

Forever Gallant: Cd-Rom And Print-On-Demand Technology Bring Back A Classic

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Recommended Citation

Nofi, Albert A. (2000) "Forever Gallant: Cd-Rom And Print-On-Demand Technology Bring Back A Classic," *Civil War Book Review*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 1 .

Available at: <https://repository.lsu.edu/cwbr/vol2/iss1/15>

Review

FOREVER GALLANT

CD-ROM and print-on-demand technology bring back a classic

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Winter 2000

Paris, Comte de *The Battle of Gettysburg*. Digital Scanning, ISBN 1582180679

These chapters from the Comte de Paris's multi-volume *History of the Civil War in America*, originally published as a one-volume work in 1886, collected here as **The Battle of Gettysburg**, provide a readable, generally clear treatment of the battle, with some surprising insights, such as the count's defense of General Longstreet in the dispute over the organization of "Pickett's Charge."

Modern readers, however, may find the work's style rather cumbersome ("During this time, Vincent, hastening the pace of his soldiers, has reached the base of this same hill"). Moreover, in keeping with 19th century optimism and romantic militarism, everyone is uniformly brave and gallant, while there is a definite lack of attention to technological matters; for example, the author never once mentions that Buford's division's stubborn resistance to Heth's division on the morning of the first day was largely due to its ability to generate much greater firepower. On the positive side, the work presents one of the clearest word-pictures of the physical environment of the battle, no mean feat.

As a reproduction of the original work, complete with maps, this edition of **The Battle of Gettysburg** is quite well done. However, any reissue of a work more than a century old should merit a contemporary introduction discussing its relationship to modern scholarship.

The CD-ROM version of this edition is identical to the print version. CD-ROM technology offers important benefits to the researcher. It is possible to search for key words or phrases. This is particularly valuable when a book is either poorly indexed, or not indexed at all, as is the case for many older works. In addition, the reader can excerpt portions of the text with ease without having to resort to manual transcription, a boon for anyone wishing to quote a paragraph

or two for use in a paper.

Digital Scanning has undertaken an ambitious program of reproducing, both in print and in CD-ROM format, a number of 19th century works, primarily Civil War-related. Yet a glance at its catalogue does not reveal many titles in desperate need of reissue. **The Battle of Gettysburg**, for example, was reprinted as recently as 1988. Other titles include *McClellan's Own Story* and *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, neither of which is particularly rare. In fact, aside from William Schouler's *History of Massachusetts in the Civil War*, none of the Civil War titles is facing extinction. The publisher would do well to follow up Schouler's work with some other selections from the enormous pool of valuable works that have been long out of print, such as *The Register of the Volunteer Army of the United States* and many of the state official histories, both Northern and Southern, such as Frederick Phisterer's *New York in the War of the Rebellion*.

Albert A. Nofi holds a Ph.D. in military history. Currently employed as a defense analyst, he is the author or editor of some 30 books, several of them on the Civil War, and contributes regular columns to North & South and StrategyPage.