

# THE CHARGER



## The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

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April 2025

CCWRT Founded 1956

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**PROGRAM** – “Lincoln’s  
Lawyers”

**SPEAKER** – The Honorable  
William F. B. Vodrey, Judge  
of the Court of Common Pleas  
of Cuyahoga County, Ohio,  
and Past President of CCWRT.

**LOCATION:** The Holiday Inn Independence at  
6001 Rockside Road, Independence, Ohio  
44131, off US Interstate 77

**TIME:** Social Hour at 6:00 PM and Presentation  
at 7:00 PM

**For reservations email:**

[ccwrtreserve@gmail.com](mailto:ccwrtreserve@gmail.com). To ensure a dinner is  
reserved for you, the reservation must be made  
by Tuesday, April 1, 2025

**Website:**

<http://www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com>

**MEETING** – April 9, 2025

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## *President's Message*

### **Fellow Roundtable Members:**

April has finally arrived after a long, harsh winter, and with it comes the unmistakable promise of spring. The earth, still damp from winter's retreat, now warms beneath our feet, inviting us to step outside, and breathe in the fresh, revitalizing air. The gentle hum of birds returning, the soft rustle of leaves as buds begin to unfurl—all around us, nature is awakening. It is a season filled with sensory rejuvenation: the bright warmth of the sun, the fragrance of flowers in bloom, and the longer days stretching ahead. This time of year carries a spirit of renewal and transformation—universal themes that resonate through nature's changes and the spring holidays, including Easter. Yet, for those who fought during the American Civil War, April brought with it a different kind of renewal—a time when the thaw of spring allowed armies to shift and decide the fate of the nation. The roads softened, the rivers receded, and the spring conditions signaled the start of an active, bustling season that brought about some of the war's most crucial moments.

April 1865 was a defining month in this tumultuous period of the Civil War, forever etched with events that not only marked the war's endgame but also reshaped American history. On April 9, General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, signaling the end of four years of fierce fighting. The weather had finally allowed Grant's relentless pursuit of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, and with the surrender, it became clear that the war was drawing to a close.

Unfortunately, on the heels of the victory at Appomattox, President Abraham Lincoln was tragically shot by an assassin's bullet at Ford's Theatre on Friday, April 14. His death the following day left the nation in mourning, tasked with navigating the promise of reconciliation amid the harsh reality of an uncertain future. In the midst of this national grief, the war's final chapters continued to unfold. On April 26, General Joseph E. Johnston surrendered to General William T. Sherman at Bennett Place near Durham, North Carolina, one of the last major surrenders in the Civil War. As we reflect on these pivotal events, we mark the 160th anniversary of their occurrence—a time to reflect and consider their lasting impact on our nation.

Alongside these monumental moments, April was a month of both beginnings and endings during the Civil War, featuring battles and actions that had a profound impact on the course of the conflict. The Battle of Fort Sumter (April 12-13, 1861) ignited the conflict, sparking the war when Confederate forces fired upon the Union garrison. A year later, the Battle of Shiloh (April 6-7, 1862) unfolded with nearly 24,000 casualties, marking one of the bloodiest early battles and signaling the grueling nature of the conflict. In April 1864, the Battle of Plymouth in North Carolina saw the Union secure a critical victory, keeping Confederate forces at bay. The following year, in 1865, the Battle of Five Forks (April 1) became pivotal in leading to the fall of Petersburg, followed by the Breakthrough at Petersburg (April 2), setting the stage for the Union's final push toward Sailor's Creek and Appomattox.

Turning to our March meeting, the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable was fortunate to have Past-President and member Steve Pettyjohn step in for Joseph Ricci to

present a detailed overview of the Vicksburg Campaign. Joe was unable to attend due to unforeseen travel issues. Steve's presentation, filled with historical insight, humor, and personal photographs from his visits to Vicksburg, MS, offered a unique and engaging perspective. He highlighted key factors in the Union's victory, particularly Ulysses S. Grant's decisive leadership and strategic brilliance. Steve began by sharing a quick overview of the challenges and setbacks Grant faced in trying to capture the Confederate stronghold of Vicksburg from late 1862 into early 1863. Despite these early setbacks, Grant remained determined to outmaneuver the Southern forces and find a way to press forward. One of the most pivotal moments came when Grant made the daring decision to maneuver his army and fleet past Vicksburg's strong artillery defenses, allowing his forces to cross the Mississippi River near Bruinsburg, setting a new course for the campaign.

Steve then focused on the critical elements of the Vicksburg Campaign that are often overlooked, highlighting how Grant's strategic use of terrain, intelligence, and rapid movements set him up for victory. As Grant advanced toward Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, he effectively leveraged the terrain to shield and protect his forces. Key to this success was the intelligence he gathered. Steve explained the significant difference in military intelligence between the Union and Confederate armies during the campaign. The Union consistently had accurate information on land routes and enemy movements, while the Confederacy struggled with poor intelligence, even within its own territory. This disadvantage was further compounded by Union raids led by figures like Abel Streight and Benjamin Grierson, which diverted Confederate cavalry and left General John C. Pemberton, commander of Vicksburg's defenses, in the

dark. Steve also discussed what he called "Grant's Blitzkrieg," or the rapid advance of his Army of the Tennessee through the heart of Mississippi, achieving victory after victory in the face of five battles over just 17 days. Grant's swift movements played a crucial role not only in capturing Jackson, but also in shifting the strategic initiative firmly in favor of the Union. A significant turning point during this period was the Battle of Champion Hill, which forced General Pemberton to retreat to Vicksburg, setting the stage for the eventual siege.

Steve indicated that Grant's innovation, along with the differences in leadership support, were critical factors in the Union's triumph during the Vicksburg Campaign. When frontal assaults failed to achieve the desired results, Grant employed innovative tactics during the siege of the "Gibraltar of the Mississippi." For example, Steve discussed the use of cotton bale barricades by Union engineers and explosive mines—strategies that Grant would later adapt for use at Petersburg a year later. The involvement of the U.S. Navy was another key element in the Army of the Tennessee's success. Grant relied on the Navy not only for transportation but also for crucial bombardments of Vicksburg itself. Steve also addressed the contrasting leadership on both sides as a decisive factor in the Union's victory. President Abraham Lincoln, despite his initial doubts, provided unwavering support for Ulysses S. Grant. After Vicksburg fell, Lincoln acknowledged that Grant had proven him right, marking a rare moment of clarity for the Great Emancipator. In contrast, Confederate President Jefferson Davis struggled with poor leadership in coordinating with General Pemberton and the reinforcements under General Joseph E. Johnston. Davis had created a flawed command structure that undermined the defense of one of the

Confederacy's most strategically important strongholds. In closing, Steve emphasized that Grant's victory at Vicksburg was pivotal, not just for securing control of the Mississippi River, but for splitting the Confederacy in half. Our thanks go to Steve for his excellent presentation, which also served as an exciting preview for our planned field trip to Vicksburg, MS, in September 2025.

