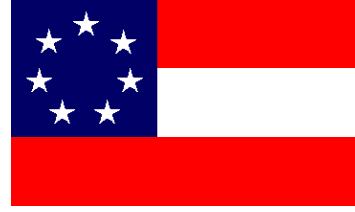
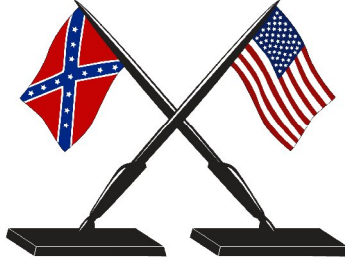
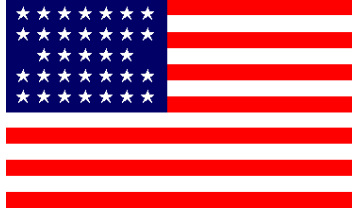


WALTER COFFEY



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FROM THE AUTHOR

Greetings from my writing cave in Houston, Texas. I'm been busy updating my website and this newsletter with my new logo – it took a few drafts to get it right. I almost published the first draft before realizing that the U.S. flag had 50 stars on it while the flag had only 34 stars when the Civil War began!

Some have asked me what kind of books I like to read. This month I'm reading *The Tragic Era*, a non-fiction historical account of Reconstruction by Claude Bowers. It was written in 1929 and the author was no doubt pro-Southern, which gives it a rather different point of view than what's being written today. I think it's important to try to read as many alternate views of historical events as possible to get as complete a perspective as possible.

I've also read *The Real Lincoln* by Thomas DiLorenzo, and a review of that book is in this newsletter. This gives a

fascinating alternative view of Abraham Lincoln. In terms of what our nation's founders intended, DiLorenzo makes a strong argument that Lincoln did much to centralize power in Washington, which is exactly what the founders wanted to prevent after driving the British out of America. Reading this book prompted me to go back and re-read the U.S. Constitution to see exactly how the laws of our land are written. Very interesting material considering the current political climate in which we live.

Regarding my new novel, I've begun the second draft of *The Confederate Trust*. I hit a writer's block in mid-March but I'm trying to fight through it and I now have the outline completed. It will most likely change as I write, after all, the book is the boss, but at least I have a good roadmap for my journey to its completion.

Stay tuned for more to come...

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APRIL 1861: THE WAR BEGINS

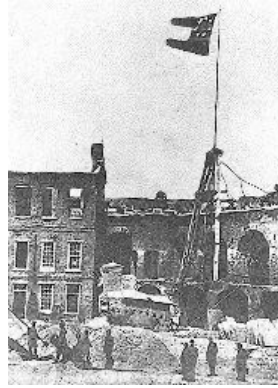
April 1861 began with tense anticipation. The United States had split into two nations, and nobody knew what to do because it had never happened before. Many were afraid that a crisis would force a decision as to whether the nations would reunite or remain separate. While state forces were driving federal troops out of various Southern military bases, there were still federal troops stationed in certain areas such as Fort Pickens in Florida and Fort Sumter in South Carolina. Would driving these troops out spark a war? And would more states secede?

In Washington, President Abraham Lincoln had to organize a new federal government controlled by a new Republican Party. He also had to contend with his Cabinet, which consisted of powerful and ambitious men, many of whom believed they were better qualified to handle the crisis than Lincoln. Secretary of State William Seward offered suggestions as to how Lincoln should preside, including proposing that Seward become a sort of Prime Minister to handle the crisis. Lincoln rejected Seward's bold recommendations and declared that he alone would set administration policy.

As part of this policy, Lincoln decided to supply the federal troops in Fort Sumter with food and clothing but no war materiel, thus posing less of a threat to the Confederates. Lincoln also made it clear that the Confederacy would not be recognized as a separate nation, as he believed the Union was indivisible and thus secession was illegal. As Lincoln ordered supply ships to head to Fort Sumter, many held their breath and waited for the Southern response.

In Charleston Harbor, Southerners prepared for war as General Pierre Beauregard demanded that Major Robert Anderson surrender his federal garrison at Fort Sumter. When Anderson refused, Beauregard ordered the batteries to open fire. At 4:30 on the morning of April 12, the first shot was fired and the Civil War begun.

The federal troops in the fort were hopelessly outnumbered by the Confederates firing at them from Charleston. Cannon pounded the fort for 34 consecutive hours with little response. When the cannon drove off the supply ships sent by Lincoln, Major Anderson knew that further resistance was futile. On April 13, he surrendered the fort to the Confederacy. General Beauregard allowed Anderson's men to perform a 50-gun salute to their flag before lowering it. During the salute a



-- Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. The Confederate flag was raised over the fort after the Federal troops under Major Robert Anderson surrendered, beginning the Civil War.

private was killed by an exploding magazine, becoming the first fatality of the war.

