

**SHERMAN'S HISTORICAL RAID.
THE MEMOIRS IN THE LIGHT OF
THE RECORD. A REVIEW BASED
UPON COMPILATIONS FROM THE
FILES OF THE WAR OFFICE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649382064

Sherman's historical raid. The Memoirs in the light of the record. A review based upon compilations from the files of the War Office by H. V. Boynton

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Cover @ 2017

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A REVIEW BASED UPON COMPILATIONS FROM
THE FILES OF THE WAR OFFICE.

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WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT OF THE CINCINNATI GAZETTE.



CINCINNATI:
WILSTACH, BALDWIN & CO.,
1875.

P R E F A C E.

GENERAL SHERMAN in the introduction to his Memoirs, says:

"What is now offered is not designed as a history of the war, or even as a complete account of all the incidents in which the writer bore a part; but merely as his recollection of events, corrected by a reference to his own memoranda, which may assist the future historian when he comes to describe the whole, and account for the motives and reasons which influenced some of the actors in the grand drama of the war."

The object of the present compilation, chiefly from the official records, is to show wherein the Memoirs of General Sherman fall far short of presenting the correct history of many great events of which they treat; how much they lack of giving a complete account of incidents which they relate; how far the author's recollection, even when corrected by his own memoranda, is at fault; and to furnish the future historian with facts which will guard him against perpetuating the error and the injustice which pervade both volumes of the work.

This book is a criticism upon Sherman as a general, only so far as the official records presented furnish such criticism. There is no attempt to contradict his statements, except as the records contradict them. Wherever these show that he has done grave injustice both to the living and to the dead, they are produced with as little comment as is needed to set them in connected order, and point out the refutations which they contain. While by this method of review, his mistakes only

are presented, there has been no intention to underrate the great and brilliant services which he performed.

If these pages serve in any degree to correct error and do justice, where error uncorrected, and injustice done, affect the reputations of men or officers, who, either in humble position or exalted station, freely periled their lives, or laid them down for the country, the object for which they have been written will be accomplished.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

GENERAL SHERMAN is one of the most popular heroes of the late war. He has published his book after ten years of reflection upon events in which he bore most conspicuous and honorable part. During these years he has had uninterrupted access to the official records, including their most confidential papers; and in view of his high position, his opportunities for intimate knowledge and his popularity, what he has now written will, in spite of himself, be accepted as history by most readers who have not the means of testing his story by the records. It is believed that the extracts from these, presented in this volume, will prove sufficient to thoroughly fortify General Sherman in the claim that his book is not history, and so in part prevent the injustice which will be done to many distinguished officers and brave armies, if what he has written be received as accurate. No criticisms of the strategy or the tactics of General Sherman will be found in these pages, except such as are plainly called forth by the records produced.

High as is the position which he occupies, great as is the authority with which he speaks, there is nothing in either which should afford him the least protection in the eyes of his countrymen, if he be found detracting from the merit or the fame which belongs to his associates.

It might be pardoned in one who accomplished so much if he had contented himself with moderately magnifying his own achievements, but when he goes beyond this, and claims the

merit which belongs to others, and steps still beyond and attempts to belittle the deeds of men in no respect his inferiors as generals or soldiers, and does cruel injustice to whole armies, the harmless vanity of the successful general becomes the gigantic wrong of the false historian.

In a broad and high sense, the merit of every man who bore a musket faithfully, and slept finally in the grave of the "unknown," is as great as his. His Memoirs arraign the dead as well as the living. The files of the War Department afford an answer for both. These orders, letters, telegrams, and reports, written either before, at the time, or immediately after the occurrence of the events ordered, in progress, or accomplished, photographed the truth, and in these the living and the dead find just defense. Here Thomas, McPherson, Stanton, and their companions, speak for themselves, and vindicate themselves from unjust aspersions. Here, in short, truth is made manifest, and exact justice done.

The position which General Sherman occupies now, and that which he held during the war, will naturally, and of necessity, give the force of history to what he has written, in spite of any disclaimer he may make, and this historical character will attach to these Memoirs so long as they remain uncorrected by the official record.

For the benefit of comrades living, who can not conveniently consult these records, and especially in vindication of such as are dead, it should be esteemed a duty by all who can reach the files, to search them carefully, with a view to overthrow error and establish truth. So far as General Sherman's book conforms to official papers, their production can only strengthen him; so far as it fails to agree with these, it not only deserves to be condemned, but its condemnation should be measured by the prominence of the author and his abundant facilities for obtaining accurate information.

Judged by the official record, the verdict must be that the work is intensely egotistical, unreliable, and cruelly unjust to nearly all his distinguished associates. Our erratic General