Up next, we are excited to welcome our very own Roundtable member, Past-President, and esteemed moderator of the Dick Crews Memorial Debate, Judge William F.B. Vodrey! William will present "Lincoln's Lawyers" at the April meeting. His talk will explore the roles of Edward Bates and James Speed, two men who served as Lincoln's Attorneys General and whose differing views on racial equality helped shape the President's evolving stance on the issue. This promises to be an important discussion as we approach the 160th anniversary of the Civil War's end and the complex legacy that followed.

I look forward to seeing you all on April 9th as we carry forward the mission of preserving and sharing this invaluable history. As spring brings a fresh sense of possibility, may this season of renewal inspire us all to grow in our understanding and commitment to the lessons of the past.

Your obedient servant,

Gene Claridge

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## *The Editor's Desk*



JOHNNY YUMA WAS A REBEL! -----I'm showing my age! I don't know how many of the present membership in CCWRT were alive during the Civil War Centennial years, but those were the formative years of my early childhood. I cannot escape them, and I do not wish to. As a child, my early interests in history in general, and Civil War history in particular, were nurtured by TV, as well as the books in our home and stories told by my parents, my aunts and uncles, and my older siblings. As you can imagine, however, being a child, TV had a strong attraction for me. You see, I was the first member of my immediate family who grew up with TV in our house. As a matter of fact, growing up on a farm on a dirt road called "Fonner Run," our house only had electric service installed just a couple years before my birth. My older brother and sisters can still remember doing their homework by the light of a kerosene lamp.

Be that as it may, however, I vividly remember when I first learned some of the basic facts of Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse. It was a Fall evening in 1960. My family and I were watching the TV show, *The Rebel*. Starring Nick Addams (who played in the movie *No Time for Sergeants* with Andy Griffith), the show followed the wanderings of a former Texas cavalryman after the Civil War. Johnny Yuma's father had been the sheriff of a small town in Texas, and when the young soldier

returned home, he found that his father had been murdered, and the town was controlled by a gang of thugs with no respect for law or order. The hero, of course, cleans up the town, avenges his father, but decides his war experience has made him too restless to stay and take over the job of town sheriff. Instead, he rides off into the west and the next adventure. We all liked westerns, and *The Rebel* was probably a good example of the genre in 1960.

At any rate, that evening the episode was titled “Johnny Yuma at Appomattox.” If you wish, you can watch the show on YouTube at the following

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkg4QQQuUF10&list=PLfJt-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkg4QQQuUF10&list=PLfJt-7qbuNtMFHMG_k2py2ABxrdnsEHIQ&index=37)

[7qbuNtMFHMG\\_k2py2ABxrdnsEHIQ&index=37](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qkg4QQQuUF10&list=PLfJt-7qbuNtMFHMG_k2py2ABxrdnsEHIQ&index=37). The script is quite an interesting portrayal of the surrender. As you listen to the dialogue, you can almost hear the words of Lee and Grant as they were recorded by Bruce Catton in his Pulitzer-Prize-winning history, *A Stillness at Appomattox*. My oldest sister was in high school at the time, and she made sure I understood what was happening on the TV screen. The plot, a flashback, centers around Johnny’s bitterness at the idea of surrender and his plan to shoot General Grant before Lee can sign any surrender terms. Yuma hides himself in the attic of the McLean House, which just happened to have a vent that overlooks the parlor where Lee and Grant meet. Accordingly, the show revolves around the conversation between Lee and Grant, and the generosity exhibited by Grant to Lee and the defeated men of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Was it authentic history? Probably not, but it made an impression on a young boy that sent him down his own long road wandering through various Civil War history books, travels to numerous historic sites and battlefields, a period of Civil War reenacting, and now membership in the CCWRT. Not a bad outcome for a 1960 TV western!

## ***Final CCWRT Testimonials for 600<sup>th</sup> Meeting***

Continuing the feature we started in the March issue of “The Charger,” here are the final testimonials that President Gene received from our members regarding the impact on their lives of membership in the CCWRT:

*John Syrone*

*Original Member 1999 -2002*

*Rejoined 2022*

*Being a member of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable has been a tremendous experience. I recall attending meetings at the Hermit Club in downtown Cleveland. What stood out in those meetings were hearing speakers, such as Shelby Foote and Ed Bearss. I still have the picture that I took with Shelby Foote. I also remember seeing the move from downtown Cleveland to the Cleveland Playhouse on Carnegie. Some other early highlights were attending the field trips to Richmond, Charleston, and Washington D.C. My latest adventures with the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable have been even more memorable with highlights including trips to Manassas and Gettysburg. In addition, being asked to serve as a Cleveland Civil War Roundtable officer has expanded my experiences with the group including judging at National History Day and being part of Dr. Curtis Fields' visit to Strongsville Middle School this May.*

*- John Syrone*

*Name: Dr. Jimmy Menkhaus*

*Member Since: First in 2000, rejoined when I moved back to Cleveland in 2020.*

*Memory: The first meeting I attended was Shelby Foote. I was a sophomore at John*



*Carroll and knew little about the Civil War beyond watching the Ken Burn's documentary with my father. I couldn't believe that the guy I had seen on tv was in the room with me. During my collegiate studies, Roundtable meetings became an educational and enjoyable break from my studies and holds a special place in my heart. I remain grateful to William Vodrey for inviting me to become a member.*

- Jimmy Menkhaus

*Name: Dave Carrino*

*Year of Membership: 2001*

*Reflection:*

*What drew me to the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable is (not surprisingly) my interest in the Civil War, and this, no doubt, is what motivated many people to join the Roundtable. But the Roundtable is more to me than just a vehicle for increasing my knowledge of the Civil War and for enhancing my understanding of the Civil War, although it is certainly that, and it accomplishes that very effectively. The Roundtable is also camaraderie, fellowship, and a shared interest with others, which elevates that interest to a much higher level of enjoyment. It is lasting friendships and enduring memories made over many years. The Roundtable provides ongoing opportunities to nourish my interest in the Civil War via monthly meetings that have a presentation by a knowledgeable speaker. But the meetings are not just a lecture. The meetings are also informal and stimulating discussions with other Roundtable members in the relaxed and congenial atmosphere of dinner. In addition to the monthly meetings, there are annual opportunities to experience the Civil War in a much more direct and tangible way via the field trips to Civil War sites, and to do this with the engaging*

*companionship of other Civil War enthusiasts, which far exceeds a visit to a Civil War site by myself. Tony Horwitz wrote in his book Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War, "The pleasure the Civil War gave me was hard to put into words, at least words that made much sense to any one other than a fellow addict." The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable is the embodiment of that sentiment.*

