



The Tennessee Confederate

Newsletter of the Tennessee Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans

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Hon. Russell B. Bailey, Division Commander

Allen Sullivant, Interim Editor

2001 Division Reunion to be Held in Murfreesboro

Compatriots of the Tennessee Division,

The members of Murfreesboro SCV Camp #33 and General Joseph Palmer chapter of the MOS&B would like to invite each of you to visit historic Murfreesboro for the 2001 SCV ~ MOS&B Tennessee Division Reunion.

We are making every effort to make this a memorable reunion and are using the theme "Tenting on the Old Campground". The area around the Hotel was used as a campground several times during the war. A mile down the road was the original Confederate Cemetery, across the road was the old Rutherford county fairgrounds where many UCV reunions were held, and the Ramada was the host hotel the last time that Murfreesboro Camp #33 hosted the Division Reunion in the 1980's. We have planned three days of events and hope that ya'll will attend each day.

Friday we will have a tour of Stones River Battlefield, a reception featuring a program by Dr. Michael Bradley on the Tullahoma campaign, and watch the movie "Song of the South" with Uncle Remus, Brer Rabbit and all their friends.

Saturday after the business meetings we will have a luncheon with the Real Sons and Daughters from Tennessee as guest. Past U.D.C Tennessee Division President Carolyn Kent will be the speaker. There will be a stop at the Rutherford County court house for a 100th anniversary commemoration of the Confederate monument. Shirley Jones, President of Martha Ready Morgan, U.D.C. Chapter 2487 will be the speaker. This will be followed by a tour of Evergreen cemetery and the dedication of a historical marker at the Confederate Circle. We will then go to Oakland's mansion for a reception and tour of the historic home that was the actual site of the surrender of Murfreesboro after

Confederate General N. B. Forrest's Murfreesboro raid.

The Saturday night Banquet will include music by the Caudell's, a program by Brent Lokey on Forrest and a late night showing of the movie "Pharaoh's Army". If you haven't hated Yankees in a while, you will after you watch this movie! Sunday we will have a memorial at the grave of Confederate hero Sam Davis.

We are offering a Reunion T-shirt for \$10.00 and everyone will want to buy one, as it will feature the Murfreesboro Confederate monument. Feel free to wear your Confederate uniform and bring your musket to take part in the memorial service. Ya'll Come!

In the Bonds of the Old South,
James G. Patterson, Reunion Chairman

Defending Our Heritage

Comrades in arms,

As usual, we continue to be under attack for publicly displaying anything remotely associated with our beloved Confederate States of America or expressing any pride whatsoever in the principles that our symbols embody. Here in Tennessee, this past year we have been fortunate in that there have been only a few public outcries against us, but we must never lose sight of the undercurrent here. Those against us remain ready to assemble their "politically correct" forces for their own insincere agenda whenever it suits them.

Nearby in our sister states, the hue and cry from all of those offended individuals resounds loudly. We must keep abreast of what is going on in and about the Confederation and educate ourselves as to the proper response. I believe that it takes more than just a statement repeating "Heritage Not Hate." Our opposition has educated themselves on an effective counter argument to that and we must develop our own plan of survival. We must demand respect and be able to

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explain why our principles deserve respect. To do this, each of us must study and read.

Take some time each day to review why our forefathers did what they did some 140 years ago. And realize that the underlying sentiments in the South began much earlier than that. The causes? Think economics, taxes, protection of homeland from unwanted federal army incursion. Learn what states rights was all about. States rights has its foundation in the principle that government at its lowest possible level is the best government for the people. Understand the part that slavery played in world history and in American history. Make sure that you have a good grasp on what the trade was all about here in the colonies, how it developed, and from what sources. Being apologetic about the institution merely plays into our opposition's hands.

We, as Southerners, have nothing to apologize for and our forefathers should not be judged and condemned by the standards of today's society. The Southern states did not have a monopoly on the institution of slavery and each of us should be ready to discuss, debate and defend the honor, character and integrity of our forefathers. We can do this only by thoroughly educating ourselves and we owe it to ourselves to BE PREPARED.

One most important point to be aware of is that whenever you have occasion to publicly associate yourselves with anything Southern, remember that you are being watched and judged. Be reserved, be honorable, be professional, be dignified and set a good example for all to see. We have come under attack in the last decade because of the ill conduct of a select few that have misused and mistreated our beloved symbols. We must realize that our Battle Flag has been misused by those who have an agenda far removed from anything that we stand for. Each of us must work toward rehabilitating our Flag and restoring it to its former honored position in society which it held in both North and South. Be alert, stand strong, and demand respect for our viewpoint.

