

HEROES IN GRAY

by
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General Editor

with contributions from members of the
United Daughters of the Confederacy

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by Samuel W. Sherrill

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Preface

To the children and grandchildren of the men who wore the gray this book is dedicated. It is only right that the children of the Southland know the full meaning of their birthright. No one can object that the truth be told them. It is unjust to the Southland and to those who followed the Stars and Bars to death and to glory not to let the true history of the years 1861 to 1865 be known.

If our children are left in ignorance as to this history they may grow up feeling that they have the blood of traitors in their veins. Nothing will stir the blood of our sons to become true and noble men more than to know the history of such men as Lee, “whose trust was ever in the God of battles,” of Jackson who never fought before he prayed, of the Southern woman who nursed the sick soldier, who struggled at home while husbands and fathers fought, who gave their dearest men to the “cause,” yet never wavered in their loyalty to it.

We should keep this history before our children so that they may be true to the principle that inspired our heroes — the principle of dying for what they believed to be right. This is the object of this little book.

In the preparation of this book, journals and reliable biographies, and other trustworthy sources have been

consulted and freely utilized. Special mention should be made of *The Life of General Forrest*, by Dr. John A. Wyeth. My thanks are due to all who so kindly contributed articles to the book, and to all who in any way assisted in its preparation.

The Author

Introduction

The publication of this work, has been made necessary, by the great demand, in the schools of this country, for short, available sketches of the lives of some of the more prominent men — leaders — who made heroic record, in the days from “Sixty-One to Sixty-Five.” This need was keenly felt, in 1907 and 1908, the centennial years of the birth of General Robert E. Lee, the great military chieftain of the South, and now acknowledged, as of world-wide fame, and Jefferson Davis, statesman, scholar and soldier, yet, still more renowned, as President of the Confederate States of America — a Government, which, in its brief life, made glorious defense for constitutional and individual rights, and fell, stainless and pure, on the field of honor.

War is always terrible, and cannot be divested of its accompanying horrors; as conducted by the leaders of the Southern army, it challenges the commendation of all truthful historians, for these made no unnecessary privations and hardships for women and children, by plunder, or destruction of homes. The truth of this assertion is clearly shown in the campaigns of General Lee north of the Potomac, when the strictest orders were issued, and enforced, for the protection of private homes and prop-

erty, and the historic “crow” need not “have carried his rations on his back” when traveling in the wake of the army of Northern Virginia.

In the sketches now presented to the public in this volume, purposely contributed by different writers, in the interest of truthful and just history, it is sought to give to the student an insight into the character and action of some of the leaders, the chivalry of the South, whose names are now registered high in the temple of fame, who were exemplars of Christian knighthood, who laid down their arms with a sublime acceptance of results and turned to their devastated homes, where, with the great womanhood of the South, a new life, under changed conditions, was carved out, by the “old South,” the embodiment of valor, courage and patriotism.

When the re-united country called for followers, in the Spanish-American war, these men, and their sons, sprang to arms with the same loyalty and courage that had marked them in the past, and in them, the “star spangled banner” will ever find devoted defenders. Our service is to our country, our memories are our own — a precious heritage.

Cornelia Branch Stone
President General, U.D.C.
Galveston, Texas

Our Southland

Long time ago the Southern people and their slaves lived on great plantations covering hundreds of acres. These "great-houses," as they were called, had each its own name, such as "Sunnyside," "The Cedars," or "Rosemary." To reach them the traveler must leave the big road and follow the cedar bordered lane leading to the wide, tree-dotted space just in front of the big entrance gate. The house is a stately, white-columned mansion standing on a little eminence, and surrounded by a grove of trees. The front door, with its heavy knocker of brass, is standing hospitably open, with the master of the plantation ready to welcome his guests at the steps. The wide front porch, with its comfortable homemade chairs, is a pleasant place in warm weather, and here breakfast and supper are often served.

As we enter the wide hall, we notice that the floor is made of boards neatly joined by means of small wooden pins, and dark with age and much polish.

The parlor is furnished with many stiff chairs and a sofa covered with black haircloth, so hard and slick that children have great difficulty to keep from slipping off on the floor.

On the walls near the ceiling, are hung portraits of ancestors in red coats, and their ladies in court trains and

powdered hair. The ceilings in all the rooms on the first floor are covered with decorations of flowers or fruit done in plaster. The curtains at the small paned windows, and the thick, soft carpet on the floor have been brought on the boat for many miles. There were few railroads in those days and no stores scattered over the country at short distances.

