



The Courier

Newsletter of the Sam Davis Camp No. 1293 SCV

Sons of Confederate Veterans *October, 2019*

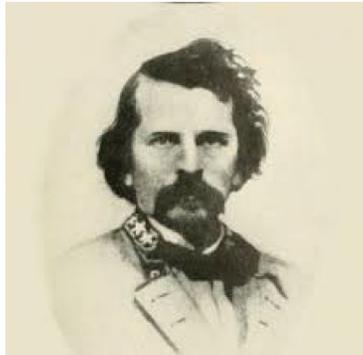
A Murder in Spring Hill

[Maury County Historian Bob Duncan passed away earlier this month. He was a first class guy, and a fine writer. The following article is one of his.]

Earl Van Dorn was one of the South's most handsome young Generals. "Buck" Van Dorn, as he was known to his friends, was a dashing, brave man. His first success came early in the war when he and his men had captured three Union ships in Galveston Harbor, earning for him a General's star. His halo slipped a bit with his lost battles of Pea Ridge, Arkansas and Corinth, Mississippi. He recouped some of his lost luster with his leadership at the head of his Confederate cavalry. In a bold move, he and his troopers had thwarted U.S. Grant's first drive on Vicksburg when they successfully raided and destroyed the Union Army's main supply base at Holly Springs, Mississippi.

In the spring of 1863, Van Dorn's command was moved to Middle Tennessee to monitor the movements of the Union Army at Nashville. He chose Spring Hill as his base of operations, using Dr. Aaron White's elegant home as his headquarters. In March of 1863, Van Dorn added another success to his legend when the Union Army launched a strong probe south out of Nashville. Van Dorn and his subordinate, the redoubtable N.B. Forrest met them at Thompson's Station, defeating them and capturing over 1,200 Union soldiers.

It was during this period that a beautiful and flirtatious young Southern Belle came to call upon General Van Dorn at his headquarters. She was Jesse Peters, wife of Dr. George Peters, a wealthy landowner who had been a member of the State Senate when Tennessee left the Union in 1861. Dr. Peters had been in hiding in Arkansas and perhaps Jesse was lonely. In any case, Jesse's loneliness and Buck Van Dorn's weakness for attractive females caused a major scandal among the citizens of Maury County. Dr. White's wife, in whose home the General was quartered, demanded that he evict



the libertine. Buck Van Dorn complied with the request and moved his headquarters to the Martin Cheairs home (pronounced "chairs" - currently the main building of the Tennessee Orphans Home), located in the center of Spring Hill.

Buck and Jesse continued their dalliance until, in early May, Dr. Peters returned home. He was quickly apprised of his wife's affair with Van Dorn and through a ploy, actually caught them together in his home. He got Van Dorn's assurance to leave Jesse alone and to write a letter exonerating her from any wrongdoing.

Two days later, on May 7, 1863, Dr. Peters came to Van Dorn's Headquarters at the Cheairs house to get the General to issue him a pass through the lines to go to Nashville. Peters and Van Dorn were alone in the General's office. Van Dorn sat at his desk to write the pass with the doctor standing to his left rear. As Van Dorn completed the pass and before he could turn to hand it to the Doctor, Peters shot the General just above his left ear. Peters picked up his pass, walked past Confederate officers in the yard to his horse, mounted and rode east toward his house. Out of sight, Peters turned north and escaped, by a circuitous route, toward Nashville and the Union lines.

Van Dorn's body was quickly discovered by one of the young Cheairs daughters. He was slumped over his desk with a bullet hole in the back of his head and a pen, wet with ink, lying on his desk. A search was mounted but Dr. Peters had made good his getaway.

Van Dorn got little sympathy from other Confederate officers for his fate. Many commented that, under the circumstances, he got what he deserved. His funeral was given from the steps of the State Bank in nearby Columbia as none of the local Churches were willing to hold the service. His body was kept overnight in the Bank's vault and was then shipped to Alabama for burial. The body was exhumed after the war and was returned to his family home at Port Gibson, Mississippi, where it rests

...continued on page 2...

Samuel Davis

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

Confederate Calendar

October 24th ~ Sam Davis Camp meets at the 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. Program: Ross Massey, "The Latent Turning Point".

November 30th ~ Winstead Hill Memorial March. We'll start from the hill at 2:00. More information to follow. **Note: This is a Saturday, not the usual Sunday.**

December 7th & 8th ~ "Civil War" Show at the Williamson Ag. Exp Center. Help work a while at the Sam Davis Camp recruiting and information table. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days.

