



# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P. O. BOX 5028, CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

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DECEMBER 1968

Vol. 12 No. 3

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## 97th Meeting

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DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1968  
SPEAKER: DR. KENNETH R. CALLAHAN  
SUBJECT: DEFENSE OF LONGSTREET AT GETTYSBURG  
PLACE: HERMIT CLUB, DODGE COURT  
PRELIMINARIES: 6 PM DINNER 7 PM

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DR. KENNETH R. CALLAHAN

Our speaker for December is again one of our very own. Ken is an oral surgeon in private practice. He also is on the staff of Luthern Hospital. He is currently serving as trustee for John Carroll University. We had the privilege of presenting Ken's article on Civil War Surgery in our January 1967 newsletter. It was subsequently reprinted by the Washington, D.C. newsletter. This is high acclaim for one of our members.

Ken first came before our group in April 1967 with a superb presentation on John Brown and the Harper's Ferry Raid. As you remember he did it in a most unusual fashion in that he used taped musical background and colored slides--like a still movie.

Once again Ken is using a most unusual method of presenting his talk. He will use commentary, taped background music and sound effects, and two electric pin-light topographical maps. That's right two pin-light maps. Ken built his first pin-light map in 1957 when a member of the Wheeling, West Virginia Civil War Roundtable and doing his residency work at Wheeling General Hospital. Also unusual is Ken's question and answer period. Instead of waiting until the end of the presentation, Ken wants to do it after he discusses each day's action at Gettysburg. It sounds like a very lively and interesting December evening.

## FUTURE PROGRAMS

98th Mtg.	JANUARY	CIVIL WAR FLAG PRESERVATION	WILLIAM B. HAINES
99th Mtg.	FEBRUARY	NOT AS YET CONFIRMED	
100th Mtg.	MARCH	DEVELOPMENT OF THE McCLLEAN SADDLE	JAMES HUTCHINSON
101th Mtg.	APRIL	VICKSBURG	EDWIN BEARRS
102th Mtg.	MAY	THE REAL MARGARET MITCHELL	COL. ALLEN JULIAN

## CLEVELAND BULLETIN BOARD

### DECEMBER BOOK SALE

We are going to have our annual December book sale. We have approximately sixty books up for sale. Several of the books will be sold by closed bid, utilizing a minimum sale price. Among the books under the closed bid will be a set of Lee's Lieutenants, Gideon Welles Diary (3 vols) and two regimental histories of the 101st and 105th Ohio. Anyone who has books for the sale, please contact Secretary Guy Di Carlo Jr. (261-0577) for details.

### 1969 DUES

It's that time again. There is no need for me to go into the annual diatribe about sending your dues in on time, etc. By now you have received notice that the dues for 1969 are now payable. The dues notice was sent to you with your OFFICIAL 1968-1969 CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND ROSTER. Anyone who didn't receive such a missive, let him come forward...fat chance...Please don't let us down and send in your dues by or before February 1, 1969.

### COURIER MAIL BAG

It isn't often that we get letters complimenting us on a particular issue of the newsletter, but such has been the case concerning the October issue on the OFFICIAL RECORDS. Our thanks to those who took the time to write. Especially member Frank Gillen. He has added several items of unusual interest concerning the O.R.s. Abet: "By the way too, were you aware that through an Act of Congress the lettering on the backs of the volumes were to be 24 ct gold? To get on (Gillen bought the O.R.s of the Honorable Henry Lyman of Parkman, Ohio, who was Assistant Postmaster General of the United States under the administration of Chester A. Arthur) this set was unused in the fact that over 75% of them were in sealed wrappers with series, title, volume printed in the upper left hand corner of the front side of each one." Another interesting point, he goes on, "To make it even more interesting the rest of the books still in their sealed wraps had been sent FREE through the mail from the government printing office to Mr. Lyman just as they came off the printing press and had all sorts of band stamps on them from the post office department. . . .Western Reserve Historical Society was aware that the O.R.s when originally issued came in individual printed wraps of heavy cream colored paper. . . .As a finishing thought on the O.R. Army set I wish to say that almost every G.A.R. Hall in the U.S. had a set and no doubt given by a local Congressman as a 'gift'. I have seen these volumes used in G.A.R. Halls for doorstops, to prop open windows and even strewn about in corners." From here on Frank goes into several items about the article that he enjoyed. Again a warm thanks to Frank Gillen for his kind, kind letter. Also to my out-of-town readers. The rest of you keep those cards and letters coming..My Pattie reads them all.

### CIVIL WAR HUMOR

A dark and windy night along the Potomac...two pickets walking their post...its very lonely...after awhile we overhear this conversation between a Union & Rebel picket:

Union Picket: "What regiment do you belong to Reb?"

Rebel Picket: "The 11th North Carolina. And yours Yank?"

