



# **The Last Battle of Winchester: Phil Sheridan, Jubal Early, and the Shenandoah Valley Campaign, August 7 - September 19, 1864**

*Scott Patchan*

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The Last Battle of Winchester: Phil Sheridan, Jubal Early, and the Shenandoah Valley Campaign, August 7 - September 19, 1864 is the first serious study to chronicle the Third Battle of Winchester. The September 1864 combat was the largest, longest, and bloodiest battle fought in the Shenandoah Valley. What began about daylight did not end until dusk, when the victorious Union army routed the Confederates. It was the first time Stonewall Jackson's former corps had ever been driven from a battlefield, and their defeat set the stage for the final climax of the 1864 Valley Campaign.

The Northern victory was a long time coming. After a spring and summer of Union defeat in the Valley, Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant cobbled together a formidable force under Phil Sheridan, an equally redoubtable commander. Sheridan's task was a tall one: sweep Jubal Early's Confederate army out of the bountiful Shenandoah, and reduce the verdant region of its supplies. The aggressive Early had led the veterans of Jackson's Army of the Valley District to one victory after another at Lynchburg, Monocacy, Snickers Gap, and Kernstown.

Five weeks of complex maneuvering and sporadic combat followed before the opposing armies ended up at Winchester, an important town in the northern end of the Valley that had changed hands dozens of times over the previous three years. Tactical brilliance and ineptitude were on display throughout the day-long affair as Sheridan threw infantry and cavalry against the thinning Confederate ranks and Early and his generals shifted to meet each assault. A final blow against Early's left flank finally collapsed the Southern army, killed one of the Confederacy's finest combat generals, and planted the seeds of the victory at Cedar Creek the following month.

Scott Patchan's vivid prose, which is based upon more than two decades of meticulous research and an unparalleled understanding of the battlefield, is complemented with numerous original maps and explanatory footnotes that enhance our understanding of this watershed battle. Rich in analysis and character development, The Last Battle of Winchester is certain to become a classic Civil War battle study.

About the Author: A life-long student of military history, Scott C. Patchan is a graduate of James Madison University in the Shenandoah Valley. He is the author of many articles and books, including *The Forgotten Fury: The Battle of Piedmont* (1996), *Shenandoah Summer: The 1864 Valley Campaign* (2007), and *Second Manassas: Longstreet's Attack and the Struggle for Chinn Ridge* (2011). Patchan serves as a Director on the board of the Kernstown Battlefield Association in Winchester, Virginia, and is a member of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation's Resource Protection Committee.

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