



# The Courier

Newsletter of the Sam Davis Camp No. 1293 SCV

\*Sons of Confederate Veterans\* July, 2017\*

## A Book Review on Page 1? Yep.

A review of *Bust Hell Wide Open: the Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest* by Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr., Regnery History, 2016.

Writing a biography about Nathan Bedford Forrest – a man recognized by no less than General Robert E. Lee and General William T. Sherman as “the most remarkable man produced by the Civil War on either side” – is a daunting task. How does an author do justice to such an imposing historical figure? In *Bust Hell Wide Open: The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest* (Regnery History, 2016), author Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr. proves that he is more than up to the challenge. Unlike many biographies, which can get so mired in minutiae that reading them feels like a forced march, *Bust Hell Wide Open* reads like a rollicking cavalry charge. Perhaps most importantly for a figure as controversial as Forrest, Mitcham massacres the untruths and misperceptions that have haunted him and unjustly darkened his legacy. Mitcham’s *Bust Hell Wide Open* can ride in the company of Forrest classics such as John Allan Wyeth’s *That Devil Forrest*, Andrew Nelson Lytle’s *Bedford Forrest and his Critter Company*, and Robert Selph Henry’s *First With the Most*.

There are many historical figures whose early lives give no indication of future greatness. Who would have thought that the corporate attorney and Illinois politico whose biggest accomplishment was getting trounced by Stephen A. Douglas would

become the messianic President who “saved the Union” and “freed the slaves,” Abraham Lincoln? Or that the quiet, dignified officer from Virginia who seemed to have reached his peak in the Mexican



War would become a military genius who turned the tide of the Civil War and a symbol of pride and hope to Southerners ever since, Robert E. Lee? There was never any doubt that Forrest was destined for greatness, however. Even from his humble roots in the Tennessee and Mississippi backcountry, Mitcham shows how every signature characteristic of the “Wizard of the Saddle” was already there in spades: his chivalry (placing himself between lynch mobs and their victims), his bravery (leaping into fights no matter the odds), his determination (hunting and killing any beast or man which threatened him or his own), and his trickery (bluffing bigger, stronger enemies into backing down). Indeed, at a phrenological lecture, Forrest even had his head measured, and was pronounced “a man who would have been a Caesar, a Hannibal, a Napoleon if he had the opportunity.” According to the phrenologist, “If he could not go over the Alps he would go through them.”

Mitcham does not sacrifice Forrest to the wrathful volcano god of American history – slavery. Indeed, it is impossible to appreciate Forrest (or anything Confederate, for that matter) if you feel intense shame or sanctimony over slavery. Outside of Muslim fanatics who purge any remnant of their pagan, pre-Islamic past, no other people in the world are as self-hating or self-righteous about their history as Americans. Until the 1960s, when Marxist-Leninists replaced *Klassenkampf* (class war) with *Kulturkampf* (culture war) and mass-immigration created a fifth column of Third-Worlders, Americans mourned the Civil War as a national tragedy and honored both sides. Today, however, “equality” has become like the Ring of Power in the hands of our political, intellectual, cultural, and corporate elite – the one ring to rule them all – and thus anyone or anything tainted by slavery must be purged.

Mitcham does not sugarcoat the fact that Forrest was a slave trader and a slave owner. “Forrest’s world view was that of a nineteenth-century Southerner...and a man who grew to manhood in the raw, tough, and often violent world of the antebellum American frontier,” writes Mitcham. “I hold that we can learn a great deal from the past and from the people who populated it, people like Forrest, even though we might not want them as neighbors.” Starting with an inheritance of

... continued next page...

