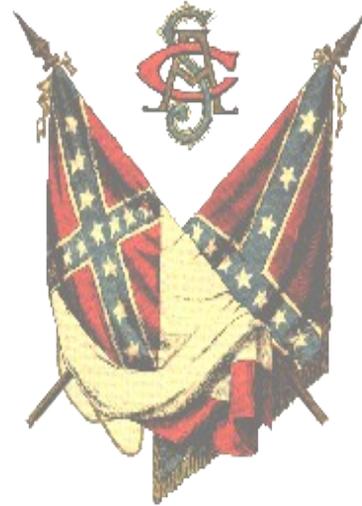




NEWSLETTER OF STATE OF DADE CAMP NO. 707



THE SILVER GRAY



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The first sign in the Medal of Honor Heritage Trail will be erected soon near the Cravens House on Lookout Mountain. These signs will be similar to those used in the Chickamauga Campaign Trail.

Christmas During the Civil War

Many of today's American Christmas customs are rooted in the early 19th century. Perhaps ironically, they came to maturity during the Civil War, when violence, chaos, and staggering personal losses seemed likely to drown out the choruses of "Peace on Earth." Many of the artists of the period, Winslow Homer, Thomas Nast, and Alfred Waud created visual chronicles of the spreading influence of many holiday traditions we enjoy today, including Santa Claus Christmas trees, gift-giving, caroling, holiday feasting, and Christmas cards.

Nast and Homer drew scenes of the wartime practice of sending Christmas boxes filled with homemade clothes and food items to soldiers at the front. The war made an



impact on the nation, both North and South, in the ways Christmas was observed. Christmas boxes like the ones Homer and Nast pictured gave their recipients a much-needed mental and physical boost. When in 1861, for the first Harper's Weekly Christmas cover of the war, Homer drew overjoyed soldiers reveling in the contents of Adams Express boxes from home.

The most beloved symbol of the American family Christmas – the decorated Christmas tree – came into its own during the Civil War. Christmas trees had become popular in the decade before the war, and in the early 1860s, many families were

beginning to decorate them. Illustrators working for the national weeklies helped popularize the practice by putting decorated tabletop Christmas trees in their drawings.

On the home front, the homes were mostly decorated with different kinds of pines, holly, ivy, and mistletoe. While there were many families who spent lonely Christmases during the war, they still had a Christmas tree that was the centerpiece for the home. Most trees were small and sat on a table.

The decorations were mostly home made, such as strings of dried fruit, popcorn, pinecones. Colored paper, silver foil, as well as spun glass were popular choices for making decorations. Santa brought gifts to the children. Those gifts were home made, such as carved toys, cakes or fruits.

It was only a matter of time before the Christmas tree made its way into military camps. Alfred Bellard of the 5th New Jersey remarked about the arrival of the newly popular Christmas icon to his camp along the lower Potomac River.

Christmas carols were sung both at home and in the camps. Can you imagine how homesick the soldiers would become singing these songs. Some of the most popular ones were "Silent Night", "Away in the Manger," "Oh Come All Ye Faithful", and "Deck the Halls".

By 1863, the Union blockade of the Southern coasts had made it nearly impossible for Santa Claus to visit homes in the South; scarcity of goods and the consequent high prices put both store-bought presents and raw materials for homemade gifts out of the financial reach of many Southern consumers. Quite a few mothers explained to their children that even Santa Claus would not be able run the formidable Federal blockade.

Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas of Augusta, Georgia, told how a simple act of faith on the part of her children caused her to dig deeper for a holiday offering on Christmas Eve: "I have written so much that it is now after 9 o'clock and yet I have said nothing of Turner's and Mary Bell's party which we gave them last week in lieu of the Santa Claus presents. Mary Bell has been told that Santa Claus has not been able to run the blockade and has gone to war – Yet at this late hour when I went upstairs Thursday night of the party I found that the trusting faith of childhood they had hung their little socks and stockings in case Santa Claus did come. I had given the subject no thought whatever, but invoking Santa Claus aid I was enabled when their little eyes opened to enjoy their pleasure to find cake and money in their socks."

As the war dragged on, deprivation replaced bounteous repasts and familiar faces were missing from the family dinner table. Soldiers used to "bringing in the tree" and caroling in church were instead scavenging for firewood and singing drinking songs around the campfire. Therefore, the holiday celebration most associated with family and home was a contradiction. It was a joyful, sad, religious, boisterous, and subdued event.

Death of Jefferson Davis Remembered

The Christmas of 1889

Was a Sad Time in the South.

By Calvin Johnson Jr.

December 6th, is the 122nd anniversary of the death of a great American Hero — Jefferson Davis. The "Politically Correct" would have you forget the past...But do not forget the history of the men and women who made the USA great. Caution, this is a family friendly story to be shared.

In 2008, the mainstream media reported a renewed interest among the American



people in the War Between the States as the 200th birthday of Jefferson Davis was celebrated. The Sons of Confederate Veterans, www.scv.org, proclaimed 2008 as the "Year of Davis." And the Virginia Division SCV is also planning a dedication of a statue depicting Davis and two of his sons — Joseph and black adopted son Jim Limber.

The New York Times reported the death of Jefferson Davis; New Orleans, December 8, 1889 — Quote "A careful tally of the visitors shows that about 40,000 persons, mostly women and children, viewed the remains today. This crowd included, in solemn and respectful attendance, all conditions of Whites, Blacks, ex-Confederates, ex-Federals, and even Indians and Chinamen." —

Davis' Death was also the page 1 story in Dixie; December 1889, The Atlanta Journal and Constitution; — Quote "The Great Chieftain passes over the river...and rests with Jackson under the shade of the trees. The hearts of a great and loving people, crushed by the death of a great leader. The Hero of hard-fought fields in Mexico. The peerless Statesman in Federal Councils. Jefferson Davis is no more!!!"

Wishing everyone

A Southern Christmas
And
A Confederate New Year!



**The Chaplain's
Corner**

In this month where we will be celebrating Christmas, there will be many military families, as well as families who have no military personnel, who find the holiday season to be of physical suffering. Many families mourn the loss of loved ones they have lost during the year as well as many who have been severely wounded serving their country in this present conflict.

Preparation for Christmas calls for remembrance of those lost during the year, civilian and military alike, and the comforting of those involved with the sorrow.

God , in this Christmas season, help us from being thoughtless and selfish by our forgetfulness and remember those who serve our country.

Galatians 4:4 *But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his son, made of woman, made under the law.*

Prayer List: I have no prayer requests , but wish Camp #707 and the First Brigade a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

May God Bless

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UPCOMING EVENTS

State of Dade will have no meetings in December .



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HONORING OUR CONFEDERATE HERITAGE

