

# COPPERHEAD CONSPIRACY

IN THE

## NORTH-WEST.

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AN EXPOSÉ OF THE TREASONABLE ORDER OF  
THE "SONS OF LIBERTY."

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VALLANDIGHAM, Supreme Commander.

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THE more effectually to aid the Southern traitors in their efforts to destroy the Government, many of the leaders of the Democratic party in the North, who are in sympathy with such efforts, determined to form secret, oath-bound, treasonable associations throughout the Northern States to act in concert with those already existing in the States in rebellion.

In 1863 this order existed in the State of Indiana, under the name of "Knights of the Golden Circle," and became subject to judicial investigation, as is shown in the following statement of the Clerk of the United States District Court for that State :

I, Watt J. Smith, Clerk of the United States District Court for the District of Indiana, do hereby certify that the records of said Court establish the following facts :

On the eleventh of February, 1863, the following persons of Morgan County were indicted for conspiracy to resist by force of arms the arrest of deserters, namely :

Samuel Dillman, William Dillman, Jacob Groseclose, Andrew J. Perry, John Coldwill, Madison Flake, Mitchel Perry, were tried at the March term, 1863, by jury, convicted, and each fined five hundred dollars. The proof established the fact that the defendants were members of a secret, oath bound organization, then known as the Knights of the Golden Circle ; that they fired upon United States soldiers who had in charge two deserters who were members of the same order.

On the seventh of July, 1863, the following persons of Boone County were indicted for obstructing the draft, namely : Patrick Lee, Patrick White, Jeremiah Nichols, John Nichols, Jacob Hill, Jeremiah Gleeson, John Doglass, Eli Goodwin, Conrad Hill, Nathan Curtis, James M. Lucas, Wright Sims, William George. Each pleaded guilty, and were fined.

July eleventh, 1863, the following persons of Putnam County were indicted for conspiracy, to oppose the draft, namely : William Randell, John Ford, George Ford, Isaac Ford, Alexander Siddons, William Hornmill,

George Hanks, George N. Coffman. These men alleged that they were a committee appointed at a meeting to wait upon the enrolling commissioner and demand that he proceed no further. The District Attorney dismissed the charge of conspiracy, and a verdict of guilty was returned on the charge of obstructing the draft, and each were fined.

Also the following persons, of the same county, were indicted on same charge: Joseph Ellis, William Ellis, Isaac Day, William McNary, Francis Allen, Conrad Cook. Joseph Ellis was tried on the charge of conspiracy, found guilty, and fined five hundred dollars. Verdicts of guilty were rendered against the others on charge of obstructing the draft. The proof clearly established the fact that between seventy-five and one hundred armed men (many of them blackened their faces) went to the house of the Enrolling Commissioner about midnight and demanded his enrollment papers, and obtained and destroyed them.

The following persons of Monroe County were indicted for obstructing the draft: Elmore J. Walker, Joel Morgan, John Graves, John Morgan, Sen., Richard J. Walker, Elijah Conder, Henry Crumb, Washington Sares, John Butcher, John Morgan, Jr., Abraham May, Peter Fossett, Alexander Smith, Drury Kirk, Michael Kirk, Lemuel Sexton, William Whitaker, Preston May, Wesley Carter, Thomas Oliphant, John Whitaker; a verdict of guilty was returned against each.

The defendants, in connection with others, met and surrounded the Enrolling Officer, and by force obtained possession of the enrollment papers.

There have been a great many other convictions and pleas of guilty of persons residing in various parts of the State on charges of obstructing the Draft.

The proof, in almost every instance, connected the defendants with a secret organization whose objects were shown on the trials to be opposition to the execution of the laws of the United States, to the prosecution of the war, and friendly to the cause of the rebellion.

The records of the Court further show that three witnesses who were taken before the Grand Jury and refusing to testify, a presentment of the facts in each case was made to the Court signed by the foreman of the Jury. In answer to a rule entered against each to show cause why they did not answer the questions propounded to them by the Grand Jury, they and each of them testified before the Court that they could not answer the questions proposed without criminating themselves and rendering themselves liable to a criminal prosecution for a violation of the laws of the United States, that they were members of this secret order, and could not disclose its objects and purposes for the above reasons, and were shielded by the Court on the ground that they could not be required to criminate themselves.

