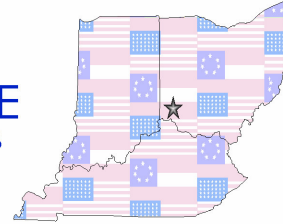




CINCINNATI
CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
SERVING OHIO, KENTUCKY AND INDIANA SINCE 1956



Book Review by Thomas L. Breiner

Dissonance: The Turbulent Days between Fort Sumter and Bull Run by David Detzer. Harcourt Books Inc. Orlando, FL, 2006. 371 pages, Hard cover \$27.00.

Dissonance: The Turbulent Days between Fort Sumter and Bull Run by David Detzer is a detailed look at the opening weeks of the Civil War. The author, through the use of diaries, letters and newspaper accounts, examines the significant events during what may have been the most crucial period of the war for both sides as they move from a peace time status to a war footing. It was a situation that no one on either side really understood.

During these critical weeks, Washington, D.C. was briefly cut off from the rest of the North. If the Confederacy has captured the Union capital, Great Britain and France might have recognized the Confederacy and possibly formed an alliance. This work devotes much of the time analyzing the several events: Henry Wise's conspiracy to take Virginia out of the Union and the capture of Harpers Ferry, the mob violence in Baltimore, MD as the Sixth Massachusetts is attacked by the citizens of that city, the Confederate take over of the Gosport Navy Yard, the struggle as the Seventh New York and Eight Massachusetts attempt to reach Washington through Annapolis and finally the importance of a slave named Luke.

The author's analyzes the question could the Confederacy have attacked and captured Washington, D.C. during the period April 23rd and April 25th of 1861. His insights and comments were extremely interesting and very thought provoking. David Detzer looks at the numbers of troops available, where they could be found, how would they be transported, and most important, who would command this campaign. The possibilities included, Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, P. G. T. Beauregard and Ben McCulloch.

I found this work to be extremely well research and written. The author has show a true ability to get to the heart of a question and give the read the information necessary to form their own opinion of how the events that shaped the early days of the war may have played out. He investigates what incentive was offered to keep Robert E. Lee in the Union army. Was Lee the obvious choice to lead the Virginia militia or may have Joe Johnston really have been the first choice of Virginia Governor Letcher?

This book is must reading for those that want to rethink the understanding of the early days of the Civil War. The approach is different and refreshing. David Detzer and now contributed three quality works concerning Civil War. His earlier works include *Allegiance: Fort Sumter, Charleston, and the Beginning of the Civil War* and *Donnybrook: The Battle of Bull Run, 1861*. Now, he has filled in the gap between the two and has done it extremely well.