KEEP IT FLYING!

John T. Wilkinson III, Heritage Defense Officer

Memphis Camp Works with Youth

The N. B. Forrest Camp #215 in Memphis continues its aggressive efforts to offer and conduct history programs in area schools.

These school programs typically last one hour and concentrate on the experiences of the "War for Southern Independence" common soldier but also include a segment on flag history, reenacting, women, children, Black Southerners, and brief mention of the true causes of the war. Presentations are made to various grade levels, from third grade through twelfth grade, and are adapted to each particular grade and area of study. To reinforce key points



Lee Millar of the N. B. Forrest Camp #215, Memphis, leads a program on Confederate history for over 150 students at Collierville Middle School.

the presenters also counter with questions to the students and give away replica Confederate money for correct answers.

Schools Chairman Lee Millar, with camp members Preston Todd, Dan Brigance, Alan Doyle, & Perry Short lead the programs, and the 52nd Regimental String Band, led by Commander Greg Todd, also join in when practicable to add some period Civil War music. Every program includes the singing of "Dixie".

Thus far this semester, the Schools Committee and Band have conducted programs in 24 public and private schools and spoken to over 4182 students and teachers. Lets all keep the truth flowing.

~ Lee Millar

A New Confederate Monument in Rogersville

Saturday, September 23, 2000 was a special day of remembrance for one of the South's fallen heroes. The Lt. Robert D. Powel Camp #1817, Sons of Confederate Veterans held a memorial service and headstone dedication for this local hero, who is their camp's namesake.

Lt. Robert Davis Powel was a native of Rogersville, Tennessee. Before the war he was one of the area's most prominent attorneys and had gone to California during the Gold Rush years of the late 1840's and early 1850's. Powel was also editor of the Rogersville newspaper before the war broke out.

When Tennessee decided to secede with her sister Southern states, Powel enlisted in Co. K of the 19th Tennessee Volunteer Infantry regiment and was elected 1st Lieutenant of Co.K, a company of Hawkins County men.

Powel volunteered with several other men to do some scouting near Cumberland Gap in September of 1861. The party got into a skirmish with a Union force in Barbour-



ville, Kentucky on September 19, 1861. During the fight, Powel was mortally wounded. Among his last words, Powel is reported to have said, when asked if he was ready to die, "I am ready."

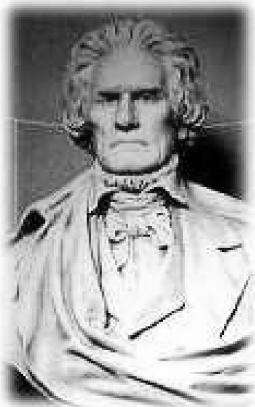
Powel's body was carried back across the Cumberland Gap and over Clinch Mountain to Rogersville and buried in the Old Presbyterian Cemetery. No grave marker was erected. Local historian Sheila Johnston believes that due to some Union sentiment in the area his grave was left unmarked to protect his body from desecration. Powel is widely known as the first Confederate soldier killed in the war outside Virginia.

The memorial service began with Lt. Robert D. Powel Camp Commander Dan Carter giving a short biography of Lt. Powel. Rev. John Mitchell gave an inspirational speech on the importance of remembering our Confederate ancestors and their fight for independence. The 19th Tennessee Volunteer Infantry Regiment Co. B, reenactment unit provided a colour guard for the event and fired a 21-gun salute to Lt. Powel. Powel's great niece Jessie Brown and great nephew James Miller were both in attendance and were presented with a folded Confederate flag in honor of the occasion.

~ Timothy R. Talbott

The Last Roll

Jimmy Allen
Died January, 2001
Savage-Goodner Camp #1513
Smithville, Tennessee



John C. Calhoun, Visionary

"Electricity, the greatest and most diffuse of all known physical agents, has been made the instrument for the transmission of thought, I will not say with the rapidity of lightning, but by lightning itself. Magic wires are stretching themselves in all directions over the earth, and when their mystic meshes shall have been united and perfected, our globe itself will become endowed with sensitiveness ~ so that whatever touches on any one point will be instantly

felt on every other." ~ John C. Calhoun foresees the Internet in a speech to the United States Senate in 1845.

Have you visited your Tennessee Division Home Page? If not, dial it up at: <http://www.tennessee-scv.org> Nearly 95,000 other folks have already taken a look at what we have to offer. Don't be left out!

Fifty Years a Prisoner

[The handsome young officer whose image is seen in the masthead of this edition of *The Tennessee Confederate* is Thomas Benton Smith. This is his story.]