Samuel W. Davis

# Next Camp Meeting: Thursday, July 27th

## Oglesby Community Center

### Supper around 6:00, Meeting starts at 7:00

## Confederate Calendar

**July 27th** ~~ Sam Davis Camp meets at 7:00 p.m., Oglesby Community Center. The Center is adjacent to the Woodson Chapel Church of Christ on Edmondson Pike, 1/2 block South of the intersection of Edmondson Pike and Old Hickory Blvd. **This month's program:** Martha Ready Morgan: From Wife to Widow in 630 Days by Mrs. Shirley Farris Jones

**August 24th** ~~ Sam Davis Camp meets at 7:00 p.m.

**September 24th** ~~ Sam Davis Camp meets at 7:00 p.m.

**September 30th** ~~ Work Day at the Oglesby Community Center

... continued from page one...

several slaves from his uncle, Forrest built a large, lucrative slave-trading business. Although slave trading – trafficking in human property – was a fundamentally inhuman business, Forrest was, as Mitcham puts it, “the best of a bad lot.” Forrest not only never sold family members off separately, but also went out of his way to reunite families who had been separated. Far from treating his slaves like animals in “pens,” Forrest kept them sheltered, fed, clothed, and healthy, and never beat or whipped any of them. Forrest even encouraged his slaves to read (a crime in many States) and allowed them to go into town by themselves and seek out their own masters. Eventually, Forrest transitioned out of the disreputable slave trade and made himself respectable: he acquired several large plantations in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas (worked by over 200 slaves) and was even elected as a Memphis alderman. Later, when

Forrest rode off to war, he took all 43 of his adult male slaves with him, promising to reward loyal service with personal freedom. Forrest ended up freeing them early, however, in case he was killed before the war ended. At least twenty of his former slaves followed him home and worked on his plantations as freedmen. “Those boys stuck with me,” recalled Forrest of his black soldiers. “Better Confederates never lived.”

Like most Southerners, Forrest was a “Union man,” meaning that while he supported States’ rights he did not support the extremity of secession. Forrest, along with a majority of Tennesseans, Virginians, North Carolinians, and Arkansans, originally voted against his State’s secession referendum. Also like most Southerners, President Lincoln’s declaration of war on the Confederacy and assembly of an invasion force completely changed Forrest’s mind; Forrest and other “Union men” soon after voted secede in solidarity with their Southern brethren. Although a well-off and well-respected man, Forrest initially enlisted as a private in the Tennessee cavalry. Tennessee Governor Isham G. Harris, however, shocked by Forrest’s humility, gave him a promotion and authorized him to raise a cavalry battalion of his own – which he did, out of his own pocket. Forrest’s ascent from private to lieutenant general was the single biggest rise through the ranks of any man during the war.

In battle, Forrest would become, as one Confederate put it, “the very God of War.” His face would darken as it flushed with blood; his blue eyes would blaze with intensity; his low drawl would become a tiger’s roar. His feats on the battlefield – dodging bullets left and right, cutting heads clean off, and “charging both ways” – sound more Homeric than historic. For example, at Memphis, Forrest

dueled a Yankee champion in single combat to decide the fate of their commands, just like Hector and Achilles at Troy. Even Forrest’s favorite warhorse, “King Phillip,” would fight for him, trampling, kicking, and biting anything in Yankee blue. Indeed, the tales of Forrest’s martial prowess would defy belief, if they were not repeated again and again by Yankees as well as Confederates.

Mitcham, a former soldier and experienced military historian, describes every one of Forrest’s battles with competence and clarity. Mitcham wisely uses Forrest’s very first battle at Sacramento, Kentucky, as a demonstration:

“At Sacramento, the standard tactics that Forrest would apply during the war made their debut. Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley noted that ‘his methods were the common sense tactics of the hunter and Western pioneer.’

“1) He always outflanked the enemy on both flanks and got into his rear, creating disorganization and sowing confusion in enemy ranks.

“2) At the first sign of confusion on the enemy’s part, he always attacked.

“3) He almost always attacked with everything he had and never left anything in reserve...

“4) He often used his cavalry as mounted infantry, meaning that his men would ride to the battlefield, and then attack as infantry.

“5) He almost always led from the front, inspiring his men by his example. His personal courage was remarkable, astonishing friend and foe alike. He had nothing but contempt for those who feared danger.

