

**JEFFERSON DAVIS. THE
PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATE
STATES, AND ABRAHAM
LINCOLN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES, 1861-1865**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649749843

Jefferson Davis. The President of the Confederate States, and Abraham Lincoln, the President of the United States, 1861-1865 by Mildred Lewis Rutherford

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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MILDRED LEWIS RUTHERFORD

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JEFFERSON DAVIS

The President of the Confederate States

AND

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The President of the United States

1861-1865

— BY —

Mildred Lewis Rutherford

Athens, Ga.

State Historian Georgia Division, U. D. C.

"Be just and fear not.
Let all thou aimest at be the truth."

1916

"The time has come when men may speak freely, kindly, and truly of the past. The War Between the States, with its sacrifices, has ceased, and peace between the sections with its ennobling, refining and uplifting influences, has come to abide forever. They who would stay its marches and delay its reign are the enemies of the Nation's happiness."

BENNETT H. YOUNG, U. C. V.,

Louisville, Ky.

INTRODUCTION

Mothers and teachers are urging the Historian General to suggest histories for the true life of Jefferson Davis and of Abraham Lincoln, saying that the children in the schools today are getting distorted facts concerning both and when urged to write essays about these two men cannot find the right kind of reference books at home or in the school and public libraries.

Complaints are coming that the teachers in our schools, many of them men and women of Southern birth, are teaching that Abraham Lincoln was "a greater man, a man of more exalted purpose than was Jefferson Davis, and that the cause for which Davis stood was an unworthy cause."

They make a plea that something shall be done and done quickly to meet the needs of the hour.

In the cause of TRUTH, then, these sketches are prepared with the hope of undoing much of the evil already done, and with the hope of presenting these two leaders in a simple, truthful way so that they may be known and appreciated by even the youngest child in our schools.

Many things not needful to know or discuss, because children cannot understand them, have been omitted, and only salient facts presented. That young people may be interested, anecdotes of childhood, as far as possible, have been collected, also the public life and services of the two men to the United States Government have been stressed on account of Essay Contest U. D. C.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

Born June 3, 1808. Died Dec. 6, 1889.

Three Davis brothers left their homes in Wales and came to America and settled in Philadelphia. Evan Davis came to Georgia and married a widow, Mrs. Emory, with two sons. By this marriage there was an only child named Samuel.

The Revolutionary War was in progress when Samuel reached the age of fifteen, and his mother sent him very often over the line into South Carolina to take food and clothing to his half-brothers serving in the American Army. The young boy became so infatuated with army life that he begged to be allowed to join his brothers in camp, and was permitted later to raise a company of infantry and, young as he was, he was made captain.

He led this company to Savannah and gained honors for himself in rendering aid to the Americans against the British. When the War ended and he returned to his home he found his mother had died, the home a wreck, all buildings burned, fences and crops destroyed. He then moved near Augusta, Ga., and began life as a farmer.

When a soldier in South Carolina he had stopped one day on a march to ask for food at the home of pretty Jane Cook, and he never forgot the charms of that young hostess.

As soon as the War ended and he had a home of his own he returned to ask her to be his wife. She was Scotch-Irish, and he was Welsh, so no better blood could be united. He was handsome with a well developed body and a very active mind; she was very beautiful, intelligent and full of life.

The home life was happy and congenial, and many children came into the home nest. Samuel Davis found it now much harder to provide for many than few, so he left his Georgia farm to seek life in the new State of Kentucky, because it gave better promise of a living for his family.

He settled in Christian County, now known as Todd County, and where Fairview is today was the modest home of Samuel Davis. He planted tobacco and began to raise fine-blooded horses and succeeded admirably well.

It was at this Kentucky home that Jefferson Davis, the

youngest of ten children, five boys and five girls, was born June 3, 1808. The names of the boys were Joseph E., who became a lawyer, and lived at "Hurricane Plantation"; Benjamin, a physician, beloved and pious; Samuel and Isaac, both planters; and Jefferson, the youngest child. The names of the girls were Anne, Lucinda, Amanda and Mary, called Polly.

For some reason the family moved later to Bayou Têche, Louisiana, but this place proved unhealthy, and another move became necessary, so a farm was bought near Woodville, Mississippi. The sport was fine for the Davis boys. They shot bear, deer, wild game of all kinds, and found fish to be abundant there.

The near-by school was kept in a log cabin, and the teacher knew little beyond "the three R's— readin', 'ritin' and 'rithmetic." This was Jefferson Davis' first school, going at the early age of five with his sister Polly, only two years older. The two little children had to go every day through a lonely wood, carrying the little dinner basket between them. One day a noise in the bushes made Polly believe the "old drunken chair-mender" was after them, and she was trembling from fright. Little Jefferson, with brotherly pride, while his little body also trembled, said, "We must'nt run, Polly. Don't be afraid, I'll protect you."

It was not the chair-mender after all, but a great wild deer with branching horns, that gazed at the children for a few moments, then bounded away and was lost in the forest.

Little things sometimes lead to great resolves. Little Jefferson overheard two of his sisters talking one day. Amanda said, "Jeff is so little he'll never amount to a thing in this world." Polly said, "Yes, he is little, but he is such a dear boy." Jefferson then and there determined to learn how to wrestle so that he would grow big and do something worthy of Polly's love.

The War of 1812 was on and three of the brothers joined Andrew Jackson's army. The other brothers took care of the home affairs and, realizing that Jefferson could get no education worth while at such a school, begged that he be sent to St. Thomas, a Roman Catholic school somewhere in Kentucky. They were obliged to slip him away from his mother for she could not abide the thought of separation from her baby boy.

