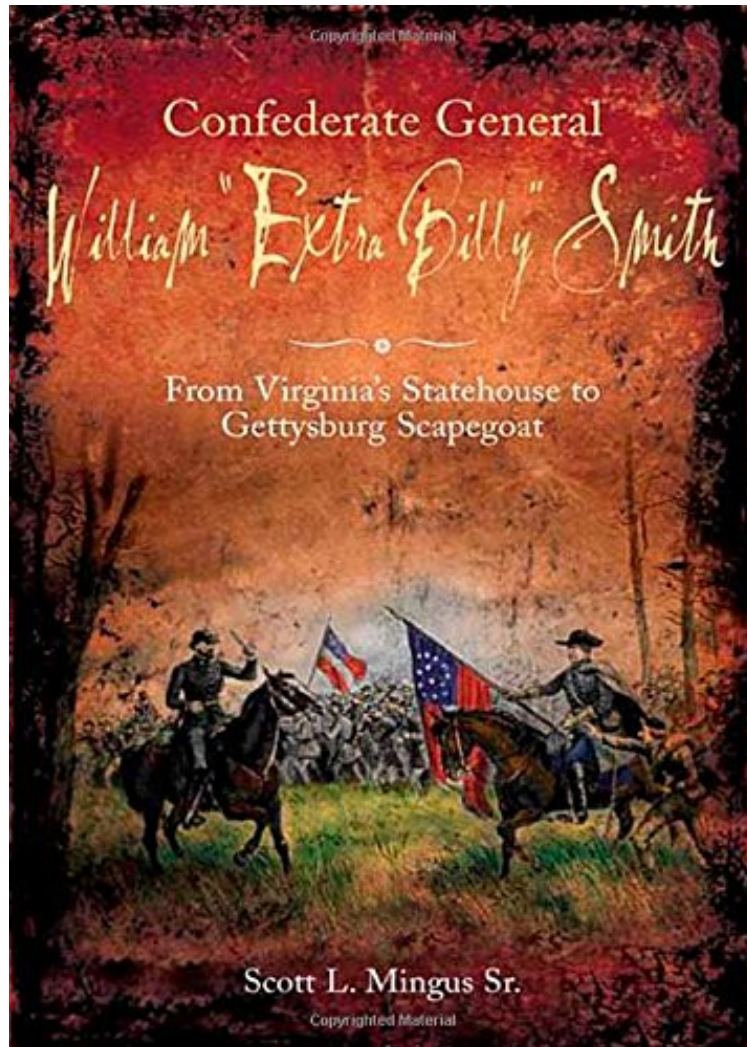


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Confederate General William “Extra Billy” Smith: From Virginia’s Statehouse to Gettysburg Scapegoat

Scott Mingus

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Scott Mingus : Confederate General William “Extra Billy” Smith: From Virginia’s Statehouse to Gettysburg Scapegoat before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Confederate General William “Extra Billy” Smith: From Virginia’s Statehouse to Gettysburg Scapegoat:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Make Extra Room on Your Shelf for "Extra Billy"By Phillip GreenwaltNever heard of "Extra Billy" Smith? Well, pick up this book and let Scott Mingus enlighten you. Smith was a polarizing figure in Southern politics and took his assertive, charismatic (if you were pro-Southern), and fearless

personality into any of his career adventures. The majority of the book is centered on Smith's service in the American Civil War, including both his military service as a regiment than brigade commander. In his last campaign, the Gettysburg Campaign, he once again showed his polarizing capability. On July 1st he thought he saw approaching Union troops on the flank of the Confederate army. Instead they turned out to be fence posts in the receding daylight. Was he to blame? Or was this just an honest mistake? I could answer, but Mingus will do a better job. Mingus packs this book with primary sources, which allows Smith, his family, and other notables from the era to advance the narrative. What is even more effective is that Mingus unfolds Smith's story while remaining mostly impartial. In fact one of the more humorous accounts comes from a fellow congressman of Smith's in the U.S. House of Representatives; "If I should make a book, and put into it all that John Quincy Adams ever did, all that Daniel Webster ever knew, and all that Extra Billy don't know, what a book it would be!" Similar quotations add to the history and gives the reader insight into who exactly "Extra Billy" was. Such a polarizing figure, pick up the book today, and add your judgment of this interesting Virginian. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. "Extra Billy" is a great biography! By Steve L. I have read many ACW biographies and "Extra Billy" is great. I became interested in finding a bio on Gen. Smith since my ancestor served in the 31st VA Infantry under him at Gettysburg. I could tell immediately that Mr. Mingus did a lot of research before he wrote this biography. Mr. Mingus does not fall into the trap where many biographers find themselves...he does not treat his subject with kid gloves. He is not overly-critical of Smith either. He is very fair in his assessment of Gen. Smith's career and life. I really enjoyed reading this biography and I look forward to reading other works by Mr. Mingus. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Neglected and Fascinating By W. Stephen Coleman Scott L. Mingus Sr. has filled in the gaps in our knowledge of one of the most fascinating, but long neglected, Confederate generals, William "Extra Billy" Smith. As usual, Mingus' scholarship is impeccable, the writing smooth and eminently readable, and the information about this colorful character thoroughly engrossing. What a terrific addition to my Civil War library!

