



# The Southern Advocate

The Quarterly Newsletter of the  
**Oklahoma Division**

**Sons of Confederate Veterans**

<http://oklahomascv.org/>



*"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." (Lt. Gen. Stephen Dill Lee, Commander General, United Confederate Veterans, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1906)*

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## Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



### Commanders Comments

Allen Harrison, Oklahoma Division Commander

I trust Compatriots and their families throughout the Division had a very happy and thoughtful Thanksgiving. With all the troubles in this world, we in the United States of America have much to be thankful for. Being Oklahomans, we have even more to be thankful for than many of our fellow Compatriots in the Confederacy.

Work continues on a draft bill for an Oklahoma SCV license tag. The bill writer should have it done by mid-December. At that time we can actively seek legislators to sponsor the bill.

With Christmas coming so near, we turn our attention to family and friends. We reflect on the year past and measure our successes and short comings. We look forward to a New Year, a clean slate, to make our mark through work and dedication in our careers, church and family. Our work in the SCV is never done, but, each day brings new ideas to better serve our camp, brigade and division.

When we think we are too busy or too tired to serve our members and grow our camps, think of our ancestors. At this time of year in 1864, they were following their commanders through snow covered mountains, nearly barefoot. Some were subsisting on parched corn in our deep-south states. Still others were defending the trenches of Petersburg with little hope of victory. They kept fighting until there was no fight left in them. We must keep up the fight today to defend their honor and sacrifice in their gallant cause to throw off the yoke of tyranny. Yours for the South.



Choctaws discover lost Civil War veterans. Historic preservation workers install the tombstone of Tecumseh King at King Cemetery near Kinta, OK. (Published in the August 2014 issue of *Biskinik*, the official publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, by Brandon Frye. Courtesy of Rocky Sumpter via James Catron.)



## Virtual Library

One of the goals of the International SCV's Vision 2016 plan is to become the premier authority on matters relating to the Confederate Period. The Oklahoma Division Strategic Plan called for the Division Historian to create a virtual library. The purpose of the library is to provide a source to Division compatriots that will enable them to find appropriate books on subjects that will help them become more knowledgeable of Southern history as it relates to the Confederate Period.

The Virtual Library is now installed on the Division website. It contains recommended reading that will help us with our charge to guard the Confederate soldier's good name, his history, and his virtues and to perpetuate his principles and ideals, and to fulfill our duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations.

The library is divided into five categories: Colonial Period to 1860, Confederate Period – 1861-1865, War of Southern Independence, Indian Territory in the War of Southern Independence and Southern History and Culture. The selected books should give the reader a good general education on the topics covered.

Readers may recognize that not all of the books are by Southern authors. The important factor is not where the author lives or where he or she was educated or has taught, but whether or not he or she presents the historical facts accurately and objectively, without personal bias one way or the other and without injecting presentism into their works.

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## Visit the Oklahoma Division Website

If you haven't visited the Oklahoma Division website in a while, you should do so again. It is filled with useful information and great photos of many of the Division's camps' activities. The Division Newsletter is also archived on the website. Also, visit our newest website page, the Virtual Library. For those with out-of-state contacts, the website is a great way to showcase the Division. Pass it along. The webmaster has done a superlative job with the website, and it's well worth periodic visits: [www.oklahomascv.org](http://www.oklahomascv.org). Also, don't forget the Division Facebook page.

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### Calendar of Events

January 10	– Winter DEC Meeting – Midwest City
February 6-7	– Stephen D. Lee Institute - Dallas
March 2	– Texas Independence Day
March 4	– Confederate Flag Day

## Indianapolis Confederate POW Monument

Allen Harrison, Division Commander

You may remember an e-mail I forwarded some time ago from the SCV camp in Indianapolis, IN. The camp is raising funds to restore a Confederate Memorial in that city. In addition to fundraising they would like to locate compatriots in the Oklahoma Division descended from the men listed below. The men memorialized in Indiana died at Camp Morton, a Union POW camp at Indianapolis.

