

THE MEMPHIS REUNION.

Ex-Sheriff Powell Writes of His Trip—Visits Friends in Tennessee and Comes Back With Some Fish Stories.

As a delegate from Walter R. Moore Camp, U. C. V., of Johnston county, to the 11th Reunion, held in the city of Memphis, Tenn., May 27th-29th, I beg space to report some of my observations, etc. A 36 hours' ride on a special Veteran's train (arranged by Gen. J. S. Carr, which means every accommodation necessary) on the Southern Railroad via Charlotte, Atlanta and Chattanooga, pleasant throughout, brought us to Memphis, and put us in the swim. Such a mass of humanity and jam on all the principal streets is rarely seen. The city had on her Sunday dress. Banners of welcome and a fluttering mass of bunting everywhere on public, private and business houses, on tents, posts, stands, carriages and painted on the sidewalks, met our gaze, while hundreds of citizens wore badges inscribed, "I am a Memphian. Ask me." (They were asked).

Two huge arches with variegated electric jets, flanked by statues of Confederate heroes, spanned one of the chief streets near "Court Square," a small but beautiful park in the center of business, set with grass and magnolia trees and inhabited by 200 or 300 squirrels and a pair of peacocks, the descendants of some owned by Gen. Andrew Jackson. A beautiful fountain and reservoir with variegated fish, adorned it also. These places served as a base for strangers to get their bearings. Bureaus of information and representatives were on every hand. None but the chronic grumbler complained. The committeemen were princes of politeness, patience and sociability. The chairman, Mr. R. F. Sloan, at Information Headquarters, deserves special thanks for uniform temper and courtesies to all. He never got rattled. Can't say so much for the joint ticket agent headquarters, where railroad tickets were deposited for extension, by paying a fee of 50 cents each, and several hundred were so deposited. Great dissatisfaction prevailed. One, I thought real rude. A lady from Texas told him he was a fraud, an old fraud. Another Texas lady said she paid a dollar for a carriage to keep from missing her train, and was told to stand back and wait, or go out and get a glass of soda-water. The room was half full and it looked like there might be some mixing pretty soon. A clerk said something about a policeman, and someone in the room said "We have seen folks in blue clothes before now." She got her ticket. This was the shady part.

Memphis did her part, and did it well. She entertained 100,000 visitors, 19,000 of which were old soldiers, to whom she furnished 10,000 cots, blankets, and pillows, at a nominal fee, and fed free, under a huge canvass containing 45 tables, 90 plates and cups each, 50,000 meals daily, using 6,000 loaves bread, 1,400 pounds hams, 1,200 pounds beef, 42 bushels potatoes, 1,200 gallons coffee, and biscuits, sausage, pork and fruits; 14 cooks, 4 meat cutters, 8 dish washers and 12 supernumerary's served them. Gray hair passed current, and many wore those.

Confederate Hall, the business meeting place and large rooms for each State headquarters, was splendidly located on the bank of the Mississippi river and was admirably planned and arranged, consisting of an open floored court, 200 feet square, flanked on all sides by graduated steps and walkways, easy of access and egress in three directions. One side overlooked the river. On one end the platform for the distinguished visitors was arranged and a beautiful clock representing time with the hour glass clacked off the seconds by electric sparks of red, white and blue. Overarching all were hundreds of yards of bunting tastefully arranged, interspersed with the portraits of our Confederate leaders, that of Gen. N. B. Forrest, Memphis' beloved son predominating; a celluloid souvenir picture of whom was presented to every registered confederate.

1,331 camps were represented by 2,305 delegates. Texas leading with 255 camps and 451 delegates. North Carolina had 65 camps, 99 delegates. Indiana, Illinois and Ohio had two camps and two delegates each. Tennessee, Arkansas and Mississippi had each 2,700 old soldiers there. Forrest's cavalry had 1,395, North Carolina had 405, and her headquarters the only one furnished with a piano, and that was by Generals Carr, London and Mr. N. S. Graves, Secretary of the Memphis cotton exchange, to whom I and daughters are indebted for special courtesies. All headquarters were appropriately and lavishly decorated with bunting, Confederate and State pride pictures.

The usual routine business was transacted without much break. At one time the noise outside was so great that General Gordon, the Commander, said if the city authorities could not stop it, he would with the old confederates. The boys yelled then. It sounded like old times. The noise stopped too.

The usual balls, music and dancing followed each night, and feathers, ribbons, flowers, and fancy dresses on the "Leans and the Fats" in general conglomeration and flutterations could be seen in the hall. I was mighty near saying many times, "I wish that gal was mine."

The soldiers' parade, headed by a Texan seven feet, seven and a half inches high, wearing a beagum hat and carrying a flag, was two miles long and took two hours to pass. Music in the lead, in the middle, all along, everywhere, Dixie, Belle of Tennessee, Old Kentucky Home, and the Yellow Rose of Texas, all mixed up with Rabbit-hash made every body yell. The parade ended with an old confederate negro with a tin cup, frying pan and a chicken on his back. The magnificent flower parade took the cake. Ladies, children, men, horses, and vehicles were decorated in every conceivable manner. The whole botanical family, both real and imaginary, were displayed. Music and shouting followed.

