



The Lost Papers of Confederate General John Bell Hood

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Scholars hail the find as “the most important discovery in Civil War scholarship in the last half century.” The invaluable cache of Confederate General John Bell Hood’s personal papers includes wartime and postwar letters from comrades, subordinates, former enemies and friends, exhaustive medical reports relating to Hood’s two major wounds, and dozens of touching letters exchanged between Hood and his wife, Anna. This treasure trove of information is being made available for the first time for both professional and amateur Civil War historians in Stephen “Sam” Hood’s *The Lost Papers of Confederate General John Bell 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 were carefully held for generations by a succession of Hood’s descendants, and in the autumn of 2012 transcribed by collateral descendent Sam Hood as part of his research for his book *John Bell Hood: The Rise, Fall, and Resurrection of a Confederate General* (Savas Beatie, 2013.)

This collection offers more than 200 documents. While each is a valuable piece of history, some shed important light on some of the war’s lingering mysteries and controversies. For example, several letters from multiple Confederate officers may finally explain the Confederate failure to capture or destroy Schofield’s Union army at Spring Hill, Tennessee, on the night of November 29, 1864. Another letter by Lt. Gen. Stephen D. Lee goes a long way toward explaining Confederate 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. While these and others offer a military perspective of Hood the general, the revealing letters between he and his beloved and devoted wife, Anna, help us better understand Hood the man and husband.

Historians and other writers have spent generations speculating about Hood’s motives, beliefs, 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.

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