

CONFEDERATE GAZETTE



Confederate Gazette

Is a monthly publication of the Major Robert M. White Camp #1250 Sons of Confederate Veterans Temple, Texas

Web Site:
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George Ballentine
Camp Commander
2714 Phyllis Dr.
Copperas Cove, TX 76522

John C. Perry
Newsletter Editor
P.O. Box 794
Salado, TX 76571

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Camp #1250
Sons of Confederate Veterans
Temple, Texas

Jefferson Davis Shrine In Biloxi Hit Hard

BEAUVOIR PARTIALLY DESTROYED BY KATRINA

Hurricane Katrina caused massive devastation to the Biloxi, Missis-

There is also a large hole in the southwest corner of the house and most of the doors and the windows are no longer there.

According

Arial photos of Beauvoir taken on August 31st. Left: SW view, Middle: Front view, Below: SE view



sippi area when it hit on August 29th, but remarkably Beauvoir, the former home of Confederate President Jefferson Davis sitting directly across the street from the Gulf of Mexico, still stands.

Initial and inaccurate reports indicated that Beauvoir had been completely destroyed. Miraculously, the home survives, although it has suffered severe damage.

The main damage was to the front of the home, which faced the Gulf of Mexico, where the columns, steps, and front porch are no longer there.

to John Echols, a member of the Board of Trustees of Beauvoir, a first hand report indicates, "The Hayes Cottage and pavilion are

gone. Nothing remains but a slab. The small library where President Davis lived and wrote, located to the east of Beauvoir, is gone. The old chapel, museum, and gift shop are all gone, even the artillery piece inside is gone. The house where (Beauvoir) Director, Patrick Hotard, lived is gone, as well as the front fence and gates, including the UDC archway in front of Beauvoir."

There was also severe damage to the Davis Presidential Library on the grounds of Beauvoir. The library was opened after the State of Mississippi authorized \$3 million in 1995 to build the library. The two-story 13,500 square foot facility opened in 1998

According to Echols, "The wall in front of the Presidential Library and

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CONFEDERATE PROFILE SOUTHERN SHRINE

Editor's Note: Normally this profile page tells the story of one of our Confederate heroes. Due to the damage that Beauvoir suffered at the end of August we have opted to tell the story of a true Southern Shrine.

Completed in
1851, Beauvoir
would become the
home of
Jefferson Davis

A planter from Madison County, Mississippi, James Brown, bought a tract of land facing the Gulf of Mexico on September 2, 1848 in what is now Biloxi, Mississippi. Brown acted as his own architect and construction superintendent in building the house. He brought slaves from his Madison County plantation to perform the routine work, and he built a sawmill on the property. Skilled work was done by carpenters and decorators from New Orleans.

Brown completed the home in 1851. A four room cottage to the rear of the house was already on the property, and it was used by the Brown family during the construction. Later, it served Brown and other owners, including Jefferson Davis, as a kitchen and servants' quarters.

Two small cottages, originally identical in plan, one east and one west of the house were built. The cottage to the east was

known as the Library Cottage, but Brown also used it as an office and as a school room for his children. The west cottage, later known as the Hayes Cottage, was first a Guest House.

Brown lived in the home until his death. Later the property was sold to a Frank Johnson, but in

was visiting the place where the last dozen years of his life would be spent.

The next year Davis returned to Biloxi and contemplated building a small cottage on his property. When Dorsey heard that Davis was on the coast, she invited him for a visit. Arriving at Beauvoir in December, Davis was impressed by the peaceful atmosphere.

The house was surrounded by live oaks, magnolias, and cedars, with Spanish moss festooning the live oaks. The Gulf lay just in front of the house, and behind it was an orange grove. Beyond it was a pine forest, crossed by a running brook, on the banks of which

grew wild azalea, bay, yellow jasmine, and sweet olive. There were six acres of scuppernong grapes. The Louisville & Nashville Railroad cut through the property, and north of the railroad was a virgin forest of long-leaf pine.