Company Rooms

If the visitors are young ladies, attended by their own colored maids, they are taken up stairs to the guest room with its windows draped in turkey red, and its high mantel-shelf on which stood home-made dips lighted after sun-down. The huge four-post bed is so high from the floor that one must have some little steps to get up to it. Instead of wooden bed-slats, the bed is corded across from side to side with stout cotton cord. On this is laid a straw mattress and then the big, soft feather bed. The whole is covered with snowy linen sheets, and a white, home-woven coverlet. Underneath this large bed is a small, low one called the trundle-bed. This is for the young folks or children and is pushed out of sight and way in the daytime, and pulled out when needed.

If the visitors are young men riding about from plantation to plantation, attended by their Negro body servants, they are quartered during their stay in the "office" where the master has his bookcases and his secretary where he keeps the plantation accounts. This office is a one-storied room somewhat apart from the great house, and is generally built in a lower front corner of the lawn where it has its own separate horse block and entrance.

The Kitchen

The great house never has the kitchen under the same roof. It is always a detached building of much importance. The kitchen floor is sprinkled with fresh, white sand every morning, and this is swept in quaint patterns. Here is the huge, open fire-place on which the colored cooks prepared such good things to eat. Down in the middle of the hot coals sets the iron bake-oven on its stumpy legs. The heavy lid fits close and is shaped to hold coals put upon it to heat the oven overhead. These are replenished as soon as burned out. All the light-bread, sweet potatoes, and puddings are baked in this oven.

In the crisp days when the frost comes the old kitchen is filled with the odor of sage and red pepper pods drying out in the oven. For the year's supply of *fresh* meat must be put away, sausage made and stuffed in long bags, the lard rendered, and the great bowls of cracklings saved for corn-bread.

At meal times the cooked dishes are carried from the kitchen to the dining-room of the great house by processions of shiny-faced piccaninnies, each bearing aloft a bowl or platter. It is the duty of another small, serious darky, with rolled twigs of hair standing out from his head, to mount on a three-legged stool and wave the peacock's feather fly-brush over the table during the meal.

At night the kitchen is lighted by a small, open iron lamp filled with grease. A wick, made of twisted cotton cord is laid in the grease, leaving one end on the rim. This, when lighted, burns slowly but gives a very good light.

Negro Quarters

The Negro quarters are the most interesting part of the plantation. The group of white-washed cabins, each boasting its own patch of garden where the slaves are allowed to raise any vegetables or flowers they liked, is placed at the rear of the great house. These cabins are comfortably furnished, and the slaves are well fed and clothed by their owners. All the time after sundown was theirs to do with as they liked. In these hours they tend their gardens, chop and haul their wood, bottom chairs, and make shuck mats and horse-collars. In these ways, if industrious, the slave make nice sums of money. Some make enough to buy their freedom, while others are set free for some brave act or by the will of their masters. Often these freed Negroes, in their turn, buy and hold slaves of their own color. But these were exceptions.

“Paterrollers”

Each plantation has an overseer, or a man whose duty it is to see that the slaves are employed at some useful work. No slave is allowed to be away from home at night without a pass from his master, else he is in danger of falling into the patrol’s hands, or “paterrollers” as the slaves call them. This is a band of Southern white men whose duty was to patrol the country and ride about over the different plantations. If they see a slave away from his home without a pass they arrest him and either take him to jail or else to his master for an explanation.

There was a great distinction of rank among the slaves of long ago. Those Negroes showing special aptitude and brightness are either taught a trade or taken up

to the great house. These "house servants" are superior in every way to the "field Negroes," or those who till the soil. The good slave, no matter what his daily toil, has everything to make him contented. If he falls sick, then medicines are provided; if it is a wedding, the bride's dress comes from the great house; or if it is only a "sociable," then the White folks are certain to come for a few minutes just to see how the fun is going. At Christmas is their greatest pleasure time for they are given a week's holiday from work in addition to many presents from their White owners.

The slaves are all very superstitious and believe in signs. If the old rooster crows before the door some morning then it is a sign that company is coming. Or if a red bird flies into the yard then it means something unexpected. They tell the time by the sun; and they plant all growing things in the different changes of the moon.

Home Industries

Many of the articles used on the plantation are made at home by the people there. When you think of the long time it would take for goods to reach their destination in those days of slow travel it is small wonder that the people were compelled to make or raise the articles in most constant use. Candles must be made to light the house, for coal oil and electric lights were unknown.

Tin molds, just the size of a candle, are used; and a twisted cotton cord is run through each mold and tied at the end. Melted tallow is poured into these molds and then left to cool and harden.