- Dave Carrino

*Name: William F. B. Vodrey*

*Year of Membership: 1996*

*I became a member of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable in 1996, when then-Atty. John Sutula recruited me. He noticed me reading a Civil War history magazine outside a courtroom one day and told me about the Roundtable, of which I'd never heard before. I went to several meetings at our old meeting spot, the Hermit Club, and was soon totally hooked: great people, interesting programs, diverse and engaging annual debates and wide-ranging, immersive fall field trips.*

*In time I made my way up the ladder of different officer posts, and was honored to serve as president in 2000-2001. Two particular highlights then were having Shelby Foote come speak to the Roundtable on what novelists and historians can learn from each other, and our fall field trip that year to Washington, D.C., including a tour of the White House focusing on the Lincoln years.*

*I've made some of the best friends of my life in the Roundtable, and can scarcely imagine not having it in my life today. Here's to the next 600 meetings, and many, many more years of scholarship and fellowship yet to come.*

- William F.B. Vodrey



Regimental Band of the 23<sup>rd</sup> OVI

### *Shooters Before Tooters*

© Brian D. Kowell January 11, 2024

The story is told that the musicians in General Daniel Harvey Hill's division petitioned the general for a baggage wagon to carry their instruments when marching. The number of baggage wagons were being reduced in the Confederate army for a number of reasons but when the General read the request, he immediately ordered that a wagon be brought up. The band was summoned for this special occasion and under the eye of Hill soon assembled with their instruments. As soon as the instruments were comfortably deposited within the wagon, Hill turned to his quartermaster and said, "Send that wagon to Richmond." Turning next to his adjutant, Hill ordered, "Have muskets issued to these men immediately. We need shooters, not tooters."

This story is from George C. Eggleston's book *Southern Soldier Stories* from 1898. It, or some variation of it, has been repeated in other books.

Stephen Davis and Bill Hendrick heard similar variations and decided to research this story's origin. Mr. Davis remembered hearing this story or something similar while he attended Emory University in Dr. Bell Wiley's Civil War course and found a quip in Wiley's and Milhollen's

*Embattled Confederates* (1964) but without attribution. But there is no mention of this incident in Hal Bridges' *Lee's Maverick General* (1961).

Mr. Hendrick researched various Civil War newspapers and found an article in the *Winston-Salem Sentinel* of April 1863. Steve Davis wrote the following blog piece in *Emerging Civil War* posted on November 10, 2020, about this find:

Gen. D.H. Hill, now in command of our forces in Eastern North Carolina, must, according to "Long Grabs," a correspondent of the *Fayetteville Observer*, be something of a wag as well as a soldier. That writer says:

Just before Gen. Hill left the army in Virginia, Dan \_\_\_\_, chief musician in Iverson's Brigade, sent up a furlough for approval.

The aforesaid Dan had devoted his time almost exclusively to music at Chapel Hill, and along with \_\_\_\_, carried on an organized Band for several sessions, so that when Dan thought as he had been so long inspiring his countrymen with the lays of martial music that he might claim a furlough with the rest, although he had killed no yankee. Imagine his chagrin when his furlough was returned, endorsed: "Respectfully disapproved. Shooters before tooters." D. H. Hill. Maj. Gen. Com'dg.

#### References:

Eggleston, George Cary, *Southern Soldiers Stories*, New York, Macmillian Co., 1898, p.234

Davis Stephen & Bill Hendrick, "Shooters Before Tooters," *Emerging Civil War*, November 10, 2020

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NOTE: We want to take a few lines to congratulate Brian Kowell on the publication of his fine article about the naval engagement between the *CSS Squib* and the *USS Minnesota* in the December 2024 issue of *North and South* magazine. Since the pandemic, this publication is one of the very few print publications still available for those of us who enjoy reading the latest research on the Civil War. Brian has always done a great job for "The Charger," and it is fantastic to see his work is reaching a larger national, and even international, audience. TO BRIAN KOWELL WE SAY A HEARTY, "HUZZA!"

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### ***TWO UPCOMING CCWRT LOCAL FIELD TRIPS***

The CCWRT Local Field Trip Committee is pleased to announce:

A contingent of the Cleveland CWRT will be visiting the Ohio Civil War Show at 10am on Sat. May 3. The event will be at the Richland County Fairgrounds in Mansfield, Ohio, about an hour from the West Side of Cleveland. There will be artillery and infantry demonstrations, living history from different eras including the American Revolution, Civil War and World War II, and lots and lots of Civil War (and other eras') books, collectibles and other militaria for sale.

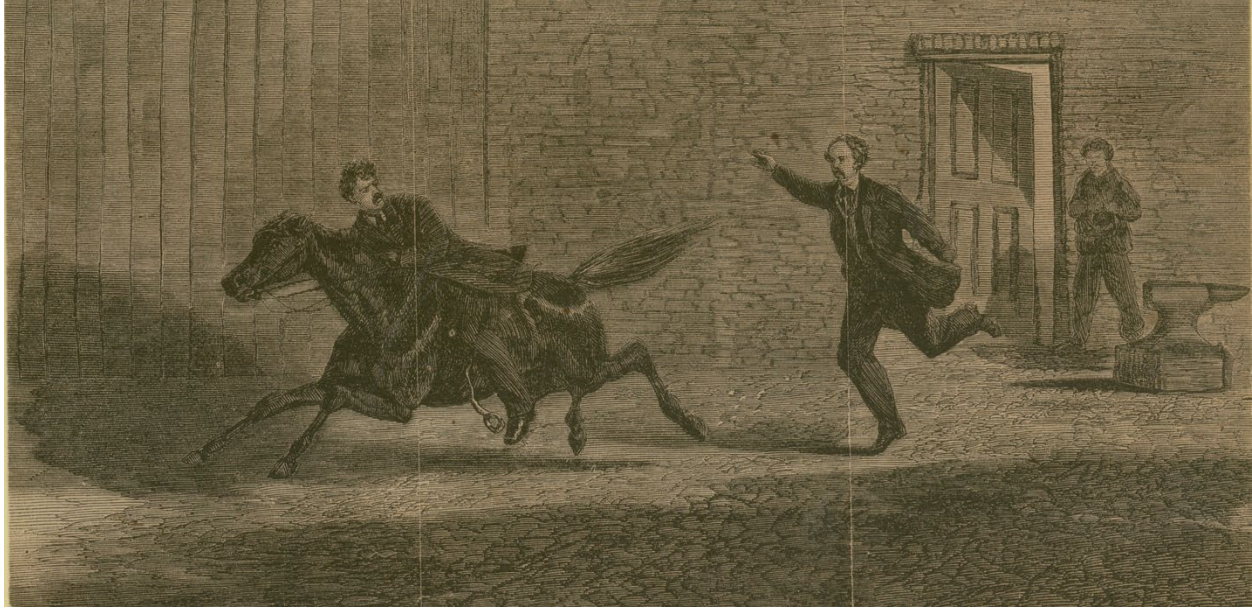
For more information: <https://ohiocivilwarshow.com/wp/>



At 10am on Sat. June 21, we've arranged for a guided tour of Lawnfield, President James A. Garfield's home in Mentor, Ohio. The tour will include information on his service in the 42nd Ohio during the Civil War, of course, among other things, including his promising but all-too-brief Presidency.

