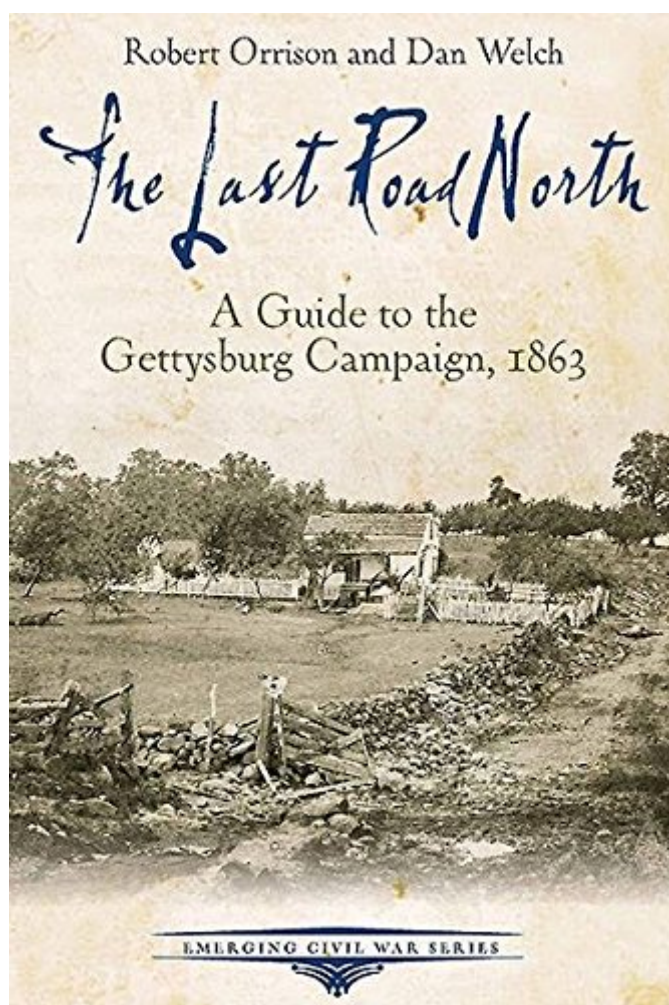


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The Last Road North: A Guide To The Gettysburg Campaign, 1863 (Emerging Civil War Series)



Synopsis

"I thought my men were invincible," admitted Robert E. Lee. A string of battlefield victories through 1862 had culminated in the spring of 1863 with Lee's greatest victory yet: the battle of Chancellorsville. Propelled by the momentum of that supreme moment, confident in the abilities of his men, Lee decided to once more take the fight to the Yankees and launched this army on another invasion of the North. An appointment with destiny awaited in the little Pennsylvania college town of Gettysburg. Historian Dan Welch follows in the footsteps of the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac as the two foes cat-and-mouse their way northward, ultimately clashing in the costliest battle in North American history. Based on the Gettysburg Civil War Trails, and packed with dozens of lesser-known sites related to the Gettysburg Campaign, *The Last Road North: A Guide to the Gettysburg Campaign* offers the ultimate Civil War road trip.

Book Information

File Size: 12135 KB

Print Length: 192 pages

Publisher: Savas Beatie (June 19, 2016)

Publication Date: June 19, 2016

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B01H39RKJO

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #402,651 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #15

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Children's eBooks > Education & Reference > Reference > Atlases #46 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Reference > Atlases & Maps > Atlases #74 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > United States > Regions > Northeast > Mid Atlantic

Customer Reviews

Good tour guide of the campaign leading up to the Battle of Gettysburg.

A very nice addition to my library. A different point of view.

Great read.

Nice book

"The Last Road North: A Guide to the Gettysburg Campaign, 1863" offers four separate driving tours which follow the movements of the Union and Confederate armies before and after the Battle of Gettysburg of July 1 -- July 3, 1863. While the Gettysburg battlefield has been visited by millions of people over the years, a much smaller number are familiar with the events leading to and following the battle itself during June to mid-July, 1863. "The Last Road North" includes a good, succinct chapter on the battle, but the focus is on the before and after. The four driving tours it presents are each lengthy and separate and cover movements through Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The first two tours begin in Virginia following the Chancellorsville Campaign. The first tour guides the reader on "The Confederate Advance" which took Lee's army from Virginia through the Shenandoah Valley to as far north as the vicinity of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The second tour, "The Union Response" is a guide to the Army of the Potomac's efforts to ascertain the goal of Lee's movements and to follow and counter them. Most of the pursuit was at a considerable distance from Lee's army, making this tour independent of the first with little overlap. The third tour "Jeb Stuart's Ride" follows the Confederate cavalry commander's fabled long ride around the Union army through Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The last of the four tours covers the "Retreat from Gettysburg" including the roads Lee's Army took back to Virginia following the battle and the Union pursuit. Each tour includes many tour stops and good brief discussions of their significance. Some of the sites discussed will be familiar to students of the battle, but virtually everyone who reads this book will learn something new. There are detailed driving directions, including GPS coordinates for those who follow one or the other of the tours in their cars. The book has photographs of much of the monumentation and commemoration of the Gettysburg campaign in places far from the battlefield. There are many photos of historic places and individuals. The writing is accessible, and the book has a good basic bibliography for those wishing to learn more. I found this book moving as well as informative in reminding me of why I study the battle and in teaching me aspects of the campaign I didn't know. The book will benefit those with an interest in Gettysburg even if they do not get on the road and drive. A strong feature of the book is the clear and detailed maps prepared by

cartographer Hal Jespersen. Detailed maps are often a rarity in Civil War books. "The Last Road North" is part of the Emerging Civil War Series published by Savas Beatie. The series aims to provide "fresh perspectives on America's defining event" and is designed to offer a "public history-oriented platform for sharing original scholarship related to the American Civil War". The authors of the book, Rob Orrison and Dan Welch, each have broad experience in presenting Gettysburg history to wide audiences. The book is an excellent introduction to the Gettysburg campaign for new and experienced readers and will enhance any reader's understanding of the battle. The work amply fulfills the goals of the Emerging Civil War Series. Savas Beatie, the publisher, kindly sent me a copy of the book to review. Robin Friedman

