



The Courier

Newsletter of the Sam Davis Camp No. 1293

Sons of Confederate Veterans ** Brentwood, Tn ** October, 2013

A Grave Injustice

Hidden in the jungle-like underbrush and Japanese knotweed smothering tombstones in an abandoned Philadelphia cemetery, Sam Ricks found his calling: to uncover and restore the graves of America's bravest -- forgotten heroes dating back to the Revolutionary War, 21 of whom are Medal of Honor recipients.

Ricks and his co-workers are painstakingly chopping through over-growth with machetes at Mount Moriah Cemetery, an estimated 380-acre historic graveyard straddling Philadelphia and Yeadon, Pa., in a quest to preserve history. Buried within the decrepit cemetery are 2,300 Navy and Marines dating from the Revolutionary War to the War of 1812 all the way to the Korean and Vietnam wars, according to Ricks. The graveyard is also the final resting place for 404 Union soldiers who fought in the Civil War, a few sailors, and two Confederate prisoners of war from the Battle of Sharpsburg. And then there are the unmarked or dilapidated graves of heroes waiting to be identified.

"This is the heritage of our country," Ricks told FoxNews.com. "These stones -- they're not high-ranking officials or generals -- these are the enlisted men who fought the battles. And we're trying to tell their story.

"These guys didn't write history, they made it," he said.

The largest cemetery in Pennsylvania, Mount Moriah was officially abandoned in April 2011. At the time, the city was poised to

identify the dead and give proper tribute to a burial ground deeply steeped in history.



cite the cemetery for various code violations, according to Ricks, a Philadelphia resident who has Confederate ancestors buried in Virginia. "The employees just up and left," he said. "They put up a notice that said it was closed to burials."

Following a public uproar, the city intervened and brought in equipment to cut the grass. But it did not take responsibility for the graveyard that holds the largest number of Medal of Honor recipients in the state, Ricks said.

"Whole sections of the cemetery were jungle, and I don't use that word lightly," Ricks said, as he described acres of Sumac trees and Japanese knotweed, a bamboo-like plant considered an invasive species in the U.S. and other countries.

The 59-year-old Ricks, who retired from the trucking industry and now works as graves registrar for the Sons of Confederate Veterans' Pennsylvania Division, decided to take over. He and a group of volunteers, known as "Friends of Mount Moriah," are tediously cleaning and restoring the vast graveyard in an effort to

Ricks said the group of volunteers was contacted in 2012 by the Medal of Honor Historical Society of the United States, which gave them a list of names of sailors they had traced to Mount Moriah cemetery but had no way of locating. Ricks and

his team got to work, hunting for the men whose graves could not be found.

On a chilly, February afternoon last year, Ricks discovered a flat marker in the grass with the word "Unknown" engraved on its white marble headstone. After combing through documents and records, Ricks pieced together the individual's identity: Commodore Jesse Duncan Elliott, a hero of the War of 1812 who was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1814. Elliott served as master-in-commander of the ship, the "Brig Niagara," and earned the medal from Congress for his heroic actions in the Battle of Lake Erie on Sept. 10, 1813.

"Our mission is to preserve history and then we have something to pass on to the next generation," Ricks said. "And when you're doing this for a descendent who spent years trying to track down their ancestor, you feel like you've done a great deed to finally find that person." ~ article by Cristina Corbin, FoxNews.com

Samuel Davis

Next Camp Meeting: Thursday, October 24th Oglesby Community Center, 7:00 p.m.

Confederate Calendar

October 24th ~ Sam Davis Camp meets at Oglesby Community Center, 7:00 p.m. 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.

December 5th ~ Sam Davis Camp meets at Oglesby Community Center, 7:00 p.m.



Our 2013 Program Lineup

October - Gene Andrews - "Waterloo, Gettysburg, and Brice's Crossroads: Command Failures and Success"

November - No Meeting

December - Div. Cmdr. Mike Beck - "The State of the State"

Camp News & Notes

Dues season is coming to a close, with November 1st being the cut-off date for avoiding the \$5 reinstatement fee. If you haven't returned your dues notice, please stroke a check and do so promptly.