“6) He never met a charge standing still. He instinctively understood the psychological disadvantage of waiting for an



attack. If the Yankees attacked first, he always met them halfway. 'Never stand and take a charge,' he once exclaimed. 'Charge them too!'

"7) He trusted his own instincts. 'Forrest seemed to know by instinct what was necessary to do,' Captain James Dinkins recalled.

"8) He generally treated his prisoners well. 'He fought to kill but he treated his prisoners with all the consideration in his power,' Dinkins recalled. 'So did his own men.'

"9) He was always the aggressor.

"10) He always did what the enemy least expected.

"Finally, fighting seems to have excited him."

~~ review by James Rutledge Roesch. To read the entire review (the above is just an excerpt) visit [abbevilleinstitute.org](http://abbevilleinstitute.org)

## Carpetbagging Southern History

A common technique of Liberal ideologues is to change the meanings of words to suit their agendas. So "illegal aliens" become "undocumented immigrants" and "adolescent criminals" become "justice-involved youths." We're witnessing a version of this phenomenon with the "contextualizing" of Confederate monuments. Realizing that the eradication of Confederate memorials was not receiving the widespread public support they expected, hostile progressives are easing up on their demolition tactics and have instead begun maligning the historical significance of the monuments. Plaques that deprecate anything related to the Confederacy are being placed on these historic monuments.

One of these Confederacy-disparagement campaigns is currently under way in Richmond, and is being orchestrated by its new Mayor, Levar Stoney. Mr. Stoney assumed office in January of 2017, getting only 35% of the votes in a controversial election involving eight candidates. Although only in his mid 30s, Stoney has years of

active involvement in the Democratic party, working for Barack Obama's presidential election as well as for the candidacy of Terry McAuliffe, who became Virginia's governor. McAuliffe is one of our nation's most corrupt governors, tainted by scandals. There are indications of vote tampering in his gubernatorial campaign, and McAuliffe refuses to turn over voting records requested by the State of Virginia. He also refuses to provide state voting records to the White House commission investigating the legitimacy of voters.

Although Levar Stoney lied to law enforcement about criminal acts to influence a Milwaukee election, McAuliffe still hired him as his deputy campaign manager, becoming his mentor, and grooming him for political office. In addition to working in the governor's election campaign, Stoney actually lived briefly with McAuliffe. McAuliffe and Stoney defied Virginia's ruling and restored voting rights to thousands of convicted felons, an act that later assisted Stoney's mayoral election. A McAuliffe-controlled PAC was one of the top three donors to Levar Stoney's mayoral campaign. McAuliffe and Stoney are birds of a feather and if the State of Virginia digs deeply into potential voting irregularities in McAuliffe's gubernatorial election, it might uncover wrongdoing by Stoney.

As the second capital of the Confederacy, Richmond's Monument Avenue features Confederate statuary that have become important for tourism. Although Mayor Stoney wishes that these statues had never been erected, he cannot remove them as Mayor Landrieu did in New Orleans. These historic statues are protected by the Commonwealth of Virginia and designated as a National Historic Landmark. Begrudgingly, Stoney must be content with "contextualizing" them, i.e., portraying them in a malicious light.

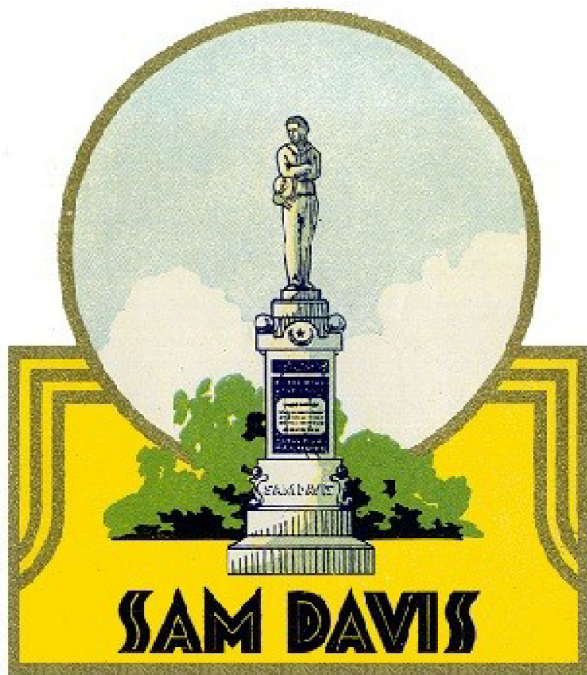
To give the appearance of an impartial community effort, Stoney formed a Monument Avenue Commission composed of historians, artists, authors, and community leaders to research and propose language for "contextual-