There were no stage coaches, no railroads and no steamboats to take him in that direction, so he had to go on horseback. This, however, was no hardship for, as soon almost as he could walk, he had learned to ride horseback—as all Southern boys

did. Major Hinds was taking his son Howell to the same school, so together the two little boys rode side by side for several weeks, camping at night or stopping at Indian "Stands" as they were called.

Jefferson was the youngest boy in the school, but the Dominican priests were very kind to him, and one of them took him into his own room and into his own bed. There were mischievous boys in this school, as there are in all schools, so these boys planned a trick on this priest, because they did not like him, and persuaded little Jefferson to blow out the light so that they could enter the priest's room in darkness. The trick was successful and the priest felt that Jefferson must know who the boys were, and attempted to force him to tell on them. Jefferson would not do it, even when carried to the loft and strapped to a frame to be whipped in order to force confession. "If you will tell," said the priest, "I will not punish you." "I know one thing," said Jefferson, "I know who it was that blew out the light." "Tell me that then," said the priest, "and you shall not be punished." "It was I," and the little fellow said this so boldly that it amused the priest, and he unstrapped him and let him go unwhipped.

He stayed at school two years, and grew very much and looked very different from the slender lad of seven, for he was taller and stronger every way. His father then decided that he should be put at Jefferson Academy near home, so sent for him to return. Little Jefferson determined to play a joke upon his mother, by pretending that he was a stranger. He approached the house and seeing her standing in the doorway he called to her in a very careless way, "Good morning, Madam, have you seen any stray horses around here?" His mother looked at him closely, then recognizing him, folded him in her arms and said, "No—no stray horses but I see a little stray boy." She was so glad to see him, and when this greeting was over, he bounded off to the fields to find his father.

When spring time came, Jefferson had the spring fever—or rather "school fever," so common to growing children—and said he didn't want to go to school. "All right," said his father, "every one about this place must work either with the hands or with the head. I need some hands on the farm, so I will give you some work to do." The next day he went into the field with the negro hands. It was so hot and he became so tired that he decided to go back to school, to study harder and to complain less.

At twelve years of age, he entered Transylvania College, Ky. Here, "he was considered the brightest and most intelligent of all the boys as well as the bravest and handsomest." He was always noted for respect to his professors, and his teachers all acknowledged that Jefferson Davis was "the most polite boy in college." While "brimful of buoyant spirit" he was no violator of rules, and was at all times gentle and refined.

His next move was to West Point to receive his military training. His father had died while he was at Transylvania College, and he grieved greatly over his death, and never even in after life could read one of his father's letters without being choked with sobs.

The discipline at West Point was very rigid, but there he distinguished himself "for his manly bearing and high-toned, lofty character." He was not very studious, however, for, out of a class of thirty-three, he stood twenty-third, and yet he was the only one of his class whose name has come down in history as famous. He saved every month part of the money paid him for expenses and sent this money to his mother.

It was at West Point he studied Rawle's "View of the Constitution," which taught him that if a State seceded—showing that it was an acknowledged fact by the Constitution that a State had the right to secede—the duty of a soldier reverted to his State—hence Davis, Robert E. Lee, Thomas J. Jackson, the Johnstons and others, acting upon this instruction, cast their lot with their States in 1861. Thus it happened then when in 1865 the question of a trial of Jefferson Davis was agitated, Chief-Justice Chase said that a trial would condemn the North, and so no trial was ever held. He was released on bail but his political disabilities were never removed.

Jefferson Davis was only twenty years of age when he was graduated from West Point. When the Black Hawk War was threatening volunteers offered their services, and then it was that Captain Abraham Lincoln of Springfield, Ill., came to be mustered into service by Lieut. Jefferson Davis of the United States army. Little did either dream that their lives would clash so strongly in after years. This is the only record that these men ever met or were brought in personal contact with each other. Both made good soldiers, but only Davis attained any distinction. Black Hawk surrendered rather than be captured by him, and became very fond of the young officer.

The red chieftain knew a soldier when he saw him, and he was irresistibly drawn to this frank, bold and magnetic young

soldier. Jefferson Davis advised him to go home and advise the braves to divide their land with the whites—they could help them, and they could both dwell in peace together—this would be better than to be driven into the sea. Black Hawk seized Davis' hand, gave it a cordial grasp, and marched away without a word. He told his men what Davis had said and counseled them never again to raise their hand against the men in blue.

The War with Mexico followed, and then Jefferson Davis became a hero many times. At Monterey he distinguished himself; at Buena Vista he was wounded; and he scaled the walls at the City of Mexico.

After his return his State sent him to the United States Senate. Later he was given a place in Pres. Pierce's Cabinet, as Secretary of War. When Buchanan was elected, Mississippi sent him again as United States Senator.

The dark cloud of war was gathering and Abraham Lincoln was elected by the Republican Party on a minority vote, because of the split in the Democratic Party, the Republicans standing, *not for the abolition of slavery*, but against forming new slave states out of newly acquired territory, fearing the growing political power of the South.

Dr. Battle, of Charlottesville, Va., said, "Had the doctrine contained in that series of seven resolutions formulated and introduced into the United States Senate in the late fifties by Jefferson Davis been observed in good faith, there would have been no war."

The South saw that their State rights were again so threatened that they could never hope for those rights guaranteed them, not only by the United States Constitution, but those also granted by the Declaration of 1776, so State by State began to secede.

South Carolina was first to act and Mississippi followed next. Jefferson Davis, although a strong Union man, had made a wonderful speech on State Sovereignty in the U. S. Senate and showed how the continued aggressions upon the rights of Sovereign States would finally force secession; so when he learned that his own State had seceded, he immediately resigned his seat in the Senate and returned to cast in his lot with Mississippi as he had been taught to do at West Point.

As soon as he reached home he was made Major General of the army, an honor he had always craved. Therefore it was with extreme regret that he heard of his nomination for President