What is probably the most important event of our Sesquicentennial will take place on November 22nd with the **150th Anniversary Commemoration** of the execution of our camp's namesake, Sam Davis. This event will take place at the statue on capitol hill. The latest division newsletter, which is in the mail as this is written and which may have already been received by some of you via email has complete details. A complete weekend's worth of events is also planned, but if you only attend one SCV ceremony this year, make it this one.

The camp will hold **elections** for officers at our December

meeting, which, if your editor reads the calendar correctly, will be on the 5th of that month. If you have an interest in serving the camp in a position of leadership, please contact Gene Andrews at 615-498-2560. If you have an interest in being sure you are not nominated and elected to an office then please be sure to attend the meeting, lest you be selected in absentia. I'm not sure that has ever actually happened, but you never know...

Our annual Battle of Franklin commemoration, the **Winstead Hill March**, will deviate a bit from the traditional date of the closest Sunday before the actual anniversary date to the actual anniversary day, **November 30th**, which falls on a Saturday this year. We'll gather about 3:00 p.m., and step off on our trek down Columbia Pike to the Carter House at 4:00 p.m., Be there, bring your flags.

You may (or may not) have noted the absence of a newsletter last month. Either way, you didn't get one, and your Editor takes full responsibility. It seems I was distracted by actually moving from our residence of the last 30 years and all that goes along with such as that, and just plain old didn't get the job done. We aren't planning on moving again for at least another 30 years (if I am indeed still moving at all by then), so it won't happen again. At least I hope not.

Please remember that your contributions to our newsletter are always welcomed, especially at times like now when a division newsletter is out and contains all the news which is fit to print, and some which isn't. If you have a desire to see byline in your own name, send us something to print. An article about your Confederate ancestor(s) would be appropriate. Or an editorial. Photos are also welcomed. Whatever you'd like to send will be considered.

The annual **Middle Tenn. "Civil War" Show and Sale** is scheduled for December 7th & 8th at the Williamson County Ag-Expo Center. We'll have a camp table, as usual. Come on out. Stuff to see!

He Gots Those Shutdown Blues

A Georgia man discovered that the federal shutdown of the national parks didn't mean he was free to illegally dig for artifacts at the Kennesaw Mountain National Military Park.

If he thought no one was watching, he was wrong. Two National Park Service rangers as well as a Cobb County police officer saw him walk onto the battlefield carrying a metal detector and a shovel.

When the unidentified man returned to his car, law enforcement swooped in to arrest him. They found that he was "carrying several objects that were from the Civil War period," as a ranger described the situation to a TV reporter. The artifacts were seized and the man faces several federal charges.

A Park Service archaeologist is usually called to the scene of an illegal dig to check out the area, but according to a newspaper account, the one for that area had been furloughed...

The Maxwell House Disaster

I was one of the four hundred Confederate soldiers confined in the Maxwell House (Zollicoffer Barracks), Nashville, Tenn., when that terrible disaster of September 29, 1863, occurred. The accident is described in a Banner of recent date, and the writer says the victims fell to the third floor, also that some of the prisoners were at breakfast. That is incorrect. I was standing near the head of the stairway when breakfast was announced, and the hungry men were crowding when they were stopped by the guard. All at once, the floor gave way, and down we went to the first floor. We fell near where the pool tables were. I fell lengthwise between two joists, and a man fell across me. His brains



were scattered over my coat, and the spots were on it when I left prison in 1865. I lay pinned down until the rest of the wounded and dead were cared for. When they prized the rubbish off of me, I was carried into the lobby.

There were one hundred and twenty six of us in the fall, forty five killed outright or died in a short time. One man, a Mr. Dodd, went with me to Rock Island, and died there of his wound. I had this statement from the best authority. John P. White, whom I had known all my life, visited me almost daily. He was a merchant in Nashville at the time and long afterwards. He said there were one hundred and twenty six.

I was surprised to see in the Banner that we fell only to the third floor. [That evidently was intended to mean that they fell three floors.]

