

***Fatal Sunday: George Washington, the Monmouth Campaign, and the Politics of Battle*****Mark Edward Lender and Garry Wheeler Stone****Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016****600 pages****\$26.95 (paper)****ISBN: 9780806153353****DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v4i1.117>**

*Fatal Sunday* is the long-awaited book by Mark Edward Lender and Garry Wheeler Stone about the Battle of Monmouth. This book was years in the making, and promised to be the most comprehensive account of the events leading up to and including the battle.

The Battle of Monmouth has been described as one of the most complicated battles of the American Revolution. Over the years there have been a number of books, articles, and papers all trying to describe the events of the 28<sup>th</sup> of June 1778. In *Fatal Sunday*, the authors do their best to bring all the information together, as well as introduce new research and archaeological data. Whenever possible Lender and Stone go back to primary sources to support their interpretation of the events surrounding the battle.

The book gives the clearest description of the battle to date including the long march to Monmouth Court House for both armies. The authors do a wonderful job of describing the events leading up to the actual battle, including putting the battle into perspective within the larger context of the American Revolution. They go into the politics of both Britain and the Colonies leading up to and including this point in the war. Further, they illustrate how the American Revolution fits into world politics and other events of the period.

Within their discussions, Lender and Stone describe the situation of both commanders-in-chief to give some insight into the objectives of Clinton and Washington. Both commanders were in desperate need of something to boost the morale of their men.

In the case of the British, Sir Henry Clinton had just replaced the well-liked Sir William Howe. Clinton, within days of taking command, was ordered to withdraw from Philadelphia, the prize of the previous year's campaign. The change of command and the abandonment of Philadelphia without so much as a token struggle had a demoralizing effect on both the British Army and their Loyalist allies.

For the Continentals' part, Washington had just survived an attempt to have him removed from command, with a number of his detractors still not fully satisfied that he was the right man to lead the Continental Army. The troops themselves had just suffered through a rough winter at Valley Forge and been put through a rigorous course of training at the hands of Friedrich von Steuben.

Probably the best contribution to historians and other students of the Battle of Monmouth is to be found in the numerous original maps, citations, notes and appendices in *Fatal Sunday*. The appendices and maps draw heavily on Gary Stone's vast experience, fifteen years as the historian/archaeologist at Monmouth Battlefield State Park, with the added insight of noted New Jersey historian/author Mark Lender. Though the maps presented are a useful aid to understand the movements and timeline of the battle, most of them are lacking an important element – a legend to help interpret the presented information. (Unfortunately, even in the more recent reprint, this oversight was not rectified.)

Overall, *Fatal Sunday* offers something for both the general reader and scholar alike. It is well written and a must read for anyone interested in learning about the Battle of Monmouth. If you have any real interest in the American Revolution, then this book deserves a place in your library.

**Michael Timpanaro**  
**Monmouth Battlefield State Park Historian**