Union Picket: "The 120th Rhode Island."

Rebel Picket: "You lyn' Yank, thar ain't that many people in the whole state."

### NOTICE TO OTHER ROUNDTABLES

This is to let the following Roundtables know that we are receiving their newsletters and enjoying every moment of it. CONFEDERATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY; ATLANTA; ARKANSAS; BATTLE CREEK; CHILLICOTHE; CINCINNATI; COLORADO; DECATUR; HAGERSTOWN; INDIANAPOLIS; JACKSON, MISS; LEXINGTON, KY; LOUISVILLE; MICHIGAN; MICHIGAN REGIMENTAL; NEW ORLEANS; NEW YORK; QUAD-CITIES; TOLEDO; EVANSVILLE; WASHINGTON, D.C.; WESTERN RESERVE and WEST RICHFIELD. Just keep em coming .....

THE COURIER  
OF  
THE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE OF CLEVELAND, OHIO

FOUNDED FEBRUARY 19, 1957

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THE SPY--HIS ADVENTURES IN KENTUCKY  
By J. D. Barbee  
CONFEDERATE VETERAN, JUNE, 1897

Some think it is dishonorable to be a spy, when, in fact, it is heroic, and assignment to the secret service is a distinction. Every man in the army is a spy in the conscious purposes of his will, and there is not one of them who would not uncover the enemy, if possible, and learn his inmost thought. Therefore it displays a weakness to become offended at the suggestion that a soldier who has been apprehended in the secret service is a spy. He is a spy, and as honorably occupied as he would be in leading a charge. The secret service is a military necessity, and some of the most thrilling chapters in the history of war are records of the adventures of spies, which have often ended in tragedy. Who has not read of Maj. Andre, Capt. Nathan Hale, and Sam Davis? And the life of Belle Boyd, a successful spy in the Army of Northern Virginia, is familiar to all.

But there was one spy during the war between the states whose history has never been written and yet some of his feats were marvelous, and his adventures exceeded romance. His eyes never looked on any man whom his heart feared, and he would have ridden with the six hundred at Balaklava or led a forlorn hope; and he was entitled to the distinction which Napoleon awarded to Marshal Ney: "the bravest of the brave." The reader will not be surprised, therefore, to learn that he was a member of Gen. John H. Morgan's military family, who had a high estimate of this staff officer and always consulted him in planning a campaign or a battle.

At a critical period in the history of "the storm-cradled nation which finally fell" Gen. Bragg desired to have the reading of the newspapers which were being published within the Federal lines. He wanted to know what was being said on the other side and what foreign countries were saying; but how to get the information was the question. The papers containing it must be obtained surreptitiously if obtained at all. Therefore a subterranean mail route would have to be established, for which the Postmaster General of the United States could in no sense be held responsible. Was that practicable? and if so, what should be the method of procedure? The enterprise seemed feasible to Gen. Bragg, the only weak point in the plan being the lack of a man qualified for it and willing to undertake it.

He sent for Gen. Morgan and laid the whole scheme before him, who approved it, and told the commanding general that he had to man in his command who would accomplish the perilous undertaking if it could be done at all. He described him as self-contained, full of personal resources, and calm amid alarms; a man whose wits never forsook him and whose courage never failed in any extremity. The representation pleased Gen. Bragg, who directed Morgan to take charge of the hazardous enterprise and arrange all details on his own discretion.

Gen. Morgan returned to his headquarters, and having called the true and trusty staff officer into his presence, they held a long, whispered consultation. The subaltern saw at once the serious character of the proposed adventure. If he should be suspected, all presumption and prejudice would be against him, and he could not hope to escape death. If his prudence should fail in any instance, he might reveal himself; or if a friend whom he had trusted should forget his prudence or prove traitor, all would be lost. In the most hopeful view which might be taken of the situation the possibilities, favorable and otherwise, were about evenly balanced. A man of feeble courage would have faltered; but our hero, with the dauntless spirit of those brave rebels of 1776, who stormed Stony Point at night and took it, was unmoved and immovable. It was night and the thought of his noble wife and little daughters far away in their humble home, heaved his breast with a sigh and a tear stole down his cheek, but he did not waver. He knew that true and faithful wife, who never forgot to pray for him was in her heart repeating the motto of the Greek mother in handing the battered shield of the deceased father to the son as he entered the service: "This, or upon this." The transformation from the appearance of an army officer into the guise of a well-dressed citizen was the work of a short time, and taking affectionate leave of his commander, the brave staff officer mounted and rode away into the darkness. Rising a knoll a short distance beyond, he halted and turned for a final look upon the camp fires of the boys in gray, not certain it would prove his farewell gaze upon receding hope.

