

Feb \_\_\_\_\_ 2015



COMMEMORATING THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF THE WAR FOR SOUTHERN INDEPENDENCE

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**THE CHARGE GIVEN BY GENERAL STEPHEN D. LEE  
 TO THE SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS**

*“To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will commit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier’s good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles which he loved and which you love also, and those ideals which made him glorious and which you also cherish. Remember, it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations*

**ALERT! ALERT! ALERT!** 

Hope you enjoy the information in this month’s Dispatch.  
 Next Month: VMI Cadets at Newmarket.



We’re glad to have the Chaplain’s Corner return to these pages and Cospers promises that he’ll pass on lots of inspirational and educational information to his “flock.”



Don’t forget this month’s meeting at “Simply Southern” (Old Western Sizzlin) on the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Come early eat, and then enjoy the meeting and the fellowship that results.

Don’t know at the time of this newsletter if we have an “official” program, but we can always sit around and take cheap shots at Cospers and Jaynes if nothing else.

Lenard, the manager of Simply Southern has cleaned up the place and made some significant changes in the quality of the food and the service.

Come on and let’s make it a good meeting!

## PRAYER REQUESTS



### **PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU NEED TO PUT SOMEONE ON THE PRAYER LIST.**

E-mail: [jay\\_b\\_good@msn.com](mailto:jay_b_good@msn.com) or [csaford@hotmail.com](mailto:csaford@hotmail.com)  
call 601-649 -1867 or call Joe Cosper at 601-649-3776.

### **CHAPLAIN'S CORNER:**

Compatriots: We need to be doing better in our camp, being concerned with each other's needs and starting the year off right. Please send me, or have at the next meeting (Feb 26<sup>th</sup>) your name, address, list of all your immediate family members, phone and e-mail contact information.

### **JEREMIAH 37:4-7**

4. Now Jeremiah came in and went out among the people for they had not put him into prison. 5. Then Pharaoh's army was come froth out of Egypt and when the Chaldeans that besieged Jerusalem heard tidings of them they departed from Jerusalem. 6. Then came the word of the Lord unto the prophet Jeremiah, saying: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the King of Judah, that sent you unto me to inquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land."

Looking forward to having a good year.  
Joe Cosper, Chaplain



### **WHEN WE ALMOST GOT SHERMAN**

Excerpted from: *Tracking Sherman through Newton County* By Ricky Harrison;

Edited by: LTC (Ret) John C. Cox, MSSG

After taking control of the Mississippi River and Vicksburg, the Union Army, under the leadership of General Ulysses S. Grant, held the Confederacy in a defenseless position, especially the heart of Mississippi. General Grant summoned General William T. Sherman to lead an expedition through central Mississippi beginning at Vicksburg and ending at Demopolis Alabama, if necessary.

The Meridian Expedition had at least two goals. The main goal was to cripple the railway system running east and west through Mississippi and to destroy the many warehouses in Meridian. A second goal was to discourage Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest from attacking Union forces in Mississippi.

Sherman had gathered about 32,000 men for the Meridian Expedition and this amount of men demanded a large amount of food and supplies. He ordered the men to pack light and take only enough food for three days with this trip taking a minimum of fourteen days to complete his troops would have to rely on sustenance gathered from the countryside to exist.

By the time Sherman had reached Newton County his resources were strained, and after crossing Conehatta Creek

on his way to Decatur, he ordered the troops placed on half-rations.

Foraging was rampant as Sherman's army cut through Newton County taking what they wanted and leaving homes in smoky ruins. Sherman had determined that the only way to win the war was to wreak enough havoc on the civilian population that they no longer wished to fight.

On the morning of February 11, 1864 the XVI Corps, led by Major General Stephen A. Hurlbut, entered Newton County at the Tuscalameta Creek. They found the bridge had been burned by Confederate forces prior to their arrival. The roads were poor, to say the least, especially at this time of year.

