

Annotations

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ANNOTATIONS

Morgan, Jo-Ann

Fall 2007

Morgan, Jo-Ann *"Uncle Tom's Cabin" as Visual Culture*. University of Missouri Press, \$39.95 hardcover ISBN 9780826217158

Conyers, Marshall

Fall 2007

Conyers, Marshall *Amongst Immortals Raging: Gettysburg's Third Day Begins*. Pelican Publishing Company, \$19.95 ISBN 9781589804684

McMurry, Richard M., ed.

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McMurry, Richard M., ed. *An Uncompromising Secessionist: The Civil War of George Knox Miller, Eighth (Wade's) Confederate Cavalry*. The University of Alabama Press, \$45.00 hardcover ISBN 9780817315313

Benson, Susan Williams, ed.

Fall 2007

Benson, Susan Williams, ed. *Berry Benson's Civil War Book: Memoirs of a Confederate Scout and Sharpshooter*. The University of Georgia Press, \$18.95 softcover ISBN 9780820329437

Williams, Patrick G.

Fall 2007

Williams, Patrick G. *Beyond Redemption: Texas Democrats after Reconstruction.* Texas A&M; University Press, \$29.95 hardcover ISBN 9781585445738

Minor, Hubbard T.

Fall 2007

Minor, Hubbard T. *Confederate Naval Cadet: The Diary and Letters of Midshipman Hubbard T. Minor, with a History of the Confederate Naval Academy.* McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, \$39.95 ISBN 9780786426454

Kroll, Douglas

Fall 2007

Kroll, Douglas *Friends in Peace and War: The Russian Navy's Landmark Visit to Civil War San Francisco.* Potomac Books, Inc., \$22.95 softcover ISBN 9781597970549

Hart, Alison

Fall 2007

Hart, Alison *Gabriel's Horses.* Peachtree Publishers, \$14.95 hardcover ISBN 9781156453986

Collins, Robert

Fall 2007

Collins, Robert *General James G. Blunt: Tarnished Glory.* Pelican Publishing Company, \$23.00 hardcover ISBN 9781589802537

Political General

The Rise and Fall of James G. Blunt

James G. Blunt was one of the North's many political generals, but he was not typical of the breed. While Blunt's ambitions may have outstripped his abilities, he was a fighter. On more than one occasion, his courage, aggressiveness, and tenacity compensated for his deficiencies, and he ended up compiling a list of achievements that excelled the records of many of the Union Army's professionally trained commanders. Blunt raised and led the armies that reestablished Union authority in much of Indian Territory and northwest Arkansas. He defeated Rebel forces in pitched battles at Old Fort Wayne, Cane Hill, Prairie Grove, and Honey Springs. He personally supervised the recapture of Fort Smith, Arkansas. In the fall of 1864, he played a leading role in crushing Major General Sterling Price's great cavalry raid into Missouri and eastern Kansas.

Blunt was born in Maine on July 21, 1826. He graduated from medical school in 1849 and moved to Kansas Territory seven years later, where he emerged as a leading abolitionist and free stater. By late 1857, Blunt had become an aide to James H. Lane, the flamboyant Jayhawker and rising politician who had been named major general of the free state militia. With the outbreak of the Civil War, Blunt enlisted in the Union Army. Lane, now a U.S. senator, had Blunt commissioned as the lieutenant colonel of the 3rd Kansas Volunteer Infantry Regiment in July 1861. The following April, Lane secured his protégé an appointment as brigadier general and commander of the Department of Kansas. Blunt remained true to his prewar principles, making public pronouncements in the summer of 1862 in favor of emancipation and raising black troops. Once these measures became official Union policy, Blunt continued to give them his outspoken support.

