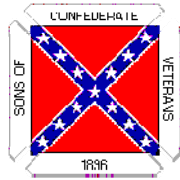
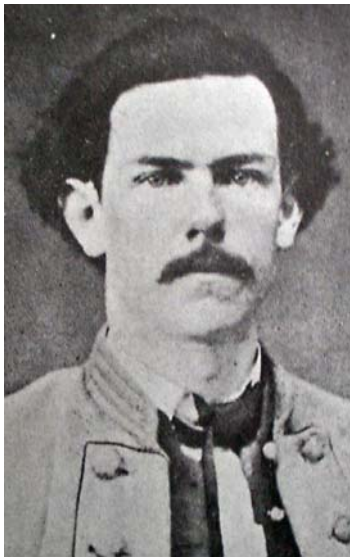
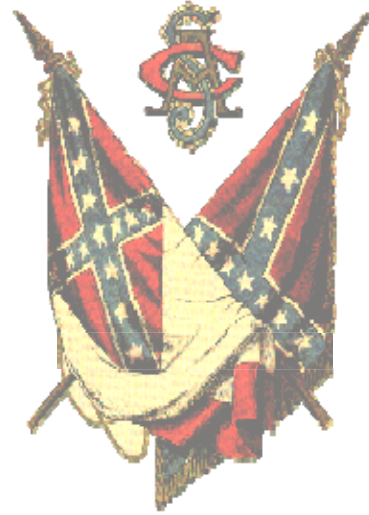




**NEWSLETTER OF STATE OF DADE CAMP NO. 707**



**THE  
SILVER  
GRAY**



Vol. 12

March 2007

No. 3



State of Dade members at the Chattanooga Confederate cemetery.



Camp Members Visit the Grave of Colonel James Cooper Nisbet.



# The Immortal 600

By Johnny Vardeman

This column last February told about the "Immortal 600," captured Confederate troops who were used as human shields by Union forces in attacks near Charleston, S.C. David Terrell Harris, a Confederate Army officer buried in Gainesville's Alta Vista Cemetery, was among the Immortal 600. Though the Confederates continued their shelling of Union forces, none of the 600 Rebel prisoners is said to have been killed. The Immortal 600 suffered nonetheless from disease and lack of adequate food. The Gainesville Eagle interviewed Harris about his experience in 1911 just months before he died. He was described as a "sprightly old gentleman who is running the four big gins of the Gainesville Canning and Ginning Co. on Athens Street."

Harris, who was known as "Uncle Davy," was 71 years old at the time. He had joined the 21st Georgia Regiment of the Confederates from Forsyth County at age 21 at the beginning of the war. He advanced to the rank of second lieutenant. While on furlough in 1863, he married a neighbor, but returned to the war front just two days later.

In 1864 during the battle of Spotsylvania, Va., a Union soldier bashed his head in with the butt end of a musket as the Yankees charged Rebel lines. When he awoke, he and several other captured Confederates were being taken to Fort Delaware prison. According to Harris' account, the Union Army rounded up 600 Confederates, including himself, to retaliate against them for the treatment Union prisoners suffered at Andersonville. He defended Andersonville by saying the Yankee blockade kept Confederates from getting food and medicine to the prisoners. Despite an abundance of food at Fort Delaware, Harris told the Gainesville Eagle that Union guards fed him and fellow prisoners only a fifth of a loaf of bread and a quarter pound of meal twice a day. While none of the Immortal 600 died during the shelling near Charleston, Harris said many died in prison, and about 200 were on crutches with not enough strength to walk.

To keep his mind occupied in prison, Harris made jewelry from silver spoons that Union Gen. Sherman's troops pillaged from Georgia homes on his march to the sea. When he had arrived at the prison, Harris said his only money was a \$5 bill he had taken from the body of a Union soldier. To keep his captors from finding it, he hid it inside his water canteen. The remnants of the Immortal 600 were sent to Philadelphia at the end of the war to be released for home. Still under guard, they were marched to a hotel, whose proprietor was a native of the South.

The hotel owner invited the prisoners in, admonishing them not to get drunk. Then he served them lavish dinners in what Harris described as "the most magnificently furnished room he had ever beheld, with grand pictures hung everywhere finished and burnished with silver and gold ... " Unknown to the Union guards, the sympathetic hotel owner treated the prisoners without charge.

Harris and the others returned to the South by train. He walked from Cartersville to his home without a bite to eat. His wife hadn't heard from him since his capture at Spotsylvania, and he didn't know if she were still alive or remarried. Harris was dirty, footsore, lame and ragged, his heart beating faster as he neared his home, wondering if his wife would still know him. Uncle Davy told the Eagle, "She knew me when I first came 'round the bend in the road, and she had me 'round the neck before I got in a hundred yards of the house. I never did see a gal run so fast."