The weather was cold and most of Tuscalameta swamp had to be corduroyed ahead of the marching soldiers. Tuscalameta Creek has since been channeled and moved from the original location to a location further east. The Confederate forces were vastly out-numbered. Rather than stand and fight, they used hit-and-run ambushes on unsuspecting Union troops. They also destroyed roads and burned bridges in their retreat but the Engineers quickly restored these roads and bridges using materials at hand.

After struggling most of the day in the swamps General Sherman sat down on the night of February 11<sup>th</sup> after crossing the Conehatta swamp and penned a special order that was to take place on February 13<sup>th</sup>.

I. Each regiment would be allowed two wagons-one for cartridges and one for bread and cooking utensils and two ambulances.

II. The army would further be reduced by all men who were sick and unable to march.

III. The wagons and escorts thus detached would follow behind the army as far as Chunky River and there await orders.

It is evident that Sherman was growing weary of the march at this time. From his memoirs it shows he nervously wanted to reach his destination of Meridian soon. Around noon on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, Smith's Division of the XVI Corps entered Decatur and began to make camp just east of the town. Sherman sent orders for the 16<sup>th</sup> Army Corps to move on to Chunky Creek and camp for the night. McPherson's 17<sup>th</sup> Corps was still 4 miles west of Decatur. Sherman detached one of the regiments of the 16<sup>th</sup> Corps to guard the crossroads at Decatur until the 17<sup>th</sup> Corps came into sight.

According to Sherman's records he made arrangements with a lady to stay the night in her double log house. This is where the war could have taken a bizarre turn.

After eating supper, General Sherman had hardly laid down on the bed to rest when he was awakened by shouting and hallooing outside and then heard pistol shots. Despite his orders, the crossroads had been left unguarded and the house was being attacked by Confederate cavalry!

Sherman quickly escaped into the back yard and hid in a corn crib near the barn.

Meanwhile, hearing the gunfire, part of McPherson's column rushed back and pushed the cavalry out of town.

This near capture got Sherman's attention as he rode all day on the 13<sup>th</sup>. He was not comfortable traveling along the narrow roads in the hills of eastern Newton County. Too many Rebels were in hiding waiting for a sniper shot at a blue coat.

He continued to ride and entered Lauderdale County some time that night. While stopped in the woods, Sherman sent General Hurlbut a message to move on toward Meridian the next day. Sherman entered Meridian on February 14<sup>th</sup> and began to burn and destroy all railroads and supply buildings.

What if this had been the time and place where General William T. Sherman was captured or even killed? The folks in Atlanta would have only wished this could somehow have happened!

Source: [http://www.nchgs.org/html/tracking\\_sherman\\_through\\_newton\\_county.html](http://www.nchgs.org/html/tracking_sherman_through_newton_county.html)



### Whatever Happened to 'Whistling Dick'?

There are several artillery pieces used during the War for Southern Independence that have famous nicknames; There is the famed Federal siege gun called the "Swamp Angel" at Charleston, South Carolina.

Brigadier General William Pendleton who was a pre-war preacher, named his four cannons in Stonewall Jackson's Brigade, Mathew, Mark, Luke and John, after the four gospels of the Bible. There is also a 7.44 inch artillery piece which served at Vicksburg, named the "Widow Blakely." for the fact that it was the sole artillery piece of that make used in the defense of the bluff city.

But, there was another artillery piece at Vicksburg with a nickname; that piece was called "Whistling Dick."

Built at the Tredegar Ironworks in Richmond, the 18 pounder wasn't that large of a piece, it was certainly small in comparison with the 150 pound Armstrong and other siege guns placed around Fortress Vicksburg.

Although there were 20 pound field pieces and even 32 pound field guns, "Whistling Dick" which was originally a model 1839 smoothbore cannon that was later rifled then had reinforced bands added on the back to prevent the tube from exploding when fired, weighed in at 2.5 tons so it was too heavy to be used in field service.