Senator Lane was a duplicitous schemer with rough-hewn manners, a fiery temper, and a ruthless resolve to run over anyone who stood in his way. A man with such an abrasive character was bound to attract many enemies. As the beneficiary of Lane's sponsorship, James Blunt also inherited the senator's enemies. Even if Blunt had not been a loyal Lane man, his own personality would have made him the target of criticism. The former doctor was a coarse man who did not mince his words. He drank too much and exhibited a fondness for prostitutes. His administration of various Western commands also inspired ugly rumors of corruption. Several professional Union officers took a dislike to Blunt. Despite the latter's many victories, Major General Henry Wager Halleck, the Union Army's chief of staff, dismissed him in April 1864 as a very

quarrelsome man. Brigadier General John M. Schofield, the commander of the Department of Missouri and Blunt's immediate superior in the middle part of the war, pushed for the obstreperous Kansan's relief on October 1, 1863, less than a month after the capture of Fort Smith. Major General Samuel R. Curtis, who commanded Blunt at other times in the war, was one of the few West Pointers to appreciate the former doctor's military merits.

General James G. Blunt: Tarnished Glory by Robert Collins is the first book-length biography of the Union general that critics called the fat boy. Considering Blunt's colorful personality and impressive military career, it is surprising that he had to wait so long for such a detailed treatment. No doubt the fact that Blunt's exploits were confined to the Trans-Mississippi theater accounts for his neglect by Civil War scholars.

Unfortunately, the Collins book does not begin to do justice to its subject. The author is a freelance writer from Kansas with a passionate interest in local history. His previous books include *Kansas Railroad Attractions and Ghost Railroads of Kansas*. The main problem with *General James Blunt* is that its author thought that he could research this topic without straying outside Kansas. His bibliography cites only six document collections at the Kansas State Historical Society and an 1850 census record from a county historical society in Ohio. Blunt's personal papers did not survive, but Collins could have tapped into the general's voluminous official correspondence had he visited the National Archives. In addition, he neglected the opportunity to visit state and local archives throughout the United States to examine the letters, diaries, and unwritten memoirs of many of the men who either served under Blunt or fought against him. Having opted to ignore the sort of sources that have enriched serious Civil War scholarship for decades, Collins relies largely on printed works, including period newspapers, which he does not always use judiciously. Consequently, the book is riddled with frustrating gaps, idle speculation, and some errors of fact and interpretation. The absence of reference notes also makes it difficult to know when Collins is performing competently.

General James Blunt is an interesting study, and Collins' portrait of the man is certainly plausible, but the book suffers from an amateurish quality that calls its reliability into question.

Gregory J. W. Urwin is a professor of history and associate director of the Center for the Study of Force and Diplomacy at Temple University. He is also

the editor of *Black Flag over Dixie: Racial Atrocities and Reprisals in the Civil War*, which was recently released in paperback by Southern Illinois University Press.

Nichols, Bruce

Fall 2007

Nichols, Bruce *Guerrilla Warfare in Civil War Missouri, Volume II, 1863*. McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, \$45.00 hardcover ISBN 9780786427338

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Tucker, Phillip Thomas *Irish Confederates: The Civil War's Forgotten Soldiers*. McWhiney Foundation Press, \$16.95 softcover ISBN 9781893114531

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Kelly, Brian, introduction by

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Mandel, Bernard and Kelly, Brian, introduction by. *Labor, Free and Slave: Workingmen and the Anti-Slavery Movement in the United States*. University of Illinois Press, \$25.00 softcover ISBN 9780252074288

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Bender, Robert Patrick, ed. *Like Grass before the Scythe: The Life and Death of Sgt. William Remmel, 121st New York Infantry*. The University of Alabama Press, \$39.95 hardcover ISBN 9780817315528

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Miller, Curtis M.
Trowbridge-Miller, Cheryl
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\$40.00 hardcover ISBN 9780813124278

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Nanzig, Thomas P., ed. *The Civil War Memoirs of a Virginia Cavalryman: Lt. Robert T. Hubbard, Jr..* The University of Alabama Press, \$46.50 hardcover ISBN 9780817315306

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Robertson, James I, Jr., introduction by

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K■nstler, Mort and Robertson, James I, Jr., introduction by. *The Civil War Paintings of Mort K■nstler, Volume 2: Fredericksburg to Gettysburg.* Cumberland House, \$18.95 hardcover ISBN 9781581825572

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University of Nebraska Press, \$21.95 softcover ISBN 9780803262461

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Brinsfield, John Wesley, Jr., eds.
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