I was taken to the Central Baptist Church, which was used as a hospital, and it was twenty two days before I could stand up. After sixty five days, I was sent to the penitentiary, and from there to Rock Island Prison, Barrack No. 44, from which I was discharged May 4, 1865. ~ John M. Kelso, 44th Tenn. Infantry, as originally published in *Confederate Veteran*, June, 1911.

Lee Stays, NAACP Walks

FORT MYERS, Fla. —A southwest Florida NAACP chapter is dropping its fight to have Gen. Robert E. Lee's portrait removed from a county building.

Lee County NAACP President James Muwakkil had sought to have the Confederate general's portrait removed from the county commission chambers.

Lee County is named after Gen. Lee, who commanded the Confederate army during the Civil War. The NAACP said the portrait was a slap to the face for local minorities.

The News-Press reports that at a town hall meeting held Oct. 5 with state and local NAACP leaders, Muwakkil said his chapter's requests for demonstrations against the portrait were denied.

Muakkil said state leaders want him to focus on crime and other issues instead. (Imagine that...)

The Lone Monument

Madison County Historian Linda Higgins recently found herself researching the death of a man who was shot and killed just four miles down the road from her house. What is interesting is the man was a Confederate soldier who died in December 1862. The man was Pvt. James Coble.

Higgins teamed up with Coble's great-great-grandson, retired area doctor Charles W. Cox, to tell the story of the soldier's death at the hands of Union forces. Together, the two wrote an article, "Lone Confederate Monument — A Symbol of Reconciliation," which was published in "The West Tennessee Historical Society Papers," about Coble and a monument in his memory that still stands in South Madison County.

Higgins spoke to the Friends of the Library about her research at the Jackson-Madison County Library downtown Thursday, and she presented a copy of the book to the library's Tennessee Room.

"I had so much fun doing this article because we actually unearthed facts that had not been put out yet," said Higgins, who was moved by the fact such history unfolded so close to her home. "This is what I try to tell my grandchildren, who I have taken on trips across West Tennessee battlefields. I'll say, 'You know, this fighting went on right here.'"

The monument is located off Harts Bridge Road, about four miles southeast of the Jackson city limits. The inscription on the monument reads: "James Coble 10th Tenn. Forrest's Cavalry Grave unknown for 51 years killed storming Federal block house this place, night 12-19-1862."

"Coble was on a mission to blow up a trestle when he was shot by Federal troops and (they) buried him right where he was shot," Higgins said.

She said in the early 20th

century a Federal captain from Illinois sent letters to a local newspaper and police chief about Coble's body being buried there, and that the captain wanted Coble's family to know.

Coble's son, James A. Coble, was 4 years old when his father was killed, Higgins said. "By 1914, (the son) was the mayor of Union City and a successful businessman," she said. "He had the monument erected." ~ *Jackson Sun*

Chickamauga: What the Heck is that thing?

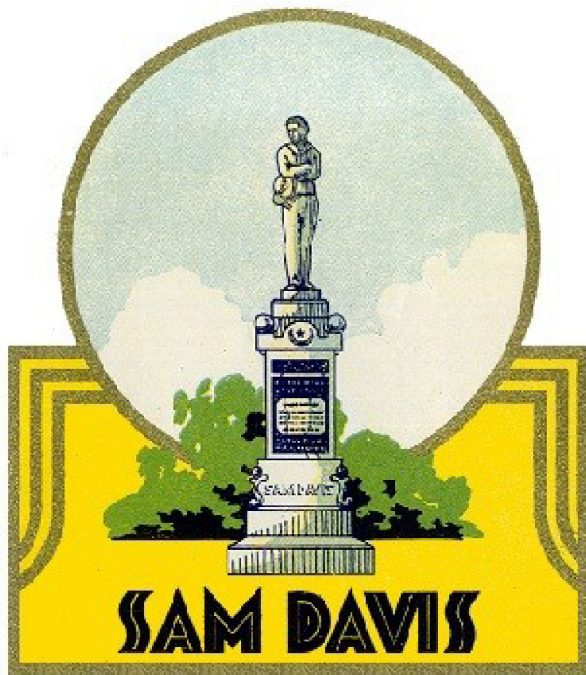
If Georgia has its own Loch Ness Monster, it may very well be "Ol' Green Eyes," a legendary creature that, according to numerous ghost hunters and tourists through the years, still haunts the massive national park at Chickamauga Battlefield. Green Eyes isn't the only apparition roaming the grounds of Chickamauga, but he certainly is the most famous.

