



A Rebel War Clerk's Diary: At the Confederate States Capital, Volume 1: April 1861-July 1863 (Modern War Studies)

J. B. Jones

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Amidst the vast literature of the Civil War, one of the most significant and enlightening documents remains largely unknown. A day-by-day, uninterrupted, four-year chronicle by a mature, keenly observant clerk in the War Department of the Confederacy, the wartime diary of John Beauchamp Jones was first published in two volumes of small type in 1866. Over the years, the diary was republished three more times—but never with an index or an editorial apparatus to guide a reader through the extraordinary mass of information it contained. Published here with an authoritative editorial framework, including an extensive introduction and endnotes, this unique record of the Civil War takes its rightful place as one of the best basic reference tools in Civil War history, absolutely critical to study the Confederacy.

A Maryland journalist/novelist who went south at the outbreak of the war, Jones took a job as a senior clerk in the Confederate War Department, where he remained to the end, a constant observer of men and events in Richmond, the heart of the Confederacy and the principal target of Union military might. As a high-level clerk at the center of military planning, Jones had an extraordinary perspective on the Southern nation in action—and nothing escaped his attention. Confidential files, command-level conversations, official correspondence, revelations, rumors, statistics, weather reports, and personal opinions: all manner of material, found nowhere else in Civil War literature, made its meticulous way into the diary. Jones quotes scores of dispatches and reports by both military and civilian authorities, including letters from Robert E. Lee never printed elsewhere, providing an invaluable record of documents that would later find their way into print only in edited form. His notes on such ephemera as weather and prices create a backdrop for the military movements and political maneuverings he describes, all with the judicious eye of a seasoned writer and observer of southern life.

James I. Robertson, Jr., provides introductions to each volume, over 2,700 endnotes that identify, clarify, and expand on Jones's material, and a first ever index which makes Jones's unique insights and observations accessible to interested readers, who will find in the pages of *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary* one of the most complete and richly textured accounts of the Civil War ever to be composed at the very heart of the Confederacy.

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