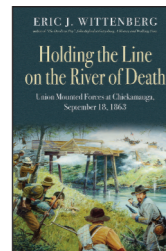


About the Author:

Timothy B. Smith (Ph.D. Mississippi State University, 2001) is a veteran of the National Park Service and teaches history at the University of Tennessee at Martin. In addition to many articles and essays, he is the author, editor, or co-editor of eighteen books, including *Champion Hill: Decisive Battle for Vicksburg* (2004), which won the nonfiction book award from the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters, *Corinth 1862: Siege, Battle, Occupation* (2012), which won the Fletcher Pratt Award and the McLemore Prize, *Shiloh: Conquer or Perish* (2014), which won the Richard B. Harwell Award, the Tennessee History Book Award, and the Douglas Southall Freeman Award, and *Grant Invades Tennessee: The 1862 Battles for Forts Henry and Donelson* (2016), which won the Tennessee History Book Award, the Emerging Civil War Book Award, and the Douglas Southall Freeman Award. He is currently writing a book on the May 19 and 22 Vicksburg assaults. He lives with his wife Kelly and children Mary Kate and Leah Grace in Adamsville, Tennessee.

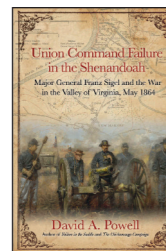
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THE REAL HORSE SOLDIERS

Benjamin Grierson's Epic 1863 Civil War Raid Through Mississippi



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BENJAMIN GRIERSON'S Union cavalry thrust through Mississippi is one of the most well-known operations of the Civil War. The last serious study was published more than six decades ago. Since then other accounts have appeared, but none are deeply researched full-length studies of the raid and its more than substantial (and yet often overlooked) results. The publication of Timothy B. Smith's The Real Horse Soldiers: Benjamin Grierson's Epic 1863 Civil War Raid through Mississippi rectifies this oversight.

There were other simultaneous operations to distract Confederate attention from the real threat posed by General U. S. Grant's Army of the Tennessee across the Mississippi River from Vicksburg in Louisiana. Grierson's operation, however, conducted with three cavalry regiments and a battery of small artillery pieces, is the most famous. For 16 days (April 17 to May 2), Grierson led Confederate pursuers on a high-stakes chase through the entire state of Mississippi, entering through the northern border with Tennessee and exiting its southern border with Louisiana. The daily rides were long, the rest stops short, and the danger as high as the tension. Ironically, the man who led the raid was a former music teacher who some say disliked horses. Throughout, he displayed outstanding leadership and cunning, destroyed railroad tracks and supplies, burned trestles and bridges, freed slaves, and created as much damage and chaos as possible.

Grierson's Raid broke a vital Southern rail line at Newton Station that supplied Vicksburg and, perhaps most importantly, consumed the attention of the Confederate high command. While Lt. Gen. John Pemberton and other Southern leaders looked in the wrong direction, Grant moved his entire Army of the Tennessee across the Mississippi River below the Vicksburg bastion, a move that spelled the doom of that city and Confederate chances of holding the river. It may also have sealed the fate of the Confederacy itself.

Novelists have attempted to capture the larger-than-life cavalry raid in the popular imagination, and Hollywood reproduced the daring cavalry action in The Horse Soldiers, a 1959 major motion picture starring John Wayne and William Holden. Although the film replicates the raid's drama and high-stakes gamble, cinematic license chipped away at its accuracy. Readers of The Real Horse Soldiers who think they know all about this cavalry operation will quickly discover just how complex and important it was, and how close it came to abject failure.

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