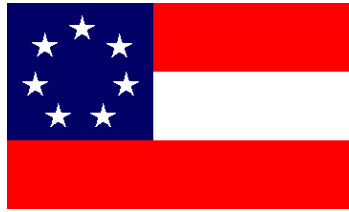
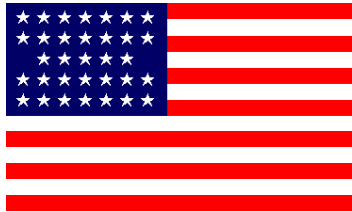


CIVIL WAR AUTHOR WALTER COFFEY

OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



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FROM THE AUTHOR

The first month of 2009 is already gone. Most of the country is suffering through bitter cold, while many people are suffering from economic hardship. Our thoughts and prayers go out to those less fortunate; let us move forward with the resolve to overcome our obstacles with the fighting American spirit that made this country so strong.

As for me, I've begun work on my fourth Civil War novel featuring Union operative J.B. Carver. The working title is *The Confederate Trust*. It involves a secret organization funding the Confederate war effort that is based in New Orleans. When a Southern spy is caught trying to steal

Union naval maps from the War Department, Carver is sent to the Deep South to find out what is being planned. He soon learns that events in New Orleans are much more complex and dangerous than anything he had imagined.

I'm finishing the outline now and hope to have a first draft completed by the end of April. In the coming months I'll keep you posted on my progress and provide sample chapters and teasers. I won't announce a completion date yet because I don't want to jinx my timetable, so stay tuned for more information!

FEBRUARY 1861: THE CONFEDERACY IS BORN



The original Confederate Cabinet created at Montgomery in February 1861. From L to R: Judah Benjamin (Attorney General), Stephen Mallory (Navy), Christopher Memminger (Treasury), Alexander Stephens (Vice President), LeRoy Pope Walker (War), Jefferson Davis (President), John H. Reagan (Postmaster) and Robert Toombs (State).

Tension, confusion and frustration swept across America as February 1861 began. Nobody had a clear idea of what was happening because it had never happened before. Could states actually secede from the Union? Some believed it was the constitutional right of any state to break away at any time. Others argued that secession was illegal because the Union was indivisible. Some thought that secession was still just blustery talk and the Southern states would eventually return. Others were glad to see them go. And still others scrambled to come up with a compromise that would save the Union.

This month Texas became the seventh state to secede. U.S. arsenals were seized and Brevet Major General David Twiggs surrendered military posts to the state militia, which many in Washington regarded as an act of treason. Texas delegates joined the other six seceded states at a convention in Montgomery, Alabama to create the Confederate States of America. A provisional constitution was unanimously adopted; it was similar to the U.S. Constitution except that slavery and state

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sovereignty were strongly protected. Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, a former U.S. senator and secretary of war, was selected to become the first provisional president of the Confederacy.

On February 11, two presidents left their homes for their respective national capitals. Jefferson Davis left his Briarfield Plantation in Mississippi for Montgomery, arriving at the provisional Confederate capital on February 16. On February 18, Davis was inaugurated as president, sparking joyous celebrations in the South as marching bands played "Dixie." Meanwhile, after delivering a farewell address to the people of his home town, U.S. President-elect Abraham Lincoln left Springfield, Illinois en route to Washington, DC.

Lincoln made many stops along the way to the capital, which he used to deliver speeches attempting to calm the fanaticism that was sweeping across both North and South. In Pittsburgh, Lincoln declared, "There is really no crisis except for an artificial one!" In Columbus, he stated, "I think that there is no occasion for any excitement." Nearly a quarter of a million people gathered in New York City to greet Lincoln. Then he spoke at Independence Hall in Philadelphia before preparing to finish his journey to Washington. But then trouble came.

To get to Washington, Lincoln's train had to pass through Baltimore, an intensely pro-Southern city. Word spread among those traveling with the president-elect that he would be targeted for assassination if he came to Baltimore. To thwart conspirators, Lincoln traveled with his bodyguards

through the city in the dark of night, arriving in Washington at 6:00 a.m. on February 23. Lincoln was widely criticized for this secret arrival, as many believed it was a sheepish beginning for the incoming president.