The existence of a wide-spread secret order whose purposes are disloyal, and at war with the peaceful execution of the law, has been established beyond all question by the trials and convictions in this Court, as conclusively shown by the records.

In witness of the truth of which, I, as Clerk of the said Court, have heretofore set my hand and the seal of the said Court, at Indianapolis, this twelfth day of September, A.D. 1864. WATT J. SMITH, Clerk.

It became the duty of General Carrington, the Commander of the District of Indiana, to find out the doings of this treasonable association; and, for that purpose, resort was had to the detective system, so effectual in the discovery of crime. The result of his investigation is given in the following report made by him to Governor Morton:

HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF INDIANA, }  
 NORTHERN DEPARTMENT, }  
 INDIANAPOLIS, IND., June 28th, 1864. }

GOVERNOR: In compliance with your request, I place in your hands a partial outline of the nature, work, and extent of a disloyal society or order now operating in the State of Indiana, under the name of "SONS OF LIBERTY."

I. NATURE OF THE ORDER.

1st. It is both *civil* and *military*. In its first relation, it declares principles of ethics and politics, for adoption and dissemination, that are hostile to the Government of the United States. In the latter relation, it assumes to organize armies for "actual service" in support of those principles, treating the United States Government as their *enemy*, and that of the rebellion as their *friend*.

2d. It is *secret* and *oath-bound*.

3d. It is despotic and absolute. The penalties of disobedience to its officers are unlimited, including the death-penalty itself.

II. PRINCIPLES OF THE ORDER.

1st. Absolute, inherent, State Sovereignty.

2d. The Union of the States as but voluntary and temporary, and revocable at the will of any individual State, so far as concerns that State.

3d. Denies to the General Government the power to enforce its laws, if it be the choice of a State to reject them.

4th. Recognizes the existing rebellion as legitimate, legal, and just.

5th. Holds revolution against the present Government as not only a right, but a duty.

6th. Holds obligations to the order as paramount, to those due a single State, or the United States.

7th. Declares its purpose to stop this war, treat with rebels, and make a treaty based upon the recognition of grades of civilization and race.

8th. Declares a law of races, one of Caucasian supremacy, and one of African servitude.

9th. Pledges a crusade in favor of all peoples attempting to establish new governments of their own choice, as against existing rulers or authorities.

10th. Accepts the creed of the rebellion, its logic, its plans, and its principles, as the normal theory of Democracy, and its own bond of coherence and ultimate success.

III. EXTENT OF THE ORDER.

Exhibits are furnished as follows:

Exhibit A. "Constitution of Supreme Council of the States," that is, of all States that may join, recognizing the primary independence of each State. "The Supreme Commander of this Council," is "Commander-in-Chief of all military forces belonging to the order, in the various States, when called into actual service."—See Sec. 8.

OFFICERS FOR 1864 AS REPORTED.

C. L. Vallandigham, of Ohio, Supreme Commander.

Robert Holloway, of Illinois, Deputy Supreme Commander.

Dr. Massey, of Ohio, Secretary of State.

Exhibit B. Constitution of Grand Council of S. L. of Indiana.

OFFICERS.

H. H. Dodd, Indianapolis, Grand Commander.

H. Heffren, Salem, Deputy Grand Commander.

W. M. Harrison, Indianapolis, Grand Secretary.

"The members of this Council, additional to the regular officers, include *ex officio*, the Grand Commander's staff, and all military officers above the rank of Colonel."—Sec 3, Art. 2.

Exhibit C. Constitution of the County Parent Temples, subordinate to which Branch County Temples may be organized.

This order, during 1863, was variously named, but popularly known as "K. G. C.," KNIGHTS OF THE GOLDEN CIRCLE, with whose ritual, oaths, etc., I furnished you in the spring of 1863. The penalty of disclosure was then death, and this penalty was specified in their obligations.

During the fall of 1863, the order changed name and ritual, and became the "O. A. K.," ORDER OF AMERICAN KNIGHTS; the ritual, signs, passwords, etc., of which are in my possession.

At the meeting of this Order, February 16th and 17th, 1864, the Grand Commander for the State of Indiana communicated the purposes of the Order, as well as the views of C. L. Vallandigham, claimed by the Order as its Head and Supreme Commander.

