

7-1-2020

Book Review - Camp Oglethorpe: Macon's Unknown Civil War Prisoner of War Camp, 1862-1864

Chandra Jackson
University of Georgia, chjack@uga.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jackson, C. (2020). Book Review - Camp Oglethorpe: Macon's Unknown Civil War Prisoner of War Camp, 1862-1864. *Georgia Library Quarterly*, 57(3). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq/vol57/iss3/15>

This Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Georgia Library Quarterly by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.

Off the SHELF

Camp Oglethorpe: Macon's Unknown Civil War Prisoner of War Camp, 1862–1864 by Stephen Hoy and William Smith (Mercer University Press, 2019: ISBN 9780881466911, \$35.00)

In this engaging and extensively researched local history, authors Stephen Hoy and William Smith detail the history of the plot of land located at the end of 7th Street in Macon, Georgia known as Camp Oglethorpe. Beginning with its origins as a muster and parade ground for central Georgia volunteer regiments, to its use as a prisoner-of-war camp for Union officers during the Civil War, to its ignominious burial under a rail yard in the years following the war, the authors uncover the story of Camp Oglethorpe through an impressive array of primary sources, including family papers, newspapers, prisoner-of-war accounts, congressional testimony, and others.

The bulk of the narrative concerns Camp Oglethorpe's time as a prisoner-of-war camp for captured Union officers. While conditions at Camp Oglethorpe never descended into the grisly hellscape of her sister prison, Andersonville, the excerpts chosen from firsthand prisoner-of-war accounts make for harrowing reading. In the final chapters, the authors contend that the alacrity with which the Reconstruction-era government in Georgia sold off the land for railroad development, effectively erasing Camp Oglethorpe altogether,

was an attempt at willful forgetting, which the authors seek to correct.

While the main narrative is a finely delivered slice of hyper-local history, the authors connect the local experience to the larger story of prisoner exchanges, Union and Confederate troop movements, and the larger progress of

the war. Considerable time is spent on Stoneman's raid, for example, in which the Union General Stoneman's attempt to capture both Andersonville and Camp Oglethorpe to free the prisoners ultimately proved unsuccessful. Indeed, ironically, the officers involved in Stoneman's raid were ultimately imprisoned at Camp Oglethorpe, while the enlisted men were sent on to Andersonville.

The book includes an extensive annotated bibliography, along with a list of prisoners circa 1864, as well as a (partial) list of those prisoners who died while at Camp Oglethorpe. Hoy and

Smith have written a volume that is suitable for students of Civil War history, central Georgia history, and prisoner-of-war narratives. The annotated bibliography itself contains a wealth of information for students and researchers. The book would make a fine addition to Georgia history and Civil War collections for colleges and universities and is highly recommended.

Chandra Jackson is Electronic Resources and Serials Librarian at University of Georgia