WINNER, 2013 JAMES I. ROBERTSON JR. LITERARY AWARD FOR CONFEDERATE HISTORY WINNER, 2013 NATHAN BEDFORD FORREST SOUTHERN HISTORY BOOK AWARD NOMINATED, 2014 VIRGINIA BOOK AWARD, NON-FICTION William "Extra Billy" Smith, the oldest and one of the most controversial Confederate generals on the field at Gettysburg, was also one of the most colorful and charismatic characters of the Civil War and the antebellum Old South. Despite a life full of drama, politics, and adventure, until now very few books have been written on Smith since a biased account in the 19th century by his brother-in-law. Scott L. Mingus Sr. has ably filled this historical void with Confederate General William "Extra Billy" Smith: From Virginia's Statehouse to Gettysburg Scapegoat. Known nationally as "Extra Billy" because of his prewar penchant for finding loopholes in government postal contracts to gain extra money for his stagecoach lines, Smith served as Virginia's governor during both the War with Mexico and the Civil War, served five terms in the U.S. Congress, and was one of Virginia's leading spokesmen for slavery and States' Rights. Extra Billy's extra-long speeches and wry sense of humor were legendary among his peers. A lawyer during the heady Gold Rush days, Smith made a fortune in California and, like his income earned from stagecoaches, quickly lost it. Despite his advanced age Smith took the field and fought well at First Manassas, was wounded at Seven Pines and again at Sharpsburg, and marched with Lee's Army of Northern Virginia into Pennsylvania. There, on the first day at Gettysburg, Smith's frantic messages about a possible Union flanking attack remain a matter of controversy to this day. Did his aging eyes see distant fence-lines that he interpreted as approaching enemy soldiers--mere phantoms of his imagination?--or did his prompt action stave off a looming Confederate disaster? What we do know is that his calls for support diverted limited Confederate manpower away from attacks against Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill that might have turned the tide of Southern fortunes in Pennsylvania. Mingus's biography draws upon a wide array of newspapers, diaries, letters, and other firsthand accounts to paint a broad, deep, and colorful portrait of one of the South's most interesting leaders and devoted sons. Complete with original maps and photos, Extra Billy Smith will satisfy anyone who loves politics, war, and a story well told. REVIEWS "The life of William "Extra Billy" Smith is just as interesting as many better-known Civil War personalities, but the man who served as Virginia's governor and a Confederate senator has been ignored by history. Scott Mingus, one of today's most talented authors, remedies this oversight with an engaging and often humorous biography of one of the oldest generals in the Confederate army. This deeply-researched and well written study will elevate Smith's memory and place in history to the prominence it deserves." - J. David Petrucci, author of *The Complete Gettysburg Guide* "An outstanding work on one of the little known but much maligned generals in the Army of Northern Virginia. Scott Mingus's research on the Gettysburg controversy and Smith's performance is the best. He has also brought together the most information on an excellent brigade of Virginia regiments who fought from Bull Run to Appomattox." - Robert J. Driver, Jr, author of *52nd Virginia Infantry* "Scott Mingus has written an engaging and well researched biography of a colorful character of the Confederacy. This book is sure to be a classic." - Ted Alexander, Chief Historian, Antietam National Battlefield and the author of *The Battle of Antietam: The Bloodiest Day*

The life of William "Extra Billy" Smith is just as interesting as many better-known Civil War personalities, but the

man who served as Virginia's governor and a Confederate senator has been ignored by history. Scott Mingus, one of today's most talented authors, remedies this oversight with an engaging and often humorous biography of one of the oldest generals in the Confederate army. This deeply-researched and well written study will elevate Smith's memory and place in history to the prominence it deserves. - J. David Petruzzi, *The Complete Gettysburg Guide* "An outstanding work on one of the little known but much maligned generals in the Army of Northern Virginia. Scott Mingus's research on the Gettysburg controversy and Smith's performance is the best. He has also brought together the most information on an excellent brigade of Virginia regiments who fought from Bull Run to Appomattox." - Robert J. Driver, Jr, author of *52nd Virginia Infantry* "Scott Mingus has written an engaging and well researched biography of a colorful character of the Confederacy. This book is sure to be a classic." - Ted Alexander, Chief Historian, Antietam National Battlefield and the author of *The Battle of Antietam: The Bloodiest Day* Those sections that focused on "Extra Billy's" life were extremely interesting. He was a success >failure> success businessman who made a fortune, lost it, and got it back. He was a man of creativity, guts and determination, all attributes he took with him into the political arena and the battlefield. He led a very interesting life. And the author captures those details in a compelling way.... "Extra Billy" is a wild ride and fun read. - Bayse Reedy, reviewer Watch the official Extra Billy book trailer! [youtube.com/watch?v=DEsske9KuZI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEsske9KuZI) About the Author Scott L. Mingus Sr. is a scientist and executive in the global paper industry, and holds patents in self-adhesive postage stamps and bar code labels. The southeastern Ohio native is a graduate of the paper science and engineering program at Miami University. He was part of the research team that developed the first commercially successful self-adhesive U.S. postage stamps. The York, Pa., resident has written several articles for *Gettysburg Magazine* and has nine Civil War books listed on www.gettybooks.com. His book *Flames Beyond Gettysburg* was a finalist for one of the 2011 U.S. Army Heritage Foundation's Distinguished Writing Awards. He maintains a blog on the Civil War history of York County, Pa. (yorkblog.com/cannonball), and is a local Civil War tour guide for the York County Heritage Trust. Scott Mingus also has written six scenario books on miniature wargaming and was elected to the hobby's prestigious Legion of Honor in 2011. His great-great-grandfather was a drummer boy for the 51st Ohio Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War.