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Book Reviews

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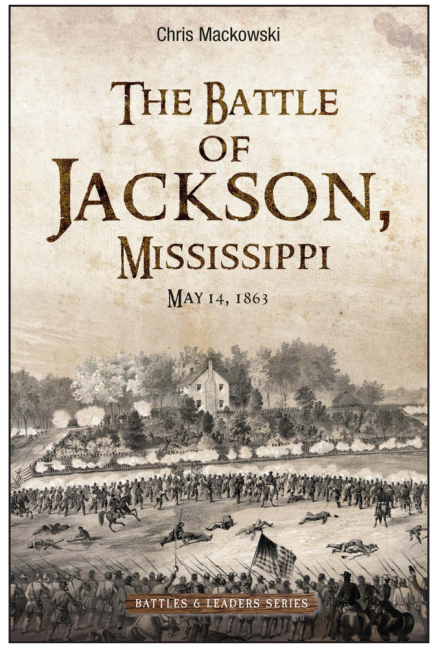
BOOK REVIEWS

The Battle of Jackson, Mississippi, May 14, 1863

By Chris Mackowski (El Dorado Hills, California: Savas Beatie, 2022. Maps, acknowledgements, points of interest, order of battle, sources, index. Pp. 171. $29.95 hardback. ISBN: 13:978-1-61121-655-4)

The Vicksburg Campaign has been written about extensively, but some of the battles of that campaign have been written about more than others. As the author points out in his introduction, "The May 14, 1863, battle does not rank as the most important of Grant's Mississippi campaign, but it does probably rank as the most overlooked." In his new book *The Battle of Jackson, Mississippi, May 14, 1863* Chris Mackowski has rectified this oversight with a well-researched study of the short yet consequential fight for Mississippi's capitol city.



Mackowski devotes Chapter 1 to General Joseph E. Johnston, overall commander of the Confederate forces in Mississippi and Tennessee. The general was ordered to Mississippi by President Jefferson Davis to offer his aid to General John C. Pemberton, the commander of Confederates forces in the state. Johnston had repeatedly put off a trip to the Magnolia State, citing a litany of excuses. The author makes the assertion that "The thing Johnston worried about most, though, was his reputation," and that he stayed as far away from Vicksburg for as long as possible, fearing that the loss of the city might tarnish that reputation.

The effort to defend Vicksburg in 1863 was hampered by the differing strategic visions held by President Jefferson Davis and General Joseph E. Johnston. Davis "advocated a defense of key geographical positions," of which Vicksburg was the most important on the Mississippi River. Johnston however "sought to consolidate troops for mobility; he was willing to give up territory to preserve his combat forces." Caught between these two competing visions was General John C. Pemberton, who

attempted to split the difference by attempting (and failing) to appease both masters.

Standing in sharp contrast to the Confederate command problems was the strategic thinking of Union commander Ulysses S. Grant. He landed his troops at Bruinsburg, Mississippi, on April 30–May 1, 1863. Once on Mississippi soil he moved quickly and decisively with his troops, never allowing Generals Pemberton and Johnston to unite their superior forces against him. Grant defeated the outnumbered Confederates at the battles of Port Gibson, Mississippi, on May 1, and Raymond, Mississippi on May 12. After the battle of Raymond, Grant ordered his army to march on Jackson, a move lauded by Mackowski as "one of his most important improvisations of the campaign."

On the night of May 12, Grant sent his corps commanders their orders for the next day's march. Major General James B. McPherson, commander of the XVII Corps, was at Raymond, and he was to move at first light for Clinton, then pivot his troops to the east and advance on Jackson using the Clinton-Jackson Road. General Sherman's XV Corps was to march through Raymond to Mississippi Springs, five miles east of the town. On May 14 he was to move his men via the Mississippi Springs Road, bringing them into Jackson from the southwest. Generals McPherson and Sherman marched their respective corps all day on May 13 to reach their assigned positions, and by the time they halted for the night, Grant had approximately 24,000 men in the two corps within a few hours marching time of Jackson.