I am suggesting we "pass the hat" at our next camp meetings for donations to this worthy cause. To refresh your memories on the memorial, go to the Division Newsletter for July—September at Page 9 for a very good article on the subject. Additionally, if any of you had an ancestor who died at the camp, please advise Compatriot Brian Blevins at [bblevins@live.com](mailto:bblevins@live.com). The Indian Territory soldiers who died at Camp Morton are:

W.O. Buckner, Co. G, 1<sup>st</sup> Creek Mounted Rifles – Died on 3-1-1864

Joseph Gardener, Co. F, 2<sup>nd</sup> Choctaw Rgt. – Died on 2-9-1864

R. McFarland, Co. C, 2<sup>nd</sup> Choctaw Rgt. – Died on 12-8-1863

James Wilkinson, Co. E, 2<sup>nd</sup> Choctaw Rgt. – Died on 1-24-1864

*Editor's Note: The project is being undertaken by the Indiana members of the SCV Headquarters Camp, MG William D. McCain.*

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## Battle Scarred: Franklin Exhibit

By Rex Cash – Contributed by Allen Harrison

This past weekend I had the opportunity to see a temporary exhibit titled "Battle Scarred" on display at the Carnton Plantation at Franklin, TN until April 26, 2015. It is made up of items from several collections with many of the items rarely publicly displayed. It's not a huge display, but it's definitely worth your time and the \$10 admission if you're anywhere near the area. It includes many personal items from the lowliest privates to the highest generals including:

1. General Hood's hat, gloves and crutches,
2. The battle torn saddle General John Adam's was riding when he met his death at Franklin,
3. General Cleburne's pistol and other items,
4. Capt. Tod Carter's sword and other items.

<http://www.battleoffranklintrust.org/battleScarred.htm>



## Portsmouth Light Artillery Norfolk Light Artillery Richmond Howitzers

Ken Cook, Division Historian

The Portsmouth Light Artillery was organized at Portsmouth, VA in 1808. It was mustered into Confederate service on April 1, 1862. Its first action was against the USS *Lockwood* on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The first action against the Union army was during the Seven Days battles. The battery served with the Army of Northern Virginia through the 1862 Maryland Campaign. It was disbanded on October 4, 1862. The men were reassigned to the Norfolk Light Artillery Blues and the Lynchburg Beauregard Rifles.

The Norfolk Light Artillery Blues was organized at Norfolk on February 22, 1828, as a state militia company and social club. The battery members called themselves the Blues because of their dark blue uniforms. The Blues were mustered into Confederate service as the Light Artillery Blues on June 8, 1861, for the duration of the war. The men exchanged their blue uniforms for Confederate gray. The battery was reorganized on March 26, 1862. The Blues served in every engagement of the Army of Northern Virginia from their muster to the end of the War.

George Wyeth Randolph, a grandson of Thomas Jefferson, organized the Richmond Howitzers on November 9, 1859, in response to John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry. The battery grew into a battalion by 1861. The Richmond Howitzers were mustered into Confederate service on April 21, 1861. As did the Norfolk Light Artillery Blues, the Richmond Howitzers participated in every engagement of the Army of Northern Virginia from their muster to the end of the War. Both units took part in the Confederate barrage on Cemetery Ridge on the third day of Gettysburg.

As with other Confederate units after the war, the Virginia artillery units were disbanded. On November 8, 1877, the Norfolk Light Artillery and the Richmond Howitzers, along with other militia artillery batteries were organized as the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Artillery, Virginia Volunteers. The Portsmouth Light Artillery joined the Battalion on July 18, 1891.

The Battalion was called into Federal service on June 18, 1916, for Mexican border duty. The Battalion was mustered into Federal service again on June 29, 1917. On August 5, the Battalion was re-designated 1<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery, Virginia National Guard as a unit of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. It served in France with the 29<sup>th</sup> during World War I.

On October 25, 1922, the Battalion was again re-designated, this time as 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 111<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery of the Virginia National Guard. The Battalion remained part of the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and served with the Division during World War II. (See the Third Quarter 2014 issue of *The Southern Advocate* for the World War II history of the Stonewall Brigade and 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.)

Today the 111<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion remains part of the historic Stonewall Brigade. Battery A is descended from the Richmond Howitzers, Battery B from the Norfolk Light Artillery Blues and Battery C from the Portsmouth Light Artillery.

The 111<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion was called into Federal service in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Their mission was to provide force protection for the installations within the Military District of Washington. In 2004, the Battalion was called into Federal service once again and deployed to Iraq.



