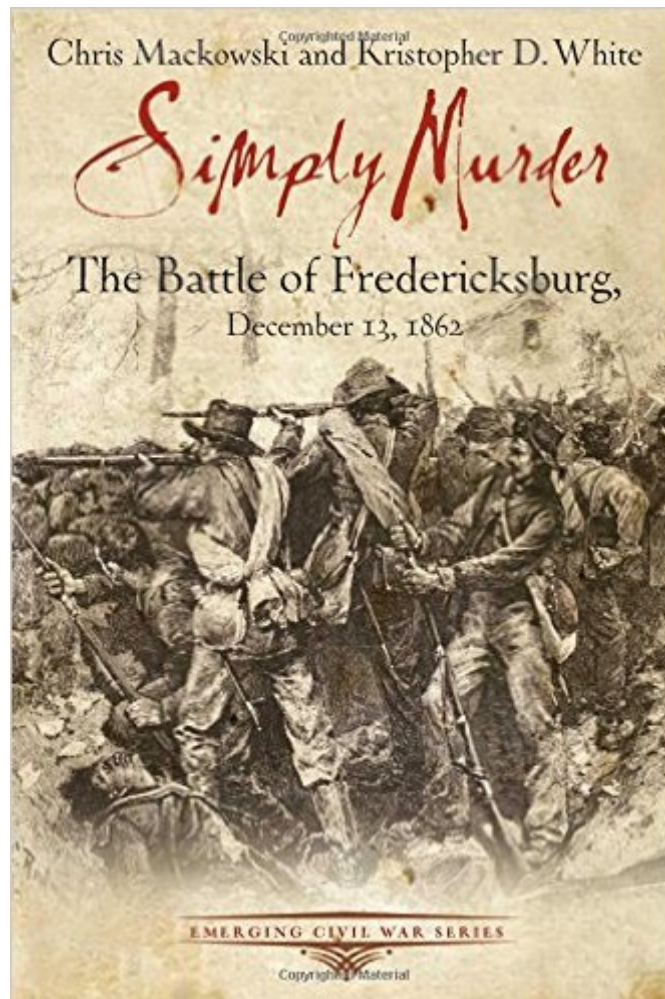


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# Simply Murder: The Battle Of Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862 (Emerging Civil War Series)



## Synopsis

They melted like snow on the ground, one officer saidâ•wave after wave of Federal soldiers charging uphill across an open muddy plain. Confederates, fortified behind a stone wall along a sunken road, poured a hail of lead into them as they charged . . . and faltered . . . and died. âœl had never before seen fighting like that, nothing approaching it in terrible uproar and destruction,â• said one eyewitness to the slaughter. âœIt is only murder now.â•The battle of Fredericksburg is usually remembered as the most lopsided Union defeat of the Civil War. It is sometimes called âœBurnsideâ™s folly,â• after Union commander Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside who led the Army of the Potomac to ruin along the banks of the Rappahannock River. But the battle remains one of the most misunderstood and misremembered engagements of the war. Burnside started with a well-conceived plan and had every reason to expect victory. How did it go so terribly wrong?Authors Chris Mackowski and Kristopher D. White have worked for years along Fredericksburgâ™s Sunken Road and Stone Wall, and theyâ™ve escorted thousands of visitors across the battlefield. Simply Murder not only recounts Fredericksburgâ™s tragic story of slaughter, but includes invaluable information about the battlefield itself and the insights theyâ™ve learned from years of walking the ground. Simply Murder can be enjoyed in the comfort of oneâ™s living room or as a guide on the battlefield itself. It is also the first release in the new âœEmerging Civil War Series,â• which offers compelling and easy-to-read overviews of some of the Civil Warâ™s most important battles and issues. About the Authors: Chris Mackowski is a professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at St. Bonaventure University in Allegany, New York, and also works with the National Park Service at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, which includes the Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Wilderness, and Spotsylvania battlefields. Kristopher D. White is a historian for the Penn-Trafford Recreation Board and a continuing education instructor for the Community College of Allegheny County near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He served for five years as a staff military historian at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, and is a former Licensed Battlefield Guide at Gettysburg. Longtime friends, Mackowski and White have co-authored several books and numerous articles for various Civil War magazines. They also co-founded the blog Emerging Civil War, which can be read at: [www.emergingcivilwar.com](http://www.emergingcivilwar.com). REVIEWS "The presentation of an intelligent, readable, and original account at each location is wonderful. Time after time, I wished this book was with me during my visit to the battlefield."â• Jim Durney, Suncoast Civil War Round Table "Simply Murder is an affordable and readable overview of the Battle of Fredericksburg. Those looking to better understand this battle . . . would do well to purchase this book."â• Brett Sculte, TOCWOC - A Civil War Blog

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An Interview with Chris Mackowski and Kristopher White, authors of *Simply Murder: The Battle of Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862* provided by the publisher, Savas Beatie.  
SB: Why did you decide to write your book on this particular topic?  
KW: The Battle of Fredericksburg is a greatly misunderstood battle. We learned this by working at Fredericksburg together as Ranger/Historians. Most visitors focus on the Battle for Marye's Heights, while also focusing their attention on the faults and failures of Union General Ambrose Burnside. We were really drawn to the compelling story of the campaign. The story of the battle and campaign is how Burnside had the cards stacked against him from day one. He took over leadership of the Union Army of the Potomac from a popular general and close friend, George McClellan. He was tasked with engaging in a winter campaign with a strict January 1, 1863, deadline for victory. Burnside was not a great general, but he was not as bad as he has been made out to be. Unfortunately, everything that could go wrong for the Federals did. Therefore, we really wanted to tell the story of a misunderstood battle and campaign in a fair and balanced way.  
CM: Visitors to the battlefield come with so many preconceived misconceptions, particularly about Burnside, as Kris mentioned. The chance to invite visitors--and now readers--to rethink what they know about the battle is a nice treat. Folks who do know something about the battle typically know Sunken Road, Stone Wall, and Marye's Heights. It's a dramatic story that has shown up a bit in Civil War-related pop culture, but there is SO much more to the battle than that. In

fact, the fighting in front of Stone Wall was really a sideshow that took on a horrible life of its own.

This short book was a charming surprise. Frankly, I got it in the recent holiday sale, and I wasn't expecting much. The Fredericksburg battle was a bloodbath, and a lop-sided Confederate victory. The authors provide an informative, concise description of the battle, which suited my needs perfectly. Plenty of quotes from generals, soldiers, and civilians are sprinkled throughout. Sources are provided for those looking for a more scholarly approach to this battle; having just read Sears's "A Landscape Turned Red," I wasn't looking for that level of detail on this battle yet. So, this book provided a good introduction -- just what I wanted. Interestingly, the book focuses on the southern flank, although there is a detailed, lengthy chapter on the more famous, doomed assault on Marye's Heights. The book also provides a type of local history and a battlefield tour. It offers directions from the tour center to the key points of the battlefield. I haven't done the tour yet, but if I did, I would certainly find this book helpful as a refresher and walking guide. Among other things, it certainly is good to know where to find restrooms and where to avoid snakes. There were some excellent appendices on civilians and slaves in Fredericksburg, and how the soldiers celebrated the Christmas of 1862. There was also interesting analysis of how the battle of Fredericksburg has evolved in the collective memory. In that section, and throughout the book, the authors point out various details about the battlefield and how its memorialization has changed over time and to suit various purposes; fitting the rest of the book, it's an appropriately light critique.

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