

# CONFEDERATE GAZETTE



## Confederate Gazette

*Is a monthly publication of the*

Major Robert M. White  
Camp #1250  
Sons of Confederate Veterans  
Temple, Texas

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Camp #1250  
Sons of Confederate Veterans  
Temple, Texas

### *6th Year of Participation In Parade*

## CAMP SHOWS COLORS IN BELTON PARADE

The Major Robert M. White Camp #1250 for the 6th straight year participated in the annual Belton 4th of July parade. Officials for the City of Belton estimated that there were 30,000 people lined up along the parade route.

The Camp again this year joined forces with the "Legends of Salado" group. Also attending the event again this year were 1st



*Camp members David Weber, driving, and Curtis Pruitt, in the bed of pick-up, prepare for the parade with the Camp's flag array. (Photo: George Ballentine)*

Lieutenant Commander of the Texas Division, Steve von Roeder and members of Camp #1263, from Austin, with their popular field piece "Patience."

Joining the parade for the first time was Steve Forman, from the camp in Conroe, who

brought an original 1860 Studebaker wagon. The men and ladies were all greeted with enthusiasm along the parade route.

### *Noted Author Speaks at Dinner Meeting*

## Camp Hears Scott Bowden

An overflow crowd of over 50 gathered on July 13th at the El Conquistador Restaurant in Temple to hear Scott Bowden speak. Bowden is the co-author of the critically acclaimed book, *Last Chance For Victory, Robert E. Lee and the Gettysburg Campaign*.

Bowden is the author of 22 books. His latest book, *Last Chance* has

won numerous awards, including, the 2001 Grady McWhiney Award of Merit for "significant contributions to the scholarship and preservation of War Between The States history," the 2001 Douglas Southall Freeman Award bestowed by the Military Order of Stars & Bars, and the 2001 General Nathan

Bedford Forrest Southern History Award given by the Forrest Cavalry Corps.

Bowden talked about Lee and both his performance at the Battle of Gettysburg and how historians have viewed Lee's performance. Bowden pointed out Lees' plan of attack was excellent, but the execution of those plans were lacking.



## CONFEDERATE PROFILE

# SALLY TOMPKINS



*By John C. Perry*

She was barely five feet tall, very petite, and was only 27 years old, yet if you were a Confederate enlisted man during the War Between the States you best salute her and call her ma'am, as she was a legitimate captain in the Confederate Army, the first and only American female to be a commissioned officer until 1901.

Sally Louisa Tompkins was born in Poplar Grove in Mathews County, Virginia on November 9, 1833. She was born into a wealthy Virginia family, the daughter of Colonel Christopher Tompkins and Maria Booth Patterson. Her father's title was as a colonel in the militia, one of her grandfathers had fought in the Revolutionary War, and the other had served as a naval officer. Following her father's death her family moved to Richmond.

Tompkins was in Richmond when the war broke out. Following the First Battle of Manassas (Bull Run), in July of 1861, the city was flooded with wounded soldiers brought from nearby battlefield, by wagons and by rail. The Confederate government put out a call to the good citizens of Richmond for help. Tompkins was one of the first people to respond. She opened a private hos-

pital to treat the wounded in the home of a friend, Judge John Robertson, at Third and Main. Judge Robertson's family had left Richmond for their country home and offered his townhouse free to Tompkins.



*Captain Sally Tompkins*

The home's furniture was moved and by August 1, 1861 the "Robertson Hospital" was ready to treat wounded Confederate soldiers, eventually having 25 beds. With so many wounded soldiers there was a desperate need for trained nurses. Being from a prominent and well to do family, Tompkins went to the socially elite ladies of Richmond and asked for help. They rallied around her forming the "Ladies of the Robertson Hospital," who cared for the hospital's sick and wounded.

Tompkins also had

help from her slaves. Four female slaves and two male slaves worked at the hospital, although one of the males ran away before the war ended. Post war the runaway returned and apologized for leaving Tompkins. Also some former Confederate soldiers who had been treated by Tompkins and her staff, stayed on to help when their wounds were too severe to allow them to be returned to active duty. One of the men who had stayed on died in 1865 just as the Federal troops were occupying the town. Tompkins refused to allow the Yankee soldiers to touch his body, and Tompkins and another slave took his body to Hollywood Cemetery for burial.

For physician care the hospital relied on help from local physicians. For the majority of the time the chief surgeon was Dr. A. Y. P. Garnett. When the war started Dr. Garnett left a large and lucrative medical practice in Washington, D. C. to cast his lot with the Confederacy. He and Tompkins would lock horns from time to time, but the medical care that the wounded and sick Confederate soldiers received was superb.

