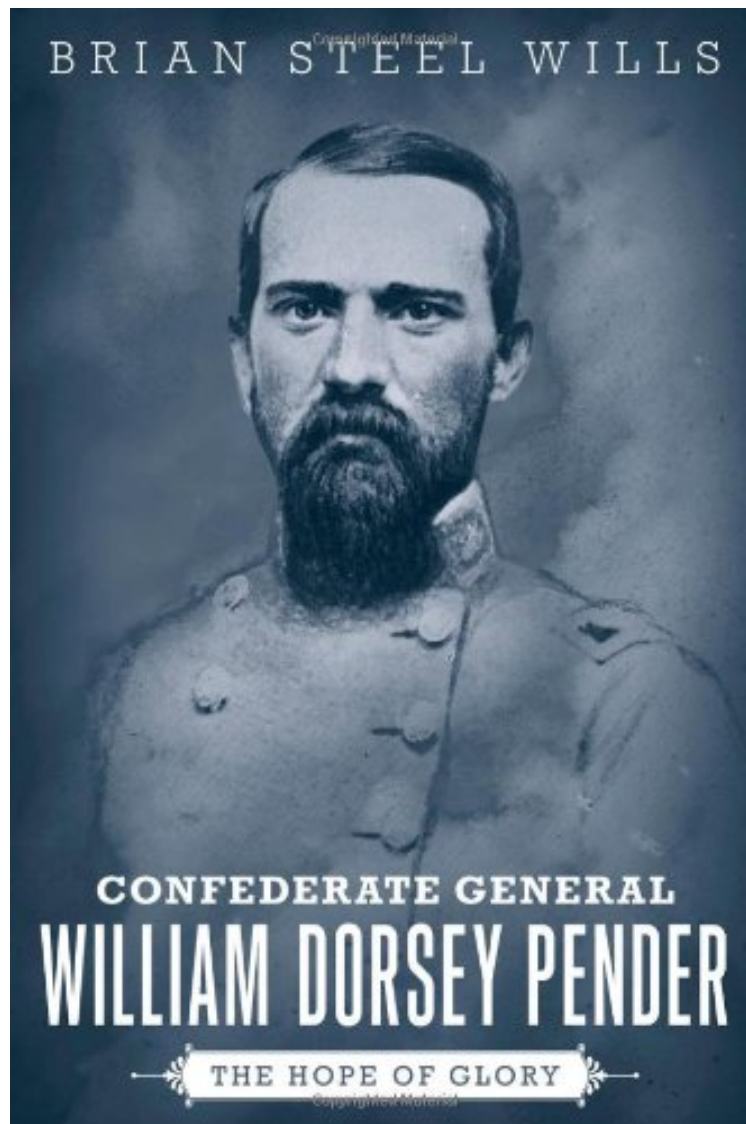


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Confederate General William Dorsey Pender: The Hope of Glory (Conflicting Worlds: New Dimensions of the American Civil War)

Brian Steel Wills

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Brian Steel Wills : Confederate General William Dorsey Pender: The Hope of Glory (Conflicting Worlds: New Dimensions of the American Civil War) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Confederate General William Dorsey Pender: The Hope of Glory (Conflicting Worlds: New Dimensions of the American Civil War):

