

## Book Reviews

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*Henry Watterson: Reconstructed Rebel.* By Joseph Frazier Wall. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956. Pp. xvi, 337. Notes and index. \$6.00.)

One of the last two ferries to shuttle the Ohio between Louisville, Kentucky, and Jeffersonville, Indiana, was the "Henry Watterson"—so named, in the words of its co-owner, "because both were symbols in the effort to unite the North and the South." Appropriately, the bottle of water that launched this boat was a blend from wells on both sides of the dividing line—from Mansfield, "Marse Henry's" estate, and from Captain James E. Howard's mansion near Jeffersonville, whence three generations of Howards also had helped link the North and South by building over four hundred steamboats.

This biography of the legendary editor of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*—which for fifty-three years (1868-1921) served as a diary of this reconstructed rebel's struggle to reconcile first the North and the South, and then the Democratic party—should be of particular interest to Hoosiers.

As Irvin S. Cobb reminded us a generation ago in a "guyed book" to Indiana, "There is a good deal of the Southerner in the composition of the typical Hoosier." To this day, some profess that a more realistic Mason-Dixon Line (than its projection down the Ohio) slices Indiana along an approximation of U.S. Route 40. Certainly, during the Civil War, in the Copperhead country of Indiana below the National Road, countless Hoosiers would have understood why young Watterson's loyalty to the South outweighed his love for the Union and his hatred of slavery.

Soon after stillness settled on the battlefields, the editor of the newspaper most widely read among Confederate troops (*The Rebel*) came to Louisville. And thus, long before the present rulers of the *Courier-Journal* coined the word "Kentuckiana" by which to lay claim to a vast circulation empire across the river, Indiana found itself bounded on the south by one Henry Watterson.

From the border of the great cataclysm, the young editor (only 28) began preaching reconciliation through his

rhythmic writing. As in the case of the New Albany citizen who at an earlier time had written in his diary that he believed only in the Bible and Horace Greeley's weekly *Tribune*—and if the two should disagree, he would stick with Greeley—a cult of avid believers in Watterson soon sprang up.

Of course, lest this reviewer be misunderstood, Watterson did not direct his words and thoughts only to Indianians. (Indiana merits mention only a few times in this book.) But by Watterson's very proximity to Indiana, his pen undoubtedly prevailed upon many Hoosiers who not long before had been on the brink of succumbing to the temptations of the plotted Northwest Confederacy.

Through his pre-Reconstruction writing, Watterson tried to bring to those who had hated Lincoln a true appreciation of the greatness and benevolence of the martyr who had lived his formative years in Kentucky and in Indiana, and an understanding of the miseries wrought upon the South by his murder.

He pounded away bluntly at the government in Washington to release the South from military rule until, in 1877, after the Tilden-Hayes decision, the troops were recalled.

Dr. Wall's chapters "To Victory with Tilden" and "On to Defeat" are among the very best in the book and detail the role played by Watterson and his paper in making the governor of New York acceptable to Democrats in both North and South, as well as his efforts to prevent the "Crime of '76." The *Courier-Journal* was the first to fly proudly from the top of its mast the pennant of the "hero" Watterson discovered. The selection of Watterson as chairman of the nominating convention assured Tilden's nomination, and "the press of the country, both Republican and Democratic, hailed the selection of Watterson as a fitting tribute to a man who . . . 'has worked harder for peace and order at the South, and for honest money, as against the Greenback delusion, than any other journalist in his party.'"

As a consolation prize for the Middle West, writes Dr. Wall, Governor Thomas A. Hendricks of Indiana was given second place on the ticket. By the well-known 8-7 decision of the special commission, Tilden and Hendricks lost—but in defeat Watterson had triumphed. As Dr. Wall states: "With the expiration of the Forty-fourth Congress . . . Watterson could return home from his only venture into officeholding

knowing that officially the reconciliation of the sections had been achieved."

Four more decades of a volatile career still lay ahead for Watterson, one of the last "personal journalists." His pungent phrases darted through his editorials until they became a part of the American language. He spoke with one of the most influential voices of his party, yet quarrelled with all its great leaders—Grover Cleveland, William Jennings Bryan, Woodrow Wilson. Nearing the climax of his fiery career, but still spry in mind and sharp of tongue, he consigned the kaiser of Germany and the emperor of Austria-Hungary to the nether regions with the best-remembered, and possibly most characteristic, Watterson words: "To Hell with the Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs."

The new biographer of Watterson chose to study "Marse Henry" at the suggestion of Arthur Krock (formerly of the *Courier-Journal*), and worked with Allan Nevins of Columbia in writing his re-evaluation of the great editor for his 1951 doctoral dissertation. The finished product is a tribute to both the subject and the writer.

The late Alben W. Barkley, who wrote the introduction, found in Watterson and this book "a charming chapter in the story of American democracy."

We who have toiled on the latter-day *Courier-Journal* could not escape feeling that Henry Watterson "is always a shadow behind your chair." Reading of the "Reconstructed Rebel" gives substance to that shadow. No doubt about it, "Henry Watterson was the last of his tribe."

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*Lincoln Finds a General: A Military Study of the Civil War.*  
Vol. IV, *Iuka to Vicksburg*. By Kenneth P. Williams.  
(New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956. Pp. xviii,  
616. Illustrations and maps. \$7.50.)

The volumes of this monumental work on the campaigns of the Federal armies during the Civil War continue to appear with remarkable regularity. The first two came out in 1949, another three years later, and now the fourth. Three more are projected. The story will then have been completed in seven volumes, and Lincoln will not only have found his general (in fact Lincoln found him in the third volume