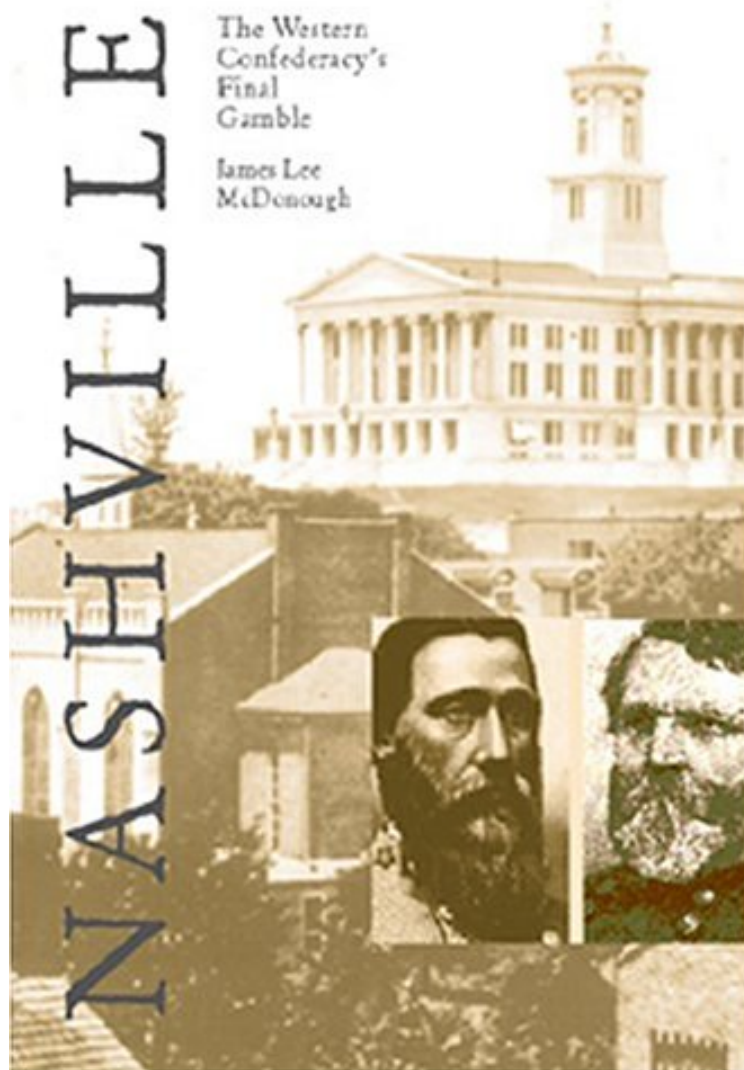


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Nashville: The Western Confederacy's Final Gamble

James Lee McDonough

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James Lee McDonough : Nashville: The Western Confederacy's Final Gamble before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nashville: The Western Confederacy's Final Gamble:

13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Covers the Subject Enjoyable Read!By Mike MinerMcDonough is a fine Civil War author, and "Nashville: The Western Confederacy's Final Gamble" is no exception to his previous works. The Tennessee Campaign is one that has not been beaten to death like so many of the ANV battles, yet it was as significant, if not more than many of those in Virginia. Adequately mapped and illustrated, the read was an