For said address, the proceedings of the Indiana Grand Council, and so much of the official proceedings as it was deemed best to publish for the private information of the Order, please see Exhibit D, hereunto annexed. This Report gives the following States as organized:

New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, New-Hampshire, Connecticut, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Delaware, Maryland, and Missouri.

Besides the Constitutions of the "S. L." referred to there is a formal Ritual for the Degrees, the same being a slight modification of the work of the "O. A. K.," which was abandoned only in May last.

These consist of the "V." Vestibule of the Temple, and first, second and third Temple Degrees or Conclaves.

The organization of the "Society of the Illini," or Democratic Clubs, does not involve full membership in the Order; for thus far comparatively few in each Temple are advanced to the Chapters or Councils of the higher degrees, but the lower and subordinate bodies, and that of the "Illini," is educational and probationary, looking to full acceptance of the general principles of the order, before the advancement of the "Neophyte," to the higher degrees.

As appears from the official report of February 17th, there were, then, only twelve thousand members in this State, and a recent report from a portion of the State would hardly triple this number, that is, of initiates, though they claim for some counties full battalions, and in a few cases full regiments.

EXHIBITS F, F, G, AND H give the Ritual of said degrees.

It will be observed that the fundamental password is CALHOUN, transposed for use thus—Nu-oh-lac.

The unwritten work and lectures of this Order vary in different States and counties, and in Temples of the same county, though not in essentials. This is accounted for from the fact that organizing agents, in installing officers, could not take time to fully post and instruct them, and the work was imperfectly committed to memory.

While the penalties of disclosure are formally declared to be such as the officers of this Order shall direct, these penalties are specifically given in the verbal lectures and instructions. The oaths of 1863 specifically affixed the death-penalty. The same is enjoined in the present Order. Instructions to execute this penalty upon at least one supposed informer have been issued within the last two months. Injunctions to arm, and much of the detail of subordinate military features of the Order are also given in verbal lectures. Concurrent testimony from different sources confirms the above. Many of the documents you have already seen, and they are not necessary in this report.

## IV. OPERATIONS OF THE ORDER.

A few facts, derived from many concurrent sources, give significance to passages in the Constitutions and Rituals. Of some you were advised at the time—thus :

1st. The outbreaks in Eastern Illinois were mainly checked by leaders of this Order, on the ground that such outbreaks were premature. This information comes from Canada, Michigan, Illinois, and other quarters.

2d. A few days before the attack of Forrest upon Paducah, I was informed that the Temples of the O. A. K. in Northwestern Illinois expected such an attack, and that Forrest would cross into Illinois, and raise the standard of revolt. He came to Paducah, but was repulsed.

3d. On the day that Morgan first entered Pound Gap, I was informed at Indianapolis, in the morning, that Morgan was about to enter Kentucky, of which you were at once advised. At three p.m. you showed me a telegram from General Burbridge, that Morgan was in the Gap. This information, derived from you, was communicated to the secret Order with my permission. Upon this, two members of the Order, both prominent—one Colonel W. A. Bowles, of Buena Vista notoriety, and the other Judge J. F. Bullitt, of the Supreme Court of Appeals of Kentucky—were soon reported to have stated that "Morgan must be stopped; he was too soon—the Order was not ready for him." Judge Bullitt, who had come to receive the new Ritual, (S. L.,) took the first train for Kentucky that day. The fact was, that Morgan *was* stopped. The incidents following and attending the visit of Major-General Lindsay from Kentucky you are familiar with, and the circumstances under which Morgan threw part of his force into Kentucky, when General Burbridge moved toward Virginia.

4th. Information was given you of the visit of Vallandigham to Detroit, his projected trip to Chicago, of the meeting of the Grand Council of Indiana, June 13, of the proposed adjournment and meeting at Hamilton, June 15, and that Vallandigham's immediate recall was subject of debate, and the prospect of his being at that time at Hamilton. At least one rebel officer left Windsor, C. W., and visited Hamilton four weeks before, in the confidence of disloyal persons, of which I was advised at that time by telegraph through General Noble.

5th. Five days before Morgan attacked Mount Sterling, and the L. and L. R. R. was severed, written report was sent by disloyal persons, of which I have the originals, that the road was quiet, that "no mules" (U. S. soldiers) were on the line, and that a glorious work would begin the coming week.

