

CONFEDERATE COPYRIGHT: THE ROLE OF NATIONALISM IN DEFINING A COPYRIGHT REGIME

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Although embroiled in war and fighting for survival, the Confederate States of America made copyright laws a priority, passing a Copyright Act in 1861. Despite the pro-slavery and state-centric laws and policies of the Confederate Congress, the Confederate Copyright Act was actually far more progressive than its Northern counterpart, offering domestic copyright protection to foreign authors and garnering international approval from France and England (and even turning Charles Dickens into a Confederate sympathizer). By examining the state of copyright laws and practices in the pre-Civil War South, the legislative history of the Confederate Copyright Act, and the fallout of the provisions of the Act during and following the War, this Article concludes that it was political and economic needs of the Southern States that motivated the passage and policies embodied in the Confederate Copyright Act, and not any interests in societal progress, public access, or author's rights..