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THE ST. ALBANS RAID—A BIBLIOGRAPHY

By ROBIN W. WINKS

THE St. Albans Raid, so well known to every Vermonter, is also probably the least understood event in Vermont history. The raid has been dealt with in an unfortunate manner and, even in standard scholarly works, appears to be only a somewhat sensational and highly colorful episode in the Civil War. Because the sensational aspects of the raid have been emphasized, subsequent scholars have failed to place the raid in its proper perspective or to study its aftermath. Everyone knows what happened to sleepy little St. Albans on that October afternoon; no one seems to have cared what happened to Canada, Great Britain, or the United States as a result of that colorful episode. Actually, the raid was an important factor in a "cold war" along the Canadian frontier which had many of the earmarks of the twentieth century.

The St. Albans raid has not received its due from historians. Although it was an event of considerable importance, it is mentioned in only one standard survey of Anglo-American relations: H. C. Allen, *Great Britain and the United States* (New York, 1955). The standard surveys of Canadian-American relations deal with the raid in summary form: John B. Brebner, *North Atlantic Triangle* (New Haven, 1945); James M. Callahan, *American Foreign Policy in Canadian Relations* (New York, 1937); G. P. de T. Glazebrook, *History of Canadian External Relations* (London, 1950); Thomas Hodgins, *British and American Diplomacy Affecting Canada* (Toronto, 1900); Bruce Hutchison, *The Struggle for the Border* (New York, 1955); Hugh L. Keenleyside, *Canada and the United States* (revised edition, New York, 1952); and E. W. McInnis, *Unguarded Frontier* (New York, 1942). Thomas A. Bailey mentions the raid once in his standard text, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (New York, 1950). James Ford Rhodes discusses the raid in volume five of his *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850* (7 volumes, New York, 1893-1906), but many standard histories of the period omit it entirely. Most amazing is the total absence of any word concerning the raid in the two standard works on Anglo-American relations during the Civil War: E. D.

Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War* (2 volumes, London, 1925), and Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War* (Boston, 1931). A more recent study, Jay Monaghan, *Diplomat in Carpet Slippers* (Indianapolis, 1945), mentions the raid in connection with Lincoln's diplomacy but fails to relate it to other events in Canadian relations. The two standard works on Canadian-American relations during the war, Helen G. Macdonald, *Canadian Public Opinion on the American Civil War* (New York, 1926), and Lester B. Shippee, *Canadian-American Relations, 1849-1874* (New Haven, 1939), skip over the raid as though it would be unscholarly to see any importance in an event so obviously a "stunt." Even the standard biographies either omit the raid altogether, as in Benjamin P. Thomas, *Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 1954), and, most surprisingly, Frederick Bancroft, *Life of William H. Seward* (2 volumes, New York, 1900), or mention it only in passing: J. G. Randall and Richard N. Current, *Lincoln the President: Last Full Measure* (New York, 1955), or D. G. Creighton, *John A. Macdonald: The Young Politician* (Boston, 1953). Two of the scholarly monographs on the Civil War, best left unnamed, contain references to articles which the writers apparently felt it unnecessary to check, showing that they felt original research into the raid would be a waste of time. Neither article had anything whatsoever to do with the raid, one being an account of an Anglican church service for surveying parties and the other an article in *True Detective Mysteries* concerning Lincoln's assassination. Although Hollywood has, quite properly, recognized the dramatic qualities of the raid in a motion picture (*The Raid*, Twentieth-Century-Fox), scholars have ignored the scholarly. In the past a single effort on the scholarly level to deal with the raid in toto (Howard W. Crocker, "The St. Albans Raid," an unpublished M. A. thesis, Queen's University, 1938) suffered from a lack of manuscript sources and from the usual Master's essay approach.

Today the situation is being corrected. Professor Oscar Kinchen of Texas Technological College is engaged in writing a study of the affair with particular concentration on the neglected trials following the raid, and it is understood that a non-professional writer in Ottawa has nearly completed a general account. The present writer has nearly finished a study of the raid's larger importance in terms of diplomatic and military affairs and will also be able, through the uncovering of a new series of letters and the use of a large range of manuscripts, to recount for the first time in English the efforts of the raiders to escape from Canada and return to the South. This will be part of a broad

study of Canadian-American relations during the Civil War. An historical novel based on the raid is also nearing completion. It is to be hoped that the writer's general study and Professor Kinchen's more detailed account will replace the sensationalized and frequently erroneous accounts of the raid.

The Vermont Historical Society prepared a Reference List (No. 7, Montpelier, n.d.) on the raid. However, it contains only twelve references. The following is offered as a nearly complete bibliography of ninety-three items on the raid for subsequent writers and local historians. It omits general histories of Canada, the United States, Quebec, Vermont, or the Civil War which mention the raid in passing. Finally, it omits the general works on the *Alabama* claims, although the raid became involved in the claims arbitration, because all such works concentrate exclusively on the activities of the *Alabama*. Items in the preceding paragraphs are not included.

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- It might also be noted that the raid was the subject of a fictionalized treatment on Kraft Theatre via television in September, 1957. The title: "October 19, 1864."



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By ROBIN W. WINKS

IN THE January, 1958, issue of *Vermont History* (XXVI, 46-51), appeared a bibliography of 115 items pertaining to the St. Albans Raid of October 19, 1861, compiled by the present writer. Since that time twenty-four additional references have been brought to his attention. The following is a list of those references. Four of the references were furnished by Mr. Glenn B. Skillin, a student at the University of Vermont; one each was furnished by Mr. Charles Morrow Wilson of Putney, Vermont; Mr. W. A. Ross of St. Albans; and Professor Oscar Kinchen of Lubbock, Texas. The rest were ferreted out by the writer. A full account of the raid appears in his forthcoming book, to be published in 1959, *Maple Leaf and Eagle: Canadian-American Relations during the Civil War*.

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