



# Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat (Volume 1)

*Dr. Grady McWhiney*

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Born in 1817 in North Carolina, Bragg ranked high in the graduating class of 1837 at West Point. He served with distinction in both the Seminole War and the Mexican War. Just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, Bragg was promoted to major general. In June 1862 Bragg was named Commander of the Army of Tennessee, the principal Confederate force in the West, and was described by Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin as “the greatest General.”

Yet less than two years later Bragg was the South’s most discredited commander. Much of this criticism was justified, for he had done as much as any Confederate general to lose the war. Under his direction the army fought four major campaigns before retreating from Kentucky through Tennessee to Georgia. The army’s failures were Bragg’s failures, and after his defeat at Chattanooga in November 1863 Bragg was relieved of field command.

Instead of retirement to the obscurity most people believed he so richly deserved, Bragg received a remarkable promotion: he went to Richmond as President Davis’s military adviser.

McWhiney intended this work – first published in 1969 – to be the first of two volumes covering the life of the Confederacy’s most problematic general. This reprint edition is issued along with *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, Volume II* by Judith Lee Hallock. McWhiney’s work carries Bragg through the defeat at Murfreesboro in January 1863, and Hallock’s book continues through the staff appointment in Richmond and Bragg’s final days as a private citizen.

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