Texas captured the next reunion. She came for it headed by a delegation of Tennessee-Texas David Crockett blood, and when the assembled delegates saw, like the coon in the tree when he saw David Crockett, rifle in hand, said "don't shoot, I'll come down." Dallas, Texas, invites us and Fort Worth, twenty miles away, with her 16 railroads and packing houses of 5,000 hogs and 3,000 steers daily capacity, seconds her and says "come we will feed, sleep, ride and entertain you as you never were." We are as big as all out doors and we yearn to show our hospitalities. She will wear her yellow rose.

Taken as a whole the reunion was a great success. The crowd was orderly and good natured. Some extortion, but little said. Practically no pocket picking or highway robbery. One hundred thousand visitors with another hundred thousand citizens half of whom are coons, shows a splendid city government and good sort of people.

Side shows, fakirs, steamboat excursions, speck-eye and souvenir vendors and a midway camp, gave all a chance of sight-seeing night and day. The cowboy show at Chickasaw Park was the best. Forty white and half breed Indians from Claremore, Indian Territory on horseback, showed great skill in roping and tying down two car loads Texas steers, driven out of cars in the open, and on signal the lassoing commenced. Heber Skinner, of Vinta, I. T., won first prize, \$50 by roping and tying down one in 31 1/2 seconds, coming, it is said, in four seconds of the world's record. One rode a bucking broncho without bridle. Another saddled and rode a steer amidst thundering cheers. Buck and Indian war hoop and dances were also performed.

Hurrah for Memphis the "Bluff" city. Situated on the bank of the Mississippi river, like her ancient namesake and sister on the Nile, is the mart for the rich bottoms and surrounding country in several states for many miles. On the old Chickasaw bluff above the mighty overflow's was once the great Indian trading post and has many legends of Indian and steamboat characters. Here about 1837 and '38 our government crossed the river with the Indian tribes of Creeks, Chickasaw and Choctaws conducting them to the Reservation or Indian Territory, after having purchased their lands in Alabama and Georgia. Signs of the military road are still traceable through the bottoms on the Arkansas side. The government gave them acre for acre, besides purchasing theirs, giving them in addition \$20,000 annually for a period of twenty years and pensioned some of the most prominent ones for life. They are all dead now. Indian pensioners die.

Here a tripple tracked iron toll bridge 30 feet wide, 60 feet above high water, with spans of 750

feet apart, spans the river (a mile wide) railroad track in the center and wagon road on each side. Here legend says De Soto started down the river which finally became his winding sheet. On the Arkansas side I saw pecan trees three feet in diameter, sixty feet high. The soil is alluvial and exceedingly rich. Dock street on the Memphis side is laid with cobble stone for over one hundred yards to the water's edge and heavy iron rings for boat fastenings arranged at intervals, all sloping at an angle of thirty degrees. The largest mules I ever saw hauled freight up and down this bank. The city is supplied with water from sixty ten inch pipe wells four to 500 feet deep. Ten million gallons are pumped daily. This is the largest inland cotton market in the world, six hundred thousand bales handled this year. The largest hardwood center in the world. One thousand barrels flour handled daily. Two hundred and ten thousand barrels meal, one hundred and eight thousand barrels potatoes, one hundred and twenty thousand barrels sugar, seventy-one thousand barrels apples, three thousand five hundred cars of hay, two thousand two hundred and fifty cars oats, two thousand seven hundred tons meat, handled annually. The greatest snuff and clothing market in the world. Large horse and mule trade. Eight hundred manufactories, one hundred miles electric car lines, eleven railroads reach here and twenty-six steamboats, besides many more touching here, call the bluff their home. Miles of broad, well paved streets, excellent system of sewerage, handsome residences, splendid business blocks, fine churches and schools, make Memphis a diamond on the bosom of the river and the "Ignus fatui" of the bottoms. With her present sanitary system she never expects another yellow fever plague. God grant that she may be spared. I have seen our own Wilmington in the sixties with the scourge. Like Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon, the half has not been told, but space forbids.

As a side issue of the reunion, I spent two weeks among relatives eighty miles east of Memphis, traveling almost the entire breadth of the State on a buggy, meeting old and forming new acquaintances, many, and in fact most of all of which were Tar Heels or descendants. One old Tennessean, holding me by the hand said, "I am always glad to meet a Tar Heel, I feel safe in their presence." Every possible courtesy was constantly extended.

I had the pleasure of attending a part of the exercises of the Georgia Robinson Christian College at Henderson, Tenn. Witnessed the "modern Annanias" act performed by the professors of the school, preceded by the unique request that all the pretty ladies, in fact all but the bald-headed ones take off their hats, that those in the rear might see. Those pretty hats came down. One lady said afterwards, that that was about all she had to show, but it came down. A preacher, the Annanias, put old A. and S. to shame. He lied to do some good.