Regimental crest of the 111<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery, "First Virginia Artillery",  
116<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team (Stonewall Brigade),  
Virginia National Guard



When Granny was asked about the so called Civil War her reply was "Oh, you mean when the Yankees invaded America"? (Contributed by James Catron)



## Chaplain's Corner

Published in the *Belo Herald* (Oct. 2014)  
Newsletter of Col. A. H. Belo, Camp No. 49, Dallas, TX

### Demons!

Many of us are concerned over the ineffectiveness of our confederation. For all of our conferences, campaigns, movements, events and activities we are seemingly stuck in a rut and going nowhere. As someone once said, "The mountain labors and brings forth a mouse." What is it that makes our efforts mediocre when they could be miraculous? Could it be that we are being hindered by our own demons?" Now, the demons to which I refer are not floating in the air above us like Humming Birds inspecting a bright red flower. They are within our ranks. And, I venture to name three such spirits which may be found among us today.

First, there is the "fighting demon." Of course, there is a fighting spirit that is good and proper. We are to endure hardness and fight the good fight. We need an aroused indignation against those who oppose us and all their works. Some of our members are peaceful because they do not believe anything enough, or they are too indifferent toward our cause to fight for it. I heard of a soldier who was asked how many of the enemy did he kill. "None," was his reply. "But, I got as many of them as they got of me." Unfortunately many of our members are just about as effective. We need a fighting spirit. However, too often we are fighting each other instead of our common enemy. One of the greatest dangers to our cause is not from without, but from this demon within.

Then, there is the "frivolous demon." We all like having a good time, and certainly our meetings should be enjoyable. But there is an inherent seriousness in our cause which requires that our manner and conduct match our purpose.

Finally, there is the "fed-up demon." I call it this for lack of a better term. There is perhaps nothing more discouraging to our membership than to see someone who has worked long and hard for our Cause leave the SCV in disgust. We all get tired "in" the fight. But, we must never get tired "of" the fight. We will win some, we may lose some, but we must never quit. Our Confederate forefathers fought to defend our country. Now, they are depending on us to defend their honor. To do this we must repel the demons that beset us and prevent us from fully accomplishing our mission. Remember: "To you, sons of Confederate Veterans, we submit the vindication of the cause for which we fought ..."

This is the responsibility of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, it was not given to anyone else, therefore the Charge is, and must be, our defining characteristic. For the sake of our Confederate fathers and our proud Southern heritage, we must go forth into battle believing that God is our Champion and Vindicator. We must believe that as we trust Him and follow Him, He will strengthen and guide us to victory over the enemies of truth. Psalm 18:2&3 states, "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I

will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from my enemies." Then, verse 47 goes on to tell us, "It is God that avengeth me . . . ."

It is my prayer and sincere desire that our Lord bless each of you in His service and in service to our just and most worthy Cause. Deo Vindice. Heb. 10:30 . . . .

Bro. Len Patterson, Th.D (1941-2013)  
Past Chaplain, Army of Trans-Mississippi

(Contributed by Jeff Paulk)

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## Camp News and Activities

Camp Lt. Col. Jackson F. McCurtain of Moore announces its speaker for their 2015 Confederate Memorial Day service. He is H. K. Edgerton, a Black Confederate, who has been a tireless worker for our cause and has received the Hunley Award from the SCV for his efforts. We are indeed fortunate to have him come the long distance to be with us.

Further details about the event will be forthcoming, but for now, those in the Oklahoma City area please place this on your calendar and make every effort to attend. For those outside the Oklahoma City area, if you are in the area at this special time, please know that you are welcome to be a part of this unique opportunity. The Memorial Day service will be at Fairlawn Cemetery in Oklahoma City.

This event is co-sponsored by UDC Chapters 1181 and 2127 of Oklahoma City, Camp McCurtain and Camp Capt. Clem Vann Rogers of Oklahoma City. (Contributed by Larry Logan)

Camp BG Stand Watie of Ardmore/Madill had a black powder shooting event on Saturday, October 11. The event was held on the farm of Camp Commander James Catron. Division Commander Allen Harrison was in attendance, so he and Commander Catron had an opportunity to discuss all things Confederate. It was a good event for conversation and preparation of rifles for deer season. Unfortunately, they were having so much fun, they forget to take photos. (Contributed by Allen Harrison)

On August 4, men of Camp Lt. Col. Jackson F. McCurtain of Moore, named for a great Choctaw warrior, Confederate officer and later Chief of the Choctaw Nation, were informed of a situation that existed in a cemetery in northern Grady County named Naples Cemetery, formed in 1864. The cemetery only had enough money to mow once a year, and at this time was grown up to heights taller than most of the men in the camp. They quickly found that the cemetery contained the graves of at least ten Confederate soldiers, some being described as unknown. Through intensive contacts that included an SCV member in Mississippi they were able to make contact with the cemetery caretaker and gather additional information. They donated enough funds to have the permanent mowing person

mow the cemetery now, and then commit to caring for the cemetery as a supplement to the once a year mowing. Unfortunately, the person who mows the cemetery had a breakdown of his machinery and has never been able to do the mowing they agreed to do.

