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Owens proves himself an indefatigable literary detective in scouring, among other sources, memoirs, war records, and regimental histories, as well as Bierce's own autobiographical writings, in his effort to determine just how much of "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and other stories are rooted in fact. In addition, Owens himself retraced the footsteps of Bierce—who spent much of the war serving as a topographic engineer under Union General William B. Hazen—in an effort to pin down connections between actual places that Bierce visited (and in some cases mapped) and the settings of his stories. For example, near the end of "A Horseman in the Sky," which Bierce set in West Virginia, a rider and his horse fall over a cliff one thousand feet high. As Owens notes, this drop is comparable to falling from the observation deck of the Sears Tower in Chicago, so readers may assume that Bierce is exaggerating. Owens, however, finds a likely match for this setting in Seneca Rocks, located in the area of West Virginia where Bierce spent late 1861.

In separating fact from fiction, Owens notes interesting patterns in Bierce's work. When read in order of their publication, Bierce's stories are a jumble, jumping around in time, location, and theme. When the locations of Bierce's war stories are plotted on a map, however, they correspond to their author's movements during the war, and the times when the stories are set match the times when Bierce visited these locations. Furthermore, when the stories are studied in order of their wartime settings, developing themes mirror the changing concerns of Bierce the soldier, whose rank and responsibility increased as the war progressed. Thus, Owens asserts that the most illuminating way to read these stories is in order of their wartime settings, not in order of their publication. Owens rejects the notion that one can trace any kind of artistic growth in Bierce by reading his stories in publication order, though this claim is largely unsubstantiated, as when Owens dismisses the artistry of a story, his grounds for doing so are often slight.

This short book is padded with a preface, introduction, conclusion, and afterword that add little to its central concerns. The substance of Owens's scholarship can be found in his book's numbered chapters, though some readers will be frustrated to find that much of this scholarship is not documented. The book gives detailed documentation only when it quotes directly from a source.

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McClellan's War: The Failure of Moderation in the Struggle for the Union. By Ethan S. Rafuse. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005. ISBN 0-253-34532-4. Maps. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiv, 524. \$35.00.

George B. McClellan, during his tenure as general-in-chief of the Union Army and as commander of the Army of the Potomac, was a lightning rod for those who wished to prosecute a "hard war" against the Confederacy. At the

same time, he was much loved by his soldiers and by many of his subordinate commanders. Historians, however, have been nearly unanimous in agreeing with McClellan's contemporary critics. In *McClellan's War*, Ethan Rafuse mounts a full-scale effort to rehabilitate the general's reputation by contextualizing his beliefs and actions. It is an endeavor that raises as many questions as it answers.

Rafuse contends that McClellan's political and social beliefs had been shaped "by his early political socialization . . . in environments where the cultural values of the . . . the Whig Party . . . dominated." This conservative outlook, he argues, "colored his perspective on the sectional conflict and shaped his approach to the war and [its] conduct" (p. 5). The book's first four chapters clearly demonstrate this conservatism's origins and manifestations, but it is a strange sort of conservatism. McClellan (though certainly not alone in this regard) saw Northern abolitionists as a threat to national unity, not proslavery southerners (pp. 122–25). This *might* have been understandable before December 1860, but that McClellan continued to see the sectional conflict in these terms *after* secession and *during* the war is not adequately explained. How, after southern secessionists had broken the union, could a true "conservative" continue to see abolitionists as the problem? Indeed, most conservative Northern Whigs went the other direction once secession occurred, as did William Tecumseh Sherman, who had no love for abolition or of abolitionists. Why was McClellan different?

