

# The Untold Story: Longstreet's Crucial Role at Gettysburg

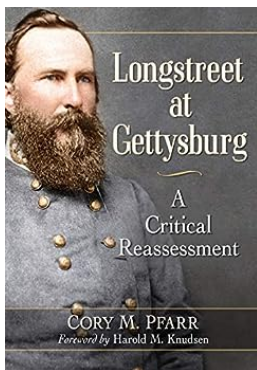


*"The old man could do it."* These words, uttered by General Robert E. Lee on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg, have long been used to emphasize the importance of General James Longstreet's role in one of the bloodiest battles of the American Civil War. However, history has often overlooked the significant

contributions made by Longstreet on that fateful day – contributions that could have altered the outcome of the battle and potentially changed the course of the war itself.

## The Forgotten Strategist

When we think of the Battle of Gettysburg, the image that usually comes to mind is Pickett's Charge and the Confederate defeat on the third day. What many fail to realize is that it was General James Longstreet who devised the meticulous plan for the Confederate assault on the Union lines. While Lee ultimately approved the strategy, Longstreet's careful planning and insights were instrumental in the initial success of the Confederate forces.



### Longstreet at Gettysburg: A Critical

**Reassessment** by Cory M. Pfarr (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 13152 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 292 pages  
X-Ray : Enabled



Longstreet recognized the importance of defensive tactics, and he advocated for a flanking maneuver against the Union army instead of the ill-fated frontal assault that would become Pickett's Charge. His plan aimed to exploit Union vulnerabilities and turn the tide of the battle in favor of the Confederacy.

## The Delayed Advance

However, despite his strategic brilliance, Longstreet faced resistance from other Confederate commanders who favored a more aggressive approach. When the attack was finally launched, it was delayed by several hours due to a lack of coordination and unexpected changes in the battlefield. This delay had detrimental effects, allowing the Union army to fortify their positions and adapt to the Confederate strategy.

It is important to note that Longstreet himself was not without fault during the battle. His cautious nature and his disagreement with Lee's decisions on the third day may have contributed to missed opportunities. Yet, it is crucial to recognize that Longstreet's approach was not a result of timidity or lack of commitment to the cause, but rather a calculated understanding of military tactics.

## **Overcoming Bias and Misinterpretation**

During the years following the war, blame was often placed on Longstreet for the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg. Some argued that had he been more assertive and adhered strictly to Lee's orders, the outcome would have been different. However, such claims fail to consider the complexities of the battle and the multitude of factors that influenced its outcome.

Recent historical research and reassessments have shed new light on Longstreet's role, gradually dispelling the long-standing prejudices against him. Scholars now recognize the significance of his strategic planning, as well as the challenges he faced in executing those plans amidst the chaos of battle.

## **A Reevaluation of Longstreet's Legacy**

The critical reassessment of Longstreet's actions at Gettysburg prompts us to reevaluate his overall contributions to the Confederate war effort. Despite the controversies surrounding his decisions, Longstreet emerged from the battle with

enhanced military prestige, leading to further achievements in the later years of the war.

From his instrumental role in the Confederate victory at Chickamauga to his successful defense of Petersburg during the Siege, Longstreet often demonstrated his tactical brilliance. These achievements should not be overshadowed by the prejudices of the time, but rather celebrated as part of a more comprehensive understanding of his military prowess.

## **A Reminder of Complexity**

The Battle of Gettysburg was a complex engagement, with the contributions of numerous commanders shaping its outcome. By critically reassessing Longstreet's actions, we move closer to a more accurate historical narrative that takes into account the intricacies and challenges faced by those involved.

History should never be viewed through a simplified lens that places blame solely on one individual. Instead, we should strive to understand the complexities of the past and gain insights into the decisions, strategies, and circumstances that influenced historical events.

## **An Unforgettable Legacy**

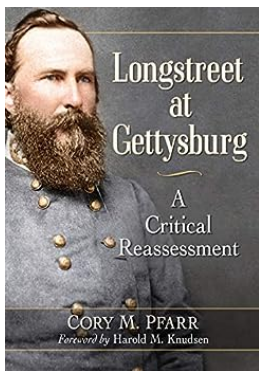
General James Longstreet's legacy at the Battle of Gettysburg is one that deserves recognition and study. He was a strategic thinker with a deep understanding of defensive tactics, whose contributions played a vital role in shaping the outcome of the battle.