Not only are these heroes now enjoying a decent final resting place but the other 250-plus souls are as well. The cemetery is approximately two acres.

The men of the camp feel this is an extremely valuable camp project, and they are doing a meaningful and worthwhile task. (Contributed by Larry Logan)



Naples Cemetery before restoration work began

The men made the pilgrimage to the cemetery on two Saturdays in September and one in November and were able to get about seventy-five per cent of the cemetery in great shape.

The final leg to complete the mission will take place in mid-April of next year. The camp is planning a small initial memorial service on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend next year. There are five Confederate veterans with stones identifying them as such, one has a stone in the cemetery but is buried in a mass grave in Louisiana where he was killed in action; one is buried in an unmarked grave that at this time we cannot locate; and six are buried together in graves that are classified as unknown. Five of the six have crosses of honor on their graves.



Camp Commander Jerry Patrick



Compatriot Rod Beckenhauer



Naples Cemetery after the restoration







The two above photos are before and after views of the graves of the six unknown Confederate soldiers



Men of Camp Lt. Col. Jackson F. McCurtain who restored the cemetery (L to R): Rod Beckenhauer, Jerry Patrick, Larry Logan, Richard McDonald, Carter Holland, Jimmy Carter, Dallas Lee Carter

On November 23, the Oklahoma Division's newest camp, Pvt. W. D. Chain, No. 2253, located in Cooperton in Kiowa County, held its charter ceremony. Camp officers are Matthew Harms, Commander; David Chain, Lt. Commander; Mike Chain, Adjutant; LeRoy Chain, Quartermaster; Ethan C. Chain, Historian; Christopher A. Chain, Color Sergeant and Leon Chain, Chaplain. The camp was chartered with ten members.



The Chain family



Indian Nations-Red River Brigade Commander, Virgil Chain, on the left and Commander Matt Harms, third from right, holding the camp charter and his membership certificate



Brigade Commander Virgil Chain on the far left. Commander Matt Harms is holding the camp charter. (Contributed by Allen Harrison)

## Winter DEC Meeting

Our next DEC meeting will be held at Golden Corral Restaurant, 617 South Air Depot Blvd, Midwest City, OK on January 10, 2015, at 11:00 a.m.

Topics to be discussed: Division Convention, April 4, 2015, SCV License Tags, Bryce Hill and James Catron; Recruiting and Retention, Past-Commander Larry Logan; Division Dues, Allen Harrison; Guardian Program, Jim Herndon; and Division Membership Directory, Jim Orebaugh. There will be other subjects added by meeting time.



## Former NAACP Member Speaks to Sons of Confederate Veterans

Matt Winter, Staff Writer  
Newport (TN) *Plain Talk*

NEWPORT—The Sons of Confederate Veterans had a special guest speaker at their monthly meeting on Tuesday night. H.K. Edgerton, an SCV member, has a wealth of knowledge on the Civil War, but is viewing it from a different perspective. Edgerton is one of many African-American members of the SCV.

As a former member and President of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Asheville NC, Edgerton said he saw that many of its members had become too radical with their views on Southern heritage and various Confederate symbols. Upon his departure from the group, he joined the SCV and has been speaking at events and gatherings ever since. Edgerton even walked from Asheville to Dallas, Texas, carrying a Confederate Battle Flag in hopes of raising awareness and spreading what he calls “the truth” about certain events during the Civil War.

Edgerton said that he sees the Civil War as something that is inherent to African-American culture, and not just from the perspective of slavery. Edgerton said that in schools today teachers aren’t teaching some of the key aspects of the war, including how former slaves picked up arms and fought with the Confederacy to protect what they considered to be their new homeland. During his time with the SCV, Edgerton said that both African-Americans and Caucasians have viewed him as treasonous.

