

are numerous typographical errors, footnotes are wrongly numbered and in some cases (pp. 172-74) are completely in the wrong order. All in all this is not a very good book.

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Richmond Redeemed: The Siege at Petersburg. By RICHARD J. SOMMERS. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1981. Pp. xviii, 670. Foreword, preface, acknowledgments, illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$22.50.)

The September 22, 1864, defeat of Confederate General Jubal Early at Fisher's Hill in the Shenandoah Valley reassured General Grant that no new reinforcements could be spared from the Confederate Valley Army for the Petersburg defense line. This, then, was an appropriate time for another attempt to break through the Richmond-Petersburg defenses. Perhaps Richmond itself would be the prize this time. There had been signs that if General Lee was pushed hard enough he would be forced to give up the capital or at least his principal railroad center: the city of Petersburg. Grant planned a two-pronged attack on the Confederate defense lines. The Army of the James would attack the Confederate strongpoint at Fort Harrison north of the James River while the Army of the Potomac at the western extremity of the Petersburg defenses would attempt to cut the Southside Railroad, the last rail link to the Confederate interior, at Lynchburg, Virginia.

The Union assault began on September 29, 1864. The First Division, XVIII Corps of the Army of the James, was successful in capturing Fort Harrison but the X Corps failed in its attempt to take its objective: Fort Gilmer. While this action north of the James was taking place, two corps of the Army of the Potomac were extending their lines west of the Weldon Railroad in a series of battles aimed at reaching the Southside Railroad. The fighting by the two armies continued until October 2. Through skillful and successful Confederate counterattacks north of the James River, Richmond was temporarily saved. The stout Confederate defense against the advance

of the two corps of the Army of the Potomac kept them from capturing the Southside Railroad. Although these Confederate efforts greatly weakened the Army of Northern Virginia, Lee's troops survived for another six months.

The story of these four days at the end of September 1864 comprise *Richmond Redeemed*. Richard Sommers calls this Union action Grant's Fifth Offensive. *Richmond Redeemed* is, without doubt, one of the most meticulous accounts of small unit fighting in the Civil War that has ever been written, ranking alongside John Bigelow's *The Campaign of Chancellorsville*. An idea of the depth of research that has gone into the book is indicated by the 127 pages of end notes, which were reduced from 4,374 footnotes of Sommers's dissertation; the author's research took him to libraries and archives at Newport News, Virginia, Berks County, Pennsylvania, Norco, California, and many other locales. If nothing else impresses the reader about *Richmond Redeemed*, he or she should be awed by the massive research effort that undergirds it.

Why go to such lengths to document a small segment of the Civil War and then publish the findings? Sommers explains: "Petersburg was the longest campaign of the Civil War. It was also one of the most important. And it was waged in the principal theater of the war between the foremost general on each side, R. E. Lee and U. S. Grant. . . . Yet the campaign has received remarkably little attention from historians. . . . That phase of Grant's Fifth Offensive was chosen primarily because it lacked coverage. Exploring it not only provides that coverage but also discloses that it was one of the most decisive portions of the campaign. . . . It was highlighted by events and potentialities of far-reaching strategic and tactical significance. Yet through lack of serious study, these occurrences and opportunities have remained unknown until now." Sommers might have added that such a detailed account greatly adds to our knowledge of the military side of the Civil War and aids historians in their continuing reinterpretation of the meaning of the war.

While one admires Sommers's research and the brilliant results revealed by *Richmond Redeemed*, one can wonder about the popularity of such a book with the general public. *Richmond Redeemed* is certainly not a book for light summer reading. The reader must keep his or her mind on the content of the book if any value is to come from reading it. It will probably be a joy to military history buffs,

probably also for Civil War students and historians, but what about the general reader? He or she may consider the book to be dull, tedious, and difficult to comprehend. Sommers assumes the reader not only has a good grounding in Civil War history but also has some knowledge of small unit tactics and the organization of Civil War armies. There are other difficulties for the general reader. Battle descriptions can be boring with the tedious but necessarily detailed descriptions of unit movements and the nature of the terrain around Petersburg.

A minor style problem was also apparent in *Richmond Redeemed*, specifically, the choice of substitute words and phrases. Obviously, Sommers was trying to keep from boring his readers when he called Grant the Illinoisan, General August V. Kautz the Badener (he was born in Germany), General Butler the Massachusetts man, and so forth. It would have been better to have just kept repeating the names of the men. The substitutes are grating as is the repetitive use of "butternuts" for the Confederate army and "blue coats" for the Union army. But these are really nit-picking comments about a truly well written account of the battles. Military historians and Civil War students will welcome with pleasure this masterful addition to their literature. As for the general reader, he or she has been given fair warning.

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Immigrant Women. Edited by MAXINE SCHWARTZ SELLER. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981. Pp. x, 347. Introduction, notes, bibliographical essay, index. \$17.50, hardbound; \$8.95, paper.)

Maxine Seller has made a significant contribution to the literature on American immigrant women with this anthology of forty-five excerpts from autobiographical sources, fiction, scholarly literature, and accounts by contemporary third parties. The editor has organized her material into eight major categories and introduced each with an essay descriptive of the contents and enriched by additional information on each topic. The essays themselves constitute a narrative history of women's immigration arranged under the following headings: "Why They Came," "Surviving in a New Land," "Work,"