Every plantation has its patch of broom-corn of which brooms of all sizes are made by some of the slaves

who have been taught the trade.

Most of the medicines were raised in the herb garden or found growing wild in the woods. While the dyes used in coloring the home-woven cloth, carpets, and blankets are made from the bark of trees, walnut hulls, and the juice of the poke berry and love-vine.

The day before a big hunt is spent in molding bullets. Lead is heated until running hot and is poured with due caution into iron bullet molds, a belonging of every home.

Horse collars and door mats were made from corn shucks, while chairs are bottomed with hickory withes, soaked until pliable and then twisted and woven together.

Neither must the shoemaker with his leather apron, his awls, and his wooden pegs be left out of this list.

Spinning and Weaving

The fleecy cotton is the most valuable article possessed by the home worker, and the spinning wheel is the foundation of all home industries. After the cotton has been picked and seeded, it is then carded into rolls. Cotton cards with their sharp little needles tear the cotton apart and clear it of all trash. Then with a twirl of the carder's wrist it falls into the waiting basket a soft, white roll ready for the spinning wheel.

The spinner starts the big wheel going, as she steps back and forth, and spins the roll into thread which is run on broaches or pieces of twisted corn-shuck. If the thread is wanted for stockings or caps then two broaches are wound together, and twisted on the wheel.

Cloth of all kinds from the coarsest home-spun, linsey and jeans to the fancy pattern coverlets for the beds,

are home woven on looms worked by the feet. If needed for weaving, the broaches of thread are reeled into hanks, and then run on spools often made of burned-out corn-cobs to find the amount of thread needed before putting it on the loom.

On large plantations spinning, knitting, and weaving go on all the time as great quantities of supplies and clothing are needed by the hundreds of Negroes belonging there. While this work is all done by the slaves, constant care and supervision has to be exercised by the mistress of the great house, or "Old Miss" as she is called by the slaves, to see that the work is properly done.

The Master and His Family

Every morning the master of the plantation has his horse saddled and brought to the door for his daily ride of inspection over the fields. He is accompanied on his rounds by his older boys who help in managing the affairs of the plantation.

The mistress of the home, ably assisted by the daughters, looks after the household affairs, and finds time to pay visits of comfort to any sick slave. The younger boys and girls mount their horses and start to the school-house, which is distant some several miles.

This school, which is known as the Academy, is not free but the parents pay for the tuition of their children.

The house is a plain building, and is not supplied with maps, pictures, and growing plants as are the schools of to-day. The children have to be in their places at eight o'clock each morning, with an hour recess at noon for dinner, which they brought with them; and then "books" again until four o'clock, when they are at liberty to return to their homes. The preacher is generally the teacher, thus combining two good professions.

Amusements

Life is not all work for these Southern people and a picnic or a barn-dance is easily arranged.

The barn-dance is just an outdoor picnic with a basket dinner, and a thick carpet of sawdust spread over the ground for the dancers. The music is furnished by several Negroes, who diligently tune their violins before breaking into the rollicking strains of some well known reel.

A barbecue is on the same order, minus the dancing, but with plenty of fun provided for everybody. The Negro slaves stay up all the preceding night cooking the whole hogs, sheep, and other meats that were slowly roasting in the great fire pits dug in some bit of open ground.

Every plantation had its pack of hounds, and fox hunting is a favorite sport for the men and boys. After the sweet potato crop has been dug and the frost turns the persimmons into balls of sweetness, came the "possum" time.

Camp Meetings

A church, where services are held each Sunday, is in reach of the plantation, and the planter and his household sees that the slaves have special religious teaching in addition to that given them by preachers of their own color.

But it was, and still is, a good old Southern custom to hold an open air camp meeting for one week of each year.

A covered arbor, for the religious services, has

been built in the woods far away from any plantation. This is furnished with plenty of broad low benches and a carpet of clean straw spread over the ground. Around the arbor are built the camps — log cabins without any windows and openings left in place of doors. The cooking is done under a shelter in the background, and the long dining-table is spread on the back porch.

Here in the early fall, families from neighboring plantations would gather to live for a week in the camps, and hold a religious meeting. Relatives, friends, and people from a distance would travel to the encampments; and genuine Southern hospitality is shown by the campers when, at the close of the eleven o'clock sermon, they will publicly invite any and all visitors or strangers to be guests at their camp for dinner or for the length of his stay in their midst.

After the slaves have finished their day's work they hold their meetings a short distance away. The musical talent of those Negro slaves find its expression in religious songs, nearly always sad in character, which they compose themselves. Their singing in the night time, and mellowed by distance, sounds lonely and pathetic.

