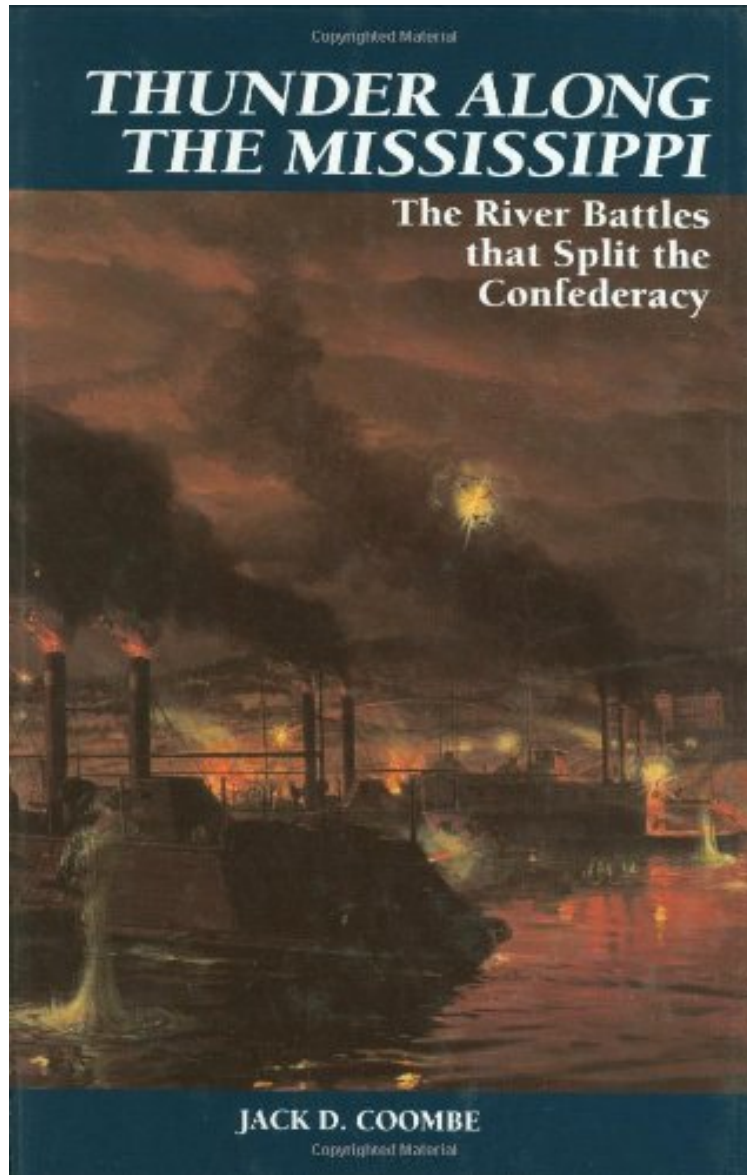


Thunder Along the Mississippi: The River Battles That Split The Confederacy

Jack Coombe

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#1961596 in Books 2005-05-25 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.50 x 1.30 x 6.00l, 1.42 #File Name: 0785816771260 pages | File size: 33.Mb

Jack Coombe : Thunder Along the Mississippi: The River Battles That Split The Confederacy before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Thunder Along the Mississippi: The River Battles That Split The Confederacy:

2 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Decent Summary of the River battles in the WestBy Aussie