As the siege progressed, the gun would gain fame not because of its accuracy, or size, but because, according to A. L. Slack an confederate artillerist of Company "E" 1<sup>st</sup> Louisiana Heavy Artillery, who served the weapon, when it fired its conical parrott-like shell the round made a 'whirring noise' as it left the tube.

However, though "Whistling Dick" was credited with sinking the Federal ironclad USS *CINCINNATI*, it served more as a psychological weapon than a true threat to Federal forces. The chances of "Whistling Dick" hitting someone was minute, thought it did cause the Soldiers and impressed slaves Grant used for digging his canals to run for cover and thus interrupted his plans as he tried to bypass Vicksburg.

The most amazing part about this particular cannon is the fact that, while it served well throughout the siege of Vicksburg, following the surrender of that river fortress it simply disappeared, vanished into thin air if you will and there is no evidence today of what happened to this famed Confederate artillery piece.

A cannon believed to be "Whistling Dick" fell into Union hands with the July 4<sup>th</sup> surrender of Vicksburg and it was soon shipped to *Trophy Point* at the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York and put on display.

During the ensuing decades however, questions about the authenticity of the cannon were raised; chief among them was a story as told by one of the former Confederate gun-crew that surfaced in 1900. He claimed that on the night of July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1863 a detail of 14 confederate soldiers moved the cannon from its firing position on Wyman's Hill to the old Vicksburg waterfront. There it was transferred to a coal barge, paddled into the main channel of the Mississippi River and dumped overboard.

Then, finally, some 100 years later, it was discovered that the cannon shipped to West Point was not "Whistling Dick," but actually the "Widow Blakely" which was similar in many respects.

In 1863 the Mississippi River did flow in front of Vicksburg, but in 1876 a cutoff occurred isolating Vicksburg from the river and forming a shallow oxbow, now called Centennial Lake, located just west of Vicksburg and while the logistics of movement might have been difficult, a river location is plausible. Alternately, burial of the cannon in a loess cave on or near Wyman's Hill is another possibility.

Although numerous loess caves were known to exist in this area, there is no documentation either substantiated or unsubstantiated indicating such a fate for the cannon. In conclusion, neither hypothesis adequately explains the disappearance of "Whistling Dick." However, given the size of the cannon, advanced geophysical techniques may be able to locate a magnetic or gravity anomaly produced by the cannon.



Just a reminder: If you or a friend want to get an SCV Tag for your vehicle, you don't have to be a member of the SCV to get one!

All you have to do is pay. The law states:

"Any owner of a motor vehicle, who is a resident of this state, upon payment...etc."

Don't let the Tax Assessor snow you. You don't have to be a member!



## Frequently Asked Questions about Jefferson Davis

Source: <http://jeffersondavis.rice.edu/faqs.cfm>

### Birthdate:

It is unclear whether Davis was born in 1807 or 1808, and Davis himself was unsure. He wrote an acquaintance in 1858 that "there has been some controversy about the year of my birth among the older members of my family, and I am not a competent witness in the case, having once supposed the year to have been 1807, I was subsequently corrected by being informed it was 1808, and have rested upon that point because it was just as good, and no better than another." For more background on the date question, see *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, Volume 1, pages lxxv-lxxvi.

### Middle Name:

From November 30, 1824, until mid-1833, Jefferson Davis' name on official lists and at times his signature included the middle initial "F." The name is not spelled out in full in any known document. In his story of Davis' life, Hudson Strode claimed that the final son born to Samuel and Jane Davis was given the middle name "Finis" because "it seemed unlikely that Jane Davis would ever bear another child" (*Jefferson Davis: American Patriot*, p. 3). The "Finis" myth has been repeated so often that it has become accepted as fact by many scholarly resources, but there is no evidence for it. All of Jefferson Davis' siblings had traditional names.