For more information: <https://www.nps.gov/jaga/index.htm>

If you'd like to go to either event, please let William Vodrey know by noon on the previous Thursday. His email is WFBVodrey at AOL dot com (broken up to avoid spam). Thanks!



John Wilkes Booth escapes down the alley behind Ford's Theater the night of the Lincoln Assassination

## ***BOOTH IN THE CONFEDERATE SECRET SERVICE***

By John C. Fazio

*[EDITOR'S NOTE: Past President John C. Fazio was a scholar of the history of the Lincoln assassination. Before he died, John had published at least two books on the subject and numerous articles. Shortly prior to his passing, John contacted us and submitted several articles he had wanted to share with CCWRT through "The Charger." We have published several of those in the past year. This is another of John's articles that we are publishing as a memorial to his service to CCWRT and his work as a scholar.]*

John Wilkes Booth was an agent of the Confederate Secret Service. It is not known, and may never be known, when or exactly under what circumstances he was recruited and accepted his role as such, but that he was an agent and was in regular contact with other agents, who had ties to the Confederate leadership, or who had ties to other agents who had such ties, has been firmly established. Asia Booth described her brother as "a spy, a blockade-runner, a rebel!"<sup>1</sup>

Because he is not known to have been an agent before 1864 and is known to have been such in 1864 and 1865, it appears that he was recruited and trained in 1864, quite likely when he was in New Orleans for three weeks that year from the middle of March through early April. While there, he boarded at the home of George Miller, a Confederate sympathizer known to have had ties to high-ranking figures in the Confederate Government. Booth and Miller are known to have

corresponded for some time after John left the city. Another sympathizer he met there, and in whose company he was often seen, was Hiram Martin, a blockade runner. Either Miller or Martin could have been the recruiter. The only certainty is that by the end of that summer, John was in regular contact with Confederate agents and was familiar with their cipher system.<sup>2</sup>

John told Asia that he was involved in the “underground” and that the work demanded travel. The unexplained trips, the strange visitors at all hours, the callused hands “from nights of rowing”, to Asia it suddenly all made sense. Asia wrote that:

He often slept in his clothes on the couch downstairs, having on his long riding boots. Strange men called at late hours, some whose voices I knew, but who would not answer to their names; and others who were perfectly strange to me. They never came farther than the inner sill, and spoke in whispers.<sup>3</sup>

It is worth noting, as further indication of John's Secret Service activities, that some time in late summer or early fall, of 1864, a few weeks after he had lost a \$6,000 investment in the oil business in northwestern Pennsylvania, John transferred all of his remaining assets to his mother, Mary Ann Booth, and his older brother, Junius, Jr.<sup>4</sup> This could only have been because a traitor's property could be seized under the treason statute passed by Congress on July 17, 1862, and this fact was surely known to every Northerner who was in any way supporting the Confederacy.<sup>5</sup>

It is well known that throughout most of 1864 and in the months leading up to the assassination, John had frequent meetings with other operatives, doubtless higher level, in Montreal, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington.

On July 26, 1864, John was in Boston at the Parker House. There he met with three Confederate agents from Canada and one from Baltimore. It appears that with this meeting, John was officially enlisted in the business of conspiracy against the Lincoln Administration. The identities of the men with whom he met are known, but the evidence is strong that they registered using aliases. The subject and purpose of the meeting are not known with particularity. What is known is that this meeting was the first, or at least one of the first, that John had with Confederate agents and that many more followed. Tidwell, Hall and Gaddy, masters of their craft, had this to say about this meeting:

The gathering at the Parker House...has all the earmarks of a conference with an agenda. The inference is that agents of the Confederate apparatus in Canada have a need to discuss something with Booth. Capturing Lincoln? Within a few weeks Booth was in Baltimore recruiting others for just such a scheme and had closed out his Pennsylvania oil operations.<sup>6</sup>

It is also known that John's relationship with his family, never good relative to the major issue of the period, especially with brother Edwin and brother-in-law John Clarke, deteriorated badly during 1864 and finally reached the breaking point. The career rivalry between the brothers, in which Edwin easily eclipsed John, accelerated the process. John told Asia that if it were not for their mother, he would never enter Edwin's home, nor, he said, would he enter Clarke's home, but for Asia. In November, following an especially bitter exchange between the brothers, and after many such exchanges during the year, Edwin ordered John to leave his home and then physically expelled him from it. This humiliation may have sent John over the edge, because it followed other major problems he was having that year.

On August 7, he was in Philadelphia, from where he went to Baltimore. Most of August he spent in New York City at the home of his brother, Edwin. He had developed a bad case of erysipelas, on his right arm, a skin infection which, in the days before antibiotics, was quite serious and could even be fatal. He was confined to his sick bed, in Edwin's home in New York, the entire month before recovering.

Later, in November, he suffered from eruptions of what have been described as "boils" or "carbuncles" on his neck, which had to be lanced and drained by a doctor. No longer welcome in Edwin's home, John found refuge with Asia in Philadelphia.

With John Ellsler, Manager of the Cleveland Academy of Music, and another friend, Thomas Mears, John had invested substantial sums in oil speculation in western Pennsylvania, a highly risky venture in which many lost small and large fortunes. John joined them; his efforts came to nothing. The "oil business", however, did provide an effective cover for John's travels and income in connection with his activities on behalf of Richmond and the Secret Service.

Clearly, John's world was falling apart: his relationship with his family was bad because of ideology and, in Edwin's case, had ruptured completely. Brother Joseph was abroad and brother Junius, Jr. was in California through May, then returned home, joining Edwin, John, Asia and sister Rosalie and Edwin's daughter, Edwina. John had been outclassed by brother Edwin on stage, who reserved the choicest venues for himself, assigning John to smaller cities and theaters, mostly in the South. Junius, also an actor, was too busy for him. In addition, John was often seriously ill physically, had lost a small fortune in oil and was, as always, drinking heavily (he could put away a bottle of brandy in one sitting) and therefore scrapping easily and often.

In these circumstances, he may indeed have been losing his mind. At all events, we can at least begin to understand why he would be drawn to persons who offered him refuge, comfort, camaraderie, acceptance, money, ideological commonality and purpose.