It had been planned to establish a chain of relay stations from Cumberland River to the city of Elizabethtown, Ky., and having subscribed for the Eastern and Northern papers, to be mailed to the address of a Southern sympathizer at the latter place, they were to be transmitted by him through carriers traveling only at night. One man would take the bundle of papers at Elizabethtown, after darkness had set in, and convey the package to a designated point and deliver it to an accomplice, and return before day. The next night the mail would be carried to another stage and left; and thus it was conveyed from point to point to a place within convenient and easy reach of the Confederate army; and long before the manager of the scheme had returned to his command Gen. Bragg was daily reading the news of the world.

When the hero of this story arrived at Elizabethtown he boldly stopped at a leading hotel, and when he had had dinner and his horse fed, he ordered the latter to be saddled, and he mounted and rode out to the camps of a regiment of Federal cavalry just beyond the city limits. They were Kentuckians, and were on the point of revolt, because the emancipation proclamation had just been issued, saying they had enlisted to save the Union, not to abolish slavery. The colonel threatened to resign upon the spot, but his visitor expostulated with him, and urged him to continue in position, and exhorted the rest to stand by the old flag under any circumstances. His speech had a placating effect, and the presumption is that the spirit of munity died out and the regiment was contented.

Returning to the hotel, he sought the officer of a leading lawyer of the city, to whom Gen. Morgan had commended him, and, being ushered into the

barrister's private office, he revealed himself and his mission. The lawyer demanded his credentials or some visible evidence that he truly represented the brilliant Kentucky general, whom he knew well. The strange visitor, on a strange and peculiar mission, had wisely and prudently omitted to provide himself with credentials, trusting alone to his own personal resources to make good his claim to being the secret agent and true representative of Gen. Morgan. He invited a careful and thorough investigation, and at the end of one hour the lawyer announced that he was satisfied and was ready to cooperate in the scheme proposed. He also made many valuable suggestions, and introduced the stranger to other Southern sympathizers who could be trusted with his secret. Among the latter was a young lawyer who soon had an opportunity to render invaluable service to the secret agent. On entering that lawyer's office on day the stranger observed him break into a wild paroxysm of laughter, which was protracted to an embarrassing length. Finally regaining self-control, he explained that his wife's pastor had just left his office, announcing as he departed that the stranger would preach for him that evening. Said the lawyer: "Do you think you can do it? Could you preach a sermon?" In reply he was informed that his new-made acquaintance was a regularly ordained preacher and a member of an Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The lawyer, as soon as he could recover from the astonishment which this announcement caused, advised the preacher to leave town for the night, saying he would make it all right with the pastor, whom he knew to be an intense Unionist, and he feared that something might occur which would betray this visiting preacher.

A few miles distant, on one of the principal thoroughfares leading to the city of Elizabethtown, our hero stopped at a wayside inn and spent the night. Having retired early, he was about to compose himself for sleep, when he heard a commotion in the office, near to which his apartments were located. A traveler had arrived who was manifestly intoxicated, and seeing our hero's name on the register, he demanded to be assigned to the same room, to which arrangement the spy was mentally assenting, for he had perceived that the new arrival was sufficiently disguised in liquor to be quite communicative. The proprietor finally consented, and the drunk man entered the room and promptly disclosed his identity and revealed all he knew, much of which proved valuable to his auditor, and was used by him in his movements in Kentucky afterwards.

On another occasion the hero of this narrative was riding along the highway, when suddenly at a curve in the road he was brought face to face with a squad of Federal cavalry moving in the opposite direction. Concealment was impossible and flight was hopeless, but his unfailing resources were at command. Turning toward a lot of negroes at work near by in a field on his right, he began in an authoritative tone to command them what to do when the present job should be finished. In the meantime the soldiers passed, with whom he exchanged salutations and renewed his journey, the perplexed negroes remarking to each other: "What sort of a man is dat?" He's sho' crazy."

On the same day he had a test of his prudence which well-nigh upset him. He had stopped for dinner at one of those elegant old Kentucky homes, and at that table the landlady remarked that she had two sons in the Confederate army, to which her guest replied with affected surprise: "You do not mean to seriously state that your sons are fighting to break up this government?" She replied, her eye kindling with indignation and patriotic fire: "Yes; and if I had a dozen sons, they should all be there." Upon further inquiry he learned that the lady's sons were with Gen. Morgan, and it was with difficulty he could refrain from telling that noble mother he knew her brave boys well and had seen them but a few days before that time. He kept silent, however, and having paid his bill, he mounted and rode off, leaving the

family under the impression that an intense Unionist had enjoyed their hospitality that day.