The hospital treated 1,313 patients during the four years it was opened. Tompkins kept careful re-

*(Continued on page 3)*

Sally Tompkins,  
first and only  
commissioned  
officer during the  
War Between  
the States

## Captain Tompkins

*(Continued from page 2)*

cords and recorded only 73 deaths in the four years. That was a survival rate of nearly 95%, unheard of in a military hospital. She was known as “the little lady with the milk-white hands.” For the Confederate soldiers who were the most desperately wounded or ill the Robertson Hospital was the place to be. Many asked specifically to

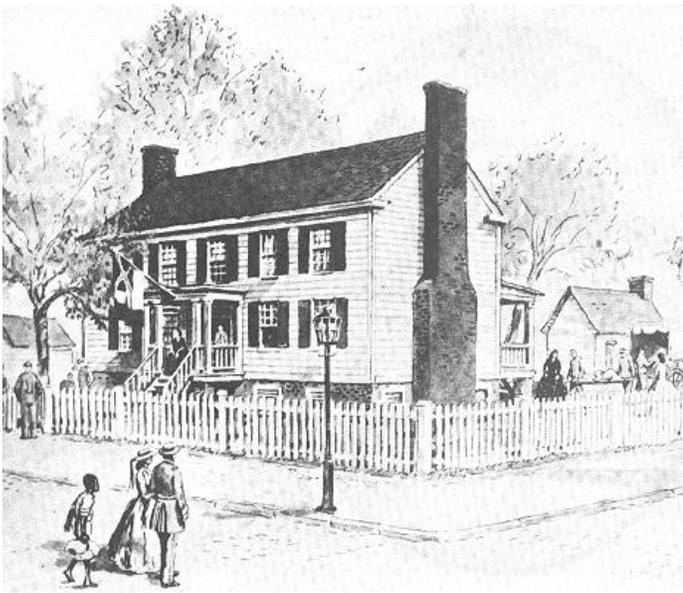
greater control over who and when a soldier would be released back to active duty. Any future uniformed patients would not be allowed treatment in private hospitals. Tompkins vigorously objected to the new government policy and appealed to Confederate President Jefferson Davis. She furnished Davis with the hospital’s register, which clearly reflected how successful they had been. Davis apparently was per-

cer in either the Confederate or United States armies. It would not be until 1901, when the U.S. Army made females eligible as officers as part of the Army Nurse Corps, would there be another American female commissioned officer.

As an officer, she would not accept any salary, saying that the Government needed every cent. As a captain she continued to run the hospital in a very efficient, if not military manner. Patients and volunteers alike learned not to question her. One person described her leadership as, “She ruled her hospital with a stick in one . . . and a Bible in the other.” She received some financial support and medical supplies from the government, but it was not enough. She continued to dip into her own funds as well as solicit contributions from others in Richmond.

As each patient was discharged he would be given a knapsack or blanket roll filled with clothing, a prayer book, and a copy of the Gospels. One North Carolina soldier was hospitalized and related that he was the last son left from his family. Eight brothers had already been killed.

*(Continued on page 6)*



*The Robertson Hospital in Richmond, run by Sally Tompkins*

be treated in the Robertson Hospital. They would also be transferred the most severe cases from other hospitals. Of all the hospitals in Richmond, they had the best rate of returning wounded or ill Confederate soldiers back to active duty.

In the late summer of 1861, the Confederate government issued new rules relating to Richmond’s hospitals. All private hospitals, like Tompkins, were ordered closed to uniformed patients. The reasoning was to allow the government greater and more efficient control of very scarce supplies and

sueded to make an exception for Tompkins. The way it was done made Tompkins a captain in the Confederate Army. By taking this approach, Tompkins’ hospital could continue to see uniformed patients, since an officer in the Confederate Army would run it.