Longstreet's critical reassessment reminds us of the importance of challenging established narratives, recognizing bias, and understanding the multifaceted nature of historical events. By acknowledging the complexities of the past, we

gain a clearer understanding and appreciation for the individuals who shaped our world.

So, the next time you hear the name Longstreet in relation to the Battle of Gettysburg, remember the untold story – the story of a skilled tactician whose contributions, both praised and criticized, played a significant part in the outcome of one of the most pivotal battles in American history.

Through the lens of history, let us recognize and honor General James Longstreet's critical role at Gettysburg.



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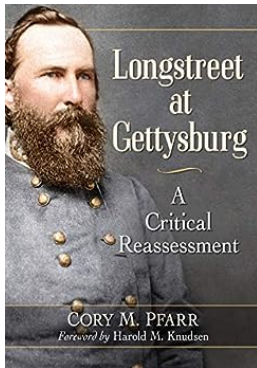
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Winner, 2019, Gettysburg Civil War Roundtable's Distinguished Book Award, best book published on the Gettysburg Campaign

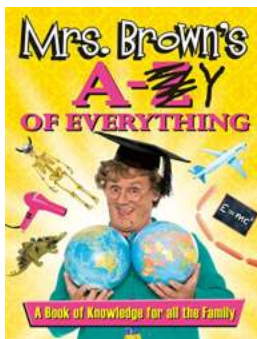
This is the first book-length, critical analysis of Lieutenant General James Longstreet's actions at the Battle of Gettysburg. The author argues that Longstreet's record has been discredited unfairly, beginning with character assassination by his contemporaries after the war and, persistently, by historians

in the decades since. By closely studying the three-day battle, and conducting an incisive historiographical inquiry into Longstreet's treatment by scholars, this book presents an alternative view of Longstreet as an effective military leader, and refutes over a century of negative evaluations of his performance.



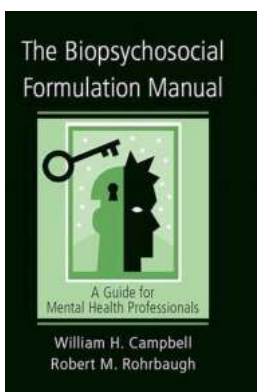
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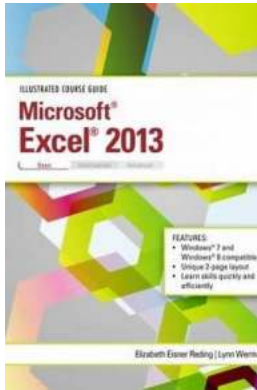
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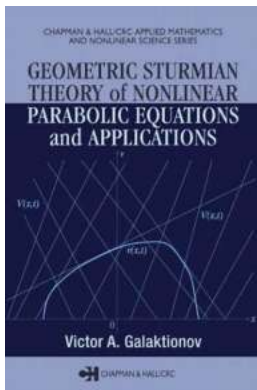
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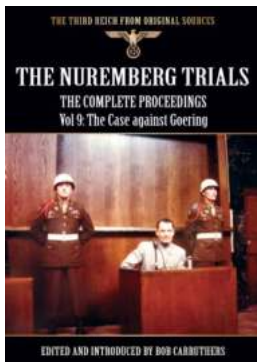
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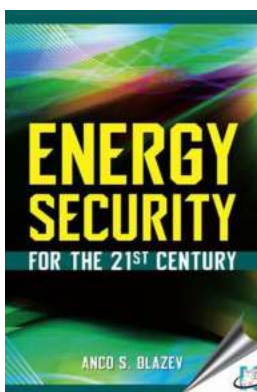
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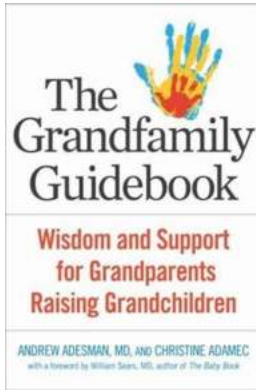
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