When the business was finished on which he had originally gone into Kentucky he lingered for a time at Elizabethtown, making daily excursions into the country to gather what information he could from the rural people. Having returned to the town one day, he was walking along a principal street and met the lawyer to whose address the contraband literature was coming, who, without turning his head, remarked: "Look out for the postmaster; he suspects you." Instantly his resolution was formed, and he went directly to the post office, which was kept in the front end of a small retail store, and immediately began to make purchases of cutlery and other convenient articles, improving the opportunity to do much talking to please the proprietor. Having finished shopping, he left with the good opinion of that postmaster, who believed there was not a more loyal man in Kentucky than his customer.

The first signal of danger had now been displayed, and the adventurer thought it wise to seek a safer locality. It was not deemed best to make a precipitate flight, but it was his judgment that there should be no early departure. That evening he learned that one too many had been intrusted with his secret. Having gone to the home of a Southern sympathizer, with whom he had become quite intimate--intending to spend the night there--he was informed that that friend had acquainted another of his class with the mission of the stranger. He instantly remarked, "You have made a mistake; I shall be betrayed," and, mounting, he took hasty leave of Elizabethtown and was soon speeding southward. And he left none too soon, for within two hours afterwards a squad of cavalry appeared upon the scene and demanded the body of the stranger. They were too late; the bird had flown; and, having visited summary punishment upon the gentlemen from whose house the escapade had but shortly before been made, they returned to camp and reported. The colonel in command ordered an officer to take ten men and give chase to the fugitive, and apprehend him if possible.

About five hours had elapsed before the troop of horse began the pursuit, and the daring Confederate made the most of the advantage thus afforded, and was thirty miles away. He was mounted on a Kentucky thoroughbred, and the noble brute seemed intelligently in sympathy with the sense of peril which fired his rider's heart, and rapidly picked up miles of "the dark and bloody ground" and threw them behind him. When the wings of the morning appeared that faithful, high-mettled animal seemed a very Pegasus, cleaving the air in his flight and touching the earth only at its high points. Finally the swollen Cumberland was reached and the fleeing veteran rode into the ferry boat and crossed to the southern side and stood before Gen. Morgan to report. The General could scarcely credit the testimony of his own eyes, for he had heard that this true and faithful staff officer was a prisoner, and did not need to be told the rest. His return, therefore, seemed an apparition or a resurrection.

The war was not yet over, and many terrible battles were still to be fought. The hero of this story dropped back into his place on Gen. Morgan's staff, and, like Murat, his white plume could ever be seen waving in the thickest of the fight. He followed his gallant leader on that famous campaign into the Northwest, and was one of the few who swam their horses across the Ohio River and escaped when Gen. Morgan's Command was captured. The Federal cavalry were approaching in large numbers, reenforced by gunboats, which had already swung into position and opened fire. Morgan could have escaped, but he said to those with him at the front: "Save yourselves if you can; I must return and surrender with my men." Noble, unselfish, chivalrous

knight! If thou couldst not have survived the sanguinary struggle, it is preferred thou shouldst have fallen in battle leading thy brave columns on the serried ranks of the enemy, and not that thou shouldst have been shot down like a dog.

When hostilities had ceased, the brave soldier whose career I have been attempting to describe resumed his place among his brethren of the Tennessee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and for thirty years more preached the gospel of peace. He won numerous trophies for the Captain of the Lord's host, and "many will rise up in the judgment and call him blessed." He was a man of affairs and a great organizer and builder, the land being dotted all over with churches which he erected to God. His greatest work was his last, the establishing of the city mission of Nashville, Tenn. Going down into the slums and out into the purlieus, he "rescued the perishing and cared for the dying."

The end came at last, as come it will to all living. After more than threescore and ten years the venerable man of God laid his body down with his charge and ceased at once to work and live. In April, 1895, God said to the angels, as in the case of Elijah: "My old servant has had a long and toilsome pilgrimage, and he is weary; take the family carriage and go down and bring him home." When the dying saint saw them he shouted, "Mahanaim!" and George W. Finn ascended to heaven.

#### BOY HERO OF TENNESSEE

CONFEDERATE VETERAN

Vol. XL No. 12 Dec 1932

Sixty-nine years have passed since Sam Davis a young Tennessee soldier of the Confederacy, sacrificed his life on the gallows at Pulaski, Tennessee, to his high sense of honor. His native state now holds his boyhood home at Smyrna, Tennessee, as a memorial to her gallant son, and visitors from all over this country go there as to a shrine, for it is hallowed by the memory of a noble deed. In tribute to this Confederate hero, a handsome bronze tablet has been placed on the great bowlder under an old oak tree on the lawn to mark the place where Sam Davis hid his horse on the night of his last visit home just before his capture in November, 1863.

. . .and it seems fitting to reproduce the interesting story of his life and death as written by the late Dr. H.M. Hamill, of Nashville, a close friend of the late S.A. Cunningham, Founder and Editor of the CONFEDERATE VETERAN, who placed on record all that could be learned of this brave boy and worked through many years to make up a fund for a monument to his memory. This monument stands on Capitol Hill in Nashville.