Thomas Benton Smith was born February 24, 1838, in the little (and now gone) Rutherford County, Tennessee, hamlet of Mechanicsville. The Smith family would play a prominent and yet star-crossed role in the War for Southern Independence. Tom Smith's only brother, John, would die carrying the regimental colors at Murfreesboro on December 31, 1862. His cousins Dewitt Smith Jobe and Dee Smith also made the ultimate sacrifice, the former giving his life in a manner which has immortalized him for the ages, and the latter as the former's avenging angel. And then there was Tom.

A bright young man with a gift for mechanical inventiveness ~ he received a patent for a locomotive pilot at the age of 15 ~, he was educated in the local schools before entering the course of study at Western Military Institute in Nashville at the age of 16. It was long thought that he had also been, for a time, a cadet at West Point, but a search of the United States Military Academy rosters for the years he may have been a student does not show his name. The coming of The War found him working for the railroad in Nashville, an occupation he gave up in order to help raise a company of volunteers in and about Triune. That company merged with a group raised by Joel A. Battle, and eventually became Company B of the 20th Tennessee Infantry.

Through the efforts of Lt. Thomas B. Smith, Company B became the most proficient company in the regiment in terms of drill and discipline. At Shiloh, the regiment suffered over fifty percent casualties, including the capture and subsequent imprisonment of Col. Joel Battle. Upon reorganization a month after the battle, his fellow soldiers elected Thomas Benton Smith their new Colonel.

As Colonel of the 20th, he led them at Murfreesboro (where he was shot through the breast and left arm) and at Chickamauga (another, less serious wound) and on to Missionary Ridge, where his brigade commander, Col. Tyler, was wounded. As the senior field officer, he then assumed command of the brigade, and on July 29, 1864, while in front of Atlanta, he received his commission from Richmond as Brigadier General, C.S.A. He was the youngest brigadier in the Army of Tennessee. From Atlanta it was back to Tennessee with John Bell Hood, to fight at Franklin, and again at Nashville.

December 16, 1864. After being driven from their works the previous day, the devastated but still defiant Army of Tennessee took up a new line south of Nashville, extending from the Peach Orchard on the far right to the



prominence later known as Shy's Hill on the left. At the apex of Shy's Hill stood the tattered remnants of the 20th Tennessee, along with the rest of Smith's Brigade. Throughout a day-long, misting rain the defenders of the hill were on the receiving end of (according to some estimates) between three and five thousand rounds of federal artillery fire, sent their way from three directions. Finally, a few minutes after four o'clock the federal infantry attacked, sweeping the outnumbered defenders over and then off of the hill. Most of the Confederates fled, hoping to escape to fight another day, but a few did not. Among the captured was Thomas Benton Smith, who had strictly adhered to Division Commander Wm. B. Bate's order to "hold the line at all hazards".

Accompanied by only a small squad of his soldiers, Smith had continued to fight on until the hopelessness of his situation had become apparent. Pulling a small white handkerchief from his pocket, he waved it over his head while ordering his men to cease fire. Swiftly taken into custody by the jubilant federals, he had been marched only few yards down the hill and toward Nashville when he was approached by Ohio Col. William Linn McMillan, commander of a portion of the victorious federal troops. McMillan was an alcoholic who had nearly been cashiered from the service for misconduct, and at the moment he confronted Genl. Smith he may have been drunk, or perhaps simply flushed with adrenaline and "temporarily insane" from the intensity of battle. Whatever the reason, McMillan began to curse and berate Smith, whose only response according to witnesses was to state that "I am a disarmed prisoner". This simple reply further enraged McMillan, who drew his saber and struck Smith three times over the head, each blow cutting through Smith's hat and crashing into his skull. Shocked by the actions of their own officer, nearby federals rushed the severely injured Smith to a field hospital, where an attending surgeon examined the wound and remarked "Well, you are near the end of your battles, for I can see the brain oozing through the gap in your skull". The doctor was both right and wrong. Although he had indeed fought his last battle against the forces that would eventually bring his nation to its knees, the Boy General surprised his captors by recovering sufficiently enough to be sent on to the prison at Fort Warren, Massachusetts, where he remained until paroled after the end of war. At that point, only 27 years of age, Thomas Benton Smith's, fifty-eight year battle to escape a prison of a different kind began.

Returning to Nashville, Smith resumed his employment with the railroad, apparently living as normal a life as possible in those turbulent years immediately following the end of the war. He even ran for a seat in the U. S. Congress in 1870, but lost the election. But appearances were deceptive, and his remarkable recovery from his injuries proved only temporary. Periods of intense clinical depres-

sion came upon him in closer and closer intervals and finally robbed him of his ability to live independently. In 1876, he was admitted to the Tennessee state asylum, an institution more recently known as Central State Psychiatric Hospital.

