No aspect of Civil War history is more fascinating than the two major campaigns that took place in the western theater in late 1864. The opposing generals, William T. Sherman and John Bell Hood, took armies that had been fighting for months and headed them away from each other: Hood marched north into Tennessee, and Sherman marched south into Georgia. As Sherman himself noted, “It surely was a strange event; two hostile armies marching in opposite directions, each in the full belief that it was achieving a final and conclusive result in a great war.” Hood went on to catastrophic defeat at Franklin and Nashville, while Sherman successfully moved through Georgia to the coast.

Many books deal with either Sherman’s march or Hood’s Tennessee campaign, but although they unfolded simultaneously and concluded the main fighting in the western theater, no recent volume analyzes the two together. In her groundbreaking study, Anne J. Bailey assesses how military events in Georgia and Tennessee intertwined and affected the political, social, and economic conditions in those areas and throughout the nation.

My Personal Review:
Bailey provides a compact and highly competent study of the post Atlanta campaign with Hood sparing well with Sherman initially then turning north in his great desperate gamble while Sherman marches through the heart of Georgia virtually unopposed except for Wheeler’s undermanned cavalry.
Bailey captures the strategy and politics very well with a big picture view of the situation. She captures the odd situation of Hood going in one direction with Sherman in the other. Hood, the great fighter seemingly moves without consultation although Beauregard is placed as the department commander by Davis, which had as much control as Johnson had of Vicksburg in that campaign. Bailey captures the desperation of Hoods movement with failed logistics, supplies and a virtual mythical expectation of troops from the TransMississippi. Bailey covers the hopes and political implications of a Lincoln re-election that is fascinating. She also details, with his movements, Sherman's desire to subjugate the south along with his views on black troops and the infamous desertion of black followers by union Jefferson C. Davis. The controversial failure to close the trap at Spring Hill is well discussed as well as the tragic battle of Franklin and the battles of Nashville where the outnumbered Confederates put up a desperate fight to total collapse redeeming General Thomas. The Nashville description of battle is economically told but captures the main aspects particularly recognizing the first use of black union troops in battle who fought bravely but were initially sacraficed in a desperate ill perceived frontal attack. A very well written book that gives a highly competent overview of the final campaign of Hood, Thomas, Sherman and President Davis as far as a real confederate threat in the west. In her efficient writing style, Bailey closes with a very good but brief study of the post war controversies between the generals and politicians.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:
The Chessboard of War: Sherman and Hood in the Autumn Campaigns of 1864 (Great Campaigns of the Civil War) by Anne J. Bailey - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!