Red River Campaign Round Up - Bibliography

Note: The commentary following each suggested book is from professional Civil War Book Reviews. Additionally, some personal editorializing has been used.

Campaign Overview

A Signature aspect of the Red River Campaign Literature to date is the wealth of overall campaign studies but a decided lack of book length studies of the Battles of the Campaign including Mansfield and Pleasant Hill – with some very limited exceptions.


“One Damn Blunder From Beginning to End”: The Red River Campaign of 1864. Joiner, Gary D. (University of Tennessee Press 2006) – Particularly fascinating original research on hydrological aspects of campaign and discovery of Confederates diversion of Red River to lower river level and trap Union Naval fleet.

The Red River Campaign: The Union’s Final Attempt to Invade Texas (Civil War Campaigns and Commanders Series) Joiner, Gary D. (State House Press June 2014) – Best “Reader’s Digest” version of the Red River Campaign.

The Red River Campaign and Its Toll: 69 Bloody Days in Louisiana, March – May 1864. Robertson, Henry O. (McFarland 2016) – Campaign Overview with a social history focus with a focus on Red River Valley – Slave Economy and Local Politics before and during Civil War


The Red River Campaign of 1864 and the Loss by the Confederacy of the Civil War. Forsyth, Michael J. (McFarland & Co. 2010). Richard Taylor contended and not without merit that he could have recaptured New Orleans after the Battle of Pleasant Hill if Kirby Smith had not stripped his Army to the bone and transferred a majority of Taylor’s force to Arkansas to deal with the Camden Expedition thrust of the Red River Campaign. Another Campaign overview with a focus on an analytical treatise on the question of whether the Confederate could have achieved a victory decisive enough to alter the course of the war had different command decisions been made in the aftermath of the April 9, 1864 Battle of Pleasant Hill.
Military Actions

Battle of Fort DeRussy – March 14, 1864

Earthen Walls, Iron Men: Fort DeRussy, Louisiana and the Defense of the Red River Mayeux, Steven M. (University of Tennessee Press 2007) – Astutely Analyzed, exhaustively researched, well written and beautifully illustrated case study of Confederacy’s use of fortified batteries and obstructions to counteract U.S. Naval Supremacy. Focuses on construction, civil war experiences of fort, defenders and nearby civilian population, Battle between Mower’s Division during opening stages of campaign and preservation efforts.


Battle of Wilson’s Farm and Battle of Carroll’s Mill – April 7, 1864

Fighting for Time. Milbourn, Curtis. – North & South Magazine Vol 5 # 4 May 2002 pgs. 68-76

Battle of Mansfield – April 8, 1864

Dark and Bloody Ground: The Battle of Mansfield and The Forgotten Civil War in Louisiana Ayres, Thomas (Taylor Trade Publishing – Feb 2001) – General Hills personal recommendation for an overview of the Campaign and Battle of Mansfield from a Southern point of view. I personally think it is an excellent overview of the Civil War in Louisiana with enough information for casual readers and hard-core Red River Campaign students. Three “phases” being – (1) CW in Louisiana to Capture of New Orleans (2) Fall of New Orleans to Fall of Port Hudson and (3) Fall of Port Hudson to Conclusion of Red River Campaign

Dead-End at the Crossroads: The Battles of Mansfield (Sabine Crossroads) and Pleasant Hill, Louisiana 8 and 9 April 1864. Kiper, Richard Leslie. Rice University Master’s Thesis May, 1976


Battle of Pleasant Hill – April 9, 1864

Civil War Battle of Pleasant Hill. Benson, Solon F. (Briner Publishing Co. – January 1972)

The Battle of Pleasant Hill. Bounds, Steve & Milbourn, Curtis. – North & South Magazine Vol 8 # 6 November 2005 pgs. 70-89

Battle of Blair’s Landing – April 12, 1864


Curious Clash at Blair’s Landing. Allardice, Bruce. – America’s Civil War Magazine July 1997 pgs. 60
The Battle of Blair’s Landing. Barr, Alwyn – Louisiana Studies 2 1963 pgs., 206

Battle of Monett’s Ferry – April 23, 1864

“May God have Mercy on Us”: The Twenty Days of the Cane River Campaign in Louisiana. Nash Jr., Weldon, Taylor, John & Whittington (23 House Publishing 2019) – Focuses on “Escape” phase of Nathaniel Bank’s Army from its isolated position within inland island formed by Red and Cane Rivers from April 10-27, 1864. Covers land and naval military actions for 3-week period on day-by day basis with primary focus on Battle of Monett’s Ferry.