December 12th ~ Combined November/December camp meeting, our last for the year, starts at 6:00 p.m. Come hungry, bring the family and invite your friends! Program: "The Life of Gen. & Mrs. Robert Hatton" by Dottie Meadows and Martin Frost of the Hatton Camp in Lebanon.

January 23rd ~ Sam Davis Camp meets at the Oglesby Community Center, 7.00 p.m. Program: Dr. Ron Zellen, "Civil War Medicine".

We get notes in the donation box at Winstead Hill now and then. Here's one:

Gentlemen:

Thank you for maintaining this beautiful park. A great big Howdy! from several of us from the Maj. Morgan Utz Camp 1815 of St. Louis, Mo.

...continued from page 1...

today.

Peters was never tried for the murder, either by the military authorities or by the civil courts and Jesse Peters, who lived to the ripe old age of 83 never uttered a public comment about the affair. George and Jesse divorced and remarried after the war, living in Memphis. One of their children, conceived during the period in question was reputed to be Van Dorn's offspring.

George died at his home in Memphis in 1889 at the age of 74. Jesse dutifully donned her "widow's weeds" of mourning but made the following comment at his funeral, "Well, I never cared for George, but I guess I owe him this much". Jesse and her family continued to live at the fashionable McLemore Street address until her death in 1921.

Jesse was buried next to George in Elmwood Cemetery in Memphis and with her passing went the last witness of the events surrounding Buck Van Dorn's death.

Visitors Note: Many of the original buildings in this story still stand. The murder site is now the Tennessee Orphan's home on Highway 31 in Spring Hill. Just two blocks off highway 31, on Duplex Road, stands the home of Dr. White, where Jesse first called on Buck Van Dorn. The old State Bank building where Buck's funeral was given still standing on the southwest corner of West Seventh and Garden, 10 miles away in Columbia. The Peters' home which stood a couple of miles southeast of Spring Hill, where Buck would furtively visit Jesse and where he was originally confronted by Dr. Peters, burned down several years ago.

Article by: Bob Duncan

Reconstructing the Reconstruction

A book condemning the left-wing bias of one of the most widely read and educationally used histories of the United States was recently written by Mary Grabar who received her Ph.D in English from the University of Georgia and went on to teach at various Georgia institutes of higher learning, including Emory University in Atlanta. The focus of her book, *Debunking Howard Zinn : Exposing the Fake History That Turned a Generation Against America*, is Zinn's 1980 work, *A People's History of the United States*, as well as the Zinn Education Project which was founded in 2007 to promote and disseminate Zinn's book as a standard text in elementary and high schools, as well as various colleges and universities, throughout America. The book by Zinn, a self-styled anarchist and socialist with a more than four hundred page F. B. I. dossier marked "high security risk," is primarily a polemic against social injustice and the supposed oppression of all minority groups in the Americas by white majorities since the time of Christopher Columbus. In spite of the fact that the text has already sold well over two and a half million copies and remains high on a number of best-seller lists, a recent poll by George Mason University in Virginia placed Zinn's work as the second least credible history book in print. Furthermore, according to another prominent Zinn critic, Professor Samuel Wineburg of Stanford University's School of Education, who is considered to be one of the world's leading researchers in the field of history education, the book was compiled on a shaky foundation of secondary and even highly



questionable source material. Professor Wineburg further cites that Zinn's book is currently the first, and for many, the only exposure a student will receive to American history. Even some well-known writers on the left, such as historian Michael Kammen and social scholar Arthur Schlesinger, have used terms like cut and paste research and polemics rather than history in describing Zinn's works. However, even in the face of such criticism, not only is Zinn's book being used as the sole history text in an ever-growing number of school systems all across the nation, as well as the fact that its comparison of the United States to the Soviet Union cast the latter in a far more favorable light, in 2006 a Russian-language edition was reprinted by the United States Embassy in Moscow for distribution to readers and students in Russia. Efforts to curtail the use of Zinn's text in various state school systems, such as those by former Indiana governor and current president of Purdue University, Mitch Daniels, and Representative Kim Hendren in Arkansas, are being met with a wall of resistance and cries of First Amendment violations by a horde of liberal academics, activists, librarians and school administrators.