From that point forward the days and years passed slowly for Thomas Benton Smith. A few attempts to resume independent living failed. However, even in those dire and depressing circumstances, he did not forget the brave men he had once commanded, nor did they forget him. Periodic reunions of the old Twentieth Tennessee Regiment were held, and Smith participated in them as fully as he was able. One such reunion was described in an article appearing in the "Confederate Veteran" magazine for December, 1910. The former Boy General was by then 72 years old...

"At a recent reunion of the 20th Tennessee Regiment at Nashville, Tenn., in the beautiful Centennial Park where was held the Tennessee Centennial Exposition in 1897, Gen. Thomas Benton Smith, an early commander of the regiment, who has been in the Tennessee Insane Asylum nearly ever since the war from a saber cut on the head after he surrendered in the battle of Nashville, was in command for a drill and short parade. The regiment was formed as a company, and the drill master, though now somewhat venerable, although he is said to have been the youngest brigadier general in the Confederacy, carried the men through the manual of Hardee's tactics as if half a century were half a year. General Smith was self-poised, as full of the animation of the old days as could be imagined. When they stood at "Right dress! Eyes right!" he said: "Throw them sticks down; you don't need them!" A picture of that scene and a repetition of all he said would be most pleasing. General Smith has times of deep depression, and is sad over his long "imprisonment", but he is always happy at Confederate gatherings, and is still a magnificent specimen of Confederate manhood."

More years passed, and with them most of his old comrades. Among the last survivors of former Confederate generals, death finally released Thomas Benton Smith from his earthly bondage on May 21, 1923. He now rests with his former comrades in the Confederate Circle of Mount Olivet Cemetery in Nashville.

Many a young and promising life fell by the wayside as a result of the vagaries of the War of 1861 ~ 1865. In comparison to Thomas Benton Smith, even those who died or suffered permanent physical injury can be described as fortunate. Who can say what was lost when this young man among men, a natural leader with an inventive mind, was stuck down by the cowardly act of a deranged foe? Who among us can know what life must have been like for Thomas Benton Smith, a "prisoner of war" for nearly half a century?

[Article by: Allen Sullivant]



Award Nominations Sought

Nominations are now being accepted for the following Division awards:

The Sam Davis Award: Presented to the Camp with the year's outstanding project.

The Jefferson Davis Award: Presented to a member of the Tennessee Division who has rendered outstanding service to the organization or contributed to the maintenance of our heritage.

The Robert E. Lee Award: Presented to an individual or organization outside the ranks of the S.C.V. who has rendered valuable service or support to any Camp, the S.C.V., or our Southern Heeritage.

The Edward Ward Carmack Award: Presented to an individual or organization for the best media coverage of the S.C.V., Tennessee Division, or our Southern Heritage.

The Tod Carter Award: Presented to the Editor of the best Camp newsletter in the Division. Representative issues must be submitted with the entry. Please submit two or three copies of three or four representative issues published within the last 12 months. Second and third place awards will also be made in this category. Judging is on a 100 points system under the following criteria:

Format ~ (25 points) ~ Appearance, masthead, layout, readability, editor's name, mailing address, volume and issue number;

Camp News ~ (30 points) ~ Reports on Camp meetings, projects, members, and activities;

Historical Content ~ (25 points) ~ Original articles and

material on the war;

National & Division News ~ (5 points) ~ Current events and news pertaining to the S.C.V.;

Editorials ~ (10 points) ~ Commentary on events of interest to the S.C.V.;

Local News ~ (5 points) ~ Current events of interest to members of the SCV not readily available to the reader from other publications.

The George Ellsworth Camp Home Page Award: Presented to the webmaster of the Camp with the best web site. Judging will be based on standard criteria for web design, i.e. technical functionality, visual appeal, ease of navigation, and depth of content. Neither the division home page nor sites designed by the division webmaster will be eligible for consideration.

The Dr. Rosalie Carter Memorial Camp Scrapbook Award: Presented to the Camp with the best scrapbook. The scrapbook must be brought to the Convention in order to be judged.

The deadline for Division awards nominations is March 31, 2001. Please do your best to meet this deadline date. It does take some time to determine award winners and have the appropriate plaque or trophy produced. The year eligible for awards runs from Division Reunion to Division Reunion. All nominations must be sent in writing to: Allen Sullivant, Tennessee Division Awards Chairman, 5700 Stone Brook Drive, Brentwood, Tenn. 37027 E-mail: reb4life@bellsouth.net

[Note: The Division Commander reserves the right not to make an award in any category where there are insufficient nominations.]

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