During the ‘60s Edgerton marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and said that he learned a very valuable lesson at the time. “Martin Luther King said there was no reason to take up the fight over the Confederate Flag. King said leave it alone and let us battle other things we can control. Too many people of every color need to leave it alone,” Edgerton said.

Edgerton spoke about the lesser known Corwin Amendment to the Constitution that was never ratified by the states. He said that with this amendment it would have never been possible for slavery to end. Edgerton went on to say that the Emancipation Proclamation was full of lies. “Saved us? Saved us from what? Lincoln let African-Americans starve and said that they would never be equal to the white man. He told them they would be better off leaving the country.”

Edgerton went on to give a history on what he deemed to be the true meaning of the Confederate Battle Flag and its connection to St. Andrew. “People have said that this flag is evil, odious and a blight. How can a Christian flag be such a thing? The whole world knows that the Christian Cross of St. Andrew has been a symbol of the fight against tyranny for centuries.”

In terms of what he hears from day to day, Edgerton said that people both African-American and Caucasian need to know what he calls “the truth”. As for the state of Tennessee, Edgerton said, “This might be Unionist Territory but it ain’t New York City. Pull these people aside who are talking out of their necks, and let them know.”

Edgerton spoke about the Underground Railroad and how many African Americans came back to the south to fight in the war. He also mentioned the mulatto child named Jim Limber who was taken in by Confederate President Jefferson Davis during the war.

He went on to further express more of his feelings towards Abraham Lincoln whom he feels was never a true savior to African-Americans. “His Yankee army was raping, robbing and killing both black and white women and children during the war. You’re going to give me this man and tell me he’s my savior?”

As a veteran of the military himself, Edgerton said that it’s not right for entities to deny the Sons of Confederate Veterans access to various parades and other gatherings. He feels as if the heritage of these group is more important than their perceived intent. “When you strip away an Army man’s colors, you strip him of his pride. You’re taking away the man himself when you take away his colors.”

Edgerton stressed that Southern heritage and way of life is something that is constantly being threatened and that is something that is in dire need of protection. He once again stressed the fact that these symbols are something that need to be left alone. “To all my Yankee friends, you can leave these things alone. There will be a time when Southern Christian white folks will find out what a Mason-Dixon Line is.”

Before finishing his speech, Edgerton expressed his hope that someday these colors would fly again in parades and other events where they once weren’t accepted. He wants it to be viewed as a teaching tool and not as a blemish on the country’s history. Edgerton finished his speech by reciting the poem “I Am Their Flag” in which he ends with, “I am history. I am heritage, not hate. I am the inspiration of valor from the past. Look away Dixie Land. I am their flag.”

Commander Bill Quinn thanked Edgerton for coming and for everything that he is doing to keep Southern heritage alive. Quinn invites anyone whether they are members or not to come and join the SCV for a meeting and see what the group is truly about. “As you can see we aren’t racist, we are far from it. We have many African-American members. We want people to know we aren’t associated with these radical groups. For us, it’s all about pride and keeping our heritage alive,” Quinn said.



H. K. Edgerton speaking at Camp Maj. James T. Huff, Newport, TN



## Time's Been Cruel to Confederate Gravestones

Josh Edwards, Hattiesburg (MS) *American*

VICKSBURG – Time has been cruel to Henry R. Allen's memory. Allen was barely out of boyhood when he was killed in Vicksburg, 500 miles from his home in Missouri. For untold years, the slab of stone at his gravesite perhaps the only marker dedicated to the young Confederate private's eighteen years on this Earth was broken and being swallowed by grass at Cedar Hill Cemetery.

Allen's gravestone and three others from the 19<sup>th</sup> century were recently repaired in an effort led by the local John C. Pemberton Camp of Sons of Confederate Veterans. Allen's grave was discovered broken from its base and flat on the ground; its edges long covered in grass. "It looks a lot better than it did laying on the ground with lawnmowers running over it," Wayne McMaster, commander of the local SCV camp, said, after repairs were made. "Although it was probably a lawnmower that took it down."

Allen, a member of Company C of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, Missouri Infantry, was eighteen when he was killed during the second Union assault on Vicksburg on May 22, 1863. He was one of five men from his regiment killed in heavy fighting near Stockade Redan. After his death, someone — perhaps family members — placed a simple tombstone at his grave engraved with his name, age, death date, military unit and the words "killed at the Siege of Vicksburg." It's unclear when the gravestone was placed, though it is unlikely a stone would have been erected for the private during the 47-day siege of the city. "Unless we can find some history on it somewhere, it's almost impossible to tell," McMaster said.

