

# Pursuit: The Chase, Capture, Persecution, and Surprising Release of Confederate President Jefferson Davis

Clint Johnson



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While much has been written about the hunt for John Wilkes Booth, much less has been written about the efforts to apprehend Confederate President Jefferson Davis in the days following the dissolution of the Confederacy, and the subsequent attempt to try him for treason. In the only book to tell the definitive story of Davis's chase, capture, imprisonment, and release, journalist and Civil War writer Clint Johnson brings this chapter in our nation's history to vivid life, and paints a fascinating portrait of one of American history's most complex and enduring figures.

In the vulnerable weeks following the end of the War and Abraham Lincoln's assassination, some in President Andrew Johnson's administration burned to exact revenge against Davis. Trumping up charges of conspiracy to murder Lincoln and treason against the Union, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton ordered cavalry after Davis. After a chase through North and South Carolina and Georgia, Davis was captured on May 10, 1865. The former United States Senator and Mexican War hero was imprisoned for two years in Fortress Monroe, Virginia, where he was subjected to torture and humiliation--but never brought to trial. Remarkably, the Johnson administration knew Davis was innocent of all crimes before he was even arrested.

With a keen eye for the period's detail, as well as a Southerner's insight, Johnson sheds new light on Davis's time on the run, his treatment while imprisoned, his surprising release from custody, and his eventual exoneration--exposing the powerful political forces involved, and their lasting impact. Johnson draws on extensive official historical documents as well as countless archived private materials such as diaries, letters, and private papers. With the 200th anniversary of Davis's birth in 2008, the time has never been better for a compelling account of such a defining episode of the Civil War.

Advance Praise for Pursuit: The Chase, Capture, Persecution, and Surprising Release of Confederate President Jefferson Davis

"A master storyteller exposes one of the most fascinating and overlooked dramas in Civil War history." --Rod Gragg Author of *Covered With Glory* and *Confederate Goliath* 

"Using solid research, an engaging style and a novelist's eye for details, Clint Johnson has produced a vivid, fresh and entertaining look at Jefferson Davis's flight and capture. This book is a welcome addition to the literature on the final days of the Confederacy and the fate of its one and only chief executive." --Chris Hartley Author of *Stuart's Tarheels: James B. Gordon and His North Carolina Cavalry* 

"If there was one Civil War historian I would choose to tell the story of Jefferson Davis, it would be Clint Johnson. In these pages, Johnson brings the mercurial Confederate President alive with a riveting and revealing narrative that sheds important new light on one of the pivotal figures in American history. Highly recommended." --Marc Leepson Author of *Desperate Engagement, Flag: An American Biography,* and *Saving Monticello* 

"Clint Johnson's Pursuit is a spellbinding tale of the last days of the Confederacy. The author's crisp prose and solid research give readers a riveting view of Jefferson Davis's last days in power." -- David J. Eicher, author of *The Longest Night* and *Dixie Betrayed* 

"Meticulously researched and well written." -- Armchair Interviews

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