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Great book about an often overlooked lieutenant
By Kristopher D White
I was greatly surprised to find this book. Pender is so often forgotten in the annals of the Army of Northern Virginia. Wills brings the life and career of Dorsey Pender to the fore. This is a great addition to any library and can be enjoyed by any Civil War historian, or buff. Well written and very well researched.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If I'm alive I'll see you in the enemy's works!
By Jonathan Weller
Confederate General William Dorsey Pender: The Hope of Glory by Brian Steel Willis is a rather detailed account of the life and career of the 29-year-old North Carolinian who was mortally wounded on July 2nd, 1863, at Gettysburg. While the book provides details galore about Pender and his meteoric rise up the promotional ladder of the Confederacy, the book often fails to grip the reader and keep one's attention focused on the story at hand. William Dorsey Pender was considered by many as one of the Confederacy's bright and shining stars before his mortal wounding at Gettysburg. Willis's book shows that Pender was much more than a maniacal secessionist that cared only for disunion and preservation of the institution of slavery, he was a tormented and often conceited young man who allowed his youth and immaturity to lead him into life's common traps. This book's main focus is centered on personal accounts between Pender and his wife, Fanny, allowing the reader to see the personal side of a man who risked everything for a cause he believed to be right. These personal accounts are insightful and helpful in better understanding the relationship dynamics of the nineteenth century, but often times they inundate the reader and bog down the story. The personal accounts do not necessarily detract from the overall work, but it does at times make the work hard to digest in large doses. The book begins with young Pender's life as a young man at Tarboro North Carolina and his subsequent entrance into West Point; it then spends a fairly large amount of pages following Pender's time of military service time in the "old army." The bulk of Willis's work concentrates on Pender's service to the Southern Confederacy from 1861-1863; however, the story does not start to get real interesting until the descriptions of the Seven Days Battles in the summer of 1862. Subsequent campaigns are discussed throughout the book, but the Seven Days Battles are easily the highlight. This, in itself, is a great disappointment to me. My entire reason for buying and reading the book was to find out why Pender was so essential to the Confederate victory that never matured at Gettysburg. Pender's inclusion and movement North with the Army of Northern Virginia was the part of the book that I looked most forward to getting a better grip on. I really wanted to know what little towns Pender's division moved through and saw; what was his beliefs and thoughts on Maryland and Pennsylvania; and what was his mindset on the defeat and retreat from Gettysburg afterwards. These questions, however, were not answered with all that much detail. I felt the author could have added much more on Pender's involvement at Gettysburg--like why was his wounding so debilitating for Robert E. Lee's battle plans--but Willis for some reason just glossed over the campaign rather quickly. I am sure that was not Willis's intention, but sadly that is what happened with the book. William Dorsey Pender is not as well-known as men like "Stonewall" Jackson, James Longstreet or even A.P. Hill, but after reading this book you realize that maybe he should be. This guy never backed away from a fight--which deprived the South of promising young general, but this is what made Dorsey Pender the incredible warrior that Lee mentioned in the same sentence as Jackson and Hood. This book is an interesting look at Pender's life and career, but it does at times overwhelm and bog the reader down. If you enjoy Civil War books that encompass the reader with primary sources and letters, then this book is definitely for you. If you, like me, prefer more battlefield stories and reports then you should probably look elsewhere.
11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. The Confederate's Boy General
By Eidetic Reader
William Dorsey Pender was the youngest major general in the Confederate army at the time of his mortal wounding on the 2nd day of Gettysburg, He was held in great esteem by General Robert E. Lee who commented later that year that he was losing his best men. "Jackson, Pender, Hood." Who was this man who was mentioned alongside famous Confederate fighting generals, Stonewall Jackson and John Bell Hood? This book will tell you who William Dorsey Pender was, how he became the person he was, and what were the life experiences that drove him to his destiny. Based on archival records, contemporary recollections and the copious correspondence between Pender and his wife, this book reveals the complexity behind a military man during the greatest conflict in United States history. Brian Wills, the author, had previously assisted in the publication of the Letters of a General to his Wife weaves together an illuminating portrait of this young general. In this book, he also sheds new light on some of the letters which were left out of that earlier book. Reading this book will give you new appreciation of the needs of a military life and provides lessons on leadership and provide a view of the Confederate cause in the early part of the war. Dorsey Pender's life was unfortunately a tapestry cut short by his untimely death at the age of 29. The What-Ifs of his life are touched upon only briefly and we will never know what might have been.

During the Civil War, North Carolinian William Dorsey Pender established himself as one of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia's best young generals. He served in most of the significant engagements of the war in the eastern theater while under the command of Joseph E. Johnston at Seven Pines and Robert E. Lee from the Seven Days to Gettysburg. His most crucial contributions to Confederate success came at the battles of Second Manassas, Shepherdstown, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. After an effective first day at Gettysburg, Pender was struck by a shell and disabled, necessitating his return to Virginia for what he hoped would be only an extended convalescence. Although Pender initially survived the wound, he died soon thereafter due to complications from his injury. In this

thorough biography of Pender, noted Civil War historian Brian Steel Wills examines both the young general's military career and his domestic life. While Pender devoted himself to military service, he also embraced the Episcopal Church and was baptized before his command in the field. According to Wills, Pender had an insatiable quest for "glory" in both earthly and heavenly realms, and he delighted in his role as a husband and father. In Pender's voluminous correspondence with his wife, Fanny, he shared his beliefs and offered views and opinions on a vast array of subjects. In the end, Wills suggests that Pender's story captures both the idealistic promise and the despair of a war that cost the lives of many Americans and changed the nation forever.

"Unquestionably the best biography [of Pender] yet available." --Civil War Times
About the Author
Brian Steel Wills is the director of the Center for the Study of the Civil War Era and professor of history at Kennesaw State University. He is the author of numerous books about the Civil War, including *George Henry Thomas: As True as Steel*, *The War Hits Home: The Civil War in Southeastern Virginia*, and *A Battle from the Start: The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest*.