When Dorsey discovered that Davis was seeking a place to write his long-delayed book, she showed him her east cottage, which consisted of one room with a pillared gallery completely surrounding it. She urged that the rear gallery could be

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*Beauvoir, in Biloxi, Mississippi, pre-Katrina.
The steps, porch and columns are now gone*

1873 Sarah Dorsey purchased the property and made Beauvoir her home. She gave the house the name it still bears, signifying its "beautiful view."

Davis was looking for some lots he had bought many years ago in Biloxi. He was looking for a quite place to write. While in Biloxi he visited Dorsey at Beauvoir.

He wrote that it was a "fine place," having a "large and beautiful house, and many orange trees yet full of fruit." He had no idea, on that day of November 18, 1875, that he



Commander's Call

By: *George Ballentine,*
Camp Commander,
Major Robert M. White Camp

First, let me say that I hope everyone keeps the folks in the areas devastated by Katrina in their thoughts and prayers. Also in the direct path of Katrina was one of our Confederate Symbols, Beauvoir, the boyhood home of CSA President Jefferson Davis. From the video taken of the building, it looks like the entire bottom floor was washed away and the building itself may be compromised. We should have more detailed information as the area becomes more open to visitors.

This is a busy month for our camp store. By the time you receive this we should be finished with the Oatmeal Festival and getting ready for Septemberfest in Cranfills Gap. I have volunteers already for these events and the September 24th Cotton Harvest in Moody, the October 1st Pioneer Days in Lake Whitney and the October 14-16th Ogletree Gap Heritage Festival in Copperas Cove. If anyone else wants to join us for either of these events, let me know.

I still need volunteers for Krist Kindl Markt, December 2-4, in Copperas Cove. This is a very profitable event for our camp, but the hours are long and cold. More details on that as it comes nearer. I have sent in fees for all events through October.

I hope that as many

compatriots and guests as possible can be at our September meeting at the Cotton Patch in the Temple Mall. Our speaker is an expert on the Confederate States Navy and has authored several books. He will have books available for sale and autographs for those interested. This should be a very interesting program.

As you know, elections are getting closer. We have selected a Nominating Committee who will be asking around to see who is interested in running for office for 2006. The slate will be announced at the November meeting. Elections, with additional nominations from the floor, will be conducted in December, and installation of officers at our annual Lee-Jackson Dinner in January. If you are interested in being put on the slate, contact John Perry, Steve Wooley or Gordon Mobley.

I look forward to seeing all of you, and your families and guests, at the September meeting. If you plan to eat before the meeting, please plan to be there in time to be finished eating by 7:00 p.m. when the meeting begins. The food is great, and the prices are reasonable, too. The program will be excellent, so why not bring along a friend and prospective member to the meeting?

Camp Schedule

September 10, 2005

Septemberfest in Cranfills Gap, 9:00 AM. Camp store to be set up, if we have enough volunteers

September 13, 2005

Camp's monthly meeting at the Cotton Patch Cafe in Temple Mall, 7:00 PM. Speaker: Mark Vogl, Topic: "Dixie's Greatest Secret, The Confederate Navy."

September 17, 2005

Division Executive Council Meeting, El Conquistador Restaurant, 901 North Loop 340, Waco, TX, 10:00 AM.

September 24, 2005

Cotton Harvest Festival, Moody, TX. Camp store to be set up, if we have enough volunteers

October 1, 2005

Pioneer Days Festival, Lake Whitney, TX. Camp store to be set up, if we have enough volunteers

October 8, 2005

Quarterly Dinner Meeting, Cotton Patch Cafe in Temple Mall, 7:00 PM. Speaker: Dr. Buddy Patterson.

October 14-16, 2005

Ogletree Gap Heritage Festival, Copperas Cove, TX., 8:00 AM. Camp store to be set up, if we have enough volunteers

October 22, 2005

Adopt-a-Highway Clean-up. Meet at the Belton McDonald's at 7:45 AM

November 8, 2005

Camp's monthly meeting at the Cotton Patch Cafe in Temple Mall, 7:00 PM.

Next Camp Meeting:
September 13th
7:00 P.M. at
Cotton Patch Cafe,
Temple Mall,
Temple, TX

Confederate Roster Book Ceremonies in Belton

Direct Link to Confederate Bell County is Conserved

A crowd of about 40 people gathered at the Lena Armstrong Public Library in Belton to celebrate the conservation of the 1888 Bell County Confederate Veterans Reunion Roster book.