To New York, he is known to have traveled at least a dozen times for secret meetings. On one of these trips, in November 1864, he met with Samuel Knapp Chester, a fellow actor, and tried to recruit him into what he described as a plan to abduct Lincoln. He told Chester there were 50 to 100 people involved in the plan. Chester refused to join. Fifty to 100 is certainly an exaggeration (it could never have been kept secret with that number), but we may be certain that there were more than the number who were tried and convicted by the Military Commission in Washington in May and June, 1865.

In the third week of October, John went to Montreal and stayed there for at least 10 days (October 18 – 27), returning first to New York, on or about November 1, and then to Washington on November 9. Before he left Montreal, he arranged with Patrick C. Martin, a blockade-runner from Baltimore, to ship his entire theatrical wardrobe to Nassau, from where it was to be shipped through the blockade to Richmond, where it would be waiting for him. Neither he nor the wardrobe made it, but that is beside the point. The point is that he obviously had no intention of pursuing his acting career in the immediate future, having more pressing matters to attend to, and that if he decided to resume that career, it would be in the Confederacy. That meant, of course, abandoning his home and family, which is a good indication of the depth of his feeling, the degree of commitment he brought to whatever he was planning and an awareness of its likely consequences.<sup>7</sup>

While in Montreal, John stayed at the St. Lawrence Hall and also at a room nearby. "The Hall", as it was generally referred to, was thought by many to be the finest hotel in the city. It was also the headquarters of the Canadian Cabinet, the name given to Confederates stationed there from early 1864, under instructions from Jefferson Davis and Judah Benjamin.

At the trial of the conspirators, several witnesses, namely Richard Montgomery, Sandford Conover (Charles Dunham), James B. Merritt, John Deveny, Hosea B. Carter, William E. Wheeler and Robert Anson Campbell, testified that they saw Booth in Montreal between the summer of 1864 and February, 1865, with most witnesses placing him there in October. The substance of their testimony was that they saw Booth in conversation and "intimate association" with Jacob Thompson, head of the Canadian Cabinet, and the notorious George N. Sanders, said by many to have been the brains behind the terror and assassination plots hatched at "the Hall".<sup>8</sup>

Some have questioned the reliability of this testimony on the grounds that some of the witnesses were later shown to have perjured themselves and also because some of the conversation allegedly overheard was unlikely, due to its sensitivity (plots against Lincoln), to have been discussed openly. The fact is that the details of the conversations are not really very important. What is important is that the Canadian Cabinet saw fit to host John Wilkes Booth for 10 days and that John Wilkes Booth felt it necessary to take 10 days from his busy schedule to travel to Montreal for the purpose of being so hosted. We may be certain he did not simply pop in on them unannounced. We may be certain the conference had been previously arranged and that both parties, John and the Cabinet, felt the conference was at least desirable, if not absolutely



necessary, to refine their plans and coordinate their efforts, at least those that pertained to John and the role he was to play in saving the Confederacy. Clearly, John was no longer a bit player; he had moved up the ladder and was now mingling with the major-domos of Confederate espionage. Major-domos of espionage do not spend ten days with an actor discussing theater, the weather or sports. Sanders, especially, was reported by Hosea B. Carter to have been observed in "intimate association with Booth",<sup>9</sup> and by John Deveny as having been seen "talking with" Booth, "talking confidentially and drinking together" and "(having) a drink together".<sup>10</sup> This is the same Sanders who was a known advocate of assassination as an effective means to bring about change; the same Sanders who, in 1853, had hosted, as U.S. Consul in London, such famous European revolutionaries as Lajos Kossuth, Giuseppe Garibaldi, Giuseppe Mazzini, Felice Orsini, Andre Ledru-Rollin and Aleksandr Ivanovich Herzen. Sanders was said to have been very impressed by Mazzini's "theory of the dagger", i.e. tyrannicide, and advocated the assassination of Napoleon III "by any means, and by any way it could be done".<sup>11</sup>

It appears that the master had taken the pupil under his wing. Sanders, already a grizzly bear, was at this time a wounded grizzly bear, because his son, Major Reid Sanders, a prisoner of war, had died in captivity at Fort Warren in Boston just six weeks earlier.<sup>12</sup> He would therefore have been all the more eager to seek revenge against the man he considered to be the ultimate author of his son's demise and the demise of so many others and all the more disposed, therefore, to groom and patronize the possible agency of it.

John is also known, while in Montreal, to have spent a lot of time with Patrick C. Martin and his family. It was probably Martin or Sanders, perhaps both, who gave him the names of, and letters of introduction to, persons in lower Maryland and northern Virginia whom he could rely upon for help. We know only that he was given such letters to, at least, Dr. William Queen, Dr. Samuel Mudd and Marshal George P. Kane, the former Police Commissioner of Baltimore and a Confederate sympathizer, and that he later made contact with these people when he was in lower Maryland and also when he was making his escape.<sup>13</sup>

On October 27, Booth and Martin went to the Bank of Ontario, in Montreal, to exchange currency. Booth traded \$300 in gold coins for 60 pounds sterling and bought an exchange receipt for \$455. He returned to Washington on November 9 and opened an account at the Washington office of Jay Cooke & Co., Bankers, into which he deposited \$1,500. This gave him the funds he needed to finance his work and, if need be, to escape abroad or into the Confederacy.<sup>14</sup>

In early November he was in Charles County, Maryland, with Dr. William Queen and his family and Dr. Mudd. On November 14, he was back in Washington at the National Hotel, but in December he was back in Charles County, this time to solicit the help of Confederate agent Thomas H. Harbin, whom he met through Dr. Mudd. Harbin agreed to help and did help Booth in his escape after the assassination. Significantly, Harbin fled the country after the assassination and disappeared. Five years later he was back in the country working as a clerk in the National Hotel in Washington. He remained there until he died in 1885.<sup>15</sup>

In late November, John stopped to see Asia in Philadelphia. He offered to show her the cipher he was using, but she would have none of it. Then he took a large packet from his breast pocket, handed it to her, told her to keep it in her safe and to open it, alone, if anything happened to him. Following the assassination, she did. It contained paperwork relating to the disposition of his property, as well as a farewell letter to his mother and another letter addressed "To Whom It May Concern", but apparently intended for his brother-in-law, John Clarke. The greeting was an allusion to Lincoln's letter to Confederate commissioners attending a peace conference at Niagara Falls in July, 1863, which letter ended the conference, such as it was.

In the farewell letter, a tender, heartfelt missive that left no doubt of his love for his mother, he sought to justify his parting from her on the grounds of "liberty and humanity due to my country", "the cause of liberty and justice" and "the justice of my cause".

The letter to Clarke was considerably longer and was a general defense of the Confederate cause and of what Booth was now planning to do to serve it. It was in this letter that he wrote:

Right or wrong, God judge me, not man...