6th. A courier intercepted between Frankfort and Louisville, who reported to me at Louisville, as I was starting for Indianapolis, claimed that Forrest was moving upon Southwestern Kentucky, and that a portion of Buckner's command would join the fragments of Morgan in Western Virginia. Two days after, Forrest defeated Sturgis; Buckner, however, was west of the Mississippi. I give these among many facts to show that there is a close correspondence of design and feeling between traitors North and the rebels South. The whole plot of the Order herein referred to is in harmony with forcible interruption of the war.

W. A. Bowles, before referred to, has made no close secret of his disloyal purposes, and his sympathy with the South.

He is reported as one of the four Major-Generals of the Order in Indiana. The remaining three are L. P. Milligan, of Huntington, Major Walker, of northwestern part of Indiana, vice Yeagle removed, and Andrew Humphreys, of Green county. The Grand Commander has already been named.

Although the new work, S. L., was obtained at Indianapolis, by R. Barrett, for Missouri, it is understood that the Order is so far organized in that State as to run a risk of disappointment by a change, and that the work of

the O. A. K. will retain its usage, as it differs only in non-essentials. Among the persons reported as at the conference with Judge Bullitt and Barrett, were J. J. Bingham, Dr. Anthon, and Mr. Ristine, of Indianapolis. I will also give the names of a few other members for your information, to enable you to watch the movement of this Order in Indiana, namely, Dr. Gatling, (associated with the Gatling Gun,) Mr. Evert, of Vanderburgh, Mr. L. Leach, Mr. Otey, Myers of Laporte, Dr. Lemons, A. D. Raga, Mr. McBride, of Evansville, John G. Davis, and Lassell, of Cass county. Several of the above are delegates to the State Grand Council of Missouri; and besides, H. H. Dodd, to the Supreme Grand Council, to be held at Chicago, the first of July next, preparatory to the political convention of July 4.

#### V. PURPOSES OF THE ORDER.

It seems that the main purpose is political power, by union with the South, regardless of men or measures. The Eastern and Western Council leaders differ as to means to this end; and, again, the radicals and conservatives differ, at the West.

Men like Dr. W. A. Bowles seem indifferent to any presidential canvass, and to prefer an early armed rupture and positive union of the Northwest with the South.

Such men are ready and anxious for such an armed invasion as will give them a nucleus for open defiance of the United States. This is not speculation; but proof is ample. I have adverted to some facts already, and will advise you, as I have the Government and General Heintzelman, as events progress.

Very respectfully yours,

HENRY B. CARRINGTON,  
Brigadier-General, Com'd'g Dist. Indiana.

His Excellency Gov. O. P. MORTON,  
Indianapolis, Indiana.

Two months after the above report was made, Governor Morton was advised that a number of arms and a quantity of fixed ammunition had been shipped from New-York to the head of the Order at Indianapolis. Notice of the fact was given to the public authorities. Mr. Russell, the Deputy Marshal for the city of Indianapolis, discloses, in the following affidavit, what afterwards took place in relation to the matter:

STATE OF INDIANA, }  
MARION COUNTY. } ss.

Before me, James N. Sweetser, a Notary Public within and for the county of Marion, State of Indiana, personally appeared John S. Russell, who, being first duly sworn, upon his oath, says he is now, and has been for more than two years last past, the Deputy Marshal of the city of Indianapolis, State of Indiana; and further says, that on the twentieth day of August, A.D. 1864, he was sent for by O. P. Morton, Governor of the State of Indiana, and was informed that there was a lot of arms and ammunition on the road to Indianapolis addressed to the care of J. J. Parsons, whose place of business is in the building occupied by H. H. Dodd, and known as the *Sentinel* Office; that upon the request of the Governor, he proceeded to search, and went to two railroad depots and the office of the Merchants' Despatch, and learned that on the fifth day of August, ten boxes, marked Hardware by Merchants' Despatch, addressed to Parsons, had already been taken away from the Bellefontaine Depot, and charges paid; the gross weight was two thousand four hundred and five pounds; they were receipted for on August the twelfth; on further investigation he

