

struggled to her bedside to find her dying.

She died September 15, 1836, and was buried in the little cemetery at Locust Grove, as young and fair as the flowers that bloomed in profusion there, and for eighty-five years her grave has been lovingly tended by successive generations of the Smith family, and there seems no probability of its being neglected. Mrs. Davis had the distinction of being the daughter of one president and the wife of another, but as she passed away before either father or husband had achieved fame and exalted position, her life-story seems like a separate volume in their respective lives; an exquisite though tragic episode in the life of the great Confederate, closed when the grave opened to receive her eighty-five years ago.

**DEAR TO WEST FELICIANA.**  
It may fairly be inferred that there is where Jefferson Davis himself would prefer that the beloved wife of his youth should rest until the resurrection morn; it is here that the surviving relatives would wish her to remain, if assured that the grave would be sacred from neglect or desecration; and it is certain that West Feliciana, as a whole, is loath to lose a spot distinguished by such romantic and historic associations.

General A. B. Booth, former commander of Louisiana Division, United Confederate Veterans, has made the suggestion to the U. C. V. committee that, instead of removing the remains of Mr. Davis, that the U. C. V. "might consider buying one hundred square feet (ten feet square) at the grave site, cover the plot with granite, with marble slab in center with appropriate legend on it." "The parish would," General Booth thinks, "gladly receive it."

This plan is entirely feasible and would, no doubt, satisfy everyone concerned, meeting all requirements of sentiment and common sense, without depriving West Feliciana of a cherished shrine.

# OPPOSES PLAN FOR REMOVING DUST OF DAVIS' FIRST WIFE

## Miss Nancy Davis Smith Recalls Stand of Confederate Leader Against Disinterment and Writes Louisiana Division Commander, U. C. V., on Veterans' Proposal

BY MAY E. ROBINSON

(Times-Picayune Special Correspondent.)  
ST. FRANCISVILLE, La., Dec. 23.—Shall the handful of dust, which is surely all that remains of the body of Sarah Knox Taylor, first wife of Jefferson Davis, be removed to a new resting place?

The United Confederate Veterans have raised this question, since at the reunion at Houston, Tex., in October, a resolution was passed by that body, and order given to a committee to make this removal from the grave in West Feliciana parish La., to one beside her distinguished husband at Richmond, Va.

The proposal is received with mixed feelings by those relatives of the great Confederate leader now resident in West Feliciana parish and by the people of the parish in general. The proposal as it reveals a desire to remove from obscurity and to do honor to the dead is deeply appreciated, but other considerations make it at least debatable, which Miss Nancy Davis Smith recently wrote to the local paper in West Feliciana, saying:

**OPPOSES DISINTERMENT**  
"I, as Jerguson Davis' oldest surviving relative and closely associated with him during his declining years, submit the following facts for consideration. Proposing to remove the body of Mr. Davis' first wife from its obscure resting place is, as a relative to both him and her, worthy of the men who wore the gray, but whether advisable or not becomes a debatable question. Would he whose lips are now sealed have approved?"

"I recall an occasion when discussing disinterments he added emphatically 'Where the tree falleth there shall it be.' A wish that was apparently expressed by the tomb marking his wife's grave. Moreover, four sons buried in different states where they died, were not exhumed while their father lived."

"Another reason for leaving his wife's remains undisturbed is that after 85 years there would seem little probability of identifying a handful of dust."

"To our granduncle, Jefferson Davis, we, the descendants of his sister, Mrs. Luther L. Smith, are indebted for foresight in reserving God's sake. The portion enclosed and taken charge of by me, I shall guard during my lifetime, but beyond that, there being no guarantee against desecration, the vision of the grave on a lonely plantation presents a forcible argument for removal. Still there is a solitary argument opposed to the objections I have specified."

(Signed) "NANCY DAVIS SMITH,"  
WRITES GENERAL BROOKS

Miss Smith has written in similar vein to General O. D. Brooks, Commander Louisiana Division, U. C. V.,

concluding with this strong paragraph: "Thus the Veterans' proposed tribute to their revered chief and the wife, who was laid to rest eighty-five years ago, would, in fact, though worthily planned, be ignoring his convictions, whose memory they desire to honor."

Miss Smith was a favorite niece of Jefferson Davis and served for years as his amanuensis, and therefore had exceptional opportunities for knowing his opinion on this as well as other subjects. The evidence all points to his being his wish that the grave of the bride or his youth shall remain undisturbed.

The grave of the first Mrs. Jefferson Davis is in the private cemetery of the Luther Smith family, Locust Grove plantation, about six miles from St. Francisville, and is the usual low brick tomb covered with marble slab with an appropriate inscription. This burial plot is reserved for the family and not affected by any subsequent sales.

### WAS TAYLOR'S DAUGHTER

Mrs. Davis was the daughter of President, at that time Colonel, Zachary Taylor. She married the gallant young Mississippi, then an officer in the United States army, in opposition to the wishes of her father, as he was averse to his daughter's marrying a soldier and being exposed to the discomforts and changes incident to life in army posts. There seems to have been no other objection, and the young couple were determined.

Shortly after their marriage they came to Locust Grove plantation, West Feliciana, to visit his sister, Mrs. Luther Smith. Both developed malarial fever, and as they were dangerously ill, were cared for in separate rooms.

Jefferson Davis heard his bride singing "Fairly Bells" in her delirium, and