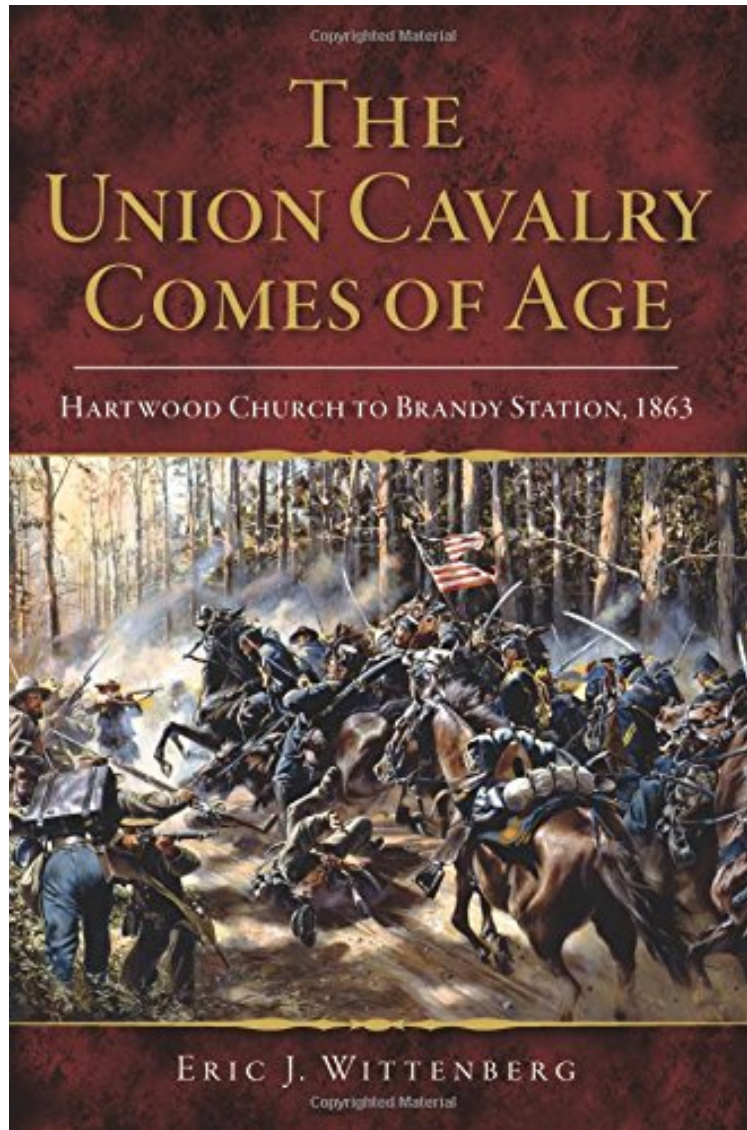


[Download free pdf] The Union Cavalry Comes of Age: Hartwood Church to Brandy Station, 1863

## The Union Cavalry Comes of Age: Hartwood Church to Brandy Station, 1863

*Eric J. Wittenberg*

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**Eric J. Wittenberg** : **The Union Cavalry Comes of Age: Hartwood Church to Brandy Station, 1863** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised **The Union Cavalry Comes of Age: Hartwood Church to Brandy Station, 1863**:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Learning to RideBy James W. Durney Learning to ride could be the sub title of this book. The Union Cavalry had many handicaps at the start of the American Civil War and that was only