This country was formed for the *white*, not for the black man. And looking upon *African slavery* from the same standpoint held by those noble framers of our Constitution, I for one have ever considered *it* one of the greatest blessings (both for themselves and us) that God every bestowed upon a favored nation...Yet Heaven knows *no one* would be willing to do *more* for the negro race than I, could I but see a way to still *better their* condition. But Lincoln's policy is only preparing the way for their total annihilation...

The South...stand *now* (before the wonder and admiration of the *world*) as a noble band of patriotic heroes. Hereafter, reading of *their deeds*, Thermopylae will be forgotten...

Alas...day by day has she (the American flag) been draged (*sic*) deeper and deeper into cruelty and oppression...

Nor do I deem it a dishonor, in attempting to make for her a prisoner of this man to whom she owes so much of misery...

*A Confederate, at present* (deleted in the original by Booth) doing duty *upon his own responsibility*.<sup>16</sup>

Is that what Samuel Arnold and William Tidwell and others called an "intelligent" man? Why did he delete "at present" from the last line? Had it ceased to be true? Need I say that his exculpation of the complicity of others, by implication the Confederate Government and its Secret Service, is proof positive of their complicity? Who asked for the exculpation? Methinks he protests too much.

It was about this time – the latter part of 1864 – that John, unquestionably under orders from his superiors to do so, began to pull some loose strings together to form a team for a stated purpose. It should be noted at the outset that if Booth had his sights on murdering Lincoln and only Lincoln, what need had he of an action team? This is something he could very well have accomplished entirely on his own, especially if he were willing to sacrifice his life in exchange. That he began to assemble a team, therefore, is a clear indication that he had grander intentions than the elimination of one man. Of course, they were not intentions he could reveal to the members of his team, because to do so would, first, surely drive most if not all of them away, because multiple killings are not something many have a taste for, and second, take an unacceptable risk of leakage. So he would lure with the pretense of a different purpose, and this despite the fact that on at least three occasions from late 1864 to April, 1865, he had attempted to induce Lewis Powell to murder Lincoln.

To facilitate recruitment, he advised his prospects that his purpose was nothing more malignant than the abduction of President Lincoln, who would be whisked off to Richmond and then held as ransom for the release of Confederate prisoners of war, as if anyone in the Federal Government would negotiate with the Confederate Government in those circumstances. No harm was to come to anyone. As an inducement to come aboard, John promised fame, the eternal gratitude of the Confederate States of America, whose continued existence as a separate nation they would play a major role in securing, and lots of money. As for the last, he promised enough to ease their lives for the present and enough, ultimately, with the success of their common enterprise, to assure that they would never have to work for a living again. At least eight loose strings, whom we know of, took the bait.

By so doing, four would wind up at the end of a rope, three would spend nearly four years in hell on earth, one of the three suffering the agony of yellow fever and then dying of it, and one would live a full life after spending 19 months abroad as a fugitive and then enduring the ordeal of a two-month trial. Let no one suppose that John gathered this motley band entirely of his own volition or that any of them, with the possible exceptions of John Surratt and Lewis Powell, knew what he was really about or the true dimensions of his conspiracy. He was daft and bizarre, but he knew how to compartmentalize his work; only those closest to him knew his true purpose.

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<sup>1</sup> Asia Booth Clarke, *John Wilkes Booth: A Sister's Memoir*, ed. Terry Alford, University Press of Mississippi, 1996, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Nora Titone, *My Thoughts Be Bloody*, Free Press, 2010, p. 319.

<sup>3</sup> Clarke, pp. 85, 87; Michael W. Kauffman, *American Brutus*, Random House, 2004, pp. 130, 131.

<sup>4</sup> *The Trial: The Assassination of President Lincoln and the Trial of the Conspirators*, ed. Edward Steers, Jr., The University Press of Kentucky, 2003, p. XXXV.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. LXI

<sup>6</sup> William A. Tidwell, James O. Hall and David Winfield Gaddy, *Come Retribution: The Confederate Secret Service and the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln*, University Press of Mississippi, 1988, p. 263.

<sup>7</sup> Stanley Kimmel, *The Mad Booths of Maryland*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. and enlarged ed., Dover Publications, 1969, p. 189.

<sup>8</sup> Clara McLaughlin, *The Death of Lincoln*, Doubleday, Page & Company, 1909, pp. 203, 204.

<sup>9</sup> Benn Pitman, *The Assassination of President Lincoln and the Trial of the Conspirators*, Moore, Wiltach & Baldwin, 1865, p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> Tidwell, Hall and Gaddy, pp. 331, 332.

<sup>12</sup> *New York Herald*, September 6, 1864.

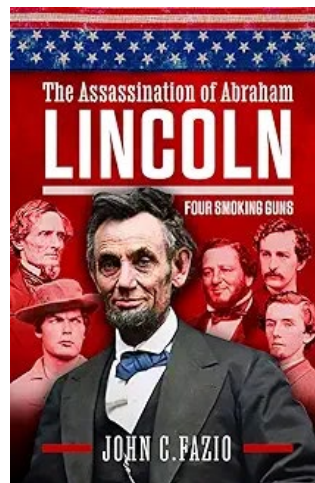
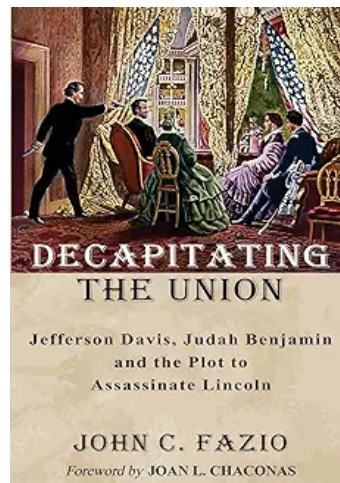
<sup>13</sup> William Hanchett, *The Lincoln Murder Conspiracies*, University of Illinois Press, 1989, p. 44; Kauffman, p. 141; Tidwell, Hall and Gaddy, p. 331.

<sup>14</sup> Kauffman, p. 141; Tidwell, Hall and Gaddy, p. 344.

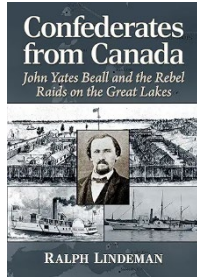
<sup>15</sup> Tidwell, Hall and Gaddy, p. 342.

<sup>16</sup> Clarke, pp. 104-110.

*[Editor's Note: For further reading on John Fazio's thoughts about the Lincoln Assassination conspiracy, you should pick up copies of his two books, **Decapitating the Nation** and **The Lincoln Assassination: Four Smoking Guns**. Both books received very good reviews and reflect John's careful research, thought, and analysis as a scholar. Trained as a lawyer, John presents the evidence to support his theories like a legal brief prepared for an appellate court. His review of the records of the event is exhaustive and well-documented.]*



## **BOOK REVIEWS**



Ralph Lindeman. *Confederates From Canada: John Yates Beall and the Rebel Raids on the Great Lakes* (McFarland and Company, 2023)

Many from our Roundtable have visited Johnson's Island in Sandusky Harbor, the site of a former Civil War POW camp for Confederate officers. Among the several offshore islands in Lake Erie near the city, it was chosen by the order of Montgomery C. Meigs, Quartermaster-General of the Union Army. The prison was opened on April 10, 1862, and when it was closed in May, 1865, 2,806 prisoners were released.