Rafuse, perhaps unintentionally, paints an unflattering psychological portrait of the general. McClellan, he tells us, "automatically presumed those who questioned him or his actions were motivated by ignorance, narrow-minded partisanship, or selfishness" (p. 123). Such rigidity, which seems more important than his Whiggish beliefs in explaining his actions, suggests that McClellan was particularly unsuited for high command. McClellan's conduct of the Peninsular Campaign, where he insisted on carrying out classic siege operations, exemplifies the problem. Rafuse argues that the general's "desire to avoid unnecessary wastage of life, maintain as complete control as he could over the battlefield, and ensure certainty of results" led him to the conclusion that "there was simply no contest between the merits of a siege versus those of a frontal assault" (p. 207). This passage, which describes McClellan's mindset at Yorktown, accurately reflects his thinking throughout the campaign. On 21 June, after nearly one month of inactivity outside of Richmond, McClellan proposed an advance on Old Tavern (*not* Richmond) that "would 'be chiefly an Artillery and Engineering affair'" (p. 221). Two days later Lee attacked at Beaver Dam Creek, rendering these plans moot. A student who recently wrote a paper on the Peninsular Campaign concluded that McClellan "imagined the campaign as it should have been and not as it was." Rafuse's account seems to support her conclusion. McClellan's political myopia was, perhaps, even more revealing. That he was unable, by the summer of 1862, to comprehend the magnitude and ramifications of "The exhaustion of Northern patience with conciliation" (p. 235) speaks volumes. The war had changed, but McClellan's rigid nature had not allowed him to change with it.

To Rafuse's credit, he is unsparing in his criticism of McClellan's per-

sonal conduct during the Seven Days' Battles, describing the general's absence from the Glendale battlefield as "dereliction of duty" (p. 227). But elsewhere he fails to support his defense of McClellan. For example, McClellan's lack of speed in the aftermath of Second Bull Run is explained in terms of logistical and organizational confusion. Though Rafuse is certainly correct that this was the situation, one wonders how Lee's Army fared any better in these areas than did McClellan's and thus was able to undertake an invasion of Maryland. Rafuse subsequently depicts the Army of the Potomac's movement after the Battle of South Mountain as a "pursuit" (p. 301, among others), a term which conjures up images of Napoleon chasing down the Prussian Army's remnants after Jena, but the Army of the Potomac's saunter to Antietam Creek seems hardly to qualify. And Rafuse's effort to clarify McClellan's Antietam battle plan fails to pierce the fog in any meaningful way. Whether reading the general's concept (part of his after action report in the *OR*) or the author's explication, it remains impossible to determine exactly where McClellan intended his main attack to fall on that fateful September day. One suspects that McClellan never really knew, either.

McClellan's War makes some important strides in unraveling the mystery that was George B. McClellan, but there remain important questions for future authors to address.

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Hell's Broke Loose in Georgia: Survival in a Civil War Regiment. By Scott Walker. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005. ISBN 0-8203-2605-4. Maps. Photographs. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvii, 311. \$39.95.

The literature of the American Civil War abounds in regimental histories, most of which concern themselves primarily with matters of a strictly military nature: command decisions, troop movements, and battles. Those traditional studies remain useful and popular, but recently a new sort of unit history has emerged that moves beyond the battlefield to focus on common soldiers and how the searing experience of war altered their lives. Among the finest such efforts to evoke this human side of the war is Scott Walker's *Hell's Broke Loose in Georgia*.

Interest in an ancestor first drew Walker to the 57th Georgia Infantry Regiment and Mercer's Brigade to which it was attached. He discovered a regiment that was at the center of nearly all of the Army of Tennessee's major engagements, from the 1862 Kentucky campaign to the pursuit of Sherman into the Carolinas in the closing weeks of the war. To provide context, Walker chronicles those campaigns and the role played by the 57th Georgia in some depth, but such is not his chief purpose. He states instead that his "primary intention is not to develop a regimental history but to relate how one small group of Confederate soldiers struggled to survive and remain sane through the ravages and rigors of the Civil War" (p. xvi). Relying on a superb collection of letters and diaries, Walker acquaints his audience with the concerns, hopes, and travails of that handful of men from