

11-1995

## Review: Riding with Stuart: Reminiscences of an Aide-de-Camp

Cline E. Hall

*Liberty University*, [cehall@liberty.edu](mailto:cehall@liberty.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/hist\\_fac\\_pubs](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/hist_fac_pubs)



Part of the [History Commons](#)

### Recommended Citation

Hall, Cline E., "Review: Riding with Stuart: Reminiscences of an Aide-de-Camp" (1995). *Faculty Publications and Presentations*. Paper 6.

[http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/hist\\_fac\\_pubs/6](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/hist_fac_pubs/6)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of History at DigitalCommons@Liberty University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Liberty University. For more information, please contact [scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu](mailto:scholarlycommunication@liberty.edu).

bardment appeared to devastate the fortification. Overconfident Union forces gathered at nightfall for a bayonet charge to be led by Colonel Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Colored Regiment, whose history was popularized in the film *Glory*. The Confederates learned of the impending attack. Shaw was killed at Battery Wagner, and his regiment and others sustained heavy casualties. One Federal officer called Wagner the "gate of Hell" (p. 114).

The Union high command concluded that "Charleston is too important to be lost when so nearly won" (p. 138). Additional troops were sent to Morris Island, and Gillmore's engineers began digging parallels, zig-zag trenches, and artillery batteries.

From August 17 to 23 these batteries and Dahlgren's ironclads carried out the first major coordinated bombardment in warfare by rifled artillery. Fort Sumter was reduced to rubble, and the Confederates in Battery Wagner could only take cover. Union entrenchments were within a few yards of Wagner by September 7, and Gillmore planned an infantry attack. However, only hours before the assault was to begin, the one thousand Confederate defenders were evacuated. Gillmore's final attempt to capture Charleston ended in an unsuccessful and disastrous naval attack to seize Fort Sumter.

The Union attack on Charleston harbor was a victory for southern morale. But as the author points out, the North gained important experience. New weapons and searchlights (Gillmore's calcium lights) were tested; amphibious and trench warfare had a beginning here; and African American soldiers won acceptance as fighting men. The campaign also demonstrated that overconfidence, lost code books, inadequate equipment, and failure to seize the initiative in combat could prove costly.

The author provides twenty-seven carefully drawn maps to identify Confederate and Union fortifications and an exhaustive "Roll of Battle" about the units and vessels engaged. This book is the definitive work on the campaign for Charleston Harbor in 1863 and is highly recommended for all students of military and southern history.

Georgia Southern University

WALTER J. FRASER JR.

*Riding with Stuart: Reminiscences of an Aide-de-Camp.* By Captain Theodore Stanford Garnett. Edited by Robert J. Trout. (Shippensburg, Pa.: White Mane Publishing Co., Inc., c. 1994. Pp. x, 124. \$19.95, ISBN 0-942597-58-3.)

Theodore Stanford Garnett came up through the ranks in the Army of Northern Virginia to the staff of Major General James Ewell Brown (Jeb) Stuart. Born in Virginia on October 28, 1844, he entered the Confederate military service through the Hanover County Artillery. Through the influence of his uncle, Garnett secured a position as a clerk in the Navy Department in Richmond before being assigned to Stuart's staff in May 1863. He used his talents as a clerk, forager, scout, and courier with Stuart during the Gettysburg Campaign, the Wilderness, and the Spotsylvania Campaign until Stuart's death at Yellow Tavern. Subsequently, Garnett served on the staff of Major General William Henry Fitzhugh Lee. After his promotion to Captain,

Garnett became Assistant Adjutant General on the staff of Brigadier General William P. Roberts until the end of the war at Appomattox.

It is fortunate that Garnett's memoir was "rediscovered" in 1988 and has been edited by Robert J. Trout. It tells us a lot about Stuart during a time that others have neglected, the period from October 1863 through June 1864 while Garnett was on Stuart's staff. Although it was written by Garnett over a period of years from June 1871 to May 1913 on seven different occasions, time did not dim his memory. He gave detailed descriptions of camp life and the movement of troops and provided information about Stuart and his staff of interest to any student of Stuart.

Most importantly, Garnett wrote about a period of time we know little about. Other staff officers such as William Blackford, Heros von Borcke, John Esten Cooke, and Henry McClellan wrote their impressions of Stuart but said very little about his later days. Garnett does that. He described the Bristoe Station Campaign, gave a detailed description of Stuart's 1863 winter quarters near Orange Court House down to the placement of tents and walkways, and even recounted "the Christmas season serenading of the ladies of Orange Court House by the headquarters band" (p. 10).

Robert J. Trout, past vice-president of the Stuart-Mosby Historical Society, does an excellent job as editor. His extensive notes are adequate in identifying people and locations, and an index and maps are included. In addition, there is a brief biography of Garnett, Garnett's address delivered at the unveiling of the equestrian statue of General Stuart at Richmond in 1907, and a few letters exchanged between General Lee and his staff relating to Stuart's role in the Gettysburg Campaign. This record is well worth examination by any person interested in the Civil War.

Liberty University

CLINE E. HALL

*A Surgeon's Civil War: The Letters and Diary of Daniel M. Holt, M. D.* Edited by James M. Greiner, Janet L. Coryell, and James R. Smither. (Kent, Ohio, and London, Eng.: Kent State University Press, c. 1994. Pp. xviii, 289. \$28.00, ISBN 0-87338-494-6.)

Daniel M. Holt, M.D., was an assistant surgeon in the Union Army from the time he joined the 121st New York Volunteer Regiment in September 1862 through October 1864, when failing health forced him to return to his Herkimer, New York, home. Wherever he was, he wrote regularly and frequently to his wife, but although his regiment took part in such famous engagements as the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, and Cold Harbor, Holt knew little of the big picture and the information that was available to him was often faulty; the true value of his letters and the diary that supplements them beginning in May 1864 lies in the fact that they record the personal experiences, impressions, and reactions of an intelligent, thoughtful, compassionate, and articulate observer. The many passages in which Holt graphically describes to his wife the aftermath of battle or the sufferings of cold, hungry, despairing men (of whom he is one) marched to exhaustion for reasons they often cannot fathom, are profoundly moving.

What Holt's letters reveal of the author himself, however, is especially in-