By a special order of President Davis Tompkins was commissioned to rank of captain, September 9, 1861. The commission was the standard commission used in the Confederate Army and referred to her as “Sir.” She would become the first and only commissioned female offi-

Next Camp  
Meeting  
August 13<sup>th</sup>  
7:30 PM  
At King’s  
Daughters  
Hospital

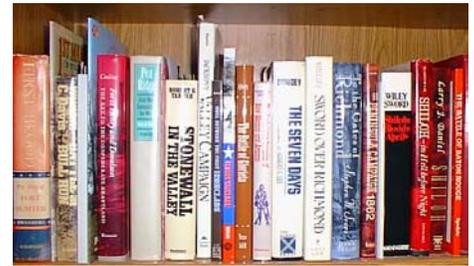
### Camp Schedule

**August 13<sup>th</sup>:** Regular Camp Meeting, 7:00 P.M., King’s Daughters Hospital, Temple, Texas

**September 10<sup>th</sup>:** Regular Camp Meeting, 7:00 P.M., King’s Daughters Hospital, Temple, Texas

**October 12<sup>th</sup>:** Quarterly Dinner Meeting 7:00 P.M., TBA

# “THE BOOK BIN” BOOK REVIEWS ON THE WAR



*Editor's Note: Almost all of us read books on the War Between the States. Please share your thoughts on a book with your fellow camp members. The book can be old or new just write something up and send it to the editor.*

**By Larry Jack Maxey**

An Honorable Defeat. The Last Days of the Confederate Government, William C. Davis, Harcourt, Inc., 2001, 496 pages, \$30.00.

When I saw this book the thought occurred to me that this was an area of the Civil War that I knew very little about. The author acknowledges that he has picked up the trail started some thirty years ago by Alfred J. Hanna's Flight into Oblivion and expanded the story. The all too familiar foundation of the pending collapse of the Confederate government gets the story started.

The author, William C. Davis, is an experienced writer of War Between the States books, having written 40 books. Davis, no relation to Jefferson Davis, also wrote Jefferson Davis, The Man And His Hour, about the President of the Confederacy.

Currently, the author is the Director of Programs at the Virginia Center for Civil War Study. He is also the chief consultant for the A&E television series, *Civil War Journal*. He also teaches history at Virginia Tech.

Mr. Davis vaguely and quickly passes through

General Lee and others attempts to convince President Davis to end the war and save lives and property. Here I was somewhat surprised at how obstinate Davis really was. Another surprise was how much influence John C. Breckinridge had with Davis and how he completely took

arms while others turned against them. Much discussion is written about the money from the Southern treasury and how it was handled.

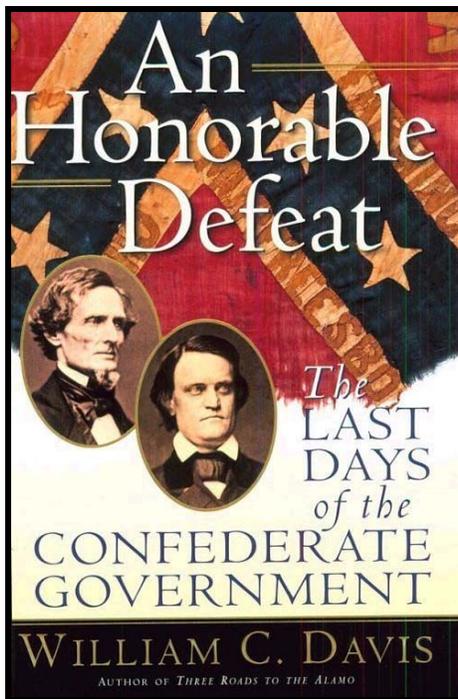
Mr. Davis also talks about soldiers who had surrendered and were trying to get home, their actions, both honorable and not so honorable. Even before Jefferson Davis had left Richmond he was already trying to find ways to join forces with either Joseph E. Johnson in the Carolinas or with Kirby Smith in the Trans Mississippi and regroup to continue the war.

It took the author three hundred pages before Davis was captured and then drops him from the scene. The rest of the book is devoted to the escape of Breckinridge and Judah P. Benjamin through southeast Georgia and Florida on to Cuba. Mr. Davis does explain what happens to the other cabinet members and also some explanation of how the Southern governors were treated.

All in all this was a good book, one that I would recommend. I learned much more about the Confederacy than just battles and military leaders.

control of the government getting out of Richmond. President Davis was almost completely led by the hand by the Secretary of War in his escape.

The book spends several chapters telling of the flight of the officials and how the people treated them. Some cities welcomed them with open



Note WBTS  
Historian  
Examines  
The Confederacy's  
Final Days

## Belton Parade

Continued from page 1

Photos: Top: 1860 Studebaker wagon, Middle: "Patience" and flags, Bottom: David Weber says "Happy 4th of July!"  
(Photos: George Ballentine)



## Confederate Gazette Quiz Questions

By George Ballentine

Answers are listed below

1 - Presidential candidate of the Know-Nothing Party in 1856 who ran third, carrying only the state of Maryland.