One famous ghost who is said to wander the battlefield is the "lady in white" who is searching for her husband. But Green Eyes is the best known apparition, and has appeared in two different forms. Some believe Green Eyes is a soldier whose head was blown off during the battle, and now wanders Chickamauga looking for his body.

The second version of the story — and the one we prefer here — is that Green Eyes is a strange, otherworldly creature, half-man and half-beast. He's been spotted walking on two legs and has long, stringy hair down to his waist. But he also has glowing green eyes and huge jaws with two sharp fangs sticking out. It is believed that this version of Green Eyes comes from a Native American legend from long before the Civil War. There were some reports of the creature wandering among the dead at Snodgrass Hill shortly after the Battle of Chickamauga.

Perhaps Mulder & Scully should reopen the X-Files and try to solve this mystery?





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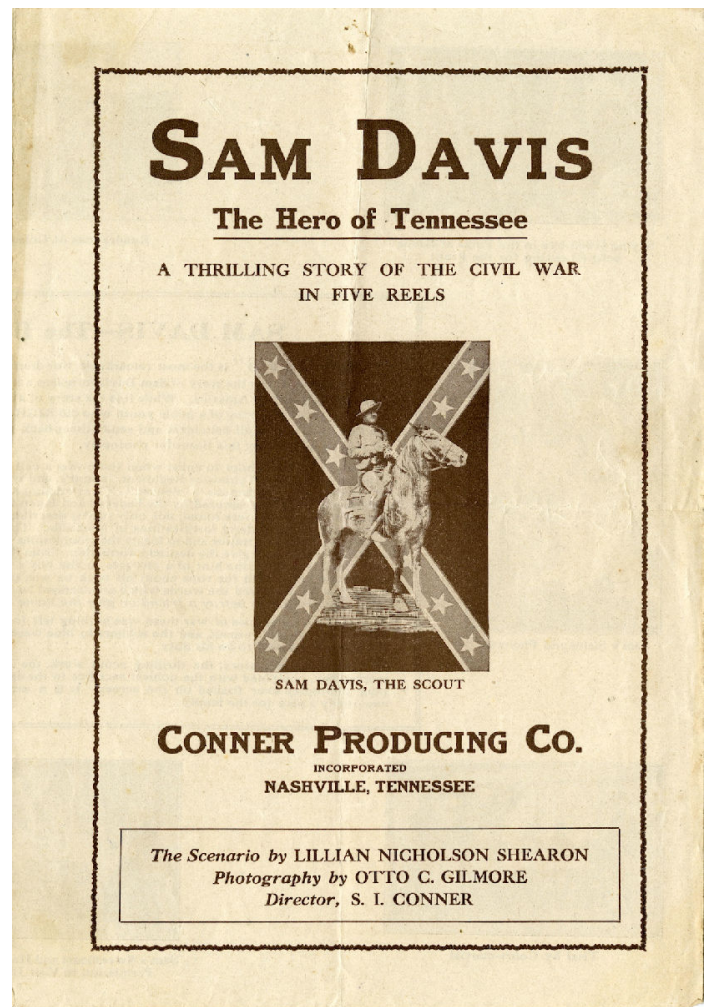
Sons of Confederate Veterans

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Dated Material



It's a little known fact that back in 1915, a "five reel" movie (about 12 minutes per reel, or in this case about an hour) telling the story of Sam Davis was produced locally and widely distributed. As is the unfortunate case with many, if not most, old silent films printed on nitrate stock this movie has been "lost". No copies are known to exist. This is the cover of an advertising flyer which is in the Nashville Room of the public library.