Even in South Carolina, one of the last three Confederate States to become free of Union occupation in 1877, the Southern Poverty Law Center managed to force the state government into adopting Zinn's history book, specifically Chapter Nine which deals with slavery, the War Between the States and the Reconstruction Era, as the text for the state-wide courses on the Reconstruction. Needless to say, use of the chapter means that South Carolina students would be exposed not only to all of Zinn's radical theories on the War's aftermath, but also his version of all the events that caused the conflict. As examples of this, such history falsely portrays John Brown as a heroic figure whose abolitionist acts led to widespread slave revolts throughout the South, even though such uprisings never took place; the inaccurate claim that all eleven states of the Confederacy seceded at the time of Lincoln's election and

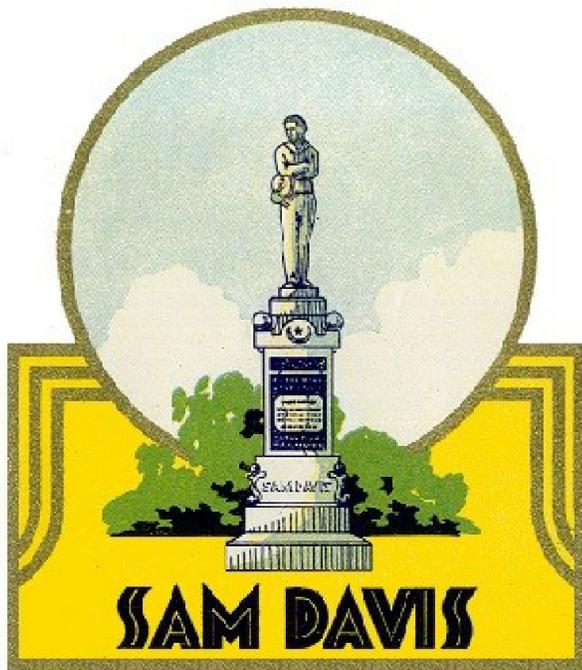
the incorrect statement that the War ended on April 9, 1865, with the surrender of General Lee, when in fact it ended on May 26th with the surrender of Lt. General Kirby Smith's Army of the Trans-Mississippi following a Confederate victory at Palmito Ranch in Texas two weeks before, an event that was actually the final battle of the War. The chapter further wants people to believe that the Ku Klux Klan was created as a terrorist group by the South's then nonexistent "economic power" and that Andrew Johnson was impeached for his opposition to Congress' efforts to improve the rights of Blacks, rather than the actual eleven charges that mainly dealt with Johnson's removal of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. Regarding the twelve years of post-war occupation in the South which is termed the Reconstruction Era, a period that lasted four years longer than the occupations of both Germany and Japan following World War Two, Zinn's so-called history becomes truly Orwellian, with much of it being based on the writings of sociologist James Loewen, the author of a number of books on racism in America, including his war-to-defend-slavery tome, "The Confederate and Neo-Confederate Reader : The Great Truth about the Lost Cause."

By 1877, the Union occupation had virtually come to an end in all but three of the former Confederate States, Florida, Louisiana and South Carolina . . . and only ceased in these areas due to a political compromise brought about by the presidential election of 1876 between Governor Rutherford B. Hayes of Ohio and his Democratic opponent, Governor Samuel J. Tilden of New York. While Tilden had won the election with fifty-one per cent of the popular vote and in the Electoral College by a vote of two hundred three to Hayes' a hundred sixty-five, the latter vote was in question over nineteen electoral votes in the three still-occupied Southern states and one in Oregon. An Electoral Commission that was ultimately made up of eight Republicans and seven Democrats had been created to decide the issue. Much to Tilden's dismay, the Democrats agreed to vote in favor of Hayes if the

Republicans would accept four Southern demands, namely that the military occupation of all the former Confederate States be brought to an end; that a Democrat be named to the Hayes cabinet; that a transcontinental train line be created through the South and that Federal legislation be passed to assist in the actual reconstruction of the region. While all four terms were agreed to by Hayes and the Republicans, no real action was even taken on the final request to help industrialize and rebuild the ravaged Southern States. What has been termed as the Compromise of 1877 gave Hayes a final one vote margin in the Electoral College with a vote of a hundred eighty-five to a hundred eighty-four and while it drew the final curtain on the actual occupation of the South, it did not end the many arguments concerning the Reconstruction Era itself. The controversy over the true meaning of the Compromise of 1877, as well as what actually took place during the Reconstruction Era that began in 1865 still rages on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line, and has been further fueled by such books as Howard Zinn's A People's History of the United States and the theories of James Loewen on the various aspects of the period which tend to dwell more on the supposed rights that Blacks had gained during Reconstruction Era and the adverse impact the end of the era had on them through the introduction of discriminatory laws and policies that Loewen claims were created solely to deny Blacks their rightful place in society, a denial that lasted for almost another ninety years.