#### THE STORY OF AN OLD-FASHION BOY.

Sam Davis was his name. He was born on a farm near the little town of Smyrna, Tennessee. His parents were old-fashioned people, God-fearing, simple mannered, neither rich nor poor, and Sam grew up in the quiet ways of the Southern country boy. Just as he had passed out of his teens, and was yet a big boy in face and spirit, he died on the gallows at Pulaski, Tennessee, a sacrifice for his friends and country.

Sam Davis spent his boyhood days in the fields and under the great trees of his father's farm, companion with mocking bird and bee and butterfly, and with the patient brutes that serve the farmer's need. There was no hint of the hero to come in the peaceful, humdrum life of the farm. True, the war clouds were gathering above and the air was becoming electric with exciting speech and prophecy; and in every village was springing up a holiday soldiery, parading in glittering uniform to the sound of fife and drum.



Out of the tenseness of these stirring years that ushered in the great war Sam's strange heroism may have been fashioned; but I prefer to trace it back to the old-fashioned mother and father and the simple, sincere life of the boy of the Rutherford County farm. Somehow the old fable of Antaeus' strength coming back to him only when in contact with mother earth is often confirmed in the strength and heroism of the men who have come to greatness from the life of the farm.

When the war finally came and drum and fife and soldier in a twinkling were transformed into the machinery of real battle, Sam put aside his schoolbooks at Nashville, and bade goodbye to the two teachers who, as Generals Bushrod Johnson and Edmund Kirby-Smith, became distinguished soldiers of the Confederacy. He enlisted as a private in the 1st Tennessee Infantry, and soon found place of drudgery and danger in the army of General Bragg.

The life of the private soldier anywhere or at anytime in real warfare is not a pathway of roses. Least of all, as the writer of his own experience can testify, was it a place of comfort in the armies of the South. The flags that flashed forth their stars and bars so bravely were soon blackened by smoke and rent by bullet. The bright uniforms soon bore the marks of the clay hills and the camp fires and soon grew tarnished and torn. Even the martial music changed its note from the sparkle and rush of the "Bonnie Blue Flag" and the "Girl I Left Behind Me" to the minor tones of "The Years Creep Slowly By, Lorena."

General Bragg, whatever criticisms may be put upon his generalship, was an insistent fighter, and his men were used to being in the thick of battle. It was so with our boy Sam. The peace and beauty of the Smyrna farm gave place to the wearisome tramp, the pangs of hunger, the cries of the wounded, and the pale faces of the dead. Those who knew the boy speak much of his courage and faithfulness. "His record was such," writes one, "that when Bragg ordered the organization of a company of scouts by General B.F. Cheatham, Sam Davis was chosen as one of the number because of his coolness and daring and power of endurance."

Capt. H.B. Shaw was given command of these scouts, and the field of their earlier endeavor was Middle Tennessee, which, in 1863, was practically in the hands of the Federals.

Captain Shaw assumed a disguise within the Federal lines, posing as an itinerant doctor and bearing the name of "Dr. E. Coleman" among the Federals, and of "Capt. E. Coleman, Commander of Scouts," among the Confederates, even in his official communications to General Bragg, this double deception being deemed necessary to the prosecution of his dangerous duty as a spy. Scout or spy, whatever the term applied, one who enters the lines of the enemy to secretly gather information for use of the opposing army, under the rules of warfare, becomes a "spy," and if caught is executed as a spy. There is no mawkish sentiment in war, and small mercy is shown one who seeks to discover the secrets of the enemy.

But, as with Major Andre of the Revolution and with many others, the occupation of scout and spy is a necessity of warfare to which any soldier is liable and upon which no just odium can be cast. No soldier of the Revolution, from Washington down, condemned the gallant young officer who, under military law, died bravely as a spy. On the contrary, one who, under the hard usage of the camp, is commissioned as a military spy, is usually chosen because of superior intelligence, courage, and devotion to his army and colors. His vocation is full of deadly peril by day and by night. If caught, he usually dies the most ignominious death under conditions that inspire contempt in the spectators, to the end that swift judgment and odious death may deter men from seeking the office of the spy. Over his supreme self-sacrifice the epitaph is commonly written, "Died on the gallows as a spy," without those added words which justice demands: "Under military appointment and for his country's cause."

It fell to the lot of my Tennessee hero to be assigned to "Captain Coleman's Scouts" and to be given a place of peculiar difficulty and danger, soon to terminate in death. The appointing officer said it was the "boy's record" that gave prominence



and promotion to one so young. He had learned as a country boy two hard lessons that few men learn in a lifetime--to fear nothing and nobody but God, and to obey orders. He had a peculiarly bright and winning way about him, an utterly fearless eye, a frank and gentle speech, and the self-poise of a great soul. Next to his God, above even his tender love for his mother and home, Sam Davis cherished that old-time sense of "honor" so sacred among the traditions of the Old South, when one's "word of honor" meant more than wealth or fame or life itself.

