



Engineering in the Confederate Heartland

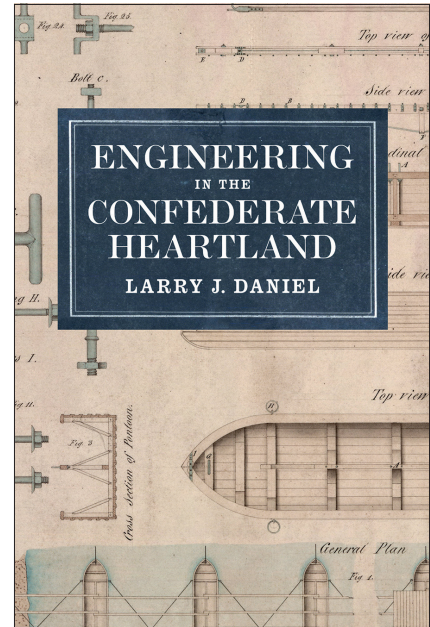
LARRY J. DANIEL

While engineers played a critical role in the performance of both the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War, few historians have examined their experiences or impact. Larry J. Daniel's *Engineering in the Confederate Heartland* fills a gap in that historiography by analyzing the accomplishments of these individuals working for the Confederacy in the vast region between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River, commonly referred to as the Western Theater. Though few in number, the members of the western engineer corps were vital in implementing Confederate strategy and tactics.

Most Confederate engineers possessed little to no military training, transitioning from the civilian tasks of water drainage, railroad construction, and land surveys to overseeing highly technical war-related projects. Their goal was simple in mission but complex in implementation: utilize their specialized skills to defeat, or at least slow, the Union juggernaut. The geographical diversity of the Heartland further complicated their charge. The expansive area featured elevations reaching over six thousand feet, sandstone bluffs cut by running valleys on the Cumberland Plateau, the Nashville basin's thick cedar glades and rolling farmland, and the wind-blown silt soil of the Loess Plains of the Mississippi Valley. Regardless of the topography, engineers encountered persistent flooding in all sectors.

Daniel's study challenges the long-held thesis that the area lacked adept professionals. Engineers' expertise and labor, especially in the construction of small bridges and the laying of pontoons, often proved pivotal. Lacking sophisticated equipment and technical instruments, they nonetheless achieved numerous successes: the Union army never breached the defenses at Vicksburg or Atlanta, and by late 1864, the Army of Tennessee boasted a pontoon train sufficient to span the Tennessee River. Daniel uncovers these and other essential contributions to the war effort made by the Confederacy's western engineers.

LARRY J. DANIEL is the author of numerous books about the American Civil War, including *Conquered: Why the Army of Tennessee Failed* and *Days of Glory: The Army of the Cumberland, 1861–1865*.



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PRaise for *Engineering in the Confederate Heartland*

"Fast-paced, detailed, and groundbreaking, *Engineering in the Confederate Heartland* is a welcome addition to the Western Theater literature. Larry J. Daniel has inherited from Thomas L. Connelly the mantle of dean of the Confederate Western Theater historians, and this book only adds to Daniel's impressive body of work."—Timothy B. Smith, author of *Shiloh: Conquer or Perish* and *The Siege of Vicksburg: Climax of the Campaign to Open the Mississippi River, May 23–July 4, 1863*

"From forts Henry and Donelson to Vicksburg, Atlanta, and Nashville, the Civil War in the Heartland was dominated by fortresses, fieldworks, and engineering feats of all kinds. Yet many of these works were frequently short of trained engineers. Larry J. Daniel masterfully presents the Confederate engineering story in this important new study of the war in the West."—David A. Powell, author of *The Chickamauga Campaign and Failure in the Saddle: Nathan Bedford Forrest, Joseph Wheeler, and the Confederate Cavalry in the Chickamauga Campaign*

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