- a - George Estey
- b - Millard Fillmore
- c - Henry Lawrence
- d - Kilpatrick Millen

2 - Confederate general who, under Buchanan, was the youngest man to hold the office of vice president.

- a - Samuel Thomas
- b - Israel Washburn
- c - John C. Breckinridge
- d - Henry Winter Davis

3 - Was named Episcopal Bishop of Louisiana in 1841, later Confederate general.

- a - Leonidas Polk
- b - Thomas Dockery
- c - Henry McConnell
- d - James Chestnut, Jr.

4 - Confederate officer Henry Wayne had taken part in the War Department's pre-war experiment in Texas with:

- a - flour milling
- b - camels
- c - oil
- d - balloons

5 - Yankee general who lost his left arm in the Mexican War and won the Legion of Honor in French service prior to the Civil War.

- a - James Bradley
- b - Robert Rossen
- c - John Hyatt
- d - Phil Kearny

Answers: 1 = b; 2 = c; 3 = a; 4 = b; 5 = d

## Camp Shows the Colors for 6th Straight Year

## Captain Tompkins

(Continued from page 3)

Tompkins and the hospital staff took up a collection so they could bring the young man's mother to Richmond to see her last surviving son. After the mother arrived she said that if she had nine other sons she would have gladly given them up for the cause.

Robert E. Lee was forced to withdraw his army from the Richmond-Petersburg defensive lines in April of 1865. Tompkins and the hospital staff and volunteers baked biscuits for the soldiers who were able to leave the hospital, before the Yankees entered the city. After Federal troops entered the city, the hospital remained open, some patients were too ill or injured to be moved. The last patient was not dismissed until June 13, 1865, two months after the war was over.

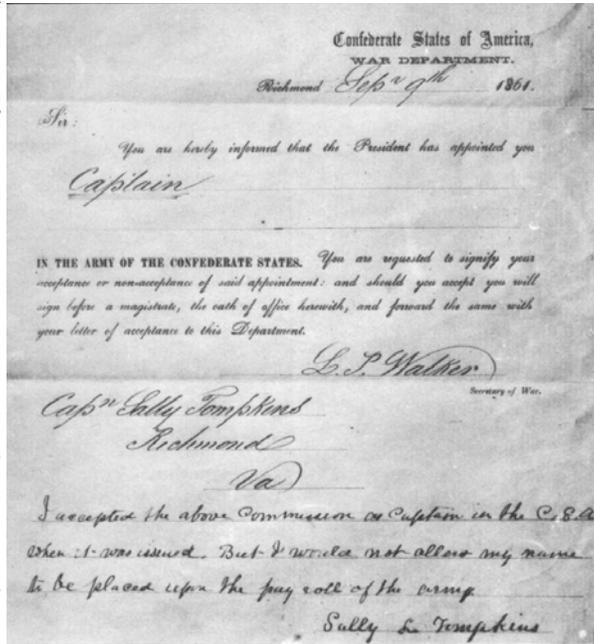
Post war, as soldiers returned home, Tompkins received several marriage proposals. She declined all the offers. She said, "Poor fellows, they are not yet well of their fevers." Tompkins never did marry. She did finally take some time off; she

went on her first vacation in four years after her last patient was discharged.

in her church, St. James Episcopal Church. During the Confederate Reunion held in Richmond in 1896 she rented a home, planted a Confederate battleflag, and opened it to any Confederate veteran in need of a place to stay. She was a popular guest at UDC and UCV meetings and reunions across Virginia.

She spent the last years of her life in the Richmond Home for Confederate Women. In 1905 the home accepted her as a "lifetime" guest. Tompkins accepted the invitation only under the condition that she would pay for her own expenses.

Her health deteriorated, as she grew older. One newspaper account described her as "shrunken and bent and piteously feeble . . ." Tompkins died on July 25, 1916 at the age of 83. She was given funeral worthy of any Confederate officer. Men from the UCV Camp, the Richmond Howitzers, and the Richmond Blues, and ladies from the Richmond UDC Chapter, participated in the funeral ceremonies.



*Sally Tompkins' commission as a captain. Her handwritten note at the bottom says, "I accept the above commission as Captain in the C.S.A. when it was issued. But I would not allow my name to be placed upon the pay roll of the army."*

After her vacation she returned to Richmond. Tompkins continued to do some nursing work and was very active

# Confederate Gazette

P.O. Box 794  
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**Next Meeting:  
August 13th  
King's Daughters  
Hospital  
7:00 PM**