Under city policy, tombstones are considered private property, and the responsibility for repair of damaged stones falls on family members. For people like Allen, who died so young and so far away from home, it's unlikely any family member has visited in more than a century.

Many other graves throughout the cemetery are in a state of disrepair with no ancestors alive or nearby to fix them. SCV members take responsibility for graves of Confederate soldiers buried in Soldiers' Rest and throughout the cemetery.

The recent repair job extended to the stones of Jerry McKenna who died in 1888 and Jacob Weis who died in 1883. Neither man has a marker identifying him as a CSA soldier. The fourth stone repaired — J.G. Sparrow — displays a large CSA logo. The repair process is tedious and requires shovels, clamps, wire brushes, and industrial epoxy, and plenty of bug spray to kill the unwanted creepy crawlers who live under neglected, broken tombstones. Neglected graves and ancestors are as old as the cemetery itself.

Some of the men who are buried near Soldiers' Rest were Confederate soldiers who died at a veterans' home known as the Confederate Annex, said SCV member Eddy Cresap, who assisted with the gravestone repair. "When the old veterans

died, and their families didn't come pick them up, that's where they were buried generally," Cresap said. That's not to say that family members of long-dead Confederates don't visit the graves at Soldiers' Rest or other dedicated Confederate plots in the cemetery. Soldiers' Rest, which contains the graves of Confederates killed during the Siege of Vicksburg, remains a major tourist attraction for people seeking a family connection to the war, McMaster said. "This cemetery brings a lot of people to Vicksburg," McMaster said.

Those visitors are getting views of broken tombstones and dead trees, John Bullard, who lives near the cemetery, said during a recent public hearing on the cemetery. Bullard presented the city with photos of tree stumps covered in poison ivy and trees that had been scarred by lawnmowers and weed trimmers. "You give me six men with a pick-up truck and two chainsaws, and it can be fixed in a day," Bullard said. "It's just not being done, and the whole area is like that."



1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Alonzo Cushing, Battery A, 4<sup>th</sup> US Artillery, finally got his due — the Medal of Honor — on November 6, 2014, in a White House ceremony, more than 151 years after the heroic actions that cost him his life on the third day of Gettysburg.



# Christmas in the Confederate White House

By Varina Davis

*The wife of Confederate President Jefferson Davis wrote this article describing how the Davis family spent the Christmas of 1864 in the Confederate White House. It was published in The New York World, December 13, 1896, and has since been reprinted often. This excerpt was obtained via the website "The American Civil War, 1861-1865."*

...Rice, flour, molasses and tiny pieces of meat, most of them sent to the President's wife anonymously to be distributed to the poor, had all been weighed and issued, and the playtime of the family began, but like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky came the information that the orphans at the Episcopalian home had been promised a Christmas tree and the toys, candy and cakes must be provided, as well as one pretty prize for the most orderly girl among the orphans. The kind-hearted confectioner was interviewed by our committee of managers, and he promised a certain amount of his simpler kinds of candy, which he sold easily a dollar and a half a pound, but he drew the line at cornucopias to hold it, or sugared fruits to hang on the tree, and all the other vestiges of Christmas creations which had lain on his hands for years. The ladies dispersed in anxious squads of toy-hunters, and each one turned over the store of her children's treasures for a contribution to the orphans' tree, my little ones rushed over the great house looking up their treasure: eyeless dolls, three-legged horses, tops with the upper peg broken off, rubber tops, monkeys with all the squeak gone silent and all the ruck of children's toys that gather in a nursery closet.

Some small feathered chickens and parrots which nodded their heads in obedience to a weight beneath them were furnished with new tail feathers, lambs minus much of their wool were supplied with a cotton wool substitute, rag dolls were plumped out and recovered with clean cloth, and the young ladies painted their fat faces in bright colors and furnished them with beads for eyes.

But the tug of war was how to get something with which to decorate the orphans' tree. Our man servant, Robert Brown, was much interested and offered to make the prize toy. He contemplated a "sure enough house, with four rooms." His part in the domestic service was delegated to another and he gave himself over in silence and solitude to the labors of the architect.