In Washington, a Peace Convention had been discussing compromise throughout the month. Although no seceded states participated, the convention was led by Southerner and former President John Tyler. The convention adjourned on February 27 after submitting its proposals to Congress; these amounted to calling for six constitutional amendments protecting slavery in the South and outlawing it in the North. Nobody seemed satisfied with the convention's proposals and none were acted upon by Congress.

And all the while, U.S. troops remained isolated at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. President James Buchanan, who had stated he could do virtually nothing to stop secession, declared that the fort would not be surrendered. Now all both sides could do was wait.

The fanatics who cried for separation between North and South appeared to be winning as February ended. While the Buchanan administration did nothing, Southerners gained confidence and pride in their newly formed country. As the South edged closer to independence, those in the North held their breath as President-elect Lincoln prepared to take office and address the crisis.

U.S. HISTORY:

ALLIANCE WITH FRANCE ASSURES U.S. INDEPENDENCE



-- Benjamin Franklin, one of the greatest statesmen in U.S. history. His signature appears on four of the nation's most important documents: the 1776 Declaration of Independence from Great Britain, the 1778 Treaty of Alliance with France, the 1783 Treaty of Paris ending the War for Independence, and the United States Constitution in 1789.

Officials of the United States and France signed the Treaty of Alliance in Paris on February 6, 1778. The U.S. diplomats who helped secure this agreement were Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane and Arthur Lee. The treaty pledged France to aid the U.S. in its war for independence from Great Britain. This also stated that peace could not be negotiated with Britain until U.S. independence was secured, and that neither France nor the U.S. could negotiate a peace with Britain without consent of the other.

The main purpose of the treaty was to provide for direct French intervention in the war between the U.S. and Britain. Following the U.S. military victory at Saratoga, French leaders were convinced that the U.S. could win the war and were thus more eager to oppose Britain. This

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treaty escalated the war in America into a world war, as Spain and the Netherlands later allied with France against Britain. Within three years, the British were fighting in America, the Mediterranean, India, Africa, the West Indies and on the high seas, all the while facing a potential French invasion.

Many scholars agree that the Treaty of Alliance damaged the French economy and was one of the many causes of popular unrest that led to the French Revolution of 1789. The treaty was officially terminated 10 years later when the U.S. and France were on the brink of war. This was the first and only

formal military alliance made by the U.S. until the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, 171 years later.

In America, the French assistance to the U.S. cause gave Americans a tremendous financial and psychological advantage that would later lead to the ultimate defeat of British rule. This treaty did much to ensure U.S. independence and was one of the most important military alliances in U.S. history.

BOOK REVIEW:

***THE WIDOW OF THE SOUTH* by Robert Hicks**

Robert Hicks's big historical first novel, based on true events in his hometown, follows the saga of Carrie McGavock, a lonely Confederate wife who finds purpose transforming her Tennessee plantation into a hospital and cemetery during the Civil War. Carrie is mourning the death of several of her children, and, in the absence of her husband, has left the care of her house to her capable Creole slave Mariah. Before the 1864 Battle of Franklin, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest commandeers her house as a field hospital.

In alternating points of view, the battle is recounted by different witnesses, including Union Lieutenant Nathan Stiles, who watches waves of rebels shot dead, and Confederate Sergeant Zachariah Cashwell, who loses a leg. By the end of

the battle, 9,000 soldiers have perished, and thousands of Confederates are buried in a field near the McGavock plantation. Zachariah ends up in Carrie's care at the makeshift hospital, and their rather chaste love forms the emotional pulse of the novel, while Carrie fights to relocate the buried soldiers when her wealthy neighbor threatens to plow up the field after the war. Valiantly, Hicks returns to small, human stories in the midst of an epic catastrophe. Though occasionally overwrought, this impressively researched novel will fascinate aficionados.

Review courtesy of *Publisher's Weekly*. This book is available at www.amazon.com.