While Harris was obviously an important figure in local Civil War lore as well as in Hall and Forsyth counties, an obituary could not be found in local papers around the time of his death June 10, 1912. His wife, Talitha Ann, died in 1930 and is buried by his side at Alta Vista. A prominent monument near the entrance to the cemetery marks their graves.

Johnny Vardeman is retired editor of The Times and can be reached at 2183 Pinetree Circle N.E., Gainesville 30501; phone (770) 532-2326; e-mail vardeman623@charter.net.

# **JIM LIMBER DAVIS: A Southern Story for Black History Month**

By: Calvin E. Johnson, Jr.  
1064 West Mill Drive  
Kennesaw, Georgia 30152  
Phone: 770 428 0978

Please share this story with young people and educators.

Many Black History Month stories are written about women but how many are written about the children? This story, which has been lost to history, is about both.

American women love, worry and protect their children. They also care about the children who live in poverty and those who are abused. America has always led in efforts to help save the children.

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 Robbins and is entitled, "Jim Limber Davis."

This is a summary, in my own words, of Mrs. Robbins heartfelt story that I re-write in tribute to "Black History Month."

The story begins on a cool, but sunny, morning on February 15, 1864. Varina Davis, wife of Southern President Jefferson Davis, was concluding 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 witnessed a young black child being abused by an older man. She immediately 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. He told them that his name was Jim Limber. He seemed to be happy to be rescued and was given some clothes of the Davis' son Joe who was about the same size and age.

Joe was tragically killed in an accidental fall later that year.

The Jefferson Davis family were visited the following evening by a friend of Varina's, noted Southern Diarist-Mary Boykin Chesnut, who saw Jim Limber and later wrote 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 some things in life that are too sickening, and such cruelty is one of them."

Some children addressed Jim as Jim Limber Davis for fun. This was fine with Jim because he felt he was indeed a member of the family. The Davis letters to friends are indication of his acceptance where they wrote that 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 received. Jim was thrilled that he helped decorate the tree.

Mrs. Robbins wrote, in her story, that Mrs. Jefferson Davis was a good story teller and thrilled the children with her sounds of different animals. Jim caught on fast and became a equally good story teller.

The end of the War Between the States was coming and Richmond, Virginia was being evacuated. Varina and her children left ahead of Jefferson Davis. President Davis 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 at Irwinville, Georgia and again the family was separated. Jefferson Davis was taken to Virginia where he spent 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 on his earlier threats to take Jim Limber away.

As Union soldiers came to forcibly take young Jim, he put up a great struggle and tried to hold onto his family and they to him. Jim and his family cried uncontrollably as the child was taken. His family would never see him or know what happened to him. The Davis' tried 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 Robbins 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 "Diversity" sake, let our schools teach all American history!





## The Chaplain's Corner

Romans 8:39 *“Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

What comfort and consolation there are in these precious words. They are especially helpful when young people leave for military service, or when there is a traffic accident, and perhaps the body of a loved one must be returned home for burial. If in life and death, we feel that nothing can separate us from the love of God, we have strength and power which no formal education can ever grant, and no one or friend can give or take away from our hearts.

Father, in this uncertain life, we give thanks for the certainties of the scriptures, which we claim as our own.

*"My religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as in bed. God has fixed the time for my death. I do not concern myself about that, but to always be ready, no matter what may overtake me.*

General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson

**Prayer List:** Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Lewis Leach. Some of our compatriots who have visited him can see some improvement in his health. Also let us remember Wedge Morrison's granddaughter, Rachel Phillips, who has a very serious illness and Ronnie

May God bless,  
James Fletcher, Chaplain,  
SCV camp #707 Ph. 256-657-5998  
E-mail [jdfletcher@farmerstel.com](mailto:jdfletcher@farmerstel.com)

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## Confederate Generals Born in March