Causes of the War Between the States

Northern people believed that the States are subordinate to the central government and that the Union could not be broken. Southern people believed that the Constitution is a compact between equal States, and for good reasons the Union may be dissolved.

The North believed that every citizen owes his highest allegiance to the central Government and then to the States, and that the Government has more power and

the State less.

The South believed in home duties first, that a citizen's first duty is to his native State, which should have more power given it while the central Government has less.

Abolitionists

There was a class of people who did not believe that slavery is right and that it should be abolished. From this word came their name, Abolitionist. The word "abolition" had been in use before this time, but now took on a new meaning and represented strife and bitterness. With a great number of people the word was a term of reproach and public feeling was against it. But the organization gained strength rapidly, and, as the number of members increased, it was enabled to do material injury to the Southern cause. Its members made speeches, wrote articles for the papers and books on the subject declaring slavery to be a sin and Southern slave-holders cruel and inhuman. These publications caused the Southerners to believe that the people of the North were mean and selfish in trying to destroy the property of others.

The Dred Scott Case

There was a Negro slave in Missouri named Dred Scott whose owner took him to Illinois and then to Minnesota, States in which slavery was forbidden. Afterward going back to his old home in Missouri he committed some offense for which he was whipped. He brought suit against his master claiming to have become a free man by his having lived in the two free States. The Supreme Court of the United States decided that Congress could no

more prohibit the carrying of slaves into any State or Territory than it could prevent the taking of any other piece of property. This decision enraged the people of the North who opposed slavery, and they publicly criticized and abused the judges for their decision. This angered the Southern people.

The John Brown Raid

An extreme Abolitionist was John Brown of Ohio who had moved to Kansas, then a Territory, who, with a party of twenty-one men, captured the arsenal at Harper's Ferry. They seized a number of guns to arm the Negro slaves they expected to join them in a war upon the Southern White people for the purpose of abolishing slavery. The Negroes did not join in the undertaking. Virginia and Maryland troops were sent out to the scene; and in the fight thirteen of Brown's men were killed, two escaped, and the rest were captured. The leader with his associates were tried for treason and murder, found guilty, and were hanged.

This raid was so universally approved in the North that Brown's memory is revered there to this day. They regarded him as a Martyr who had been given too severe a punishment for his offense. The Southern people, being the ones he had started out to kill, naturally looked at his action from quite a different view-point.

The Slavery Question

One of the causes leading to the war between the States was the question of slavery. In Colonial times, Northern and Southern people had both believed in slave

holding, and Negro slavery flourished in all the colonies and was declared legal by the highest English court of law.

The cold climate and the occupations of the North did not suit the Negro; and slaves proved to be an unprofitable investment. While in the warm climate of the South, and in the raising of cotton, corn, rice, and tobacco the Negro made an excellent servant.

In the North slave labor was finally abolished by all the States lying north of the dividing line run by the old surveyors, Mason and Dixon, between Maryland and Pennsylvania.

Going westward along the Ohio River it was used as a dividing line between the States in which slavery was forbidden and those in which it was allowed. But with the opening up of new territory the dividing line was lost and trouble ensued. Hot disputes were only kept down by forming new "free" States to balance the new "slave" States entering the Union. This compromise was satisfactory to neither party.

The Underground Railway

This was a secret threat to the property rights of Southern slave holders. Away back, as far as 1786, Northern sympathy was with runaway slaves. As time passed this feeling grew stronger until there were certain, well marked out roads from the South to the North which would carry the slave where he was not likely to be found by his master. As the slaves could neither read nor write, this information as to where they could find help and shelter had to reach them by word of mouth. This was a dangerous task for the men who made it their work to slip around from plantation to plantation and make the Ne-

groes dissatisfied.

You must remember that the Southern people had bought and paid for these Negroes, and each one of them represented a large sum of money. They were just as much the property of the man who had bought them as *that* many houses, jewels, or horses would have been. So it is not strange that slave owners objected to the loss of their valuable possessions and always recovered it when possible. A law was made that directed the surrender of fugitive slaves wherever found. But Northern sentiment practically made this law of no use, as assistance in the capture of a fugitive slave was given only when commanded by the Government.

Secession

After the election of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States, South Carolina withdrew from the Union. In a short time six other slave States — Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas — seceded and took their place by her side. These Southern States believed that when the Northern government allowed its people to aid slaves in seeking freedom that it was a violation of the Constitution. These seceding States declared that as the North had not kept the agreement the South had a perfect right to withdraw from a compact they had voluntarily made with the privilege that any State could withdraw whenever its peace or safety demanded.