Bailey’s Dam


A Dam Fine Solution. Soodalter, Ron. – America’s Civil War September 2019 pgs. 28-35


Political, Economic & Social Aspects of Campaign

The Red River Campaign more so than many other Campaigns of the Civil War had major political, economic and social dimensions among its objectives. Lincoln and Stanton were greatly concerned with “Planting the Flag in Texas” to thwart any attempts by foreign powers – particularly the French who inserted themselves in Mexico’s Civil War - from interfering in the conflict between North & South. So much so that they overrode the tactical advice of Maj General U.S. Grant and Banks himself who would have preferred to make the port of Mobile, AL the Gulf thrust portion of the overall 1864 Strategic Campaign.

The Red River Campaign was the fourth (or fifth) and final attempt to take Texas for the Union. The North never succeeded in this objective. Besides planting the flag in Texas another objective of the campaign (and all previous attempts to take Texas for the Union) was to stop the cross-border trade between the Confederacy and Mexico. Mexican ports such as Bagdad, Mexico were international ports for shipment of Southern Cotton to European markets. Shutting down the cross-border trade would have limited the South’s access to European markets from a natural, relatively accessible outlet – Mexican ports. Additionally; the cotton and sugar crop of Louisiana and Texas itself was increasingly itself targeted as other cotton production areas of the South were captured and confiscated to eliminate the South’s primary natural resource and for confiscation to be shipped North for textile production. Lastly a goal of the campaign was to establish a Unionist State Government.

Planting the Union Flag in Texas: The Campaigns of Major General Nathaniel P. Banks in the West

Dupree, Stephen A. (Texas A&M University Press 2008) Excellent synthesis that places The Red River Campaign in context as the fourth or fifth expedition by Banks as part of single campaign to capture Texas. (The 5 campaigns being (1) Galveston January Oct ’62-Jan ’63 (2) Sabine Pass Oct 62 & Sep ’63 (3) Rio Grande Expedition Oct ’63 (4) Oct ’63 – Texas Overland Expedition and (5) Red River Campaign March 64-May 64.
Among the Cotton Thieves. Bacon, Edward S. (Big Byte Books October 2014) Originally published in 1867 by Colonel Edward S Bacon of the 6th Michigan Vol Inf. Among Civil War Memoirs this is considered to be in the top flight. A stand out of unique military despotism and ineptitude by a highly educated and articulate officer in an easy-to-read prose style. Gen Banks had a $5 million dollar account which he was authorized to spend to buy cotton from areas under northern control. He never spent a dollar of it, because his troops were able to steal enough cotton to meet requirements, primarily sent to Democratic power broker friends in New England to satisfy textile mill demands and to further his hope for election to the White House in 1864. Banks and the Navy were in competition to plunder and steal as much cotton form areas of Louisiana under Federal Control so much so that the Navy failed at some critical junctures to support Banks because they were to busy plundering. The book along with Ludwell Johnson’s Classic is as its best in describing the campaign’s shady and rather disgraceful economic and political origins and how they trumped purely military issues. No one looks good here, from Lincoln on down.


Louisiana Sugar Plantations During the Civil War. Wilson, Walter E. (McFarland Press.) 2020

Civil War Scoundrels and the Texas Cotton Trade. Roland, Charles P. (Louisiana State University Press.) 1957


Command Overviews


A Crisis in Command: Edmund Kirby Smith, Richard Taylor, And the Army of the Trans-Mississippi. Prushankin, Jeffery S. (Louisiana State University Press 2005). In a war rife with discord at the command level, the degree of acrimony between Confederate Trans-Mississippi Department commander Edmund Kirby Smith and district commander Richard Taylor rises to the very top. Their contentious relationship throughout the 1863 Bayou Teche Campaign, the disagreements over the attempts to relieve Vicksburg boiled over to the top by the Red River Campaign. Their relationship was often marred by
misunderstanding, deliberate distortions, and breaches of faith both petty and serious. Many of the
problems arose from their diametrically opposed strategic views. Smith fixated on Arkansas and
Missouri and favored trading large areas of space for time to effect concentration of forces. Taylor, on
the other hand a native son of Louisiana was firmly committed to aggressively defend the borders of his
District command – Louisiana. His constant desire to occupy the LaFourche area and threaten New
Orleans was seldom if ever shared by Smith.

considered book to be another Campaign overview of Red River Campaign without any original archival
research.