General Braxton Bragg - 22 Mar. 1817 - Warrenton, N.C.  
Lt. General Wade Hampton - 28 Mar. 1818 - Charleston, S.C.  
Maj. General Matthew Calbraith Butler - 8 Mar. 1836 - Greenville, S.C.  
Maj. General Thomas James Churchill - 10 Mar. 1824 - Jefferson Co., Ky.  
Maj. General Henry DeLamar Clayton - 7 Mar. 1827 - Pulaski, Ga.  
Maj. General Patrick Romaine Cleburne - 17 Mar. 1828 - County Cork, Ireland  
Maj. General George Bibb Crittenden - 20 Mar. 1812 - Russellville, Ky.  
Maj. General James Fleming Fagan - 1 Mar. 1828 - Clark Co., Ky.  
Maj. General John Sappington Marmaduke - 14 Mar. 1833 - Arrow Rock, Missouri  
Maj. General William Thompson Martin - 25 Mar. 1823 - Glasgow, Ky.  
Maj. General William Henry Chase Whitting - 22 Mar. 1824 - Biloxi, Miss.  
Brig. General William Wirt Adams - 22 Mar. 1819 - Frankfort, Ky.  
Brig. General William Nelson Rector Beall - 20 Mar. 1825 - Bardstown, Ky.  
Brig. General William Robertson Boggs - 18 Mar. 1829 - Augusta, Ga.  
Brig. General William Felix Brantley - 12 Mar. 1830 - Greene Co., Ala.  
Brig. General John Bratton - 7 Mar. 1831 - Winnsboro, S.C.  
Brig. General Montgomery Dent Corse - 14 Mar. 1816 - Alexandria, D.C.  
Brig. General William Ruffin Cox - 11 Mar. 1832 - Halifax Co., N.C.  
Brig. General Johnson Kelly Duncan - 19 Mar. 1827 - York, Penn.  
Brig. General John Dunovant - 5 Mar. 1825 - Chester, S.C.  
Brig. General John Echols - 20 Mar. 1823 - Lynchburg, Va.  
Brig. General Martin Witherspoon Gary - 25 Mar. 1831 - Cokesbury, S.C.  
Brig. General Hiram Bronson Granbury - 1 Mar. 1831 - Copiah Co., Miss.  
Brig. General Louis Hebert - 13 Mar. 1820 - Iberville Parish, La.  
Brig. General John Robert Jones - 12 Mar. 1827 - Harrisonburg, Va.  
Brig. General John Herbert Kelly - 31 Mar. 1840 - Pickens Co., Ala.  
Brig. General Lewis Henry Little - 19 Mar. 1817 - Baltimore, Md.  
Brig. General Robert Lowery - 10 Mar. 1830 - Chesterfield Dist., S.C.  
Brig. General Samuel Bell Maxey - 30 Mar. 1825 - Tompkinsville, Ky.  
Brig. General Thomas Taylor Munford - 28 Mar. 1831 - Richmond, Va.  
Brig. General Allison Nelson - 11 Mar. 1822 - Fulton Co., Ga.  
Brig. General Elisha Franklin Paxton - 4 Mar. 1828 - Rockbridge Co., Va.  
Brig. General Edward Aylseworth Perry - 15 Mar. 1831 - Richmond, Mass.  
Brig. General William Flank Perry - 12 Mar. 1823 - Jackson Co., Ga.  
Brig. General Roswell Sabine Ripley - 14 Mar. 1823 - Worthington, Ohio  
Brig. General Felix Huston Robertson - 9 Mar. 1839 - Washington, Tx.  
Brig. General Jerome Bonaparte Robertson - 14 Mar. 1815 - Woodford Co., Ky.  
Brig. General Robert Emmett Rodes - 29 Mar. 1829 - Lynchburg, Va.  
Brig. General Francis Asbury Shoup - 22 Mar. 1834 - Laurel, Ind.  
Brig. General William Richard Terry - 12 Mar. 1827 - Bedford Co., Va.  
Brig. General Edward Lloyd Thomas - 23 Mar. 1825 - Clarke Co., Ga.  
Brig. General William Henry Wallace - 24 Mar. 1827 - Laurens Dist., S.C.  
Brig. General John Wilkins Whitfield - 11 Mar 1818 - Franklin, Tenn.  
Brig. General Sterling Alexander Martin Wood - 17 Mar. 1823 - Florence, Ala.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 11: Quarterly Mechanized Cavalry Meeting: The quarterly meeting of Georgia Mechanized Cavalry will be held at 12:00 noon on Sunday, March 11, 2007 at the Wicks Tavern in Villa Rica, GA.
- March 20: Camp Meeting: The March 2007 meeting of the State of Dade Camp 707, Sons of Confederate Veterans will be held at 7:00 P.M. on Tuesday, March 20, 2007 in back of the Easy Rental Store on Highway 11 at the south end of Trenton. We will meet to eat at 6:00 P.M. – there will be no retreat! Call 657-5000 for directions.
- March 17: St Patrick's Day Parade in Savannah. Plan now to attend.
- March 23-25: Battle of Bridgeport Reenactment. To pre-register for the event a fee of \$5.00 must be paid.



**STATE OF DADE CAMP No. 707**  
**Sons of Confederate Veterans**  
**Larry D. Wheeler (Adjutant)**  
**639 Canyon Park Dr.**  
**Trenton, Georgia 30752-2640**

**HONORING OUR CONFEDERATE HERITAGE**