one of them. Trapped by official disapproval and high command's indifference the cavalry had real problems. This is the story of the journey from ugly stepchild to equal on the field of battle. At the start of the war, official Union policy refused to raise volunteer cavalry regiments. The existing Regular U.S. Army Cavalry would be able to perform all the duties required and the government had no need to incur the additional expenses. Late to the field, badly trained and saddled with a tactical doctrine that guaranteed failure the cavalry endured and learned. In 1863, the Cavalry fought the Cavaliers of the Army of Northern Virginia to a stand still at Brandy Station. This is the story of the two years of abuse and misused that plagued them. Even more, it is the story of the AOP's Cavalry growing and developing their role in the winning of the war. This is first of a series of excellent book on the Union Cavalry by Eric J. Wittenberg. This book builds a solid foundation that will help the reader understand the real price of victory in 1865.3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Few Observations.By M.,J.NoellThis is a well written and exhaustively researched book covering an important period of time for the Union Cavalry.I have but one minor complaint. I am probably the only person on the planet who would take exception to the phrase; "Keenan`s Charge." My great grandfather, Major, later Colonel and Bvt. Brig. General Pennock Huey, was the officer who, when surprised by Jackson`s troops, gave the order to "Draw sabres and charge", which was repeated by Major Keenan who was killed in the "Charge of the Eighth Pennsylvania Cavalry" at Chancellorsville. Due to the vainglorious imagination and outright lies of Gen. Alfred Pleasonton and his later testimony at hearings on the conduct of the war, Keenan was credited with having been ORDERED to charge Jackson`s troops when, in fact, the entire action was an unfortunate accident from which the only method of extrication was to "charge".Mr. Wittenberg gets it right in his text but still refers to the incident as "Keenan`s Charge". Fact is, as I was told by my grandfather, HIS father never referred to it as ANYONE`S charge; just the "Charge of the Eighth Pennsylvania Cavalry." The phrase: "Keenan`s Charge", as well as the two execrable songs of the same title, should be consigned to the ash can of history.J.W.Huey III2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A much needed book to fill a void in printed material on the subjectBy T. FerryBasically, in the early days, months and first few years of the war, the Federal cavalry were trodden upon, ridden over, around, beaten and flanked by their southern counterparts on numerous occasions. Was it because of poor supplies, poor drill and training, lack of communication, poor horse flesh, inferior equipment and arms, lack of military knowledge, courage, proper utilization by the Union high command? What was it that caused the Confederate cavalry to be superior to the Union cavaliers?By realizing what happened in these early years and the reasons how the "Union Cavalry Comes of Age", the reader will better understand, how in the mid to late war, from 1863 onward, the Union cavalry was used to great effect and was critical in the outcomes to victories at Gettysburg, Yellow Tavern, Old Church, Tom's Brook, Third Winchester, Cedar Creek, Five Forks, Saylor's Creek and Appomattox Court House.Ultimately, the Union horse and the Union horse soldier seriously crippled and helped bring Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia to it's knees and ultimate defeat.Rider for rider, soldier for soldier, horseman to horseman, the Union cavalry did come of age. It wasn't easy and their was allot to learn and overcome, but Eric Wittenberg covers it all in this book. You are taken to the Virginia Peninsula and to the Central Virginia Piedmont where the horsemen gained their renown, honor and acclaim to match that of J.E.B Stuarts troopers.I think this is one of his best books, along with the several he has written on the Gettysburg Campaign (including Protecting the Flank at Gettysburg: The Battles for Brinkerhoff's Ridge and East Cavalry Field, July 2 - 3, 1863 and Gettysburg's Forgotten Cavalry Actions: Farnsworth's Charge, South Cavalry Field, and the Battle of Fairfield, July 3, 1863 to be specific).This book is titled correctly and does fill a void, a much needed block of information that gathers together the learning process and transformation of this arm of the military in the Eastern Theater of American Civil War. Federal Horsemanship 101 was learned and passed! Good book, good read!

In *The Union Cavalry Comes of Age*, award-winning cavalry historian Eric J. Wittenberg provides a long-overdue challenge to the persistent myths that have unfairly elevated the reputations of the Confederate cavalry's "cavaliers" and sets the record straight regarding the evolution of the Union cavalry corps. He highlights the careers of renowned Federal officers, including George Stoneman, William W. Averell, Alfred Pleasonton, John Buford, and Wesley Merritt, as well as such lesser-known characters as Col. Alfred Duffie, a French expatriate who hid an ugly secret. Wittenberg writes a lively, detailed account of a saber-slashing era in which men fought for duty, honor, and bragging rights. Indeed, a taunting note left behind by Confederate Brig. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee on a raid at Hartwood Church, Virginia, in 1863 sparked Northern retaliation at the Battle of Kelly's Ford. The Federal cavalry then evolved during the trials of Stoneman's Raid, with their hard work culminating in the Battle of Brandy Station, where they nearly broke the unsuspecting Confederates in a fourteen-hour maelstrom that is considered the greatest cavalry battle ever fought in North America.A skillfully woven overview, this unforgettable story also depicts the strategic and administrative tasks that occupied officers and politicians as well as the day-to-day existence of the typical trooper in the field. *The Union Cavalry Comes of Age* shows that Northern troopers began turning the tide of the war much earlier than is generally acknowledged and became the largest, best-mounted, and best-equipped force of horse soldiers the world had ever seen.

"A splendidly written and thoroughly researched study." --America's Civil War  
From the Publisher  
A noted authority on cavalry challenges a Civil War myth  
About the Author  
Eric J. Wittenberg is the author of *Protecting the Flanks, Gettysburg's Forgotten Cavalry Actions* (winner of the Bachelder-Coddington Literary Award as 1998's best new work interpreting the Battle of Gettysburg), and *We Have it Damn Hard Out Here*. In addition, he is the editor of *With Sheridan in the Final Campaign Against Lee, Under Custer's Command* (Brassey's, Inc., 2000), and *One of Custer's Wolverines*. He lives in Columbus, Ohio.