In November, 1863, the 16th Army Corps under Gen. G.M. Dodge, U.S.A., was centered at Pulaski, Tennessee not far from the Tennessee River and the Alabama line. General Dodge had started from Corinth, Miss., to Chattanooga, Tenn., to reinforce General Grant. On all roads his cavalry kept sharp lookout, especially to break to pieces the Coleman band of scouts, who were here and there, watching every movement of the Federals, and by persistent and accurate reports to General Bragg were making havoc of General Dodge's peace and plans--so much so that the General put on its mettle the famous Kansas 7th Cavalry, nicknamed the "Jayhawkers," to run to earth and capture Coleman and his scouts. So active and alert was the entire corps that capture was at most a matter of a few days only.

Captain Shaw, alias Coleman, summoned Davis and committed to his care certain papers, letters, reports, and maps giving late and important news to General Bragg. In his shoes and in the saddle seat were hidden the dangerous documents; and Sam, with Coleman's pass, started southward to Decatur, Ala., thence to take the "Scout Line" to the headquarters of General Bragg. His last route began and ended November 19. Rund down and arrested at the Tennessee River by the Jayhawkers, along with other prisoners was hurried to Pulaski, and by night was in jail. Elsewhere, on the same day, Captain Shaw himself was captured and imprisoned also in the town. Davis' papers and reports were placed in the hands of General Dodge, who twice had him brought to his headquarters, urging him in strong but kindly way to disclose the name of the one who had committed to him the captured papers.

As shown throughout the Davis tragedy, General Dodge was proven to have been a man of kindly spirit. Something about the Tennessee boy evidently touched the General's heart. Of him he wrote at length to the CONFEDERATE VETERAN, paying long cherished tribute to Davis' memory, saying that "he was a fine, soldierly looking young man, dressed in a faded Federal coat, an army soft hat, and top boots; he had a fresh, open face, which was inclined to brightness; in all things he showed himself a true soldier; it was known by all the command that I desired to save him. I appreciate fully that the people of the South and Davis' comrades understand his soldierly qualities, and propose to honor his memory. I take pleasure in contributing to a monument to his memory." And with it came the General's personal check. Of Davis' arrest and trial, he further writes: "I was very anxious to capture Coleman and break up his command." (General Dodge did not know, nor did any Confederate prisoner in the Pulaski jail give the slightest hint, that the "H.B. Shaw" captured the same day as Davis, and probably prisoner in the same building with him, was the veritable "Coleman" himself.) "I had Davis brought before me. His captors knew that he was a member of Coleman's Scouts, and I knew what was found upon him, and desired to locate Coleman and ascertain, if possible, who was furnishing information so accurate to General Bragg. Davis met me modestly. I tried to impress on him the danger he was in, and as only a messenger I held out to him the hope of lenient treatment if he would answer truthfully my questions. I informed him that he would be tried as a spy and the evidence would surely convict him, and I made a direct appeal to him to give me the information I knew he had. He very quietly but firmly refused to do it. I pleaded with him with all the power I possessed to give me some chance to save his life. I discovered that he was a most admirable young fellow, with highest character and strictest integrity. He replied: "I know, General, I will have to die; but I will not tell where I got the information, and there is no power on earth that can make me tell. You are doing your duty as a soldier, and if I have to die, I shall be doing my duty to God and my country."

There was nothing more that General Dodge could do. A military commission was convened within three days, which tried Davis and sentenced him as a spy to death on the gallows Friday, November 27, between the hours of 10 A.M. and 2 P.M.--one week from the day of his capture. You may be sure it was a long and lonely week to the brave boy, especially those last three days that intervened between his sentence and the day of doom. Somehow, though not strangely, there sprang up in all hearts an ever increasing interest in one who by a single word could open the door of his prison, yet chose to die in place of another "for duty's sake." With "Coleman" probably in touch of his hand and sound of his voice, he gave no sign or hint of his identity. "He is worth more to the Confederacy than I," he said. I doubt it.

Again and again Federal soldiers sought Sam in his cell, pleading with him to disclose the informer's name and save his own life. Chaplain James Young, of the 81st Ohio Infantry, was his constant visitor and comforter, to whom the last messages and tokens were committed for delivery to his home. On the last morning, for "remembrance sake," Sam gave him the Federal overcoat that his mother had dyed, which Mr. Young lovingly kept until his seventy-third year, not long before his death, he sent it to the Editor, of the CONFEDERATE VETERAN, saying: "My promised remembrance is fulfilled. I am seventy-three years old, and could not reasonably expect to care for it much longer. I have cut off a small button from the cape, which I will keep. The night before he died we sang together, 'On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,' and, as he desired, I was with him constantly, and at the end I prayed with and for him." Dear old Chaplain! He and Sam are together now under brighter skies with the Master whom they served. Provost Marshal Armstrong, who had charge of prison and gallows, became Sam's ardent friend, and rough soldier though he was, could scarcely perform his painful duty. Captain Chickasaw, Chief of Dodge's Scouts, also took a strong liking to the boy, and made a last effort to save him.