An interesting addition to the Savas Beatie series. This explores the "road to Gettysburg." The book traces several routes (not all north): (1) the Confederate movement from Fredericksburg to Gettysburg and other points in between and north; (2) the Union army's movement to Gettysburg (including the change of commanding general from Hooker to Meade); (3) JEB Stuart's ride around the Union army--to little effect; (4) the Confederate retreat from Gettysburg and the Union forces' pursuit. This is done nicely. The volume is not lengthy enough to provide full detail, but it does a good service with its coverage. With other books in this series, it also provides those who wish to visit sites mentioned in the book directions on how to visit such sites (including warnings about heavy traffic along certain roads).. There are some errors. At one point, for example, General John Bell Hood is listed as a leader who was killed at Gettysburg. Nonetheless, a nice addition to this series. . . .

Robert Orrison and Dan Welch, in their appealing style, describe the action of "The Last Road North: A Guide to the Gettysburg Campaign, 1863" and discover insightful consequences. While the Battle of Gettysburg was a Union victory, the campaign leading to and the Confederate retreat back to Virginia was far from the best moment in the history of the Army of the Potomac which failed to follow up their advantage. Union General George Meade failed to prevent the Army of Northern Virginia to cross the Potomac which led to 21 months of fighting until Confederate General Robert E. Lee's surrender to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. The authors make excellent points in showing that Lee failed to meet most of his most important objectives in having his army cross the Potomac in early June 1863, freeing Virginia from enemy forces, and transferring the fighting to the North. Ultimately, his forces were defeated and the war did continue. This study offers a good introduction

to the Gettysburg Campaign. The organization of this title and tour follow the battle in the framework of actions leading up to and after the monumental Battle of Gettysburg. This solid guide book covers a large geographic area from central Virginia to central Pennsylvania. This volume is separated into four routes; the Confederate Advance, the Union response, Jeb Stuart's Ride to Gettysburg, and the Retreat from Gettysburg. The first three tours end at different locations at Gettysburg National Military Park. The Retreat from Gettysburg starts at the Seminary Ridge Museum in Gettysburg. Each route is each at least 120 miles while the retreat route is approximately 50 miles. Many of the stops are part of the Civil War Trails program that successfully helps history buffs to easily associate the context of this campaign with the Civil War. The authors provide pertinent information on how to tour a battlefield as well as background to the campaign. This title provides chapters that deal with the Confederate advance, the Union response, Jeb Stuart's ride, the Battle of Gettysburg, and the retreat from Gettysburg. While all of these locations did not instantly become recognizable tourist attractions, these historians' emphasis on the decisions made by both Southern and Federal commanders make this fascinating story come alive. Savas-Beatie has published a comprehensive narrative in 2016; as part of its "Emerging Civil War Series", with 192 pages, 17 in-depth maps and numerous helpful photographs and illustrations but failed to include notes, a bibliography or an index. Footnotes for this volume are available at an emerging civil war web site for those that are interested. Cartographer Hal Jespersen produced a series of clear, succinct and detailed maps with times and location that appear throughout this volume. Directions, instructions and maps are easy to use and follow which is most important to first-time visitors. GPS coordinates are also provided for each location which will be most beneficial to the first-time traveler. Furthermore, the wonderful anecdotes concerning the monuments, tablets and markers are another plus brought to life by these individuals. For some enthusiasts the photographs of the battlefields and the monuments as well as the maps will make this tome most useful in understanding the events. An important part of this treatment is the prologue to the battle which provides readers with a clear understanding and appreciation of what became a bloody fight to end this turning point of the war. Information that proved useful from this balanced narrative is the Epilogue, and the Suggested Reading as well as an abundance of first-hand accounts and tales of officers and soldiers who experienced the struggle from the opposing forces. The writers make important references to facts and misconceptions from this important day of the battle. They provide troop movements as well as highlighting pivotal portions of the battlefield and its terrain that is critical to most individual's visits. Historians and Rangers such as Clark Hall, Mike Block, Eric Wittenberg, Bob O'Neil, Kris White and Matt Atkinson assisted the

writers with this work. Throughout this tour Orrison and Welch suggest visitors to this sacred ground to get out of their automobiles to explore and walk around the suggested stops. It might be beneficial to travelers to employ a Licensed Battlefield Guide during your journey. They keep things simple while highlighting the important landmarks that lend clarity to the historical record. The two historians have achieved a useful guide that provided background for events, good tactical descriptions though not in depth for a broad audience. Orrison and Welch have produced a well written, very organized, concise, readable, and balanced tome that offers an excellent start to the historic actions that focuses on all major events that took place during the Gettysburg Campaign. This volume is suggested to anyone visiting these important Eastern Theater locations for the first time or for the serious student who will visit these battlefields over and over again. This new addition to the study of the "The Last Road North" will help the reader know what happened at each stop during June and July of 1863. This work is recommended by this reviewer.

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