On the night of May 13, General Joseph E. Johnston arrived in Jackson and found that only 6,000 troops were on hand to defend the city. He then sent to Richmond the message "I arrived this evening, finding the enemy's force between this place and General Pemberton, cutting off the communication. I am too late." After this pessimistic note, "Johnston made a show of trying to save the city," and never moved to concentrate his forces "to significantly complicate" matters for Grant and keep him from taking Jackson.

Johnston came to the conclusion that Jackson should be evacuated as quickly as possible. To buy time for this withdrawal to take place, Johnston ordered Brigadier General John Gregg to stay behind with a rear guard and fight a delaying action to slow the Union advance. This led to the fights at the O. P. Wright Farm and along Lynch Creek, which did allow for a successful evacuation of the city.

The battle of Jackson, although a minor skirmish by Civil War standards, was an important engagement of the Vicksburg Campaign. The Federal capture of the city broke up the Confederate troop concentration that was just beginning to take shape in the city, and neutralized an important communication, transportation, and supply center. General Pemberton's army in Vicksburg was isolated, and never able to affect a junction with General Johnston's troops, allowing Grant to concentrate his forces against the Confederates in the Hill

City. Vicksburg fell to Union forces on July 4, 1863.

Mackowski's well-researched book is a delight. His clear and concise prose makes the action easy to follow as the campaign unfolds. In addition, he concludes the book with a very useful guide to the Civil War sites associated with the fighting at Jackson that can still be viewed today. *The Battle of Jackson, Mississippi, May 14, 1863* will probably stand as the definitive guide to the battle for many years to come.

By Jeff Gambrone

Outposts of Zion: A History of Mississippi Presbyterians in the Nineteenth Century

By Robert Milton Winter. Second Edition. (Holly Springs, Mississippi: Published by the author, 2021. Includes bibliographical references and index. Pp. 507. $20.00 paperback. ISBN: 978-0-9914041-7-9)

Citadels of Zion: A History of Mississippi Presbyterians, Vol. I: 1900-1960

By Robert Milton Winter. Second Edition. (Memphis, Tennessee: Published by the author, 2021. Includes bibliographical references and index. Pp. 544. Price unknown paperback. ISBN: 978-0-9914041-8-6)

Citadels of Zion: A History of Mississippi Presbyterians, Vol. II: 1960-2016

By Robert Milton Winter. Second Edition. (Memphis, Tennessee: Published by the author, 2021. Includes bibliographical references and index. Pp. 530. Price unknown paperback. ISBN: 978-0-9914041-9-3)

Milton Winter's three-volume history chronicles—with unparalleled breadth, depth, and detail—more than two centuries of Presbyterian activity in Mississippi. Winter combines the comprehensiveness of E. T. Thompson's regional denominational study *Presbyterians in the South* (John Knox Press, 1973) with the state-specific approach of Randy Sparks's *Religion in Mississippi* (University Press of Mississippi, 2001) to make a massive (more than 1,500 pages) and unique contribution to the histories of Mississippi, southern religion, and American Presbyterianism.

The first volume, *Outposts of Zion*, studies Mississippi Presbyterians in the nineteenth century. In it, Winter gives readers "a flavor of the church's life, a sense of its beliefs, and an understanding of its mission (iv)," with special attention to Presbyterian educational efforts and ministers who defended the disenfranchised Indians and African Americans. Winter traces the growth of Presbyterianism in the Mississippi Territory from: (1) the pioneer missionaries to the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes in Northeast Mississippi, (2) to the organization of the first congregations near Natchez, (3) to the establishment of Mississippi Presbytery at Pine Ridge in 1816. He continues through the century describing: (1) James Smylie's influential biblical defense of slavery, (2)

Oakland College president Jeremiah Chamberlain's 1851 assassination, and (3) Mississippi Presbyterians' involvement in the Civil War including that of: (1) Confederate apologist B. M. Palmer of New Orleans, Louisiana, and (2) unionist and slavery reform advocate James A. Lyon of Columbus, Mississippi. After the war, Mississippi's White Presbyterians struggled to define their relationship with both White Presbyterians in the North and newly emancipated Black Presbyterians in the South. Winter believes that over the nineteenth century, the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) "removed itself from the center to the margins of the civil society, restricting itself to matters of individual salvation and a certain concept of personal piety (486)." But he concludes, nonetheless: that advocacy for dispossessed Indians, Lyon's work for the amelioration of slave conditions, and support for denominational educational institutions provided inspiring examples for the present (488).