A copy of a faded little war paper issued from the camp of Dodge's Corps gives the Federal account of Davis' last hours on earth. "Last Friday," it reads, "the citizens and soldiery of Pulaski witnessed one of those painful executions of stern justice which make war so terrible; and though sanctioned by its usages, it is no more than brave men in their country's service expose themselves to every day." Then it goes on with its generous tribute to the young hero whom the bravest soldier might look upon with pride even upon the gallows.

Friday morning came all too swiftly, and at ten o'clock sharp the drums were beating, the execution guard under Marshall Armstrong was marching to the jail, while the soldiers of the 16th Corps by the thousands, with muskets in hand, were being marshaled in line about Seminary Ridge, where the gallows was upreared in waiting. A wagon, with a rough pine coffin, on which Sam Davis sat, headed the march. In sight of his fellow prisoners, Sam waved his goodbye with a smiling face, and at the gallows dismounted and sat under a tree, unfalteringly looking above at the swinging noose and around at the sympathetic faces of the soldiers.

"How long have I to live, Captain Armstrong?" he inquired. "About fifteen minutes, Sam." "What is the news from the front?" And Armstrong told him of General Bragg's battle and defeat. "Thank you, Captain; but I'm sorry to hear it." And then, with one last quaver in his voice of loving remembrance of his comrades in gray: "The boys will have to fight their battles without me." Captain Armstrong broke down: "Sam, I would rather die myself than to execute sentence upon you." "Never mind, Captain," was the gentle reply. "You are doing your duty. Thank you for all your kindness."

It was then that Captain Chickasaw came swiftly on horse and, leaping to the ground, sat himself by Sam and pleaded in that last fierce moment of youth for the word of information that would send him to his home in freedom. Sam arose to his feet and, with flashing eye and uplifted face, made his last answer: "No I cannot. I would rather die a thousand deaths than betray a friend or be false to duty."

A Federal officer who was looking into Sam's face, wrote of him long after in the OMAHA BEE: "The boy looked about him. Life was young and promising. Overhead hung the noose; around him were soldiers in line; at his feet was a box prepared for his body, now pulsing with young and vigorous life; in front were the steps that would lead him to disgraceful death, and that death it was in his power to so easily avoid."

For just an instant he hesitated, and then put aside forever the tempting offer. Thus ended a tragedy wherein a smooth-faced boy, without counsel, in the midst of enemies, with courage of highest type, deliberately chose death of life secured by means he thought dishonorable."

The steps to the gallows were firmly mounted, and Sam's last words, "I am ready, Captain," followed the Chaplain's prayer--when in a moment he had passed through the gates of death to take his place forever among the heroes of the Southland.

In his memory, a costly and beautiful monument, surmounted by a bronze figure of the boy, was erected on Capitol Hill, in the heart of Nashville. From every State in the Union, from Blue and Gray, from rich and poor, the money to build the monument was contributed upon plea of the Editor of the CONFEDERATE VETERAN, whose conception it was; and on dedication day many thousands bowed their heads in loving memory of the boy hero of Tennessee. Sometime, when passing through Nashville, take a moment to look upon the noble bronze face, and then visit the old Smyrna home and in the garden see the grave of Sam as he sleeps by the side of his mother and father.

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### SAM DAVIS CONTROVERSY

The forgoing article on Sam Davis from the December, 1932 issue of the CONFEDERATE VETERAN was done for a purpose. In May of this year I ran a query from the men in Murfreesboro from the Nathan Bedford Forrest CWRT. It was entitled "Sam Davis and the Decision at Pulaski." I am about to repeat that brief query for the benefit of all and then print the rejoinder from Colonel Allen P. Julien, our dear friend from Atlanta.

### SAM DAVIS AND THE DECISION AT PULASKI

Many unanswered questions remain in the long wake of the execution of Sam Davis at Pulaski, Tennessee, on November 27, 1863. Here are three:

1. Why was not the decision of the drum-head court-martial reported to President Lincoln for his approval or disapproval? Presidential sanction for military executions was required then and is today.
2. Why was the execution not reported in the OFFICIAL RECORDS?
3. In the specifications why was Davis unequivocally charged as a spy when all evidence pointed to his role as a scout? In the first place, he wore Confederate gray, not civilian attire, and secondly, he carried identification papers of the type issued by General Bragg to all members of the Coleman Scouts. Under a reciprocal agreement with union military authorities operating in Middle Tennessee, Confederate Scouts in uniform, if captured, were guaranteed immunity from the death penalty. This applied conversely to Union Scouts.