ized" plaques for the monuments. But excerpts from Stoney's announcement of the Commission's creation raise questions about impartiality: "...it's our responsibility to set the historical record straight on Monument Avenue's confederate statuary. Equal parts myth and deception, they were the 'alternative facts' of their time – a false narrative etched in stone and bronze more than 100 years ago – not only to lionize the architects and defenders of slavery – but to perpetuate the tyranny and terror of Jim Crow and reassert a new era of white supremacy.... these monuments have become a default endorsement of that shameful period – one that does a disservice to the principles of racial equality, tolerance and unity we celebrate..."

The Commission has two options: 1) denigrate the Confederacy itself, or 2), denigrate the motives for erecting the monuments. Some members might try for non-partisan language, hoping to create a middle ground, but the Mayor's charge to the Commission affords little room for deviant interpretations. To meet the Mayor's goal, members must not present the Confederate statuary as benign or even remotely laudatory. They must be depicted in a malignant and pernicious manner. Should you have any doubts about Mayor Stoney's intentions, you should be aware that he has also said that contextualizing is a "first step."

Richmond's Monument Avenue has already been adulterated by the addition of memorials to contemporary figures that rightfully should have been placed in other areas of the city. This Avenue represents a specific historical era, and tourists from around the world travel to Richmond to view it. In keeping with today's Confederaphobia, the city erected a statue of Abraham Lincoln nearby to detract from Monument Avenue's Confederate significance. Richmond's placing an effigy of Lincoln by Confederate monuments is akin to Paris placing a statue of the Duke of Wellington beside Napoleon's tomb. ~ Gail Jarvis





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## First Class Mail Dated Material

## Game of Yankees?

Yours truly saw an episode of Game of Thrones one time. It seemed to take place in a land of dragons, knights and ladies, intrigue, violence, gore, brutality, gratuitous sex and full frontal nudity, filth, squalor and ignorance. In spite of all that, everyone seemed to have had perfect teeth. - Ed.]

Game of Thrones creators David Benioff and D.B. Weiss have set their followup series to the blockbuster fantasy drama. They will reteam with HBO for **Confederate**, an alt-history original drama series.

Written by Benioff and Weiss, who also will showrun, Confederate chronicles events leading to the Third American Civil War. It takes place in an alternate timeline, where the southern states have successfully seceded from the Union, giving rise to a nation in which slavery remains legal and has evolved into a modern institution. The story follows a broad swath of characters on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Demilitarized Zone – freedom fighters, slave hunters, politicians, abolitionists, journalists, the executives of a slave-holding conglomerate and the families of people in their thrall.

“We have discussed *Confederate* for years, originally as a concept for a feature film,” add Benioff and Weiss. “But our experience on Thrones has convinced us that no one provides a bigger, better storytelling canvas than HBO. There won’t be dragons or White Walkers in this series, but we are creating a world...”

Production on Confederate will begin following the final season of Game of Thrones.

## Dues Notice!

Due to a procedural change, the grace period for submitting your dues (actually due on August 1st) has been reduced to 30 days. Dues received after August 31st will need to include an additional \$5.00 late fee. The previous late fee date was October 31st. IHQ is working to implement a system which will allow members to pay dues on line, like any other bill. It may be in place next year, but for this year, get your dues in by the end of August if you want to avoid the late fee.