Perhaps equally curious is the sudden appearance and just as sudden disappearance of the middle initial. Davis had been at West Point for at least three months before it showed up for the first time, on a monthly conduct report. The last known "J. F. Davis" signature is on a note of October 3, 1832, notifying his commanding officer of his acceptance of a furlough. As of the publication of Davis' appointment as second lieutenant of Dragoons on May 4, 1833, the "F." had disappeared from official documents as well. At the time the initial was in use, there were no other Davis officers with the given name Jefferson (Jefferson C. Davis, a Union general in the Civil War, did not enlist until 1846), so it is unlikely the young cadet was trying to avoid mistaken identity. Only two other officers named Davis with the first initial "J." were in the army from 1824-1833, and one of them died in 1828. It should be noted that the "F." was used on Davis' first marriage license (June 17, 1835), although he signed the document without the "F." The initial was not used on his second marriage license ten years later.

### The Case Against Jefferson Davis

What, exactly, happened in the case of *The United States v. Jefferson Davis*? Enough intrigues, maneuvers, plot twists, and changes of the political wind exist to fill a book (and it would make a good one). It is quite a complex matter, but the bottom line is that the case never went to trial and the indictments were dismissed. The proceedings dragged on into 1869, but Davis himself was only in the courtroom on two separate days.

Davis was captured by troops and held at a military base (Fort Monroe) in a state (Virginia) under martial law. Had he been linked to the Lincoln assassination, his trial would have taken place before a military tribunal, but the fabricated case connecting him to the assassination (the primary informant was convicted of perjury) fell apart before Davis was charged. The government soon decided that any trial for treason would have to be in a civil court, and in Virginia, the base of Davis' alleged treasonable activities, directing armed rebellion against the United States. Neither John C. Underwood, circuit court judge for the District of Virginia, nor Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase, who presided over the circuit including the Virginia district, felt he had any authority as long as Davis was held by the military. Chase in particular wanted to avoid such dangerous legal waters, and he continued to find excuses to avoid hearing the case. Underwood's competence was questionable, and he was known to be overly zealous (he had bragged to a congressional committee in 1866 that he could pack a jury to insure a conviction), so Chase's presence was essential for a respectable verdict.

Because of the issues of military control of Davis' imprisonment, Chase refused to issue a writ of habeas corpus in June 1866, but almost a year later, in conjunction with an order to the military authorities from the president, a writ of habeas corpus brought Davis to Richmond to be transferred to the authority of the federal courts. He appeared before Underwood on May 13, 1867, bail was set at \$100,000, and the bond was immediately posted. "Deafening applause" broke out in the courtroom when Davis was freed. Horace Greeley, one of a growing number of northerners who wanted the case settled so the country could get on with the healing process, had secured backing for the bond and personally guaranteed a quarter of it. He was in the courtroom that day and met Davis after his release.

After half a year with his family in Canada, Davis returned to Richmond in November 1867 for what was supposed to be the beginning of the trial. Court convened on the 26th, but Chase was not present, and the government asked for a postponement. Davis was released on his own recognizance, and the defense asked that some sort of consideration be given him so he would not be "subjected to a renewal of the inconvenience" of making the trip to Richmond if a trial was not going to be held. As it turned out, Davis would not have to appear in court again during any of the subsequent proceedings.

As time passed, many elements changed, and so did the players. U.S. attorneys general came and went (three different men were involved in the Davis case). Andrew Johnson was impeached and nearly convicted. And the 14th Amendment was passed and ratified. Johnson began to fear that if Davis were tried and acquitted--a very real possibility with a Virginia jury--he (Johnson) would be

impeached again and removed from office. For a variety of reasons, no significant action was taken until after the 1868 election.

In an unusual twist, Chase made known to Davis' attorneys, a distinguished group of northern and southern litigators, his opinion that the third section of the 14th Amendment nullified the indictment against Davis. His contention was that by stripping the right to vote from high Confederate officials, a punishment for treasonable activities had been legislated, so Davis could not be punished again for the same crime. Davis' friends reminded his lawyers that Davis (who was in Europe and out of telegraphic range) wanted a trial because he saw it as an opportunity to vindicate both himself and the actions of the Confederacy, i.e. the constitutional right to secede. Davis' lawyers, however, pointed out that Davis' life was at stake, and there was a general agreement that they could not pass up the opportunity to arrange what they believed to be an honorable settlement. One of the attorneys later wrote Davis that the defense team also felt that if they could establish a precedent based on the 14th Amendment, it would lift the threat of prosecution for other Confederate leaders as well.