News of the fort's surrender spread like wildfire throughout North and South. Southerners held massive celebrations while Northerners were outraged. President Lincoln proclaimed a state of insurrection existed and called for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion. Confederate President Jefferson Davis called Lincoln's proclamation a "declaration of war."

Lincoln's proclamation also prompted fury in Virginia. The legislature believed the call was an affront and voted to secede from the Union. This deprived the Union of the services of Colonel Robert E. Lee, a loyal Virginian. Lee had been offered command of the Union Army, but when Virginia seceded Lee declared that he could not raise his sword against his home state.

In Maryland, secessionists met in Baltimore to discuss whether Maryland should secede. This greatly alarmed the Lincoln administration because if Maryland seceded, Washington would then be surrounded by Confederate states. Meanwhile volunteers from other Northern states began heading for Washington, and in so doing, they had to travel through Maryland. On April 19, a riot erupted in Baltimore when Massachusetts troops fired into protestors hurling rocks and bricks at them. At least 13 were killed and Maryland was on the verge of rebellion.

The Baltimore riot stopped the flow of federal troops to Washington, and while waiting for troops to arrive via a roundabout river route, Washington was vulnerable to

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Southern invasion. In the capital, Southerners were resigning from government jobs in droves, and many remained in the city where they could pose as spies or saboteurs. Military men were resigning their posts and going South as well. But there was reason for optimism when the Maryland legislature voted to remain in the Union. This was vital in keeping Washington secure.

A major initiative begun by the Lincoln administration this month was imposing a naval blockade on Southern ports until the insurrection ended. Although this was not immediately effective, the blockade became a vital war tool against the Southern economy. Federal troops also reinforced Fort Pickens in Florida, keeping it out of Southern hands. This made the fort a constant threat to the South on the Gulf Coast.

Meanwhile throughout the month on both sides, editorials

blared the call to arms, people gathered to sing patriotic songs and hear flamboyant speakers, women made clothing and blankets for the new volunteers, communities took up collections to care for families without their men, and churches, schools and other organizations helped in any way they could. The New York Yacht Club offered their yachts to help the Southern blockade.

Still it was hard to comprehend that civil war had actually begun. There was still uncertainty and vague hope for peace, but for the most part people were exhilarated by the war spirit, by the excitement, by the thrill of the conflict and being a part of history. Both sides believed that this would be a very short war. The grim reality would come later.

U.S. HISTORY: SEVENTEENTH AMENDMENT IS RATIFIED



*-- The U.S. Capitol,
Washington, DC*

On April 8, 1913, the Seventeenth Amendment was ratified and became part of the United States Constitution. This allowed people to directly elect their U.S. senators to Congress; previously senators had been elected by their state legislatures. The amendment also empowered the state governor, if authorized by his legislature, to appoint a senator in case of a Senate vacancy until an election can be held.

In framing the Constitution, the nation's founders intended to create a system of government checks and balances on the state and federal levels. As such, the three political groups of government – the House of Representatives, the Senate and the Presidency – were assigned three different electoral processes: Representatives were to be elected by popular vote, senators were to be elected by the state legislatures, and the president was to be elected by the Electoral College.

Initially senators were expected to concentrate more on

government business without direct pressure from the people, thus senators were granted longer terms (six years) than representatives (two years). The House was expected to be directly responsive to the people while the Senate was meant to be a more deliberative body. Electing senators through state legislatures checked and balanced the federalist system of government that the founders envisioned for America.

However people began voicing displeasure with the process beginning in the 1850s. As the Civil War loomed on the horizon, animosities in many state legislatures caused deadlocks in senatorial elections, with some states taking several years at a time to fill vacant seats. Accusations of bribery and corruption in electing senators were frequent. Between 1866 and 1906, there were nine charges of bribery and 45 deadlocks in 20 states regarding senatorial elections.

The movement to directly elect senators garnered popular support in the 1890s when the Populist Party, one of the most successful third parties in U.S. history, included direct senatorial election in its party platform. By the beginning of the 20th century, many states had laws enabling people to vote for their senators in either party primaries or nominating conventions, with the legislatures pledging to elect the winning candidates. By 1912, at least 29 states were already allowing for direct

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senatorial election in some form.