My sister painted mantel shelves, door panels, pictures and frames for the walls, and finished with black grates in which there blazed a roaring fire, which was pronounced marvelously realistic. We all made furniture of twigs and pasteboard, and my mother made pillows, mattresses, sheets and pillow cases for the two little bedrooms.

Christmas Eve a number of young people were invited to come and string apples and popcorn for the trees; a neighbor very deft in domestic arts had tiny candle moulds made and furnished all the candles for the tree. However the puzzle and triumph of all was the construction of a large number of cornucopias. At last someone suggested a conical block of wood, about which the drawing paper could be wound and pasted. In a little book shop a number of small, highly colored pictures cut out and ready to apply were unearthed, and our old confectioner friend, Mr. Piazzzi, consented, with a broad smile, to give "all the love verses the young people wanted to roll with the candy."

About twenty young men and girls gathered around small tables in one of the drawing rooms of the mansion and the cornucopias were begun. The men wrapped the squares of candy, first reading the "sentiments" printed upon them, such as "Roses are red, violets blue, sugar's sweet and so are you," "If you love me as I love you no knife can cut our love in two." The fresh young faces, wreathed in smiles, nodded attention to the reading, while with their small deft hands they gined [?] the cornucopias and pasted on the pictures. Where were the silk tops to come from? Trunks of old things were turned out and snippings of silk and even woolen of bright colors were found to close the tops, and some of the young people twisted sewing silk into cords with which to draw the bags up. The beauty of those home-made things astonished us all, for they looked quite "custom-made," but when the "sure enough house" was revealed to our longing gaze the young people clapped their approbation, while Robert, whose sense of dignity did not permit him to smile, stood the impersonation of successful artist and bowed his thanks for our approval. Then the coveted eggnog was passed around in tiny glass cups and pronounced good. Crisp home-made ginger snaps and snowy lady cake completed the refreshments of Christmas Eve. The children allowed to sit up and be noisy in their way as an indulgence took a sip of eggnog out of my cup, and the eldest boy confided to his father: "Now I just know this is Christmas." In most of the houses in Richmond these same scenes were enacted, certainly in every one of the homes of the managers of the Episcopalian Orphanage. A bowl of eggnog was sent to the servants, and a part of everything they coveted of the dainties.

At last quiet settled on the household and the older members of the family began to stuff stockings with molasses candy, red apples, an orange, small whips plaited by the family with high-colored crackers, worsted reins knitted at home, paper dolls, teetotums made of large horn bottoms and a match which could spin indefinitely, balls of worsted rags wound hard and covered with old kid gloves, a pair of pretty woolen gloves for each, either cut of cloth and embroidered on the back or knitted by some deft hand out of home-spun wool. For the President there were a pair of chamois-skin

riding gauntlets exquisitely embroidered on the back with his monogram in red and white silk, made, as the giver wrote, under the guns of Fortress Monroe late at night for fear of discovery. There was a hemstitched linen handkerchief, with a little sketch in indelible ink in one corner; the children had written him little letters, their grandmother having held their hands, the burthen of which compositions was how they loved their dear father. For one of the inmates of the home, who was greatly loved but whose irritable temper was his prominent failing, there was a pretty cravat, the ends of which were embroidered, as was the fashion of the day. The pattern chosen was simple and on it was pinned a card with the word "amiable" to complete the sentence. One of the [missing] received a present of an illuminated copy of Solomon's proverbs found in the same old store from which the pictures came. He studied it for some time and announced: "I have changed my opinion of Solomon, he uttered such unnecessary platitudes -- now why should he have said 'The foolishness of a fool is his folly'?"

On Christmas morning the children awoke early and came in to see their toys. They were followed by the Negro women, who one after another "caught" us by wishing us a merry Christmas before we could say it to them, which gave them a right to a gift. Of course, there was a present for everyone, small though it might be, and one who had been born and brought up at our plantation was vocal in her admiration of a gay handkerchief. As she left the room she ejaculated: "Lord knows mistress knows our insides; she just got the very thing I wanted."