But, this happened over one hundred years ago and things, after a fashion, have been settled. Racing one's motor now must be reserved for the buff. That which is uncovered by the amateur researcher will be filed alongside the inconsequential minutiae gleaned from the littled travelled, poorly-marked sideroads of history. The death of Sam Davis was a tragedy. Yet there were over 600,000 others whose exits must have created some emotional stir in homes all over the country. But, it seems there must be categories of dying--and how one dies. Falling from a sniper's bullet is one. Reeling the final throes in a cottonfield is another. Having one's guts blown out from an up-close twelve pounder is still another. Having one's head caved in with a rifle but another. Then too, there must be a category reserved for the unsophisticated demise via say, dysentery. But Davis, from one point of view, is in a rarified category all of his own. Rare from one this view--rare is he who has a happy choice between life and death. Davis had that choice and made it and accepted the results without a quiver. His executioner, nineteen-year-old private Corwin W. Van Pelt said so.

Now here is Ned Julian's reply to the boys in Murfreesboro. I quote: "I have not had time to read all your newsletter, but one thing I did read thoroughly and wish to comment upon . . . about the execution of Sam Davis.

First, it would be interesting to know upon what authority someone stated that the sentence of the court should have been referred to Mr. Lincoln. In fact, for some crimes, department and field force commanders could approve similar sentences without referral to the President. Davis was a Confederate, hence he was not under the protection of military laws of the United States.

Second, why should so routine a matter as the execution of a spy, unless he happened to be a person of prominence, be included in the OFFICIAL RECORDS?

Third, when Davis entered the Union lines for the purpose of contacting a spy he lost whatever protection the agreement pertaining to scouts may have afforded him. He too, became a spy.

Further, according to a statement made by General Dodge, in a letter to the Editor of the CONFEDERATE VETERAN, dated June 15, 1897, Davis was wearing when apprehended "a faded Federal soldier's coat, one of our army soft hats, and top boots." The boots are immaterial, of course, and the hat meant nothing, but the coat, despite the fact that thousands of Confederates wore various articles of the Union uniform at times, from sheer necessity, was damning. More so, the material which he was carrying from the spy who had collected it enroute to Bragg. Davis could have saved himself by informing on his contact, but would not; so Dodge had no choice even though he admired his courage and loyalty. Too much vital information was passing out of his lines to risk his command by failing in his duty to execute Davis. Sad case, but Davis knew the risk he was taking. Dodge described him as "a fine, soldierly-looking young man . . . with a frank face . . . (who) listened attentively and respectfully to me. . . (but) made no definite answer. . . ." My material was taken from THE BATTLE OF ATLANTA and other campaign addresses by General Dodge, p. 167. I didn't mean to get into all that, but I'm afraid someone has been misinformed.

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#### SECURITY VS NEWS

"Not long since, General Sherman, in conversation, alluded to a correspondent of the NEW YORK HERALD whom he had threatened to hang, declaring that had he done so his 'death' would have saved ten thousand lives. It seems that one of our Signal officers had succeeded in reading the code of the enemy, and had communicated the same to his fellow-officers. With this code in their possession, the corps was enabled to furnish valuable information directly from Rebel headquarters by reading the Rebel signals, continuing to do so during the Chattanooga and much of the Atlanta campaign, when the enemy's signal flags were often plainly visible.

"Suddenly this source of information was completely cut off by the ambition of the correspondent to publish all the news, and the natural result was the enemy changed the code. This took place just before Sherman's attack on Kenesaw Mountain (June 1864), and it is to the hundreds slaughtered there that he probably refers. General Thomas was ordered to arrest the reporter and have him hanged as a spy; but old 'Pap' Thomas' kind heart banished him to the north of the Ohio for the remainder of the war instead."

From "Hardtack and Coffee"  
by John D. Billings, 1887.

#### THE "FLYING TELEGRAPH"

Perhaps the greatest communications achievement during the war was the adapting of the electric telegraph into the field service of the Army. General Myer wanted tactical electric telegraph which could be moved about in the field when visual signals could not be used. With civilian inventors, he developed the Army's first electrical communication device, the Beardslee magneto-electric telegraph set. Readily portable, it could signal over several miles of insulated field wire, which soldiers laid rapidly over the ground or strung on lance poles. (Taken from THE OFFICIAL ARMY INFORMATION DIGEST, AUGUST 1961, SPECIAL ISSUE COMMEMORATING THE U.S. ARMY IN THE CIVIL WAR...1861-1865.