enjoyable one. The author was more than fair and accurate in his assessment of Hood who mismanaged, wasted and destroyed the superb Army of Tennessee, in effect throwing away the Confederacy's most viable hope. I don't think the reader will be disappointed with this work, and it certainly ranks near the top of a short list written on a significant campaign. It's also great to get a nice large book for your money these days too! 24 of 30 people found the following review helpful. *Traces the Last Gasp of a Forlorn Hope* By Roy E. Perry In 1863, with the defeat of Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at the Battle of Gettysburg and the fall of Vicksburg, the "Gibraltar of the Mississippi," the tide of the Civil War turned disastrously against the Confederacy. Now, in the fall of 1864, Atlanta was captured by the bluecoats and the railroad hub of Petersburg, a crucial link in the lifeline supplying the Confederate capital at Richmond, was besieged by the Army of the Potomac, led by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Union Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman had his army poised to make their famous (or, to Southerners, infamous) march from Atlanta to the sea, cutting a sixty-mile-wide swath of destruction through the Rebel heartland, "making Georgia howl." The Confederate leader John Bell Hood believed that by attacking the railroad that stretched from Nashville through Chattanooga to Atlanta, he could destroy Sherman's supply line and force Sherman to withdraw from Atlanta and pursue his (Hood's) army. Hood's "grand vision," a dream that turned into a nightmare, was to invade Tennessee and recapture Nashville, which was occupied by Yankees under the command of Gen. George H. Thomas ("the Rock of Chickamauga"). Then, if all went well, he would continue on through Kentucky to the banks of the Ohio. This final gamble of the western Confederacy was a forlorn hope, an ill-fated mission that would virtually destroy Hood's army. Nashville tells how Hood's ill-equipped, ill-clothed, and ill-fed army stalled at the Duck River in Columbia and incredibly let Schofield's federals pass him during the night at Spring Hill, joining Thomas's regiments for the defense of "fortress Nashville." The heart of the book describes how the Confederate army was decimated in a horrendous bloodbath at the Battle of Franklin (Nov. 30, 1864) and was routed at the Battle of Nashville (Dec. 15-16, 1864). The book includes maps of the Battle of Nashville, showing where the fighting was the hottest, to a large extent along present-day Woodmont Boulevard where that thoroughfare intersects Franklin Pike, Granny White Pike, and Hillsboro Pike, and particularly at Peach Orchard Hill (Overton Hill), where the Confederate right flank was anchored, and at Shy's Hill (formerly Compton's Hill), where the Confederate left flank was anchored. The central player in this volume is Gen. John Bell Hood, a fierce, aggressive fighter who lost the use of his left arm at the Battle of Gettysburg and who sustained life-threatening wounds at the Battle of Chickamauga, resulting in the amputation of his right leg. During his subsequent military service, he had to be strapped in the saddle in order to function. McDonough asserts that Hood, a commander who was physically unfit and who (possibly) deadened his pain by the use of alcohol and/or pain-killing drugs such as laudanum (a tincture of opium), should not have been entrusted with decisions that meant life or death to his troops. John Bell Hood is a prime example of the Peter principle: he had been promoted to a level of incompetency. "It was Hood's tragedy," writes one of Hood's biographers, "that he was such an excellent soldier, but such a poor general." Hood blundered terribly at Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville, and his shattered army retreated southward along the Franklin Pike, back through Columbia, to the Tennessee River, where it crossed into Mississippi and finally collapsed in Tupelo. Civil war buffs with relish this spirited account of the western Confederacy's last gasp. And Nashvillians particularly will find many historical facts about Nashville, its founders and famous residents, such as James Robertson, John Donelson, and Andrew Jackson. The book is illustrated by numerous photos of the people and places involved in these battles, such as the William Harrison house, the Fountain B. Carter house, and the Carnton (John and Randall McGavock) House in Franklin and the Belle Meade mansion in Nashville. Roy E. Perry of Nolensville is an advertising copywriter at a Nashville publishing house. He may be reached at rperry1778@aol.com ABOUT THE AUTHOR: James Lee McDonough is a retired professor of history from Auburn University. He is the author of numerous books on the Civil War, including *Shiloh--In Hell Before Night*; *War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville*; *Chattanooga--Death Grip on the Confederacy*; and *Stones River--Bloody Winter in Tennessee*. He is also the co-author (with James Pickett Jones) of *War So Terrible: Sherman and Atlanta* and (with Thomas L. Connelly) of *Five Tragic Hours: The Battle of Franklin*. 9 of 33 people found the following review helpful. *Typical Hood Bashing* By Kygal Author James McDonough's most recent work on the Battle of Nashville is yet another version of the tried and true formula of successful Tennessee Campaign authorship: ignore ethical historiography, and attack the character and ability of Confederate Gen. John Bell Hood. The typical rumor mongering, fact filtering, and censorship is apparent to any knowledgeable and dispassionate reader. For a fair and complete presentation of the important Battle of Nashville, read Thomas Hay's "Hood's Tennessee Campaign" or Winston Groom's "Shrouds of Glory."

After Major General William Tecumseh Sherman's forces ravaged Atlanta in 1864, Ulysses S. Grant urged him to complete the primary mission Grant had given him: to destroy the Confederate army in Georgia. Attempting to draw the Union army north, General John Bell Hood's Confederate forces focused their attacks on Sherman's supply line, the railroad from Chattanooga, and then moved across north Alabama and into Tennessee. As Sherman initially followed Hood's men to protect the railroad, Hood hoped to lure the Union forces out of the lower South and, perhaps more important, to recapture the long-occupied city of Nashville. Though Hood managed to cut communication

between Sherman and George H. Thomas's Union forces by placing his troops across the railroads south of the city, Hood's men were spread over a wide area and much of the Confederate cavalry was in Murfreesboro. Hood's army was ultimately routed. Union forces pursued the Confederate troops for ten days until they recrossed the Tennessee River. The decimated Army of Tennessee (now numbering only about 15,000) retreated into northern Alabama and eventually Mississippi. Hood requested to be relieved of his command. Less than four months later, the war was over. Written in a lively and engaging style, *Nashville* presents new interpretations of the critical issues of the battle. James Lee McDonough sheds light on how the Union army stole past the Confederate forces at Spring Hill and their subsequent clash, which left six Confederate generals dead. He offers insightful analysis of John Bell Hood's overconfidence in his position and of the leadership and decision-making skills of principal players such as Sherman, George Henry Thomas, John M. Schofield, Hood, and others. Within the pages of *Nashville*, McDonough's subjects, both common soldiers and officers, present their unforgettable stories in their own words. Unlike most earlier studies of the battle of Nashville, McDonough's account examines the contributions of black Union regiments and gives a detailed account of the battle itself as well as its place in the overall military campaign. It will become the definitive treatment of a crucial battle-ground of the Civil War.

About the Author James Lee McDonough is retired professor of history from Auburn University. He is the author of numerous books on the Civil War, including *Shiloh--In Hell Before Night*, *Chattanooga--Death Grip on the Confederacy*, and *War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville*.