On November 30, 1868, Davis' lawyers filed a motion requiring that the government attorneys show cause why the indictment (the latest of at least four indictments which had been handed down with the same charge--another long story) should not be quashed. A hearing on the motion was held before Chase and Underwood on December 3-4, and on the 5th they announced their finding. The vote was split--Chase favoring laying aside the indictment, and Underwood, who had overseen the grand juries responsible for the indictment, wanting the case to be tried. Chase's anger with Underwood was obvious, and he stated for the record why he believed the 14th Amendment exempted Davis from further prosecution.

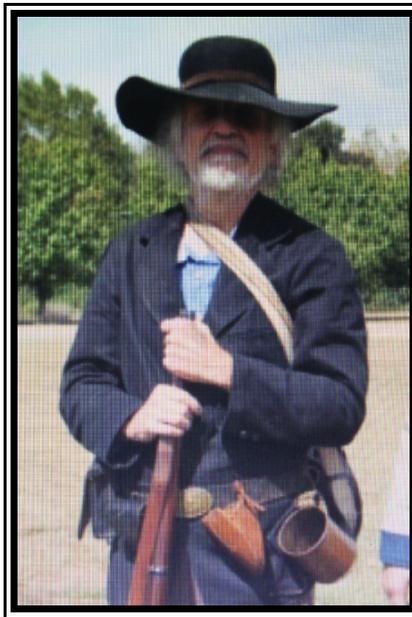
The certificate of division between Chase and Underwood was forwarded to the Supreme Court, and the indictment technically remained pending, but there would be no more action taken. It was clear that Chase would favor overturning a guilty verdict, making the government hesitant to proceed. The Davis case remained on the circuit court docket for February 15, 1869, but the government indicated at that time that it would not prosecute (*nolle prosequi*). The indictment was, therefore, dismissed, as were indictments against thirty-seven other ex-Confederates, including Robert E. Lee. Davis' lawyers contacted the Justice Department to make sure that other indictments against him in Washington and Tennessee were not going to be prosecuted.

**Note:** While the full story of the case remains to be told, there are a couple of articles which provide good background information. Eberhard P. Deutsch, "United States v. Jefferson Davis: Constitutional Issues in the Trial for Treason," *American Bar Association Journal*, 52 (Feb. and March 1966): 139-45, 263-68, deals with the legal matters of the case. Roy F. Nichols, "United States vs. Jefferson Davis, 1865-1869," *American Historical Review*, 31 (Jan. 1926): 266-84, covers many of the

political issues involved. Bradley T. Johnson's detailed court record is reprinted in Davis, *Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist*, edited by Dunbar Rowland (10 vols., 1923), 7:138-227. No work has been done on public perception of the case in North and South. The involvement of influential northerners, with Horace Greeley at the center of activity, was a major factor in what transpired. There is also much left to be written about the maneuvering of Chase, Johnson, and the Justice Department. *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, which includes all known documents from Davis' birth through 1840.



## TIME WARP:



**Newt Knight Returns?  
Spooky ain't it!**



## HEAD'S UP!

PineFest at Landrum's Country Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am until 5:00 pm.

Like last year we're there to meet and greet and entertain the folks that come. We'll be over where we normally encamp, and we need to have plenty of things to do good "show and tell" stories for the people.

Hopefully Mr. John Parker will have his cannon there and it will, of course be a real crowd pleaser.

Try to be there at least by 8:30am so you can get filled in, checked out and ready to meet the public!

This is also a good recruitment chance so we will have a small table with membership applications plus a little bit of other information.

**ALERT! We have a Gun Show coming up also! We'll need some people for the desk and some people dressed up with their shootin' irons! Maybe John's Cannon?**

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