What some may not know much about was the aborted attempt on September 19, 1864, by Confederate raiders from Canada led by John Yates Beall to liberate the prisoners. This book by Ralph Lindeman, a former trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice and later a Washington journalist, tells this complex tale and related events in great detail. The book begins and ends with Beall and his execution as a spy on February 24, 1865.

Beall was from a wealthy Virginia family, and he volunteered when the Civil War broke out. After suffering a serious wound in October 1861 at the battle of Bolivar Heights near Harper's Ferry and recuperating, Beall eventually found his way in late 1862 to British-controlled Lower Canada and Confederates in the cities of Montreal and Toronto. In February 1863, Beall arrived in Richmond and met with Confederate President Jefferson Davis. He proposed two plans: either to organize a raid to liberate Confederate prisoners being held at Lake Erie, Ohio Johnson's Island camp after capturing the USS Michigan warship or acting as a privateer in the Chesapeake Bay disrupting Union shipping. Initially, Davis and Confederate Naval Secretary Stephen Mallory approved Beall's plan to liberate Johnson's Island prison but then Davis cancelled it for fear of alienating Great Britain.

Instead, Beall organized a commando team of naval raiders, including Glasgow, Scotland native Bennett G. Burley, who had launched a torpedo unsuccessfully in New York's Harbor. Beall launched his first attacks on Union fishing boats in the Chesapeake Bay September 19-26, 1863. The campaign was short lived. Spotted by fishermen, Beall and his team were captured by troops from a Union gunboat on November 14, 1863, and they were imprisoned in chains in Fort McHenry in Baltimore. Transferred later to Fort Monroe, Virginia, Beall was released in a prisoner exchange on May 5, 1864.

Meanwhile, in February 1864, the Confederacy had established a Secret Service based in Montreal, Canada and which also operated in Toronto. It was headed by Jacob Thompson, one of three Commissioners. It would plan various schemes intended to harass the Union, one of which a revival of Beall's plan to liberate the Johnson's Island Confederate officers' POW camp.

In November 1863, a planned attempt by Confederates in Canada to liberate the Johnson's Island POW camp had been aborted due to an informer's warning to Canada's Governor General, who



alerted the U.S. authorities. However, in February, 1864, Thomas H. Hines came to Richmond and met with Jefferson Davis, War Secretary James Seddon, and Secretary of State Judah Benjamin to discuss another attempt to liberate the Johnson's Island camp. Hines was among the Morgan Raiders who had been imprisoned in the Ohio State Penitentiary after being captured in the Summer of 1863. He escaped on November 26, 1863, was recaptured, and escaped again. Now, with the Confederacy's battlefield prospects endangered after its defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, Davis approved Hines' plan.

Hines went to Canada where he met with exiled Copperhead leader Clement Vallandigham, the former Ohio Congressman, and other Copperhead leaders to discuss another plot to release first the Confederate POWs imprisoned at Camp Douglas in Chicago at the beginning of the Democratic Presidential convention in August 1864. The idea was then to have Midwest pro-Confederate uprisings led by the Sons of Liberty Copperheads. In preparation for this ambitious plan, Jacob Thompson sent a former Confederate soldier named Charles H. Cole on a tour of Great Lakes American port cities to inspect their defenses. At the August 28, 1864, date chosen for the attack on Camp Douglas led by Hines, the Sons of Liberty failed to show up as promised in Chicago, resulting in the cancellation of the plan.

Then, Beall, having returned to Canada, met with Thompson, and was put in charge of a revived plan to liberate the Johnson's Island camp, where conditions had deteriorated due to overcrowding, poor sanitation, and reduced rations because of the Union retaliation for the poor conditions of Union POWs in Confederate prisons. Beall met with Bennett Burley to plan the attack and Cole was planted by Thompson in Sandusky to coordinate the attack on the USS Michigan stationed at Johnson's Island and to contact the prisoners organized for an uprising and mass escape.

The plan was seizing the Lake Erie steamer Philo Parsons when it left the Detroit River and sail it to Sandusky to attack the USS Michigan. Cole, posing as a wealthy investor, was to drug the Union ship's officers he had befriended previously at an evening dinner party as the Philo Parsons arrived. On September 19, 1864, Beall, Burley and other raiders seized the steamer and sailed it to Middle Bass Island off Sandusky to remove the passengers. Informed by them of the Confederate seizure, John Brown, Jr., the elder son of the abolitionist icon John Brown, organized a defense of South Bass Island and then went to Johnson's Island to help defend it. An informer had warned the Union authorities in Sandusky of the impending attack and Cole had been arrested along with some Copperhead supporters. So, when Beall's raiders awaited a signal from Cole to attack the USS Michigan, it never came. That night Beall called off the attack and sailed the Philo Parsons back to the Detroit River, where he scuttled it.

As a result of this failed plot, the U.S. increased its armed defenses along the Canadian border. This action was accelerated after a Confederate bank raid into St. Albans, Vermont on October 19 and the raiders' escape back into Canada that increased tensions along the border.

In yet another maritime Confederate plot, in the absence of Beall, Burley was put in charge of the ship Georgiana bought by Thompson and refitted as a gunboat intended to attack American

Great Lakes cities. It sailed on November 5, 1864 and reached Sarnia, where the Canadian authorities arrested Burley. The ship ended up in Lake Huron and never threatened U.S. cities.

In the next plot supported by Thompson, Beall and a team were sent to intercept a train on the Lake Shore Railway said to be transporting several Confederate generals, including Isaac Trimble, division commander captured at Gettysburg after being wounded in Pickett's Charge, from Johnson's Island to New York City. As with the previous plots, this too failed due to confusion about the train schedule on December 16, 1864, and Beall and another man were arrested in the Niagra, New York train station.

Beall was imprisoned in New York City, where he was charged with being a spy. He was tried by a military court and convicted. Scheduled to be hanged on February 18, 1865, an unlikely number of prominent persons, including not only Southerners but also, for example, Radical Republican Thaddeus Stevens, lobbied Abraham Lincoln to commute Beall's death sentence but Lincoln refused to do this. Beall was executed on Governors Island on February 24, 1865.

In an Epilogue on "Their Later Lives", Lindeman provides brief profiles of the many characters in this history. It includes John Wilkes Booth, who visited Montreal in October, 1864 and may have met Beall there, while planning the kidnapping of President Lincoln. Lindeman rejects the idea that Booth assassinated Lincoln to avenge his refusal to prevent Beall's hanging.

