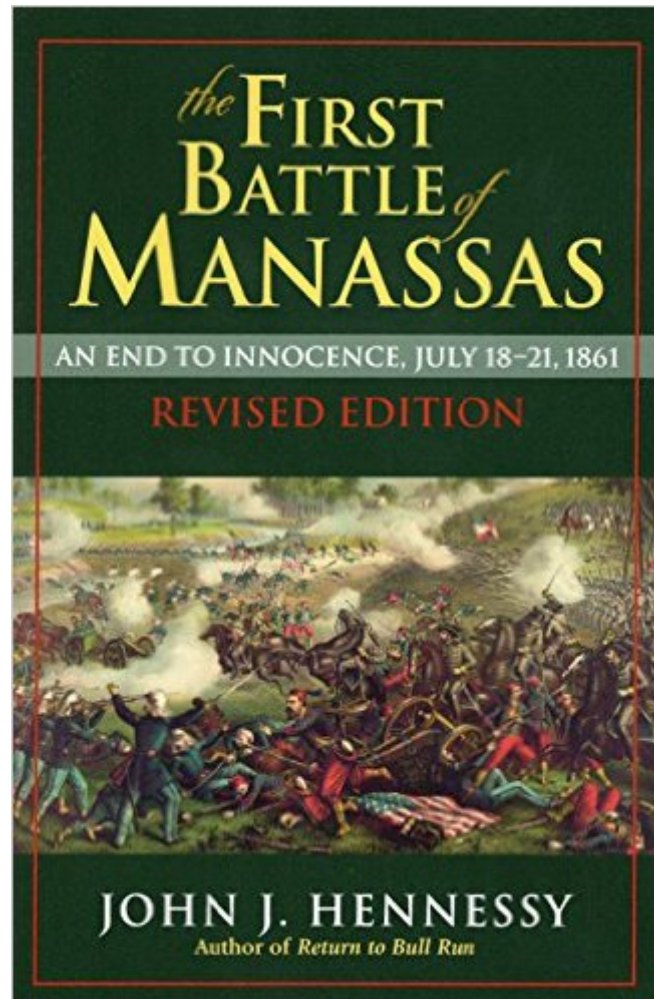


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The First Battle Of Manassas: An End To Innocence, July 18-21, 1861



Synopsis

Unmatched in its description of the battle's tactics and actual fighting.--Ethan Rafuse, author of *McClellan's War* On July 21, 1861, near a Virginia railroad junction twenty-five miles from Washington, DC, the Union and Confederate armies clashed in the first major battle of the Civil War. This revised edition of Hennessy's classic is the premier tactical account of First Manassas/Bull Run. Combines narrative, analysis, and interpretation into a clear, easy-to-follow account of the battle's unfolding. Features commanders who would later become legendary, such as William T. Sherman and Thomas J. Jackson, who earned his "Stonewall" nickname at First Manassas

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is the shortest one in total pages that I have read on the First Battle of Manassas (165 pages total/129 pages main) but it is the best of the bunch in my opinion for the following reasons:1. This is the only volume I have read on the battle that can truly be considered a microtactical history of the events down to the regimental, battalion, battery, company, and section level. This is all laid out in an easy to follow fluid manner that allows the reader to keep track as the battle unfolds. But as shown earlier due to the short length of the book the reader does not get bogged down in details.2. Maps! Even this book could have used more, but it has 11 functional representations of the combat areas along Bull Run that make it easy to follow the action and keep track of events as they unfold. My only complaint about the maps is that the only terrain feature not represented on them is elevations. These are named so you know where they are located,(Matthews Hill, Henry Hill, Buck Hill, Dogan Ridge, Chinn Ridge, etc.) but you are unable to see the actual outline of the

terrain feature. But with eleven good maps this book blows away all the others on this battle. The book does not have a theater map, and this makes it hard to follow the troop movements upto the beginning of hostilities at Blackburn's Ford, but the book only has one chapter on the events leading upto the battle so starting in chapter two your there on the banks of Bull Run following the action, so it is really not that much of a problem.³ The author, John J. Hennessy. He is the former National Park Service Historian at the battlefield and everyone knows his other book about the Civil War in the Manassas area, "Return to Bull Run", but it does not seem like that many people know about this one?

John Hennessy's "First Battle of Manassas: An End To Innocence July 18-21, 1861" presents a very readable, detailed account of the first major battle of the Civil War/War Between the States, where both sides were "green" as Lincoln put it. The book offers a compact 129 pages of blow by blow battle narrative, followed by an "Order of Battle" section showing the makeup of both sides armies and casualty rates, as well as a fine Note section which explained interesting topics, such as what was actually said by Brigadier General Barnard E. Bee to Jackson resulting in the legendary sobriquet of "Stonewall Jackson." In addition to describing the course of the battles, including the fighting from Blackburn's Ford, to Matthews Ridge and the finale at Henry Hill, Hennessy provides an excellent analysis of the tactics employed by both sides as well as a description of the Union commanders' failings and shortcomings, which resulted in the Confederate victory and the Union's retreat to Washington. Throughout the book, Hennessy entertains the reader with descriptions of the "greenness" of both sides, such as troops searching for blackberries on the way to battle; or both sides mistaking the enemy for friendly troops before getting raked by the fire power of the other side's infantry or artillery. Hennessy faulted 69-year old Major General Robert Patterson for his failure to keep Johnston's forces occupied in the Shenandoah Valley, which he considered to be a primary cause of the Union's defeat, as it enabled Johnston's forces to reinforce Beauregard at Manassas.

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