The Confederate Government

In February, 1861, a convention of delegates from the seceded States met at Montgomery, Alabama, and

formed a new government called the Confederate States of America. Its constitution recognized the rights of each State and guaranteed protection to slavery.

Jefferson Davis, of Mississippi, was elected President, and Alexander H. Stephens, of Georgia, Vice-President.

A few months later the States of Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee passed ordinances of secession and joined the Confederacy. The Capital was removed from Montgomery to Richmond, Virginia.

The "Stars and Bars" was adopted as the accepted design for the Confederate flag which floated from the Capitol at Montgomery on March 4th, 1861. Gray was the chosen color for the uniform of the Confederate soldiers, with the colors to denote the branch of service. With the news of secession came the gay, thrilling music of "Dixie," immediately adopted as the national air of the South. This made the tune so unpopular in the North that when the bands played it on the street they were hooted and hissed.

The Aftermath

The men of the Southern army who for four long, hard years had followed the flag of the starry cross through the smoke and flame of desperate battles had now to begin life with empty hands.

Their homes were ruined, their ranks broken by death and their Confederate money of no value. They had shown the world their ability to fight, but they now gave other and better proof of their courage. Hands that had held the sword and musket now handled the hoe and plow.

The army had been filled with men from all clas-

ses of society — from the veteran of the Mexican War and the sunburned farmer boy, to the men from the mansions, the owner of hundreds of slaves, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the boys from the mountains. There was no distinction, for one and all fought for a loved cause; and now they again stood equal when all was lost save honor.

Reconstruction Period

The darkest days the South had ever known were close at hand.

For five years the South suffered under the attempts of ignorant men who were trying to adjust the old customs to meet their new laws. This was called the Reconstruction Period.

In addition to the abolishing of slavery, the Negroes were made citizens of the United States with the right to vote.

All public offices were filled with ignorant, dishonest men whose first thought was personal gain.

United States troops were placed in the Southern States to see that these new and bad laws were enforced; and to uphold incompetent officers.

Affairs were in such a bad shape that finally some of the best White men of the South decided to do what they could toward restoring law and order in the Southern States. So they met and organized the Ku Klux Klan, otherwise known as The Invisible Empire or White League. This was a secret society and its members were banded together to protect the weak, the innocent, and the defenseless, and to defend Southern rights and Southern homes.

The time needed the advent of these brave, silent men, wrapped in disguise of snowy white with the three mystic red letters showing what they represented, men who dared exile, imprisonment, and death to benefit the land they loved. Their work was swift and sure, doing more to restore order in the South than any of the authorities.

After the work of the Klan was finished they buried the books containing their objects and rules; and then quietly disbanded. Although thousands of men were members of the Klan not a single disguise was ever penetrated.

The South of Today

The commercial advancement in the South has sprung from the ground, not only in agriculture but also in mining.

Several of the Southern States have their own factories to manufacture cotton goods instead of shipping the raw material away. The marshes and lowlands have been drained and converted into rice fields.

Southern sugar and molasses mills are kept busy in supplying the demand for sweet things. The land has been made fruitful and productive, and the bins and coffers overflow from the results of bountiful harvests. Other Southern States have opened up immense coal mines and discovered quantities of iron ore in unsuspected fields. Wells have been bored and great underground streams of oil have been brought to the surface of the ground in huge fountains. Progress is in evidence everywhere in the South and no longer is the hum and whirr of the spinning wheel or the muffled thunder of the loom heard throughout the land. The Lost Cause is enshrined in the hearts of all true

Southerners, who consider the days of '61 to '65 to be the brightest pages in all the history of the Southland.

Miss Georgia Doty

Dixie: New Version

I wish I was in the land of Cotton,
Cinnamon seed and sandy bottom,
Look away! Look away! Look away!
Dixie Land.

Her scenes shall fade from my memory never,
For Dixie's land, hurrah forever!
Look away! Look away! Look away!
Dixie Land.

CHORUS:

I'll give my life for Dixie,
Away! Away!
In Dixie's land, I'll take my stand
And live and die in Dixie,
Away! Away!

Away down South in Dixie!
By foes be girt and friends forsaken,
The faith of her sons is still unshaken,
Dixie Land!

For Dixie Land and Dixie Nation,
We'll stand and fight the whole creation,
Look away! Look away! Look away!
Dixie Land.

Then up with the flag that leads to glory,
A thousand years 'twill live in story,
Look away! Look away! Look away!
Dixie Land.

The Southerner's pride, the foe man's wonder,
That flag that the Dixie boys marched under,
Look away! Look away! Look away!
Dixie Land.