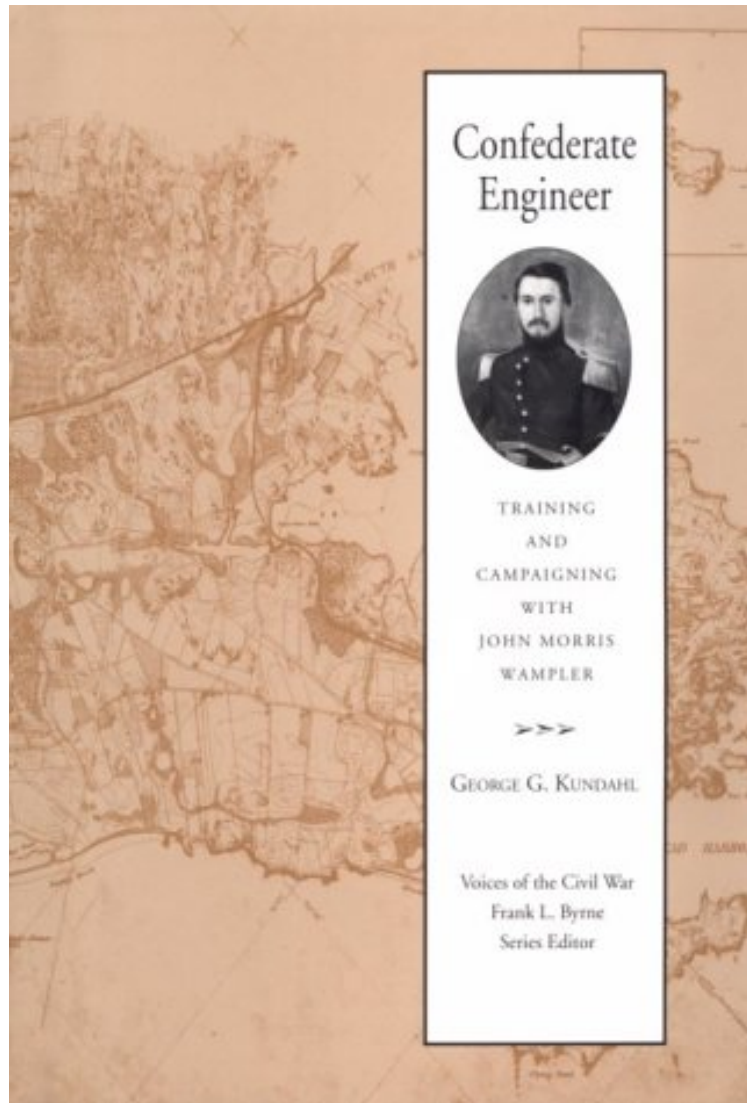


(Free read ebook) Confederate Engineer: Training Campaigning John Morris Wampler (Voices Of The Civil War)

## Confederate Engineer: Training Campaigning John Morris Wampler (Voices Of The Civil War)

*George G. Kundahl*

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**George G. Kundahl : Confederate Engineer: Training Campaigning John Morris Wampler (Voices Of The Civil War)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Confederate Engineer: Training Campaigning John Morris Wampler (Voices Of The Civil War):

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. John Morris WanplerBy Ltc Phill was researching a relative who