A college band of piano, two horns, two violins, a guitar and mandolin made the sweetest of music, all of which was greatly enjoyed; some of the acts being encored, both stage and musical. There was some of all sorts of laughter, even horse laughing. This is a denominational school of the Christian Faith, named for a beautiful young lady, Miss Georgia Robinson, daughter of a native North Carolinian, who contributed nearly \$7,000 to the college building. Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, who live at Crockett's Mills, Tenn., were there as guests of the school, but the loved one whose name the college bears has gone to her reward.

Rev. J. B. Farror, of Alamo, Tenn., a live preacher, whom I met, delivered the address and the subject of religion, education, discipline and morals, etc., was as clay in the potter's hands. Henderson had a regular reunion. I commenced looking for them at every town I came to. Five hundred pupils on the rolls, representing several states, North Carolina among them. I met two from Robersonville, N. C. The excellent professor, Mr. Fred, has leased the college for a term of six years and all anticipate a flourishing school. Two trains each way on the Mobile and Ohio railroad daily. No liquor sold in the country.

I met the mayor, T. B. Hardman, J. W. Stuart, clerk of the court; cashier C. M. Williams, Drs. Williams and Perkins, all of Henderson and their hospitality and courteous treatment made

me feel like I was one of them, and a little tar on their heels would pass them in North Carolina. And there were others, male and female.

I went picnicing and flying jennet spianing with five young streaked heads and had a royal time. We finally landed at soda fount and you may guess the rest.

I visited Humboldt and met Mr. D. H. Senter, mayor of the town and a native of North Carolina from Harnett county. He is a jovial and up-to-date mayor, proud of his tar heel ancestry and the democratic principle in his bosom, rejoices in the action of his native state and praises her splendid code of laws.

I took a trip sixty miles through the country to the Keel-foot lake in north west Tennessee. It was formed in 1811-12 by the gradual sinking of the land for a space of five by thirty-five miles to a depth of from one to many hundred feet. Huge trees stand upright, submerged now. The Obion river passes through it and empties into the Mississippi—not far away. A strip of rich bottom land lies between the lake and Mississippi river, forming Lake county. Steamboats can be heard constantly passing from across lake and county. I saw cotton here two feet high the 21st of June. This is the greatest fresh water fish lake in the known world. The catch and shipment of fish is almost incredible. One firm ship weekly 60,000 pounds and 45,000 pounds have been shipped in one day. They are transported over land on wagons sixteen miles to the railroad. A great variety are caught, trout, buffalo, and cat predominating. I saw five catfish fill a sugar barrel. The spoon bill cat has a bill like a duck, is boneless, grows to weigh one hundred and more pounds, and is the most valuable of the cat tribe. One hundred and fifty men near Samburg, Tennessee alone fish for a business. One man has caught sixty dollars worth in a day. Another caught 1250 pounds in eight nets and had fifty-two more set. Every fish caught can be sold at the landing to regular fish companies.

This is David Crockett's old county Obion. Many yarns are handed down of his exploits. Crevices in the hills are still pointed out as beards that Crockett bearded bruin in. A large beech tree here has the outlines of a coon carved on it. It is not known whether it stands for David Crockett or Dead Coon. Of course he did it. The land is rather broken, but beautiful and fertile. Wheat and corn grow to perfection while cotton and clover just astonish the stranger. No fertilizer used here. Never saw or smelled any in Tennessee. Horses, mules, cows and hogs are raised largely here. I saw 21 four-horse binders at work on the road in a distance of nine miles. Five following each other in a seven hundred acre field was mighty pretty, looked like a steamboat race. This field will average 25 bushels per acre. Same man made seventeen thousand bushels last year. Threshers are drawn and operated by traction engines and 28,000 bushels per season is not unusual. They do all the work, even haul the wheat out of the field. The farmer only moves the bags of grain out of the way. I saw thousands of piles of straw (last year's) as large as the court house. Two railroads pass through here and are well equipped.

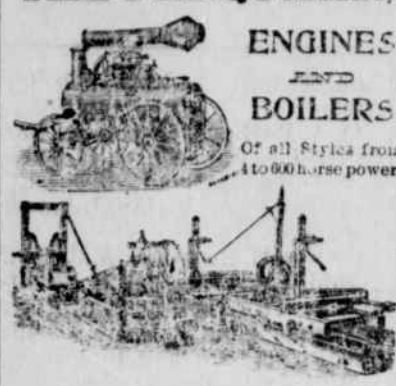
One township in Obion county, No. 24, will not allow a negro to stop in it. If one is seen the alarm is given and he is escorted to the line and a map with the district lines put on his back for future reference and recollection. They claim that he consumes and will not produce.

I must sidetrack. I cannot in this limited article give details or touch on many things that I saw and enjoyed. Suffice it to say that I had a good time and only wish more could have been with me. However, in closing I must say that like the "old time religion" for Paul and Silas, Johnston county "is good enough for me." C. S. POWELL, Smithfield, N. C., June 24.

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