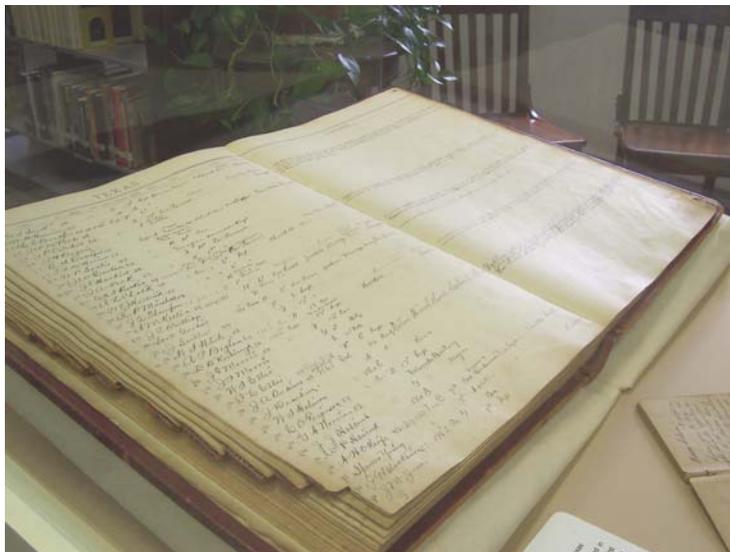
The event was hosted by Library Director Kim Kroll and was jointly sponsored by The Bell County Museum. Camp Member Rocky Sprott addressed the group giving those in attendance both a history of Bell County's Confederate service and a history of the roster.

The roster book was created in 1888 when the first Confederate Veterans Reunion was held in Belton. The roster contains a record of those veterans still alive and attending the reunion. The Confederate Veteran's age, rank, date of enlistment, current address, regiment, and other information is all recorded in the roster.

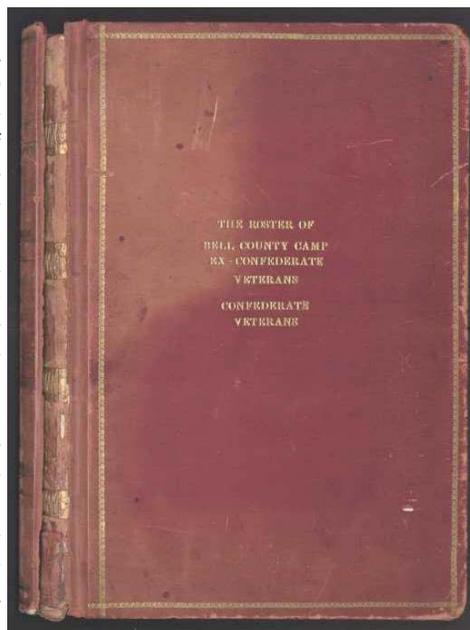
The fragile roster book was recently conserved by

the Library. The book was first taken to the University of North Texas where it was digitized. The book

Austin, who also created a special storage box for the book when it is not on display. Funding for the project



Above: Confederate Veteran Roster Book on display at the Belton Library on Saturday, September 3, 2005. Below: The cover of the 1888 Roster Book.



was then cleaned and stabilized by April Smith, a paper conservator from

project was through the Lone Star Libraries, a state funding source administered by the Texas Library and Archives Commission. Kroll said that the conservation of the roster book is an opportunity for one to,

“recognize the uniqueness and value of our historic objects by having them stabilized for posterity.

The roster book can be viewed at the Bell County Museum and can be also be viewed online. The digitizing work done by the University of North Texas' Portal of Texas History on their Internet site. It can be seen at <http://texashistory.unt.edu>. Click on “Researchers Portal” and then type in “Confederate Ledger.”

Kroll also completed an updated version of a transcription of the book. The transcription is available for review at the Library.

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Roster Book Ceremonies

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Camp #1250 was well recognized at the event. The camp's colors were in prominent display at the library and three camp members were in uniform, Rocky Sprott, Richard Sutton, and Gordon Mobley.