In South Carolina's mandated Reconstruction courses are four other matters concerning the era which Loewen calls "myths" that are based on what Pan-Africanist William E. B. Du Bois termed in his book Black Reconstruction as "universal lying" about the period. The first "myth" being that since the end of the Nineteenth Century, people had considered Reconstruction to be a failure and an evil which had been inflicted on Southern Whites by illegal governments imposed by the North and supported by Union bayonets. Loewen contends, however, that the





Published by The Sam Davis Camp #1293, Sons of Confederate Veterans, P. O. Box 3448, Brentwood, Tenn. 37024

Commander ~ Monte McDearis

Lt. Commander ~ Gene Andrews

Adjutant ~ Allen Sullivant 971-7454

Treasurer ~ James Turner 335-6944

Chaplain ~ Tony Rocchietti 399-1606

Newsletter Editor ~ Allen Sullivant 971-7454

Web Address ~ <http://www.samdaviscamp.org>

The Courier

Sam Davis Camp #1293

Sons of Confederate Veterans

P. O. Box 3448

Brentwood, Tenn. 37024



First Class Mail
Dated Material

reverse was really the case in that the newly elected Republican governments passed a number of highly popular measures that aided the South by lowering taxes, rebuilding the infrastructure and creating many new schools and hospitals. Loewen further claims that as many as forty per cent of white Southerners supported these Republican efforts in spite of local efforts to undermine such progress through intimidation and violence. The second of Loewen's "myths" is the one that says that Blacks and Northern "carpetbaggers" ruled the South during the Reconstruction Era, and cited one Mississippi text book from the 1960s as the central basis for such a claim. He further stated that this type of false thinking about "Negro rule" ultimately led to the shooting of Blacks in a Charleston, South Carolina, church a hundred and fifty years later. Again, Loewen contends that the reverse was true during the Reconstruction Era and that the former Confederate States all had white majority governments, with all the terror being that which was inflicted on Blacks by "white Democrats." The third "myth" concerns what Loewen calls the canard that a tidal wave of Northerners flooded into the South during the Reconstruction Era carrying cheap valises made from carpets and filled with dreams of becoming wealthy from the spoils of war. He cites that even President Kennedy in his book "Profiles in Courage" wrote that "No state suffered more from carpetbag rule than Mississippi." Once again Loewen claims the reverse was actually the case for the reason that since the South was in ruins, no one would venture there merely seeking riches and added that besides the Union soldiers on duty in the South, the majority of the Northerners who went there were those who wished to improve the area. These Loewen said were mainly missionaries and teachers seeking to bring comfort and literacy to the former slaves and their children, as well as a number of both white and black politicians trying to create a better and more workable interracial society. Loewen's final "myth" concerns the long-accepted references to Republican politicians constantly waving the "bloody shirt" during the period in order to hide their duplicity and failures by blaming the South for all the death and destruction caused by the War, and again cited President Kennedy's book as perpetuating the "myth." Students now are told by Loewen that this interpretation of the often-used term was totally incorrect, and that the "bloody shirt" was actually a nightshirt worn by the white superintendent of a black school in Mississippi which became bloodied when he was dragged from his bed and almost whipped to death by "white supremacist Democrats" for refusing to leave the state. In spinning this lurid tale, which is at at best apocryphal, it should have begun with the phrase "Once upon a time in the South . . ."

A truer reading of history would be that after the holocaust of the Reconstruction Era was finally brought to an end in 1877, the once-again united nation began to enter what could be termed an era of reconciliation, a period that was to endure for more than a century, with the Confederacy, its leaders, its history and its heritage being firmly woven into the tapestry of America's past. Due in no small part to the revisionist writings of historians and social activists such as Howard Zinn, that fabric began to be torn asunder during the latter part of the last century by those who were once again imbued with a burning desire to erase from the pages of history any favorable trace of the Confederacy, along with anyone or anything that represented that lost nation, and those who would raise their voices in honest opposition being branded as Neo-Confederate, white supremacists, and racists. ~~ John Marquardt