



Yankee Dutchman: The Life of Franz Sigel

Stephen D. Engle

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Lauded as a hero in his native land for his sensational but ultimately unsuccessful exploits during the 1848 German Revolution, Franz Sigel—who immigrated to the United States in 1852—is among the most misunderstood figures of the American Civil War. He was appointed by Abraham Lincoln as a political general in the Union army, a move that successfully galvanized northern support and provided a huge influx of German recruits who were eager to “fight mit Sigel.” But Sigel proved an inept and ineffectual leader and, unfortunately, is most often remembered for his disappointing failure at the Battle of New Market and his subsequent loss of command.

In his insightful biography, Stephen D. Engle provides the first complete portrait of this enigmatic leader and German standard-bearer, showing Sigel to be a disciplined, self-sacrificing idealist who sparked more pride among his fellow émigrés, aroused more controversy among Americans, and perhaps enjoyed more admiration—despite his military shortcomings—than any other Civil War figure.

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