learned that twenty-two boxes, addressed to the same party, weighing four thousand two hundred and sixty pounds, marked Hardware, were then in the Bellefontaine Depot, which fact was immediately reported to the Governor, and the Governor reported to Col. Warner, commanding the Veteran Reserve Corps at this place, who thereupon detailed one company to go with said Russell and seize said boxes; in pursuance of which the boxes were taken by Russell and said company from the building in which said H. H. Dodd & Co. and Parsons were doing business. We proceeded first to the Bellefontaine Depot, but the boxes were gone; but on finding the drayman, whose name is Henry Ankenbrook, he stated that the boxes were delivered at the house above mentioned. We found the twenty-two boxes in the press-room; four more in the same room, supposed to be of the first lot, in one corner of the room, covered up with old tables and boards; and six boxes were found in the second story, piled up behind a lot of other boxes filled with waste-paper and books thrown over them, and Parsons name scratched off the boxes. There were three hundred and ninety revolvers and one hundred and forty thousand rounds fixed ammunition in said boxes, which were taken to military headquarters at the Soldiers' Home. The brand of the revolvers was Northway's patent, or some similar name, purporting to be made at Middletown, Connecticut.

JOHN S. RUSSELL,  
Deputy Marshal.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this tenth day of September, A.D. 1864.

JAMES N. SWEETSER,  
Notary Public.

[Five-cent Revenue-stamp affixed.]

The above shipment was made as "Stationery," as shown on the bill of lading, in order to conceal the true contents of the boxes!

Twenty-two additional boxes of arms, addressed to the same person, were subsequently seized in New-York.

These arms were to have been used by the oath-bound traitors for the purpose of driving Union men from the polls at the approaching election in Indiana. How far similar desperate arrangements have been made to control the election in other States, is yet unknown.

That the deliberations of the Chicago Convention were controlled by the Order of the "Sons of Liberty" no well-informed man will deny. During its session, Dr. OLDS, a leading member of the Order, an out-spoken traitor, boldly announced that the "Sons of Liberty" were in session in the city, and might have a communication to present to the Convention before its adjournment.

Vallandigham wrote the platform, which was adopted almost unanimously, and it was upon his motion that McCLELLAN was declared the nominee of the Convention. The essential portions of the platform had been previously adopted by the Grand Council of the Order at a meeting held at Indianapolis on the sixteenth of February, 1864, as is shown by the following resolution found on the secret records of that Order, in the safe of Dodd, the Grand Commander for Indiana:

5. That whatever the theory of the powers of the Federal Government to coërcé a State to remain in the Union may be, war as a means of restoring the Union is a delusion, involving a fearful waste of human life, hopeless bankruptcy, and the speedy downfall of the Republic. Therefore we recommend a cessation of hostilities upon existing facts, and a convention of the sovereign States to adjust the terms of a peace with a view to the restoration of the Union, entire if possible; if not, so much and such parts as the affinities of interest and civilization may attract.

Now read the following corresponding portion of the Chicago Platform:

*Resolved*, That this Convention does explicitly declare, as the sense of the American people, that after four years of failure to restore the Union by the experiment of war, during which, under the pretence of a military necessity, or war power higher than the Constitution, the Constitution itself has been disregarded in every part, and public liberty and private right alike trodden down, and the material prosperity of the country essentially impaired, justice, humanity, liberty, and the public welfare demand that immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities, with a view to an ultimate convention of all the States, or other peaceable means, to the end that at the earliest practicable moment peace may be restored on the basis of the Federal Union of the States.

Compare these resolutions, and no man can doubt their paternity—they each emanated from the brain of Vallandigham, the Grand Commander of the secret and oath-bound conspirators.

Should the nominee of this secret Order be elected to the Presidency, his administration will be controlled by the men who controlled the Convention, as a consequence certain to follow. They will demand, in the language of the platform of their Order, “a cessation of hostilities upon existing facts, and a convention of all the sovereign States to adjust the terms of peace, with a view to the restoration of the Union, entire if possible; if not, so much and such parts as the affinities of interest and civilization may attract.” The demand will be acceded to by their President, notwithstanding the fustian about “a preservation of the Union at all hazards,” put into his letter of acceptance for the purpose of catching votes. That is well understood, or else the oath-bound traitors would not now be making every possible effort to attain power through his election.

Are the people willing that such a result, so revolting to every feeling of manhood and patriotism, shall thus be accomplished?

Every patriot is against it. Every soldier in the field is against it. The blood of the thousands slain by rebel hands cries from the ground against it, and, we fervently believe, the Great Ruler of the Universe is against it.