



The Gen. Gordon Dispatch

The Gen. John B. Gordon Memorial Camp #1449
P. O. Box 6003 . Thomaston, Georgia 30286
Web site: www.johnbgordon.com



February 2010

Black History Month

In 1989, a magazine article caught my eye which I had to read from beginning to end. This was not an ordinary story but about a black child, a Confederate President's First Lady and the Southern Presidential Family. The story was written by Gulfport, Mississippi freelance writer Mrs. Peggy Robbin's and is entitled, "Jim Limber Davis."

While Black History Month mostly focuses on black adults in history, this story is about a black child. This is a summary, in my own words, of Mrs. Robbin's splendid story .

On the morning of February 15, 1864, Mrs. Varina Davis, wife of Southern President Jefferson Davis, had concluded her errands and was driving her carriage down the streets of Richmond, Virginia on her way home. She heard screams from a distance and quickly went to the scene to see what was happening.

Varina saw a young black child being abused by an older man. She demanded that he stop striking the child and when this failed she shocked the man by forcibly taking the child away. She took the child to her carriage and with her to the Confederate White House.

Arriving home Mrs. Davis and maid 'Ellen' gave the young boy a bath, attended to his cuts and bruises and feed him. The only thing he would tell them is that his name was Jim Limber. He was happy to be rescued and was given some clothes of the Davis ' son Joe who was the same size and age. Joe was tragically killed in an accidental fall later that year.

Continued on the back...

113th Annual Georgia SCV Reunion

The Old Capitol Camp #688, Sons of Confederate Veterans are making plans for a great reunion this June. What better place for SCV members to gather than the once great Capitol of our state during the Confederate years. Camp 688, the host camp has posted information about this event on their website.

Upcoming Meeting

When: Tuesday, Feb. 23rd

Time: & 7:00 PM

Place: Thomaston - Upson Archives Building

Speaker: M/TPR Al Medcalf, Georgia State Patrol

Program: Operation Full Throttle. Operation Full Throttle is a Motorcycle Safety Program. It is not only for motorcycle riders but is for the general motoring public as well.

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.





The Davis family were visited the following evening by a friend of Varina's, noted Southern Diarist-Mary Boykin Chesnut, who saw Jim Limber and wrote later that she had seen the boy and that he was eager to show me his cuts and bruises. She also said, "the child is an orphan rescued yesterday from a brutal Negro Guardian." and "there are things in life that are too sickening, and such cruelty is one of them."

There were some children who addressed Jim as Jim Limber Davis for fun. This was fine with him because he felt he was indeed a member of the family. The Davis letters to friends are indication of his acceptance and they said he was a member of their gang of children.

The Christmas of 1864, would be memorable for the Davis family and probably the best Christmas Jim Limber would ever have. A Christmas tree was set up in Saint Paul's Church, decorated and gifts placed beneath it. On Christmas evening orphans were brought to the church and were delighted with the presents they got. Jim was happy that he helped decorate the tree.

Mrs. Robbin's wrote, in her story, that Mrs. Jefferson Davis was a very good story teller who was able to make sounds of different animals in the stories about the critters. Jim was always eager to help.

The end of the War Between the States was coming and Richmond was being evacuated. Varina and the children left ahead of Jefferson Davis. The president and his staff left just hours before the occupation of Union troops.

Varina and the children were by the side of Jefferson Davis at his capture near Irwinville, Georgia and again the family was separated. Jefferson Davis was taken to Virginia to spend two years in prison.

Mrs. Davis and her children were taken to Macon, Georgia and later to Port Royal outside of Savannah. At Port Royal their Union escort, Captain Charles T. Hudson, made good at his earlier threats to take Jim Limber away.

As the Union soldiers came to forcibly take young Jim, he put up a great struggle and tried to hold onto his family as they took him. Jim and his family cried uncontrollably as the child was taken. His family would never again see him or know what happened to him. The Davis' tried in later years to locate Jim but were unsuccessful. They prayed that he grew to manhood and did well in life.

The Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia is home to a portrait of Jim Limber Davis in the Eleanor S. Brookenbrough Library. I thank Mrs. Peggy Robbin's who wrote the Jim Limber Davis story in 1989 and the Southern Partisan Magazine for publishing her story in the second quarter Issue-Volume IX of 1989.

For more information about Jefferson Davis go to: www.beauvoir.org, the website about the last home of Jefferson Davis where the Jefferson Davis Presidential Library is also located.