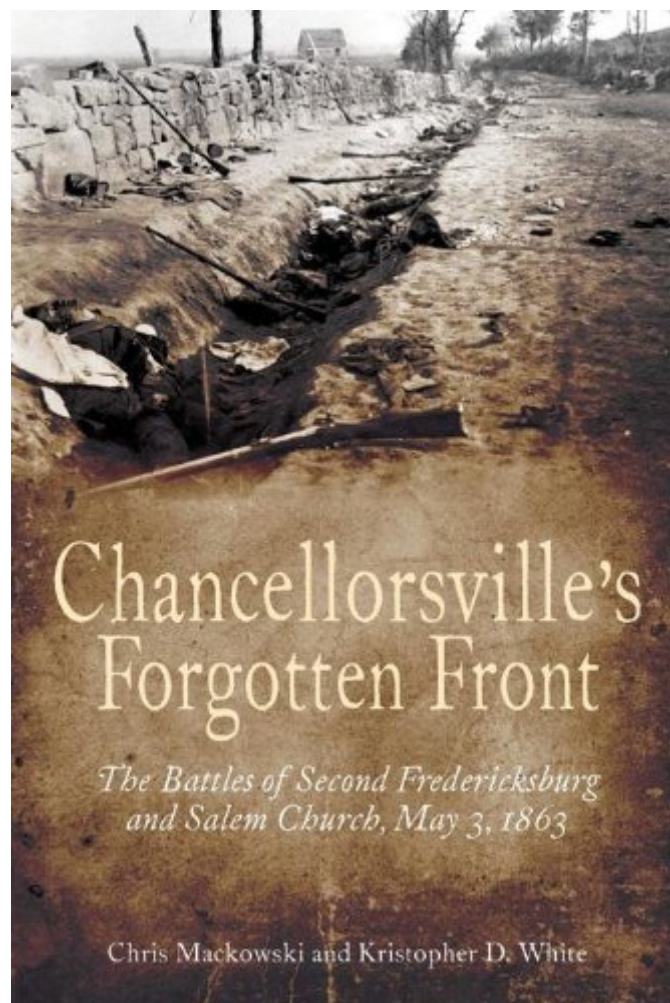




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Chancellorsvilleâ€™s Forgotten Front: The Battles Of Second Fredericksburg And Salem Church, May 3, 1863



Synopsis

By May of 1863, the Stone Wall at the base of Marye's Heights above Fredericksburg loomed large over the Army of the Potomac, haunting its men with memories of slaughter from their crushing defeat there the previous December. They would assault it again with a very different result the following spring when General Joe Hooker, bogged down in bloody battle with the Army of Northern Virginia around the crossroads of Chancellorsville, ordered John Sedgwick's Sixth Corps to assault the heights and move to his assistance. This time the Union troops wrested the wall and high ground from the Confederates and drove west into the enemy's rear. The inland drive stalled in heavy fighting at Salem Church. Chancellorsville's Forgotten Front: The Battles of Second Fredericksburg and Salem Church, May 3, 1863 is the first book-length study of these overlooked engagements and the central roles they played in the final Southern victory. Once Hooker opened the campaign with a brilliant march around General Lee's left flank, the Confederate commander violated military principles by dividing his under-strength army in the face of superior numbers. He shuttled most of his men west from around Fredericksburg under Stonewall Jackson to meet Hooker in the tangles of the Wilderness, leaving behind a small portion to watch Sedgwick's Sixth Corps. Jackson's devastating attack against Hooker's exposed right flank on May 2, however, convinced the Union army commander to order Sedgwick's large, unused corps to break through and march against Lee's rear. From that point on, Chancellorsville's Forgotten Front tightens the lens for a thorough examination of the decision-making, movements, and fighting that led to the breakthrough, inland thrust, and ultimate bloody stalemate at Salem Church. Authors Chris Mackowski and Kristopher D. White have long appreciated the pivotal roles Second Fredericksburg and Salem Church played in the campaign, and just how close the Southern army came to grief—and the Union army to stunning success. Together they seamlessly weave their extensive newspaper, archival, and firsthand research into a compelling narrative to better understand these combats, which usually garner little more than a footnote to the larger story of Jackson's march and tragic fatal wounding. The success at Second Fredericksburg was one of the Union army's few bright spots in the campaign, while the setback at Salem Church stands as its most devastating lost opportunity. Instead of being trapped between the Sixth Corps's hammer and "Fighting Joe" Hooker's anvil, Lee overcame long odds to achieve what is widely recognized as his greatest victory. But Lee's triumph played out as it did because of the pivotal events at Second Fredericksburg and Salem Church—"Chancellorsville's forgotten front"—where Union soldiers once more faced the horror of an indomitable wall of stone, and an undersized Confederate division stood up to a Union juggernaut.

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Customer Reviews

This book is an awesome read, the book is written well and keeps your attention. This is a must have for anyone reading about the battle of Chancellorsville. I read Sears book on the battle but you never realize there was two fronts at Chancellorsville until you read this book. The author did an awesome job on this book, it is well researched and would make a great addition to anyone wanting to know more about this battle.

The editors of at least the Kindle version of this very well researched book should be shot, or at least fired! The book is very good and fills an important gap in coverage of the fighting at 2nd Fredericksburg, Salem Church and Bank's Ford. The proofreading of the text is not just poorly executed, but the random insertion and repetition of whole sentences and fragments makes reading painful. The authors deserve better than this and I hope the publisher makes amends for this botched publication.

Very well written. A good and readable account of the 2nd battle of Fredericksburg and Salem Church. This kind of detail was formally available only in books about the overall Chancellorsville campaign.

excellent work

received timely, mighty interesting too. I am a sucker for the US civil war and another phase of the known battles always draws my attention

Excellent book, well researched.

I definitely got the feeling from reading this book it was written by someone more interested in telling the Federal side of the story. For example, they place a great emphasis on telling the story of a particular union colonel who was brave but whose regiment was beaten very badly, losing 200 of its 453 men, which indicates his tactical skill didn't match his bravery. The key turning point of the battle was the charge of the 9th Alabama regiment. Watching the charge, the Confederate division commander called them the finest regiment on the North American continent. The book's narrative doesn't even mention this regiment specifically. Overall, not a bad book but to get a full picture of the battle, especially from the southern side you need more than this book. The maps are very nice but not necessarily completely accurate. For example, in Confederate Veteran Volume 16, page 61, published in 1908, a member of the 9th Alabama, who was at the battle, recalls laying in the road and waiting for the order to attack. The book's map shows that regiment positioned to the right of the road. More likely it's left side was astride the road in order to support both the infantry and artillery in front. It's not much of a difference but given these small details can easily be found on the Internet it shows something of a lack of research on the part of the author's who claim to present the definitive work on the subject of this battle. More likely they just weren't interested in telling the story of the winning side of this battle.

The editing for the Kindle version is terrible. Sentences that drop off, only to be picked up a paragraph or two later, so that you often need to spend time just trying to read the book in the literal sense. Also, the maps provided are too few and don't convey a good sense of the ebb and flow of the battle at different times. I felt this could have been a good book on an overlooked episode, but

the amateurish editing and poor use of maps really detracted from its overall quality.

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