General Richard Taylor as a Military Commander. Bergeron Jr, Arthur W. – Louisiana History: The
Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association. Winter 1982 Pgs. 35-47**

“To This Fatal Blunder. Prushankin, Jeffrey W. – North & South Magazine Volume 5 Number 6

Command Personalities

From First to Last: The Life of Major General William B. Franklin. Snell, Mark A. Fordham University
Press 2002

Memoir of Commodore David Porter, of the United States Navy. Porter, David D. Munsell Publishing –
Albany, NY 1875

Work – 3,396 Presidents, Governors, Cabinet Members and Union & High Command officers. (See for
biography on A.J. Smith, Joseph Mower, Frederick J. Steele

Hamilton P. Bee in the Red River Campaign of 1864. Meiners, Fredericka. – The Southwestern
Historical Quarterly, Vol 78, No 1, July 1974. Pgs. 21-44** (Bee’s Cavalry

Mosby Monroe Parsons: Missouri’s Forgotten Brigadier. Gurley, Bill editors -Hewitt, Lawrence L.,
Bergeron, Arthur W., Schott, Thomas E. – University of Tennessee Press – Confederate Generals in the
Trans-Mississippi Vol 1 & 2 2013 Pgs. 91-134 & 2015 pgs 191-220

“Not Fortunate in War”: Major General Thomas J. Churchill. Christ, Mark editors Hewitt, Lawrence L.,
Bergeron, Arthur W., Schott, Thomas E. – University of Tennessee Press – Confederate Generals in the
Trans-Mississippi Vol 1 2013 Pgs. 167-196

Three Days in April: Tom Greene’s Contributions at Carroll’s Mill, Mansfield and Pleasant Hill During
the Red River Campaign. Milbourn, Curtis editors Hewitt, Lawrence L., Bergeron, Arthur W., Schott,
Thomas E. – University of Tennessee Press – Confederate Generals in the Trans-Mississippi Vol 1 2013
Pgs. 197-232

Gallant, Unselfish, and Patriotic: Alfre Mouton Jeffrey Prushankin editors Hewitt, Lawrence L.,
Bergeron, Arthur W., Schott, Thomas E. – University of Tennessee Press – Confederate Generals in the
Trans-Mississippi Vol 2 2015 Pgs. 101-128

John A Wharton Paul Scott editors Hewitt, Lawrence L., Bergeron, Arthur W., Schott, Thomas E. – University of Tennessee Press – Confederate Generals in the Trans-Mississippi Vol 3 2019. (Appointed by Taylor to command Confederate Cavalry after the death of Tom Green at Blair’s Landing Wharton lead the CSA Cavalry during the rest of the campaign. Personal dispute with Baylor at the Battle of Yellow Bayou lead to his death by murder in closing days of war at hands of John R. Baylor)

Essay & Anthology Collections


Primary Sources & First-Hand Accounts


Destruction and Reconstruction: Personal Experiences of the Late War. Taylor, Richard (Time-Life Books – Collectors Library of the Civil War)

Unit Studies with Significant Involvement and Impact on the Red River Campaign

USA


The Indiana Jackass Regiment in the Civil War A History of the 21st Infantry/1st Heavy Artillery Regiment Faller, Phillip E. (McFarland Publishing 2013)

The 2nd Maine Cavalry in the Civil War. Smith, Ned (McFarland Publishing) 2014
Civil War History of the 47th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers Schmidt, Lewis (privately published) 1986. My personal interest in Red River Campaign. Only PA Regiment in the campaign. Played a pivotal role at the Battle of Pleasant Hill. PA Dutchmen in Louisiana – must have seemed like Mars to these foreigners.

CSA


Between the Enemy and Texas: Parsons’ Cavalry in the Civil War. Bailey, Anne J. (Texas Christian University Press) 1989


Daniel’s Battery the Ninth Texas Field Battery. Perkins, John D. (Hill College Press) 1998


Confederate Artillery in Western Louisiana, 1864 Barr, Alwyn. (Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association, Winter 1964, pgs. 53-73**

Miscellaneous


The Defense of Shreveport- The Confederacy’s Last Redoubt. Moore, Waldo W. Military Affairs, Vol No. 17 No. 2 (Summer 1953) pp.72-82 Interesting article on the defenses of Shreveport whose capture and occupation was the goal of both the Red River Campaign and the Steele’s Camden Expedition pincers movement from Arkansas**

For the Cause. Holloway, Richard H. (America’s Civil War, (May 2020) pp.77-86 Interesting article on Daniel Boyd – captured Louisiana Tiger – Taylor’s Chief Engineer who “spied” on Federal activity on a while on board a Prison Ship – The Polar Stary and managed to make detailed note on Federal troops movements and activities while imprisoned on the Red River and return to Taylor in time to use the information during the campaign.

The Wartime Administration of Governor Henry W. Allen Simpson, Amos E – Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association, Vol 5, No 3 (Summer 1964) pgs. 257-269**. Final popular wartime Louisiana Governor of Louisiana and ex-Conederate office seriously wounded at Shiloh and Baton Rouge who Governed from Shreveport during the Red River Campaign
** These journal articles can be downloaded and read by visiting Jstor.org’s website and purchasing a monthly or annual subscription. The monthly option can be selected as non-renewable. The cost to download 10 articles is $19.50.