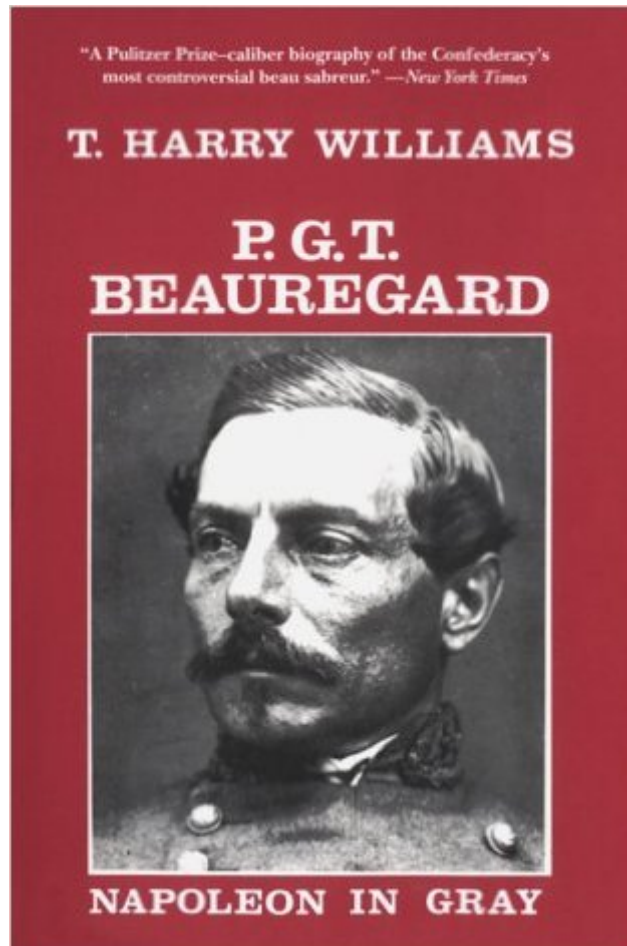


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P. G. T. Beauregard: Napoleon In Gray (Southern Biography Series)



Synopsis

First published in 1955 to wide acclaim, T. Harry Williams' P.G.T. Beauregard is universally regarded as "the first authoritative portrait of the Confederacy's always dramatic, often perplexing" general (Chicago Tribune). Chivalric, arrogant, and of exotic Creole Louisiana origin, Beauregard participated in every phase of the Civil War from its beginning to its end. He rigidly adhered to principles of war derived from his studies of Jomini and Napoleon, and yet many of his battle plans were rejected by his superiors, who regarded him as excitable, unreliable, and contentious. After the war, Beauregard was almost the only prominent Confederate general who adapted successfully to the New South, running railroads and later supervising the notorious Louisiana Lottery. This paradox of a man who fought gallantly to defend the Old South and then helped industrialize it is the fascinating subject of Williams' superb biography.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The staying power of this book is made obvious in the fact that it was first published in 1955 and it is still in print today. T. Harry Williams is an excellent historian and writer, having won the Pulitzer Prize for his biography on Huey Long. He has written often on the Civil War, including two books on Abraham Lincoln. This is an important work on the "perplexing" Confederate general Beauregard, as combative with his fellow officers as he was with the enemy on the field. Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, a Creole born near New Orleans in 1818, attended West Point and was assigned to

the Engineers. He served in the Mexican War, was promoted twice, and after the war was stationed in New Orleans where he made navigational improvements to the Mississippi River. He was made superintendent of West Point in 1861, but after only a month he threw his hat in with the Southern cause and joined the Confederacy, being assigned to Charleston. He ordered the firing on Ft. Sumter that began the conflict and later that year led the Confederate forces at Manassas. A hero at Bull Run, he was promoted to full general and joined Albert Johnston in Tennessee. Over the course of the war he saw action at Shiloh, the Bermuda Hundred, Petersburg, and finally in the coastal defense of South Carolina and Georgia, where he was when the war ended. After the war he was offered command of army forces in Rumania and Egypt, but decided to stay in Louisiana where he became a successful businessman as president of a Southern railroad company and adjutant general of the state. A great deal of his spare time was spent arguing in articles and books his role in the war and his criticisms of other rebel leaders. He died in 1893.

.....but dull is not one of them. Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard remains one one of the South's most controversial Generals, either a genius or simply one more mediocre officer in a long line. But, either way, Beauregard had STYLE. He remains, along with Lee and Forrest, the most recognizable Confederate Officer. In fact, he was a sharp, and tough, combat officer, never defeated in battle. No one questions the Creole's intellect; let no one question his courage, either. Beauregard is, in some ways the Civil War's comic relief...witness his continuing attempt, two years into the war, to collect on a claim for travel back from West Point just prior to the war. I have made the same statement about Judah Benjamin, and there are parallels: Louisiana background, a French Catholic and a Jew, outsiders in a land run by British Anglicans. The two most financially successful Confederates after the war, Beauregard and Benjamin refused to stay defeated. They had STYLE, you see. PGT Beauregard came from a successful family, did well at West Point [second in his class, as was Lee], and was assigned to the Engineers, the reward for academic success. The war in Mexico soon followed, where Lieutenant Beauregard, along with Captains Robert E. Lee and Joe Johnston, helped pave General Scott's way into Mexico City. After Mexico...Charleston, where his bar-excavator made the harbor usable, and his native New Orleans, where his engineering skill made possible the building of a Customhouse, which he ran for seven years. Appointed Superintendent at West Point, he lasted a week, relieved because of his obvious Southern sympathy in the coming conflict [this is the origin of the travel claim mentioned above]. Came the war....Beauregard served the whole way, East and West...

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