For me there were six cakes of delicious soap, made from the grease of ham boiled for a family at Farmville, a skein of exquisitely fine gray linen thread spun at home, a pincushion of some plain brown cotton material made by some poor woman and stuffed with wool from her pet sheep, and a little baby hat plaited by the orphans and presented by the industrious little pair who sewed the straw together. They pushed each other silently to speak, and at last mutely offered the hat, and considered the kiss they gave the sleeping little one ample reward for the industry and far above the fruit with which they were laden. Another present was a fine, delicate little baby frock without an inch of lace or embroidery upon it, but the delicate fabric was set with fairy stitches by the dear invalid neighbor who made it, and it was very precious in my eyes. There were also a few of Swinburne's best songs bound in wall-paper and a chamois needlebook left for me by young Mr. P., now succeeded to his title in England. In it was a Brobdingnagian thimble "for my own finger, you know," said the handsome, cheerful young fellow.

After breakfast, at which all the family, great and small, were present, came the walk to St. Paul's Church. We did not use our carriage on Christmas or, if possible to avoid it, on Sunday. The saintly Dr. Minnegerode preached a sermon on Christian love, the introit was sung by a beautiful young society woman, and the angels might have joyfully listened. Our chef did wonders with the turkey and roast beef, and drove the children quite out of their propriety by a spun sugar hen, life-size, on a nest full of blanc mange eggs. The mince pie and plum pudding made them feel, as one of the gentlemen laughingly remarked, "like their jackets were buttoned," a strong description of repletion which I have never forgotten. They waited with great impatience and evident dyspeptic symptoms for the crowning amusement of the day, "the children's tree." My eldest boy, a chubby little fellow of seven, came to me several times to whisper: "Do you think I ought to give the orphans my I.D. studs?" When told no, he beamed with the delight of an approving conscience. All throughout the afternoon first one little head and then another popped in at the door to ask: "Isn't it 8 o'clock yet?," burning with impatience to see the "children's tree."

When at last we reached the basement of St. Paul's Church the tree burst upon their view like the realization of Aladdin's subterranean orchard, and they were awed by its grandeur.

The orphans sat mute with astonishment until the opening hymn and prayer and the last amen had been said, and then they at a signal warily and slowly gathered around the tree to receive from a lovely young girl their allotted present. The different gradations from joy to ecstasy which illuminated their faces was "worth two years of peaceful life" to see. The President became so enthusiastic that he undertook to help in the distribution, but worked such wild confusion giving everything asked for into their outstretched hands, that we called a halt, so he contented himself with unwinding one or two tots from a network of strung popcorn in which they had become entangled and taking off all apples he could when unobserved, and presenting them to the smaller children. When at last the house was given to the "honor girl" she moved her lips without emitting a sound, but held it close to her breast and went off in a corner to look and be glad without witnesses.

"When the lights were fled, the garlands dead, and all but we departed" we also went home to find that Gen. Lee had called in our absence, and many other people. Gen. Lee had left word that he had received a barrel of sweet potatoes for us, which had been sent to him by mistake. He did not discover the mistake until he had taken his share (a dishful) and given the rest to the soldiers! We wished it had been much more for them and him.

The night closed with a "starvation" party, where there were no refreshments, at a neighboring house. The rooms lighted as well as practicable, someone willing to play dance music on the piano and plenty of young men and girls comprised the entertainment. Sam Weller's soiry [*sic*, soiree refers to a party or reception held in the evening], consisting of boiled mutton and capers, would have been a royal feast in the Confederacy. The officers, who rode into town with their



long cavalry boots pulled well up over their knees, but splashed up their waists, put up their horses and rushed to the places where their dress uniform suits had been left for safekeeping. They very soon emerged, however, in full toggerly and entered into the pleasures of their dance with the bright-eyed girls, who many of them were fragile as fairies, but worked like peasants for their home and country. These young people are gray-haired now, but the lessons of self-denial, industry and frugality in which they became past mistresses then, have made of them the most dignified, self-reliant and tender women I have ever known -- all honor to them.

So, in the interchange of the courtesies and charities of life, to which we could not add its comforts and pleasures, passed the last Christmas in the Confederate mansion.



German political refugee, Dr. Karl (Charles) Minnigerode, moved to Williamsburg in 1842 to take up a professorship at the College of William and Mary. He became close to Judge Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, a professor of law, and boarded with him on Nicholson Street in what Colonial Williamsburg named, after the judge's father, the St. George Tucker House. In 1856, Dr. Minnigerode was appointed Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Richmond, called the Cathedral of the Confederacy. In the spirit of Dr. Minnigerode, each Yule season, St. George Tucker House volunteers erect a Christmas tree for guests to enjoy. (Courtesy of [www.history.org](http://www.history.org).)



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