ReaderThis book offers the reader a general overview of the Federal campaign in the West using the great water-ways to cut the Confederacy in half. The author presents a well told and interesting story, covering the river craft and tactics used by both sides. Overall I found it a half decent book to read but it does not offer an in-depth account of the battles and campaigns fought to gain Vicksburg. If that's what your after you will have to look else where but the book is well suited for a general reader. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Informative but disappointing
By Mark Longstroth
This book was an easy read. I am interested in the Mississippi Squadron so I bought this book. It was written by a Navy veteran and does a good job of reviewing the history of these gunboats and this is the strength of the book. There are good accounts of many of the river Navy's engagements, some well known and others obscure. I was disappointed in the author's attempts to tie the naval war into the ground war where I thought the author made mistakes, which I thought a more through treatment would have avoided. There are only a few maps. There are a good number of photos, and period lithographs that are placed on good paper for excellent reproduction, which looks much better than reproducing them on the ordinary paper with the text. If you can overlook some minor errors this is a good book about the naval war in the western theater. 5 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Poorly Edited and Amateurish Writing
By A Customer
Several mistakes, inconsistencies, and typographical errors belie its otherwise scholarly attempt to document an important event which determined many courses of action during the Civil War: the capitulation of the Mississippi River Valley and its major tributaries. Examples: 1) page 62 - Fort Donelson is actually on the West side of the Cumberland River, not the East as the book states. 2) p. 96 - At the Battle of Shiloh, Sherman held the Federal right flank during the first day of battle, not the left flank as stated in this book. That honor fell to Hurlbut's forces. This is an error too basic to be made by anyone with any knowledge of the Civil War. This error tells me that the author is incompetent (or incomplete) in his research and/or the editor failed to catch the mistake. Either reason renders the book significantly less credible as a source of correct information regarding the Civil War. 3) p. 95 - the last sentence of the first paragraph contains a dangling preposition. There are, unfortunately, many instances of this type of error throughout the book which further lends to the notion that this is nothing but an amateurish, hastily constructed book. 4) p. 146 - the second paragraph on the page (which starts "After the battle was over...") is a run-on sentence. Unfortunately, there are more than just this one instance in the book. 5) p. 165 - "When the Union vessels hove into sight, Essex in the van, the fight was about to begin." This is an inane statement to make and insults the intelligence of the reader. What else would they be about to do? 6) p. 168 - I believe that the gentlemen's name is DAVID Dixon Porter, not DAVIS Dixon Porter. 7) p. 168 - Porter was appointed Commodore in April of 1862, not April of 1866 as stated in the book. The book is correct in stating that he gained command of the Mississippi River fleet in October of 1862 yet in the same paragraph the book states this occurred in October of 1861. These are troubling errors for a book which deals with a subject that was so pivotal in determining the course of the Civil War. The book is not credible, but readable nevertheless. My final criticism is the lack of detail surrounding some of the more important issues impinging upon the Union's successful prosecution of the Mississippi campaign: for example, there is only cursory treatment of the long-standing, bitter rivalry between the Army and Navy, exhibited with the battle over control of the Mississippi River Brigade (COL Alfred Ellet, Commanding) within ADM Porter's fleet. This controversy reached all the way into Lincoln's cabinet where a dispute raged between Stanton and Welles over influences exerted on the course of the war by their respective departments. This important controversy is not discussed but in a very cursory fashion which further calls into question the depth of research conducted or the knowledge desired to be disseminated. In any event, this book is not worth the time spent to read it for serious students of the Civil War, and specifically the Mississippi River Campaign. It is entertaining if only to discover what the editors overlooked but should be considered nothing more than an inept, incomplete treatment of an otherwise fascinating and important subject.

To this day, there has never been a story quite like this. In telling the history of the river battles that split the Confederacy, the Civil War ironclads wrote a stunning new page in naval history.

.com The squat river gunboats of the Civil War may have lacked the sleek majesty of oceangoing frigates, but undoubtedly they helped hammer home the North's victory as they successfully blasted their way up and down the Mississippi River. Jack D. Coombe presents the definitive account of these ironclad and wood-hulled warriors in the young country's western waterways, including the campaigns against Fort Donelson, New Orleans, and Vicksburg. The Union essentially built an inland navy, which pounded the Confederacy's heavily fortified towns and tried to dodge its mines. (Interesting piece of trivia: the Star of the West, the merchant ship attacked by Confederate batteries as it tried to reinforce Fort Sumter in January 1861 [the first hostile shots of the war], was later captured by Texans and converted into a rebel river steamboat.) Coombe argues that Federal control of the Mississippi made the South's defeat inevitable. His case is convincing, and his book is attractive--it includes dozens of black-and-white photos, plus several maps. It's one of the best naval histories of the Civil War available. --John J. Miller
From Library Journal
Historian Coombe (Derailing the Tokyo Express, LJ 9/15/91) provides a view of naval warfare from an often overlooked angle?the battles on inland waterways. By concentrating on the use of both Union and Confederate navies

on the Mississippi, Coombe demonstrates the importance of these river battles and how they brought about the demise of the Confederacy in the West. Coombe supplies background information on the development of the ironclads and how these emerging technologies became the basis for today's navy. Graphic accounts of the battles allow readers to understand conditions aboard these floating war machines, especially when under attack: "Added to this would be hits on the armor plate from enemy shots, the resounding heavy clanging would deafen ears, and in many cases would cause bleeding from them to add to the misery." Coombe's work is essential for anyone with an interest in Civil War naval operations or the war in the West. Recommended for public libraries. ?Barbara A. Zaborowski, Cambria Area Community Coll., Johnstown, Pa. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist

On July 3, 1863, the slaughter of George Pickett's division ended the Battle of Gettysburg; on the following day and 1,000 miles away, Confederate general Pemberton surrendered the fortress of Vicksburg to General Grant. The Union now had complete control of the Mississippi, effectively cutting the Confederacy in half. Coombe, a naval veteran of World War II, advances the theory that the so-called river war, climaxed by the fall of Vicksburg, was actually more decisive than the eastern campaigns in sealing the fate of the Confederacy. Coombe convincingly demonstrates that the decay of General Lee's army in Virginia was largely a result of the seizure of southern ports and inland commercial centers along the river highways. Coombe is a skilled writer with a fine grasp of the strategic context behind the "anaconda" plan that strangled the Confederacy. His portrayal of both the familiar and the obscure movers and shakers is often fascinating, and his insights into the development and revolutionary impact of ironclads are particularly striking. This work will be a delight for Civil War buffs, but there is also much here for the well-informed general reader, too. Jay Freeman