



# The Maltby Brothers' Civil War

*Norman C. Delaney*

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On December 11, 1863, a US brigadier general and a Confederate artillery captain met on board the packet steamer *Diligent* on the Mississippi River below Vicksburg. The Confederate officer had not come on board on official business; he was a paroled prisoner of war. The brigadier general was his older brother, who had learned of the younger man's capture three weeks earlier at Confederate Fort Semmes, on the Texas coast, and had arranged to have him brought from New Orleans to Vicksburg to be given medical care at the Federal garrison.

The American Civil War has rightly been called a war of brothers; Henry, Jasper, and William Maltby were three such brothers. The scene recounted above was between Jasper and William, who had not seen each other in several years since Jasper had left their birth home in Ohio, but who met frequently over the months following their reunion, their familial bond overriding their political allegiances.

The three brothers' lives cover the critical years of Civil War and Reconstruction, a time when Jasper devotedly served the Union cause, while Henry and William became outspoken secessionists, operating Confederate newspapers in Corpus Christi, Matamoros, and Brownsville, eventually as a thorn in the side of Reconstruction officials. Despite their own Southern sympathies, the two Confederates cherished their Yankee brother, whose bravery at Fort Donelson and Vicksburg took a heavy toll on his health and eventually cost him his life. Both Rebels named a son in honor of their hero brother.

Combining detailed research in William Maltby's personal papers with contemporary accounts, military and court records, and the editorials of the two who became newspapermen, veteran scholar and educator Norman Delaney has created a vibrant story of how war can affect a family and a community.

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