The second volume, *Citadels of Zion, Vol. 1.* studies Mississippi Presbyterians from 1900 to 1960. Winter declares that, although Presbyterians had lost their intellectual fire by this time, they directed their energy towards a "second Civil War" over segregation and fought that war on religious grounds (vi, viii). For Mississippi Presbyterians, the early twentieth century was a time of hope, marked by efforts to develop denominational academies and colleges such as Belhaven in Jackson (22, 14). Their hopes were dampened by ominous disagreements in the PCUS. Southern Presbyterians constantly wrestled over reunion with their northern counterparts. Conservative Mississippi Presbyterians expressed concern over what they perceived to be burgeoning theological modernism on the mission field, embodied by Mississippi-connected author Pearl S. Buck, who was raised in the PCUS China mission (155, 294). At home, they led inquiries into the orthodoxy of denominational colleges (Southwestern in Memphis) and seminaries (especially Prof. E. T. Thompson at Union in Virginia). Though smaller in number than their Baptist and Methodist contemporaries, Mississippi Presbyterians held significant state and national political positions in this period, including Governor Hugh White, Senator John Stennis, and later Governor William Winter.

The third volume, *Citadels of Zion, Vol. 2.*, brings the story from 1960 through 2016, with some observations on topics straying into the 2020s. Winter focuses on Presbyterian engagement with integration and the Civil Rights Movement, which played an influential role in the approaching division of the PCUS. In 1963, theological conservatives in Mississippi began what became Jackson's Reformed Theological Seminary (156ff). The PCUS finally divided in 1973, when many of the same conservatives established the Presbyterian Church in America (239ff). About one decade later, more theological conservatives left the PCUS to form the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (363). These

departures from the PCUS paved the way for its reunion with the UPCUSA in 1983, which established a national mainline Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (361). However, when the dust settled from divisions and reunion, Mississippi had become the only state in the country with more Presbyterians outside of the mainline PCUSA than within it (229).

Winter suggests that social and political differences, especially over integration, played a more important role in the division of the PCUS than did theological divisions. For example, he writes, "the issues before congregations, presbyteries, and synods aligned with the PCUS from the 1940s to the 1980s focused on two matters: racial integration and union with the United, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A (221)." However, many conservative leaders in that period, including Reformed Theological Seminary president Sam Patterson, whom Winter quotes, said that theological differences, especially the doctrine of biblical inerrancy, were the primary cause of division (160). In a recent study of the decades preceding the division, Sean Michael Lucas' *For A Continuing Church* (P & R Publishing, 2015), also identifies theological differences as the main cause. Lucas and Winter agree that both social and theological differences influenced the split. However, by identifying social and political disagreements as the primary cause, Winter departs from Lucas' study and from Patterson's firsthand explanation of the division.

This three-volume history includes: (1) stirring accounts of pioneer missionaries, (2) descriptions of worship services and clerical attire, (3) stories of student life at Presbyterian schools, orphanages, and camps, (4) quotes from Presbyterian Citizens' Council members, (5) remembrances from urban and rural congregations, and much more. All of these topics are often helpfully described within their broader ecclesiastical, social, and political contexts. The three volumes also contain a combined 136 pages of photographs of significant church members, ministers, facilities, and events. The text is usually printed in two columns per page, with headings marking subject changes, and the volumes read more like a series of journalistic articles than a thesis-driven academic monograph.

Professional historians of southern religion and culture as well as church historians will appreciate Winter's volumes for their analysis of myriad primary sources as well as the author's engagement with key historical works. Readers interested in religious history, Presbyterianism, and the history of Mississippi will appreciate the books' accessible prose and interesting content. The volumes represent a lifetime of research and personal experience in Mississippi Presbyterianism.

By David T. Irving