



The Lost Papers of Confederate General John Bell Hood

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Scholars hail Confederate General John Bell Hood's personal papers as "the most important discovery in Civil War scholarship in the last half century." This invaluable cache includes documents relating to Hood's U.S. Army service, Civil War career, and postwar life. It includes letters from Confederate and Union officers, unpublished battle reports, detailed medical reports relating to Hood's two major wounds, and dozens of letters exchanged between Hood and his wife Anna. This treasure trove is being made available for the first time for both professional and amateur Civil War historians in *The Lost Papers of Confederate General John Bell Hood*, edited and annotated by award-winning author Stephen M. Hood.

The historical community long believed General Hood's papers were lost or destroyed, and numerous books and articles were written about him without the benefit of these invaluable documents. In fact, the papers had been carefully preserved for generations by Hood's descendants. In 2012, collateral descendent Stephen Hood was given access to these papers as part of his research for his book *John Bell Hood: The Rise, Fall, and Resurrection of a Confederate General* (Savas Beatie, 2013).

This 200+ document collection sheds important light on some of the war's lingering mysteries and controversies. For example, letters from Confederate officers help explain Hood's failure to entrap Schofield's Union army at Spring Hill, Tennessee, on November 29, 1864. Another letter by Lt. Gen. Stephen D. Lee helps to explain Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne's gallant but reckless conduct that resulted in his death at Franklin. Lee also lodges serious allegations against Confederate Maj. Gen. William Bate's troops. Other papers explain, for the first time, the purpose and intent behind Hood's "controversial" memoir *Advance and Retreat*, and validate its contents. While these and others offer a military perspective of Hood the general, the revealing letters between he and Anna, his beloved and devoted wife, help us better understand Hood the man and husband.

Historians and other writers have spent generations speculating about Hood's motives, beliefs, actions, and objectives and the result has not always been flattering or even fully honest. Now, long-believed "lost" firsthand accounts previously unavailable offer insights into the character, personality, and military operations of John Bell Hood the general, husband, and father.

REVIEWS

By locating, editing, and publishing *The Lost Papers of Confederate General John Bell Hood*, Sam Hood has made an immense contribution to the history of the Civil War. General Hood may be perhaps the most misunderstood of the eight full generals of the Confederacy, and these vastly important documents fill in many of the blanks in the historical record. No Civil War collection will be complete without this book.

- Winston Groom, author of *Forrest Gump* and *Shrouds of Glory: From Atlanta to Nashville: The Last Great Campaign of the Civil War*

"New Civil War era papers are found each day, but none will have the impact of General Hood's private papers. We now know what was important to Hood, what he was working on, his relationships with political

and military notables, and who he was as a citizen, husband, and father. Detailed medical reports for his Gettysburg and Chickamauga wounds reveal much about his physical condition — the subject of endless speculation — and letters from prominent Confederate officers shed fresh light on the dramatic events in Tennessee in late 1864. Given the major revelations in these papers, Hood's memoir, *Advance and Retreat*, deserve a new look. What a great Sesquicentennial gift to the history of the American Civil War!"

- Len Riedel, Executive Director, Blue and Gray Education Society

"Few personalities in the Civil War are more intriguing and captivating than John Bell Hood, yet he remains clouded by characterizations made of him by historians who were convinced there was no documentary proof to question what they wrote. That has changed! These newly found documents by and about John Bell Hood provide an entirely new picture of the gallant general and his relationships with other Confederate commanders and his wife Anna. Here also are the remarkable reports of Hood's very capable surgeon, John T. Darby, describing in intricate detail his Gettysburg and Chickamauga wounds, the operations, the recuperations, and the effects of all of that upon Hood, all written by the one person most qualified to so testify. Finally, we see the real John Bell Hood, and he is a wonder to behold!"

- Kent Masterson Brown, author of *Retreat From Gettysburg: Lee, Logistics and the Pennsylvania Campaign*

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