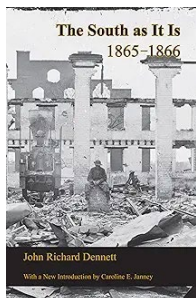
This book offers a wide-ranging history of the activities of the Confederate Secret Service and some of its several Canadian-based plots supported by Jefferson Davis and his government, including those involving John Yates Beall. For those readers mainly interested in the second attempt to liberate the Johnson's Island camp led by Beall, it is covered in pp. 114-131. As to Beall, his activities, and his execution, the author leaves it to the reader to decide about his life and character.

Additional references for this subject include:

Peter Kross. "The Confederate Spy Ring: Spreading Terror to the Union" Warfare History Network (Fall 2015): <https://warfare.historynetwork.com>

Barry Sheehy. *Montreal, City of Secrets: Confederate Operations During the American Civil War* (2017).

--Dennis Keating



Dennett, John Richard. *The South as It Is: 1865-66*, New Introduction by Carolyn Janney, 2010, University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa, Alabama. ISBN # 978-0-8173-5630-9

Not long ago I happened upon a book that tackled a topic rarely discussed or talked about. That is the economic and social conditions in the south immediately following the Civil War. It seems that just after the Army of Tennessee surrendered in April 1865 a newly formed New York newspaper "The Nation" sent a reporter John Richard Dennett into the defeated south to report on the economic and social conditions there

and to send a weekly report back to New York describing these conditions. This new newspaper, “The Nation” was a continuation of several abolitionist newspapers who because of emancipation were shortly to cease publication. The “Liberator”, and “The National Anti-Slavery Standard” were formed into one newspaper, investors were found, among them were Fredrick Law Olmsted and Henry James and an editor, E.L. Godkin was hired to run the new newspaper which set up offices on Nassau St. in New York City. Godkin hired a recent Harvard graduate, John Richard Dennett, to do the legwork. He was to be paid a salary of \$150.00 a month to travel throughout the south and send back a weekly report on conditions there. Dennett was Canadian born but his family emigrated to New York City when he was two. He entered Harvard and became known for his literary talents among which was editor of the “Harvard Magazine”. His reports were to be sent to “The Nation” which was putting together a series called “The South As It Is” and would answer such questions as “Were southern whites able to accept the results of the war? Had the rebels truly been subjugated? What would become of the four million slaves recently emancipated? Would they be able to care for themselves or would they require federal-government assistance? For nine months John Dennett was to travel the former Confederacy and wire back answers to these and other questions. The compilation of his reports make fascinating reading.

Dennett took a steamer from New York to Norfolk, Virginia and his first article published under the headline “The South as It Is” appeared in July 1865. It would be the first of many he would send back describing life in the defeated Confederacy. During the next nine months he traveled throughout the south visiting such cities as Norfolk, Richmond, Lynchburg, Greensboro, and Augusta. He would visit Port Royal and report on the Sea Island Experiment before moving on to Atlanta, Montgomery, Mobile, New Orleans, Houston and, nine months after beginning his reports, he wired his last two installments from Boston to New York.

After returning to New York, Dennett was admitted to the Bar and continued to work for “The Nation”. However, he continued to suffer from consumption or T.B. He died less than ten years after his sojourn into the defeated south at the age of thirty-six in 1874. His accounts nevertheless portray an accurate picture of what life was like in the South shortly after the Civil War. After reading his book it was easy for me to understand why the ramifications of the Civil War both in racial attitudes, many of which still plague us today, and industrial development in the south lagged the rest of the nation well into the 1970s and many even to the present.

So what did John Dennett find on his fact finding mission into what was left of the southern states in 1865? Here are a few of the quotes from his book that I have found very prophetic:

“He had come to the South optimistic that white Southerners were willing to accept the results of the war and that African Americans might soon reap all the glories of freedom. While touring Virginia in the summer of 1865 he encountered former rebels willing to concede defeat, and in North Carolina he was pleasantly surprised by the intensity of Unionist sentiment. But as he travelled deeper into the South, his hopes faded. He increasingly found unapologetic Confederates who had been encouraged by President Johnson’s lenient policies and he frequently cited the virulent animosity white Southerners directed toward Freedmen’s Bureau officers, Northerners in general and the United States government. By April 1866, he concluded that “I could not see that as regards loyalty, the South was different in any important respect from what it was during the war”

Upon approaching Baton Rouge, Louisiana he writes “Baton Rouge came into sight long before I reached it, the city being situated on a considerable hill, and the glaring white towers of two large buildings, the asylum and the capitol, being visible far off. The latter building is ruined, (the Louisiana State House was burned early on in the War by the U.S. Navy) and I am told that the finest part of the city was also destroyed during the late war. Certainly, what remains is not fine.”

Attitudes among Southerners differed however, while in New Orleans Dennett reported, “ Every one of their soldiers will tell you- I hear it said almost every day-that he is tired of fighting, that he has taken the

oath of allegiance, and that he means to keep it, and to be a good citizen; and when they tell me this I believe them.”

While in Macon, Georgia however Dennett talked to the occupying troops and heard such things as: “Officers on duty in this city tell me that some of the women still carefully gather up the folds of their dresses when they approach a man in the Federal uniform and prefer to cross the street to walking under the national flag. “Some of what he observed was truly heartbreaking, such things as, “I remember in Louisiana, I met men and women who since the war had made long journeys in order to see their parents or children. I dare say there must have been thousands of such cases. I met men plodding along Virginia and North Carolina roads who had come from distant parts of those States, or from distant States, seeking work or looking for relations. One man I remember had walked from Georgia in the hope of finding at Salisbury a wife from whom he had been separated years before by sale.

Dennett found that attitudes varied among the defeated rebels but one of the overwhelming questions plaguing southern society was the prospect of “will we be ruled by Negroes?” Not how will we repair the infrastructure, not how will we repair the railroads, bridges, telegraph lines, roads and the burned out cities but “will we be ruled by Negroes”? Most southerners seemed to be obsessed by this question and after reading this book it is easy for one in the twenty first century to see why racial attitudes have been so long in changing. I personally believe some of that toxic mindset is still present.

John Dennett emerges as one of the unsung heroes of the early reconstruction. He, even after being dead for one hundred- fifty years sheds light on why our country has had such a hard time realizing racial justice, how we got here, and how much we have to correct.

This book with a text exclusive of notes of 370 pages was very easy to read, and as stated above very informative. I enjoyed reading it and would highly recommend it to anyone studying Reconstruction and the early aftermath of the Civil War. I believe it is still in print and can be ordered through Amazon or Abe Books or, of course, at one’s favorite bookstore.

--Paul Siedel



April 9, 1865