served in the 2nd Rgt Engineers, PACS, and there is not much information available on the three Confederate Engineer Regiments. This book is more of a biography of Wampler, who was a staff officer and not a line officer in an engineer organization.<sup>9</sup> of 10 people found the following review helpful. A Peripheral View By A Customer This is an interesting book for a variety of reasons. The subject is John Morris Wampler, a young man whose life we follow from an inauspicious start in pre-civil War MD, to his untimely end as a Confederate Captain in Charleston, SC. The story is made doubly interesting, as Wampler is the author's great-great-grandfather, and one can feel Kundahl's personal investment to tell the story completely and without embellishment. One strength of the book is the insight it gives us into the institutions that built our country. Prior to the war, Wampler finds his early niche with the U.S. Coast Survey; at the time, an organization considered to be the premier scientific organization in the country and charged by Congress to conduct a thorough survey of the US coastline. For those with a technical bent, they will enjoy Kundahl's detailed description of the surveying techniques used by Wampler in his work along the Texas coast. Another strength is the unadorned manner in which we follow Wampler's somewhat unsuccessful pursuit of fame and fortune, both prior to and during the war. Kundahl provides a solid record of Wampler's attempts to advance his career, to include the sometimes clumsy use and abuse of mentors. The underlying story could probably be written about any aggressive 30-year-old, however, and that adds credibility to the book, showing us that human nature has not changed. The real strength--and in some respects the weakness--is Kundahl's description of Wampler's involvement in various actions during the war. At best, Wampler's involvement was always peripheral. Kundahl's strength is his ability to take the perspective of the periphery and show how it played into the greater scheme of things. For those without a detailed knowledge of the Civil War, however, the view is sometimes hard to grasp. While the book is well-illustrated with Wampler's maps--his forte--battle maps showing the greater picture would be a very welcome addition. Nonetheless, the thorough accounting of Wampler's actions does give an excellent insight to the life of a staff officer. This duty is not usually depicted in typical histories, which tend to focus on the generals at the top or the infantrymen at the bottom. In addition, the book gives a good review of the art of military engineering during the war and opens the idea of other books focusing on specialized staff functions at the time. The book ends with the very personal story of Wampler's widow trying to place his sacrifice into a framework that brings it the dignity and honor she feels it deserves. Kundahl's ability to draw on family records gives this section special poignancy. Given his access to family records, Kundahl's book also raises an interesting question: In this age of e-mails and telephone calls, will such books be able to be written in the future? There will always be a large public record to help document the actions of the generals and a corpus of front-line reporting to reveal the ordeal of the privates. It is doubtful, though, that these personal accounts from the periphery--which is no doubt the view of the vast majority of the participants in any period of history--will be preserved. If for nothing else, Kundahl's telling of one particular individual's peripheral view is a valuable addition to our understanding of this period in our history.<sup>4</sup> of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Unique Voice By H.C. Kellermann Kundahl's biography of Morris Wampler is an excellent read! The story of Wampler's life and untimely death has an appeal for Civil War enthusiasts, for those interested in the development of the engineering profession, and for those who would like to learn about the life and times of an average citizen in a tumultuous period in American history. The material of the book has been gathered from Wampler's personal diaries and from the painstaking research of the author, who is Wampler's great, great grandson. The rich source material and Kundahl's deft handling of it give the reader the immediate experience of Wampler's life from his early education at the Mercer Academy to his work with the U.S. Coast Survey, an important scientific body that was mapping the Nation's expanding boundaries, and, finally, to his labor and ultimate sacrifice in support of the Confederate cause. Viewing the progress of the Civil War from the vantage point of and, at times, in the very words of a mid-level officer is an extraordinary experience. Kundahl had done a masterful job for transforming Wampler's life into a compelling experience for the reader. Four stars!

Compared with generals or even foot soldiers, relatively little is known about the role played by engineers during the Civil War. This first study of Confederate engineering in more than forty years combines biography with a comprehensive overview of the profession to present the life and accomplishments of one talented individual. John Morris Wampler was a topographical engineer in the Provisional Army of the Confederate States and eventually became chief engineer of the Confederate Army of Tennessee. Based on extensive use of Wampler's unpublished correspondence and journals, the biography follows his experiences before hostilities and then during the war in both major theaters. It also draws on the writings of his wife, Kate, to show how she struggled to hold their family together during the fighting. The combination of both the husband and wife's perspectives on the war makes this treatment unique. Wampler's experiences spanned the range of activities undertaken by a Civil War engineer, and by midway through the conflict he had worked on engineering projects in eight of the Confederate states, as well as Maryland and Kentucky. While his specialty was cartography, he also built and repaired earthen works, laid out and prepared hasty defensive positions, conducted reconnaissance, reconstructed bridges, and mended railway lines and routes of march. Confederate Engineer also presents a fascinating account of antebellum engineering, showing the importance of the U.S. Coast Survey as a training ground for both Union and Confederate engineers. In addition, the book contains

valuable material on the Confederate invasion of Kentucky—including the battle of Perryville—and on the defense of Battery Wagner at Charleston. By focusing on a staff engineer, the narrative provides a fresh perspective on the conduct of military operations during the Civil War. In telling this story, the author never loses sight of the human dimension of an ordinary man confronting the challenges of extraordinary times. The Author: George G. Kundahl is a retired major general in the U.S. Army. He served as executive director of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 1981–1990, and as a principal deputy assistant secretary of defense, 1990–1993. He received a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Alabama.

About the Author The Author: George G. Kundahl is a retired major general in the U.S. Army. He served as executive director of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, 1981–1990, and as a principal deputy assistant secretary of defense, 1990–1993. He received a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Alabama.