Photos: Above left: Gordon Mobley, Rocky Sprott & Richard Sutton, Above right, Stephane Turnham of the Bell County Museum explains the book to guests, Below left, Rocky Sprott speaks Below right: Kim Kroll Librarian speaks.



Jefferson Davis' *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* was written at Beauvoir

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closed and could become a bedroom and dressing room, while the large room, could be lined with bookshelves.

Dorsey agreed to \$50.00 per month for board. By February, 1877, Davis was hard at work on his book at Beauvoir. Dorsey volunteered her services as Davis' amanuensis on the book, and her talents and literary experience were very valuable.

Davis also brought his 20-year-old son, Jefferson Davis, Jr., to Beauvoir, and he occupied one of the two small rooms built on the rear gallery of the east cottage. Jeff, Jr. assisted in taking dictation for the book.

While Davis was writing, *The Rise and Fall of the*



Confederate Government, many Confederate leaders came to Beauvoir to assist him by clarifying various historical points. During the Christmas season of 1877 General Jubal A. Early visited Davis. Sarah Dorsey approached General Early about Davis' financial condition. She told Early that she had learned that Davis was almost destitute. She also said that she felt that she did not have long to live, and that she intended to leave her entire estate to Davis. But

she warned Early that he must not let Davis know of her intentions because he would not permit it if he knew her plans.

In February, 1879, Sarah Dorsey offered to sell Beauvoir to Jefferson Davis, and on February 19, the title was passed to Davis for \$5,500, to be paid in three installments, the first of which was paid immediately. Dorsey then moved to New Orleans.

Following General Early's visit, and well before the sale of Beauvoir to Davis, Sarah Dorsey made her will on January 4, 1878, leaving her estate to Jefferson Davis. It is noteworthy that after her death, Davis paid the two

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Beauvoir Damaged



Above: Davis Presidential Library on the grounds of Beauvoir pre-Katrina; Right: Davis statue still standing despite all of the first floor Presidential Library damage.

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the flagpoles in front are gone. The entire lower floor of the Presidential Library is washed out." He said it would be like driving a car under a carport. "The only thing remaining is the President's statue, he said just as it was." Echols said.

John Hildreth, director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation told the *Baltimore Sun* that Beauvoir was under as much as 30 feet of water at one point. "It's maybe 500 yards from the beach, ground zero in Biloxi," he said. "We'd heard at first that it had

been destroyed, but I found out that it's still standing on its foundations. The galleries [porches] are gone, and there has been significant damage to the house. We don't know yet how all the papers in Davis' presidential library have fared."

Larry McCluney, 1st Lt. Commander, Mississippi Division, SCV said that, "Beauvoir is salvageable," with at least 65% of the main house still standing.

Initial reports on the Presidential Library indicate that the first floor is destroyed with the only thing left standing on the first floor is a statue of Jefferson Davis. Apparently most of the artifacts and papers, along with his will, were moved upstairs, so they survived.

The Military Order of the Stars & Bars (MOS&B) has started a Beauvoir relief fund. The fund dollars will only be used for Beauvoir. In order to contribute make out a check payable to the



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remaining installments due on Beauvoir in order to liquidate debts owed by Dorsey's estate. Consequently, Davis did buy Beauvoir, and he paid for it in full.

Davis' two volume *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* was published in 1881.

Jefferson Davis left Beauvoir for the last time in early November, 1889 for a trip to Brierfield, his plantation on the Mississippi River below Vicksburg. He took ill there and died in New Orleans on December 6, 1889.

Beauvoir is currently owned and operated by the Mississippi Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

MOS&B with the notation "Beauvoir Relief Fund." Send your donations to: MOS&B, PO Box 1274, Fairhope, AL 36533-1274.

The SCV has started a general relief drive for Katrina victims. Compatriots wishing to assist those compatriots who have suffered from the impact of this storm may send financial contributions to: SCV Relief Fund, PO Box 59, Columbia, TN 38402

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Next Meeting:
September 13th
Cotton Patch
Temple
7:00 PM