The amendment was approved in the Senate in 1911, mainly because most Senators were in their first term and had been popularly elected in their various states. Southern and Eastern Senators generally opposed the measure. The amendment moved to the House where it was argued and finally passed in the summer of 1912. It was then sent to the states for ratification. On April 8, 1913, the Connecticut state legislature ratified the amendment, giving it the necessary three-fourths of state approval to become part of the Constitution. Since the 66th U.S. Congress in 1919, all senators have been popularly elected.

In 2009, the amendment became part of media focus when the governors of Illinois and New York made controversial appointments to the Senate to fill the vacant seats of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. Senators such as Russ Feingold, John McCain and Richard Durbin have proposed that the amendment be revised so that vacant seats could only be filled by special election. Since the amendment's ratification, there have been many critics calling for either revision or repeal.

Many critics argue that directly electing senators damages the federalist structure of American government created by the founders. By taking the power away from the state legislatures, it takes away an important check on federal power previously reserved by the states. Senators are now more vulnerable to corrupting influence by national special interest groups who can focus their attention on Washington alone without having to spread out among all the state legislatures. Critics claim that this amendment, along with the Sixteenth Amendment providing for federal income taxes, expanded the power of the federal government beyond the scope provided in the original version of the Constitution. Professor Thomas DiLorenzo stated that this amendment "was one of the last nails to be pounded into the coffin of federalism in America." Some believe that this amendment has helped to centralize power in Washington, which is exactly what the founders hoped to prevent after breaking away from the centralized power of Great Britain.

BOOK REVIEW:

***THE REAL LINCOLN* by Thomas DiLorenzo**

If there are any sacred cows in America, the one at the head of the herd has got to be Abraham Lincoln. Our culture gleefully vilifies almost everyone. Psycho-biographies, in which the darkest interior rooms of the subject are exposed to light, are the rage these days. But somehow Lincoln for the most part has managed to escape all this. He's still the great American hero, venerated by layperson and scholar alike, sometimes to the point of embarrassing hagiography.

Thomas DiLorenzo refuses to genuflect before Lincoln's altar. In *The Real Lincoln*, a book that's guaranteed to infuriate a wide audience, ranging from Civil War buffs to Lincoln scholars to African-Americans to political liberals to history traditionalists, DiLorenzo claims that Lincoln's real historical legacy is the strong centralized state that characterizes the American political system today. From first to last, claims DiLorenzo, Lincoln's political vision was the creation of a Whiggish empire of protectionist tariffs, government subsidized railroads, and nationalization of the money supply. In the first year and a half of his administration, he pushed through much of this agenda. The average tariff rate tripled, railroads began raking in

government money (a "war necessity"), and the National Currency Acts monopolized the money supply.

So far none of this is terribly alarming. Even admirers of Lincoln will admit much of what DiLorenzo says about Lincoln's economic dream and Whig leanings. But where DiLorenzo begins to stir up a storm is when he claims (1) that Lincoln basically allowed an unnecessary and horribly bloody war to occur in order to further his political vision of a strong state; (2) Lincoln was a "constitutional dictator"; and (3) Lincoln was never terribly concerned with slavery as a moral injustice.

In reference to the first point, DiLorenzo points out that the right to secession was simply taken for granted by most Americans prior to Lincoln's administration because they saw the country as a voluntary association of states. Lincoln didn't "save" the Union so much as he destroyed it as a voluntary association. In reference to the second point, DiLorenzo provides example after example of Lincoln's disregard – supposedly in the interests of the state – for the Constitution: launching a military invasion

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without Congressional consent; suspension of habeas corpus; censorship of newspapers; meddling with elections; confiscating private property; and so on. Finally, in reference to the last point – which is probably the book’s most inflammatory one – DiLorenzo argues that Lincoln rarely mentioned the issue of slavery in political speeches until it became politically expedient to begin doing so. His opposition to slavery was always based on what he feared was its economic dangers, not on moral principle. As his contemporaries accurately noted, Lincoln the “Great Emancipator” was never an abolitionist. Even after the Emancipation Proclamation, he was willing to tolerate slaveholding in non-secessionist states. His ultimate solution – one that infuriated abolitionists such as Horace Greeley –

was to colonize American blacks “back” to Africa or the Caribbean.

Much of DiLorenzo’s claims about Lincoln’s activities will be familiar. What’s new about the book is the overall unfavorable portrait of Lincoln that emerges as DiLorenzo discusses them. It may be the case that DiLorenzo has swung too far in the opposite direction from conventional Lincoln hagiography. But it may also be the case that his book will encourage more moderate and accurate portrayals of Lincoln in the future. One can admire Lincoln without worshipping him.

Review courtesy of Kerry Walters at www.amazon.com.